

For Immediate Release

October 27, 2015

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New York State Tourism Industry Association 2015 Tourism Excellence Award Winners Announced

Albany, NY - The New York State Tourism Industry Association (NYSTIA) has recognized leaders in New York State's tourism industry who have achieved a high level of excellence and accomplishment at the 2015 Tourism Excellence Awards. The winning individuals or organizations are selected on the basis of demonstrated commitment, leadership, and accomplishment in travel and tourism.

Listed below are the 2015 Tourism Excellence Awards winners:

Excellence in Tourism Marketing - Statewide

Haunted History Trail, Kelly Rapone, Tourism Marketing Director, Genesee County Chamber of Commerce

Excellence in Tourism Marketing - Regional

Brew Central, Kelly Blazosky, President, Oneida County Tourism, Central New York Vacation Region

Excellence in Tourism Marketing - County

Distinctly Dutchess Marketing Program, Mary Kay Vrba, Executive Director, Dutchess Tourism, Inc.

Cultural Heritage

Finger Lakes Sweet Treat Trail, Meg Vanek, Executive Director, Cayuga County Tourism

Visitor Service

Distinctly Dutchess Tourism Training, Lydia Higginson, Deputy Director, Dutchess Tourism, Inc.

Visitor Service – Private Sector

New York's Best Experiences Tour, Josiah Brown, President, New York Welcomes You

Excellence in Leadership

Roberta Byron Lockwood, President/CEO, Sullivan County Visitors Association

Excellence in Marketing - Private Sector Small Budget

Anthem Tours, Great American Cycling, Dieter Drake, President

Excellence in Marketing - Private Sector Large Budget

Darien Lake Theme Park Resort, Amber Ciesiulka, Public Relations Manager

Herb Clark, Chair of the Board for the New York State Tourism Industry Association acknowledged the winning programs stating, "Tourism is a major economic development tool across New York State, excellence in marketing and visitor services are rightfully honored for the attention that they draw to our state as a great place to visit – work – and live."

NYSTIA President and CEO, Jill Delaney, adds, “The strength of our business relies on the passion and dedication of those leading the way with innovative ideas and the determination to bring those ideas to fruition. By recognizing the accomplishments of our honorees, NYSTIA hopes to inspire continued creativity and passion throughout New York State’s tourism industry.”

2015 Winners were honored at the NYSTIA Tourism Excellence Awards Dinner on Thursday, October 22, 2015 at The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, NY.

New York State Tourism Industry Association honoring excellence and achievement in New York State's Tourism Industry. The New York State Tourism Industry Association (www.nystia.org) is a statewide membership based organization for travel and tourism related businesses. NYSTIA is a 501c6, New York State not-for-profit Corporation engaged in the business of advocacy, leadership, marketing and professional development. The historic merging of the New York State Tourism Promotion Council (NYSTPA) with the New York State Travel & Vacation Association (NYSTVA) in early 2014, has created the opportunity to grow NYSTIA into a larger, more engaging state-wide membership organization.