**2016 NYSTIA Awards**

**Edited Script/Briefs on Awards and Award Recipients**

New York is filled with fabulous travel organizations and individuals, so choosing these winners was no easy task.

Our winning candidates were selected based on their demonstrated commitment, leadership and accomplishment in travel and tourism. Please join me in a hearty applause after each presentation!

**Marketing Excellence Awards**. Entries in this category presented their innovative planning and implementation of overall marketing strategy for an attraction, destination or region that resulted in increased attendance, public and private partnerships, media exposure, website activity or consumer response.

**Excellence in Tourism Marketing**

**Regional Effort**

**Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Canandaigua, NY**

**#FLX Dream it… Live it! Conference for the Midwest Travel Writers Association**

Our first award goes to the Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, who created a conference for the Midwest Travel Writers Association (MTWA) called *#FLX Dream it… Live it!,* which successfully educated, entertained and enlightened 61 travel writers, photographers and industry professionals about New York’s Finger Lakes.

Their goal of fostering media coverage about the region was more than met. As of September 20th, more than two dozen articles and blogs were published, creating more than 15.3 million impressions, having the estimated ad value of $633,000!

An equally rewarding achievement was that they were able to give their guests the most fun and well-run conference they’d ever been to. With a modest budget and some amazing industry partners and sponsorships, they wined, dined and toured their guests to the max.

**Excellence in Tourism Marketing**

**County Effort  
Seneca County Chamber of Commerce**

**Seneca County Visitors Guide**

Seneca County is being recognized today for their creativity in developing a visitors guide that is completely different from other travel publications: one that portrays a horizontal landscape when reading, but is carefully designed to be placed vertically in a brochure rack.

The Seneca County Visitors Guide promotes development of unique experiences for local wineries and craft beverage properties, culinary resources, water-based activities and historic or cultural assets. Within a five-month span, 80,000 of 100,000 copies were distributed, producing a steady 20% increase of website page views and users every month after distribution

**Excellence in Tourism Marketing**

**Public Sector – Small Budget**

**Central NY Vacation Region: Outdoor Adventure/ www.visitcentralnewyork.com**

**Courtesy of ABC Creative, Syracuse, NY**

Central NY Vacation Region’s Outdoor Adventure Campaign tapped into an unexplored asset in the region that is the perfect complement to the food and beverage experience travelers were already responding to.

Using exclusively digital marketing on a limited budget, Central NY Vacation Region was able to triple the amount of traffic to their website they’d seen all year in just one month! Their visitors’ level of engagement exceeded their expectations, and most importantly, web visitors turned into tourists as traveler spending skyrocketed.

**Excellence in Tourism Marketing**

**Private Sector – Small Budget**

**The Roscoe NY Beer Company**

The Roscoe NY Beer Company is committed to its community. Since its opening in 2015, it’s not only sought to increase awareness about itself but also about their hometown as a regional destination, and has succeeded in doing so.

Their collaboration with local businesses is proof of their exceptional ability to work as a team, and has had a positive impact on the whole community’s tourism growth. From web traffic to social media engagement, both the brewery and the region have seen dramatic increases.

Our **Cultural Heritage award** focuses on the question: How does our industry leverage its cultural heritage to increase visitation to our communities and stimulate local economy? We are pleased to present this award to **Discover Long Island.**

**Cultural Heritage Award**

**Discover Long Island/Long Island CVB & Sports Commission**

**Washington Spy Trail**

Discover Long Island’s Washington Spy Trail promotion rode the momentum of the fascinating true story of General George Washington’s ‘Culper Spy Ring,” who lived on Long Island and risked their lives to deliver secrets to Washington and help win the Revolutionary War, as depicted in the AMC TV series, *Turn.*

By creating a 30-second TV commercial, a social media campaign, a beautiful Spy Trail map and more, they maximized the spy theme and attracted an already captive audience to visit the actual sites on Long Island.

Our **Visitor Services Award** recognizes a tourism promotion agency, community or attraction that has worked strategically to welcome visitors more effectively, through projects and programs such as providing front-line staff training, tourism readiness workshops, visitor-friendly websites, interactive visitor centers and more. This year’s award goes to Corning Museum of Glass – specifically, to **Regina Wagner**.

**Visitor Services Award**

**Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY**

As Guest Services Manager, Regina is the perfect combination of creative and professional, painting a perfect picture of world-class customer service. Since she came to the museum, Regina has not only made things more fun for everyone, she has also helped attain a 9.5/10 in customer surveys when asked about the museum’s customer service. The key factor here is that Regina not only hires and trains new young employees, but does everything in her power to help develop them professionally, so they can go on to do what she has done for Corning Museum of Glass, wherever they go.

