Work Plan 2020

This Annual Work Plan supports the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council’s Strategic Plan of 2015.

The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council is the state-designated tourism planning and development agency for the cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and the towns of Cumberland, Lincoln, North Smithfield, Smithfield, Burrillville and Glocester, Rhode Island.

The Council is a not-for-profit organization, incorporated in 1985. It produces program-driven marketing to the tourism organizations and communities of the Blackstone River Valley of Rhode Island.

The Council serves Rhode Island and the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor communities with resilient, sustainable, Geo-tourism-based, whole-community tourism development programs that integrate with resident needs while enhancing and protecting the character, environment, arts, culture, heritage, aesthetics and commerce of the Blackstone River Valley.

In an effort to draw visitors to the Blackstone Valley, the Tourism Council operates several events, two Visitor Centers, one English-built Canal Boat and one 40-passenger river educational boat to leverage visitor spending and the Valley’s attractiveness.

Ongoing Programs and Projects

- Assist where possible with the development of the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park
- Continue our partnership with Mystic Aquarium on the E/V Blackstone Valley Explorer
- Operate the Blackstone Valley Explorer from Central Falls Landing, Festival Pier in Pawtucket, East Providence and Woonsocket
- Work with the City of Woonsocket on a new temporary riverboat landing at Market Square
- Operate the Blackstone Valley Heritage Golf Tournament at Crystal Lake Country Club in Burrillville
- Operate the Blackstone Valley Scenic Railway Fall excursion to Putnam CT
- Operate the Blackstone Valley Polar Express train rides from Woonsocket Station
- Present the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Annual Gathering Awards Ceremony
- Celebrate United Nations World Tourism Day
- Restart the Blackstone Valley Tourism Network
- Further develop the Hachiko Monument with the Woonsocket Rotary
- Support the Levitt Amp Music Series
- Manage the Rhode Island Chinese Dragon Boat and Taiwan Day Festival in conjunction with the RI...
Chinese community and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Boston

- Further expand Dragon Boat race opportunities and potential collaboration at Festival Pier with Pawtucket Arts Festival to extend into a two-day event

- Work with the Bryant University, Johnson and Wales University, Brown University and the University of Rhode Island and local high schools, educating students in tourism planning and development

- Continue work with the State-wide Bicycle Mobility Plan and continue working with the *Paths for Progress* cycling group

- Support tourism development and planning for all Blackstone Valley communities

- Operate two Sustainable Tourism Laboratories

- Manage the Chocolate Mill Overlook Park in Central Falls

- Collaborate with federal, state, local, non-profit and/or for-profit agencies for the benefit of tourism programs in the communities in the Blackstone Valley

- Continue Dynamic Marketing Program

- Establish an Outreach Program with our attractions, museums, event planners, and accommodations

- Participate in conferences and educational opportunities that benefit the mission of the Tourism Council and educate the staff to better serve the Blackstone Valley

- Continue the work with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Inc.

- Work with City of Central Falls to complete the Central Falls Landing Project

- Continue work to build the Keep Blackstone Valley Beautiful as the Keep America Beautiful affiliate for Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Glocester, Lincoln, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Smithfield and Woonsocket

- Continue to work with the Cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket and the Town of Cumberland in managing the *Broad Street Regeneration 2.0* program

- Continue working with the Woonsocket Main Street Riverfront Initiative

- Expand the Blackstone Valley Visitor Information Distribution Services Program

- Continue to operate the Blackstone Alert program along the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor - Is the Blackstone Alert site up-to-date? This has not been utilized for a few years

- Work with the Genesee and Wyoming Railroad to encourage wheelchair accessibility aboard the Blackstone Valley Scenic Railroad tours

- Work, in conjunction with Commerce RI and the regional tourism district managers, to promote Rhode Island as a premiere visitor destination
• Work to produce an Official Blackstone Valley Visitor Guide
• Enrich each of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council websites
• Expand the Blackstone Valley on-line shop
• Continue researching funding to support the Rhode Island Cherry Blossom Festival to life
• Continue to support the Rhode Island State Society
• Host a conference to discuss how to recognize the 50-year anniversary of Project ZAP (2022)
• Support the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame
• Host an event to recognize and celebrate the 50-year anniversary of Earth Day (2020)
• Work with the Amber Valley of England on collaborations
• Continue planting Cherry Trees along Roosevelt Ave in Central Falls and Pawtucket
• Expand Group Tourism Efforts
• Work with the RI House - Blackstone Valley Commission on Economic Development
• Maintain membership in the Destination Development Association Inc.
• Continue and expand the Culinaria program in support of Blackstone Valley restaurants and food venues.
• Increase volunteer involvement in appropriate programs and events.

