



Let's Welcome a Busy Fall Tourism Season!

I say this every year, It's hard to believe that Labor Day weekend is here! I hope all of our hotels, restaurants, attractions, museums, retail, cultural, historic, and arts organizations had a prosperous summer tourism season, and that the fall continues to be strong, attracting in-state and out-of-state business and leisure travelers. The Big E will no doubt continue to be a big draw this year along with all the other fairs in the State and as long as the weather is good, officials are expecting record crowds!

As a reminder, the 2025 legislative session wrapped up in June with the passage of another biennial budget. Tourism marketing funding was maintained at \$4.5 million, with no increase despite our continued advocacy for additional support. While this fell short of some of our goals, we remain committed to our efforts and will continue to push for greater investment in tourism and tourism marketing in the years ahead.

Typically, the post-session period is relatively quiet, but there's talk of a special session that could happen in late September or early October. If it does, it will most likely be to respond to federal changes or other pressing issues that were unresolved during the previous session, such as housing. While a special session may not directly alter current allocations for tourism funding, it would still provide us with an opportunity to maintain our presence, and continue making the case for the value of investing in tourism.

Looking ahead to the 2026 session, we're encouraged by the support we've built at the Capitol and the opportunities that lie ahead. Our focus will be on continuing to advocate for the agenda of the Connecticut Tourism Coalition, finding fresh ways to make our case, and highlighting the numbers and success stories that prove just how important tourism is to our communities. Tourism continues to play a vital role in Connecticut's economy, and with strong advocacy and leadership, we can ensure that its importance is recognized and supported.

During the session there was a big push to support legislation that would allow a portion of the meal tax to be dedicated to tourism marketing. While this legislation didn't pass, the momentum generated for its support was significant. We expect this proposal to receive greater attention as we work with the arts and humanities leaders and constituents to see this across the finish line.

As always, I am forever grateful to our officers, board, and membership for their commitment and continued support. I am also amazed at the amount of time and commitment our exemplary Executive Director Frank Burns puts into this organization daily with assistance from Christine Dagata. Please stay safe, healthy and enjoy the best that fall has to offer in Connecticut!

Paul Mayer



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

VARRIALE LAW FIRM PLLC



David J. Varriale, Esq.

Founder and Owner New York and Connecticut Metropolitan Area

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David is an experienced litigator and trial attorney whose

practice focuses on the defense of general liability, premises liability, and other professional liability claims brought in the state and federal courts of New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. David's primary clientele is in the resort, hotel, and hospitality industry.

David is a trial attorney who has defended clients and obtained many defense verdicts in high exposure cases from inception to trial.

Prior to founding Varriale Law Firm PLLC, David was a partner and trial attorney for 18 years at Kaufman Borgeest & Ryan LLP where he defended clients in high exposure professional liability cases from inception to trial.

Prior to that, David was a Senior Claims Counsel and Underwriting Manager for the Hartford Financial Products Group where he assessed business and corporate risks for private companies' directors and officers and their employment practices, and also coordinated the litigation and management of those claims.

David has lectured extensively on topics of risk management including the litigation of complex medical claims at Yale University School of Medicine – Yale Endocrine Grand Rounds. Practice Areas General Liability Premises Liability Resort, Hotel, & Hospitality Professional Liability Education St. John's University School of Law, J.D., 1995 Activities and Societies: Dean's List, Moot Court Cornell University, B.S., 1992 Activities and Societies: Dean's List, Varsity Lacrosse, Cornell National Scholar, Red Key Society, Chi Psi Fraternity. Bar and Court Admissions New York Connecticut Pennsylvania New Jersey.



CHAMPION SPOTLIGHT:

First Selectman

DANIELLE CHESEBROUGH



After graduating from Stonington High School, Danielle attended Clemson University and then went on to graduate

school at UCONN.

Before serving as Stonington First Selectman, she worked with the United Nations for over eight years helping companies and financial markets operate more transparently and sustainably.

Danielle served as an elected official on Stonington's Board of Finance through two budget cycles and also served four years on the Economic Development Commission. Danielle's husband Sam is a small-business owner and they have three children. Danielle's mother and Sam's parents also live in Stonington.

Danielle remains unaffiliated, running as part of the new Forward party movement, because she believes in their vision to create a political home for anyone willing to work together, in good faith, to find practical ways to make our communities better.

Like many of you, she believes coming together and engaging those with different perspectives in a respectful dialogue is the best way