As the title suggests, the **Excellence in Leadership** awards honor a tourism professional for excellence in leadership through outstanding initiative, impact of their work and the inspiration they’ve been to others. Our first leadership award goes to **Gavin Landry**.

**Excellence in Leadership**

**Gavin Landry, Executive Director of Tourism, New York State, I Love NY**

A leader for the *I Love NY* team, Gavin has a knack for communicating the why of what they do for New York tourism. He is not only a leader to his staff, but a mentor and friend who is always eager to remind them of their value and the important role they play in making New York’s economy strong.

Gavin oversees the entire ILNY team, including advertising, PR, digital, events, international and segment marketing initiatives. His leadership results in overall increased tourism to New York State; but most importantly, it helps the team remember why their job matters, and pushes them to be the best they can be in the workplace.

The **Young Professional Leadership** award is given to an individual under the age of 35 who has proven their commitment to increasing their expertise in the travel and tourism industry through their outstanding abilities and hard work. Today, we recognize the rising star, **Danae Jones-Persip**.

**Young Professional Leadership**

**Danae Jones-Persip, Tourism Marketing Assistant, Division of Tourism – I LOVE NEW YORK**

Danae embodies hospitality. Tireless and organized, Danae works as the Project Manager for the Brand USA co-op, including management of all assets on behalf of New York State. Ever upholding her conscientiousness, Danae’s expertise has ensured that all reimbursements are handled properly, questions are vetted and all partners are supported.

Success has followed in her wake as Danae has coordinated tours, organized scheduling and worked under the pressure of quick deadlines. We’re sure that her professionalism and work ethic will open the door for future growth in leadership.

Entries for the **Tourism Economic Development** are individuals, communities or organizations that have fostered economic development or enhance a destination as a result of revitalizing a downtown, adaptive reuse of a historic structure to be used as a visitor center, museum, restaurant or lodging facility, or encouraged development of a tourism attraction. This year, we celebrate **Old Erie Canal Working Group** for its project, **Tour the Towpath.**

**Tourism Economic Development**

**Tour the Towpath – Old Erie Canal Working Group**

Tour the Towpath was a 36-mile supported recreational bike ride along the Old Erie Canal section of the Canalway Trail. The project included overnight camping, free activities such as outdoor movies and music, and a guide to exploring the surrounding area.

This two-day ride succeeded as a twofold purpose. It highlighted the path as a tourist destination and also encouraged visitation to the Old Erie Canal area’s attractions, benefitting local businesses, restaurants, shops, museums, historical sites and more.

Their collaboration with different organizations, counties, towns, villages, state agencies and businesses has merited the Old Erie Canal Working Group this Tourism Economic Development award.

The **Partner in Tourism** award is given to a business or individual not directly affiliated with a tourism entity, whose commitment to tourism in New York State has been demonstrated through their unique contributions. These may include marketing firms, media providers, nonprofit organizations, event organizers and more. This year’s award goes to **Cycle Adirondacks.**

**Partner in Tourism**

**Cycle Adirondacks  
Wildlife Conservation Society, Saranac Lake, NY**

With the simple goal of showcasing the scenery and towns of the Adirondacks, this week-long road bicycle tour connected the event participants to the communities of the Adirondacks. Operating under the non-profit Wildlife Conservation Society, the event worked with various partners, vendors, agencies and community groups to highlight the landscape, history and culture of each unique community along the tour.

The 2016 event doubled in size from 2015, drawing 300 cyclists from 35 different states and provinces! For many, it was their first time to the Adirondacks, and certainly won’t be their last.

**Excellence in Service**

**Herb Clark**

Now, on behalf of the board and members of NYSTIA, we’d like to extend a special thank you to our own Herb Clark, for his leadership and service, both during the merger process and as the first chair of the Board of Directors of NYSTIA for the past 2 years. Herb, we are extremely grateful for all that you do for us. Please accept this Excellence in Service award.

**The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo**

**Governor of New York State**

We’d also like to express our gratitude to the Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of New York State, for his dedication and commitment to the advancement and improvement of the tourism industry of New York State! Thank you for paving the way for these award winners and countless other leaders in the tourism industry. Your commitment to our industry has been demonstrated year after year, and the announcements made at Tuesday’s Tourism Summit further prove your commitment to keeping tourism near the top of New York State’s economic development plan.

Gavin Landry of I Love New York accepted the award on behalf of the Governor.

Meg Vanek: “We hope that these awards have encouraged you all, both nominees and guests, in striving to reach greater heights in leadership, innovation, creativity and excellence. We are so proud of the work that’s been done for the travel industry, and excited for the accomplishments to come.”