



Gearing Up For A Busy Legislative Session!

Welcome to late winter, Tourism Coalition Constituents. As I mentioned in the last Newsletter, Connecticut's General Assembly regular session convenes February 7th and adjourns on May 8th, 2024. We look forward to educating new and old legislators by continuing to communicate our advocacy and mission to ensure that Tourism in our State is funded at an appropriate level and can continue to compete with the other New England for visitation to help realize the full economic return on investment for tourism. We have been busy working with legislative leaders on a revised Art's, Culture and Tourism Roadmap. The vision for this initiative is to create a healthy, vibrant, and diverse cultural sector, strengthened by robust tourism marketing that attracts visitor's and businesses, spurs economic growth, and supports a strong and growing workforce. The Roadmap seeks an additional \$41.7 million annual State investment in the Arts, Culture and Tourism (ACT) sector through the Tourism Fund. Another important initiative is the funding and planning for the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. As mentioned in previous communications, a committee has been formed and their progress can be tracked on the CT250.org website. Other States are funding the 250th at a high level and it's critical that CT not only competes but has the resources to capitalize on this great marketing opportunity.

Our Executive Director, Frank Burns will be sending out information to all of you so you can reach out to legislators and voice your support for these two very important projects that can positively impact tourism!

In recent weeks, CBIA President Chris DiPentima hosted the CBIA Foundation's Economic Competiveness Forum workshops throughout the State. The workshop at Mohegan Sun focused on Leisure and Tourism and I was happy that the Tourism Coalition had great representation as several Board members made their voices heard with candid conversations on opportunities, frustrations and visions to help grow Connecticut's Tourism industry. I was also very happy that they are looking at Tourism and making it part of their strategic planning.

I am looking forward to attending the State's Connecticut Tourism Conference. The date for this exciting and insightful event will be on Wednesday, March, 27th, 2024 at the Bushnell Performing Arts Center, Hartford. Please mark your calendar and I hope to see many of you there!

As always, I am grateful to our officers, board, membership, and staff for their commitment and support, as we transition from Winter through the busy Spring season. I look forward to working with all of you, and our legislative leaders, as we continue to talk about the importance of tourism and its economic return on investment.

Paul Mayer



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:



Connecticut Magazine has noted the Gwyn Careg Inn as one of Connecticut's most desirable, romantic settings for hosting elegant wedding ceremonies, receptions and special gatherings.

The estate is nestled upon 14 acres of manicured landscape, including a majestic enclosed stone wall Spanish Garden, multi-tiered greenery and a soothing, picturesque 3 acre pond.

The Inn itself is registered on the National Historic Registry.

Dennis and Rosemary Bove are owners and innkeepers of the Gwyn Careg Inn. They have been operating the Inn since 1999. Natives of Connecticut, both Dennis and Rosemary consider themselves fortunate to be owners of the beautiful Gwyn Careg Inn. Each guest is treated as the first. The rewards of serving guests seeking a quiet escape, a romantic getaway, a girlfriends' weekend, or the picture perfect wedding is what keeps both Dennis and Rosemary going.

Both pride themselves on providing quality customer service. Creating the utmost experience for their guests is what makes them so successful and their guests returning. Dennis has over 20 years of sales and marketing while Rosemary has over 25 years of marketing and promotion with the Connecticut Office of Tourism.



TOURISM CHAMPION:

Connecticut Tourism Director **RACHEL LENDA**

Governor Ned Lamont announced that Rachel Lenda will serve as the new director of the Connecticut Office of Tourism. Lenda brings a wealth of tourism and hospitality experience to the team and holds the distinction of being the first Connecticut born and raised resident to occupy this position in a generation.

Her background includes leadership roles at Hard Rock Café International and the Eastern Regional Tourism District. In her most recent position, Lenda played a pivotal role in leading the organization towards a new brand identity.

"With Rachel's extensive background in the tourism industry and her forward-thinking approach, she is well equipped to lead Connecticut tourism toward sustained growth," **Governor Lamont said.** "Given the record-breaking numbers of the past two years, my optimism for the future of Connecticut's tourism industry has never been stronger."

The Connecticut Office of Tourism is a division of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development.

"What a privilege it is to have the opportunity to contribute to a team that has transformed Connecticut from a drive-through state into a must-visit destination," **Lenda said.** "I grew up here and made my home in Connecticut, so to now be in a position to champion the state as a destination to visit fills me with excitement. I am really looking forward to collaborating with my colleagues and partners throughout the state to build upon this impressive momentum and further enhance Connecticut's vibrant tourism landscape."

"Rachel is the embodiment of a true Connecticut ambassador," Anthony Anthony, chief marketing officer for the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, said. "Her love and enthusiasm for the state combined with her extensive tourism experience makes her a wonderful asset to the team, and I am confident that under Rachel's leadership, our tourism office will continue to grow and thrive."