New Projects and Programs to consider

• Collaboration with McCoy Stadium Events Center to host various events at McCoy (i.e. concerts, drone races, and other entertainment related events)

• Develop a Manufacturers' Tour of the Blackstone Valley

• Build up the Blackstone Valley “Carbon Footprint Campaign” for visitors, businesses and residents to make the Blackstone Valley more environmentally conscious

• Develop “Sam Patch” Day in Pawtucket

• Create the Blackstone Valley Heritage and Environmental Trust Fund to insure the Blackstone Valley Explorer operations into the next decade

• Bike Races, Running Races, Possible Tough Mudder, Triathlon in the valley, on the bike path to promote the bike path and fitness

• Develop a "Discover the Blackstone River Valley" tour

• Build on the “Made in Blackstone Valley” campaign

• Create in-house the history of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Inc.
• Examine the idea of a Dragon Boat 5-mile endurance challenge race
• Look to move Festival Pier garage to new location or move garage contents to a new facility.
• Rail car ride on unused P & W railway from Woonsocket to North Smithfield.
• Purchase new Ghost Army tank for use in local parades and veteran-related events state-wide.
• Further develop relationship with Brett Johnson and Fortuitous Partners.
• Work with Central Falls to bring a kayak and canoe teaching and training program to the Central Falls Landing.

**International Efforts in Promotion**

• Continue international development of tourism partnerships with Canada, England, Taiwan and China
• Work with the Lt. Governor on the International Economic Ambassador program
• Manage the RI Cherry Blossom Princess program
• Participate in international promotion of the Blackstone Valley with Discover New England program
• Support the United Nations World Tourism Organization on their sustainable tourism initiatives
• Work with the Consul General of Japan in Boston on Japan/US programs
• Work with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Boston on Taiwan/US programs
• Work with the RI Chinese Community on the development of China/US programs
• Work with the Museum of Work and Culture on the New England Franco Route from Canada.

**Front-line Visitor Services**

• Continue management of the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Pawtucket
• Include rental of Gallery and meeting space for those exhibits and/or events/meetings that coincide with the mission of BVTC
• Continue to coordinate the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Visitor Services at the Blackstone River State Park
• Implement hospitality training to all personnel and volunteers
• Expand volunteer support at the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Lincoln
• Work to secure a location for continued operations of the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Pawtucket
Geo-tourism Planning

• Work with all Blackstone Valley Communities and East Providence on Geo-tourism development planning

Legislative Actions

• Collaborate with tourism districts to maintain current or a better form of tourism district management that supports local community input in decision-making

• Continue to contract a government affairs assistant in matters relating to state legislative affairs

Headquarter Operations

• Upgrade office technology

• Install full technology at the Visitor Center in Lincoln

• Relocate the Council headquarters to Central Falls Landing while ensuring the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center remains in robust operation in Pawtucket

Organizational Improvements

• Update Blackstone Valley Strategic Plan

Explorer, River Classroom Programs, Environmental Education and History

• Pursue grants with other organizations and cities:
  • Community Development Block Grant with the City of Pawtucket 2019-2020, 2020-2021
  • EPA-Clean Water Environmental Education and Stewardship Project 2020-2021PA with URI SMILE Program 2020-2021
  • NOAA-21st CCLC Watershed STEM Education Partnership Grant with URI SMILE Program 2020-2022
  • NOAA Urban Birding Program with Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership 2020-2021

• Collaborate with the following organizations: Mystic Aquarium, Museum of Work and Culture, Preservation Society of Pawtucket, The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., Audubon Society of Rhode Island University of Rhode Island SMILE Program

• Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds with Audubon Society of Rhode Island and Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership, free birding for the public through a 12-month program at various urban locations in the state of RI
Keep Blackstone Valley Beautiful

- Continue to grow Keep America Beautiful Great American Cleanup Events with the municipalities, schools and businesses

- Build a larger network of KBVB’s Tree Hugger Tuesday participating venues

- Continue the Blackstone in Bloom municipal beautification program to continue to have more beautified spots in the Blackstone

- Host our KBVB/PawSox “Don't Litter Poster Contest” in which local students to take part

- Continue placing cigarette litter containers out in our communities to reduce cigarette litter

- Celebrate America Recycles Day bringing awareness to importance and proper recycling

- Conduct annual litter index to document litter trends in our communities