



LET'S GET BEHIND THE ARTS, CULTURE AND TOURISM FUNDING ROADMAP, LET OUR VOICES BE HEARD!

I hope everyone had a great winter and now is the time to welcome the busy spring tourism season. I want to start this message off by applauding the efforts of Jason Mancini, Executive Director of the CT Humanities, Brett Thompson, Executive Director of the CT Arts Alliance and our CT Tourism Coalition Executive Director, Frank Burns for their tireless efforts in traveling all over the state in-person and Zoom gathering support and educating state leaders, Chambers and other industry groups about the importance of funding the \$58.5 million Arts, Culture and Tourism Roadmap. We are also grateful for the leadership and support of State Senator Cathy Osten, State Senator Heather Somers and Representative John-Michael Parker as we continue to get great press, increase awareness and build on that support.

You all should have received information on the Roadmap and now we must all let our voices be heard! Please reach out to your legislators and tell them to support this important legislation. We can't afford to go back to 2019 funding levels, especially with the other New England States outspending CT and trying to attract the same target audience. Our industry won't get meaningful, reliable and equitable funding unless we all raise our voices together. I want to thank all of you who testified, on behalf of the Roadmap, at the public hearings in February. Your voices were heard and we must continue to push this message from now until the end of the Legislative session.

Aer Lingus has relaunched the service of the Dublin/Hartford direct flights. The CT Office of Tourism in partnership with Bradley Airport and Aer Lingus hosted an event in late March at the edgy Vault section of Dublin's Epic Museum, immersed 95 key members of the Irish and European Media and travel trade professionals in colorful video and photo imagery showcasing Connecticut as

vibrant, energetic, diverse and inclusive to encourage travel via Ireland into the state. Also supporting visitation to Connecticut from Ireland and key connecting European cities, is a paid media campaign specifically designed for this purpose that will run in relevant markets from the end of March through August. Speaking of international travel, I'm pleased that the Discover New England Travel Summit was a huge success in Boston, resulting in over 200 tour operators from the UK with representation and sales efforts from all three of Connecticut's Tourism Regions. All of this positive activity is at a time when international travel seems to be getting back on its feet and hopefully will result in an increase in visitation.

The state's website CTvisit.com launched another newer version on April 7th with new features and categories. The homepage will offer themed channels, new itineraries, traveling with pets, fashion, weddings, big events, weekend happenings and more. I encourage everyone to check it out and provide valuable feedback to the state.

Members like you continue to be our best ambassadors, and it's critical that we keep adding new members to our base. I will remind you again how critical it is to get behind the Arts, Culture and Tourism Roadmap and communicate that support to our legislators. As always, I am grateful to our officers, board, membership, and staff for their commitment and support. Here's to a busy and healthy spring tourism season!

Paul Mayer
President, CT Tourism Coalition

For more information about the CT Tourism Coalition
or to become a member, please visit tourismCT.com

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:



STONINGTON CONNECTICUT



Incorporated in 1649, Stonington was initially inhabited by members of the Plymouth Colony who claimed it for Massachusetts and called it Southertown. A trading post was established in Wequetequock where our first burial ground was established. There you find family names like

Palmer, Miner, Stanton, Denison and Chesebough.

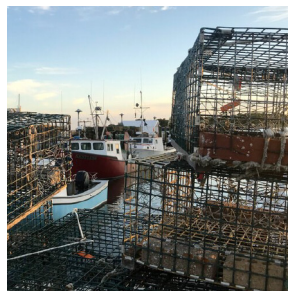
In 1662 Governor John Winthrop, Jr., obtained a crown charter for the Colony of Connecticut which set boundaries that included the town. The General Court changed the name to Mystic in 1665; and later to Stonington in 1666.

Today, Stonington is a thriving community with four separate villages: Old Mystic, Mystic, Pawcatuck and Stonington Borough which is the oldest continuously operating Borough in Connecticut dating back to 1803. Covering 42 square miles, the town has a varied and scenic coastline, pristine uplands, the Mystic and Pawcatuck Rivers, and sheltered anchorages in Stonington Harbor.

Located half way between New York City and Boston, Stonington is a perfect place for business. Not only do we enjoy a high quality of life for our employees, but the attractions of two great cities are just hours away by car or train. Also, our state's public and private universities, local public schools and private academies rival the best in the country. Our manufactured products have been to the deepest ocean depths as well as to the moon!

Our over 18,000 residents are joined in the summer months with a substantial seasonal population who come to enjoy our maritime activities, tourist attractions, some of the best restaurants in Connecticut and extensive recreational facilities.

We also attract over a million tourists annually to the gates of the Mystic Seaport and the Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration with at least another million visiting our various villages.



POLITICAL CHAMPION: STATE REPRESENTATIVE STEPHEN MESKERS



State Representative Steve Meskers was elected in November 2018 to represent the 150th district in Greenwich. He is House Chair of Commerce, and serves on the Energy and Technology, Finance, Revenue and Bonding and Insurance and Real Estate Committees.

He graduated from Fordham University with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Spanish in 1980. He then completed his education by graduating from Pace University with a Master of Business Administration.

In addition to a 35-year career in corporate lending, bankruptcy, and international bond sales, he has served 20 years on Greenwich's Representative Town Meeting.

Steve supports gun safety and environmental protection legislation. As a member of the Coastal Caucus, he works to protect Long Island Sound in coordination with Connecticut's Blue Plan.

He also worked on measures to protect vulnerable residents from unscrupulous third-party providers of electricity.

Now more than ever our state budget will need to reflect our new reality and Steve will continue to protect wallets and ensure that tax dollars are spent effectively.

