

# 2024 Annual Report



TOUR  
CAYUGA  
in the FINGER LAKES

Cayuga County Office of Tourism | 25 South Street | Auburn, NY 13021

Photo: 2024 Annual Meeting

# A Note from the Director



Karen Kühl

As Executive Director of Tour Cayuga, I am proud of the impact tourism has on our community. By attracting visitors to Cayuga County, we create a foundation for a vibrant region where people want to live, work, and invest. Tourism fuels our local economy, inspires pride among residents, and fosters an environment where businesses thrive. This year, we continued showcasing Cayuga County's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and innovative spirit.

Here's to a future filled with promise, collaboration, & shared achievements!

## Chair:

Erin Katzker

The Rev Theatre

## Co-Chair:

Kari Terwilliger

CC Planning

## Treasurer:

Doug Dello Stritto

CC Parks & Trails

## Secretary:

Kirsten Lunkenheimer-

Slocum

Lunkenheimer Craft Brewing

## 2024 Board of Directors

**Sara Douglass:** ARISE

**Brian DiBernardo:** Turtle Cove Resort & Marina

**Nancy Gable:** Salt of the Earth

**Amber Ganser-Dagnesi:** MacKenzie-Childs

**Kate Grindstaff:** Seward House Museum

**Jacob Hamilton:** Hamilton Salon & Apothecary

**Laura Hahn:** Little Yard Farm

**Jennifer Haines:** City of Auburn

**Stephen Lynch:** Cayuga County Planning

**Kate Pelkey:** Otter Lake Farm & Fiber

**Chuck Mason:** City of Auburn

**Aileen McNabb-Coleman:** Legislature Dist. 5,  
Legislative Chair

**Michael Riley:** Old Mentz Heritage Center

**Sallee Ten Eyck:** Summerhill Brewing



## Staff

**Karen Kühl:** Executive Director

**Claire Dunlap:** Group Sales & Marketing Manager

**Dawn Lubaszewski:** Marketing Assistant

**Lynne Sweet:** Office Manager

**Noah Howard:** Public Relations Manager





Strategic plans serve as a roadmap for success, aligning goals with actionable steps to achieve a shared vision. They provide clarity, focus, and direction. 2024 was the final year of the current-five year strategic plan. We will be working with Think Place Agency in 2025 to guide us through an introspective and collaborative view of our organization to provide a roadmap to continue the impactful work that has been accomplished in last 5 years as well as expand our efforts around destination stewardship.



The Cayuga County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) will be the primary catalyst for the ongoing development of a dynamic, collaborative, and innovative tourism industry which:

- Provides an unparalleled Finger Lakes experience
- Enhances economic development throughout the county
- Improves quality of life for its residents

The CCCVB is Cayuga County's tourism promotion agency. We increase tourism and related revenues through promotion and research-based targeted marketing and we improve the visitor experience by providing data and training to local hospitality industry providers. We continuously work to increase tourism and improve the visitor experience, which in turn stimulates economic growth and sustains relational and cultural opportunities in the county.

Our Cayuga's advocacy and research efforts in 2024 empowered our community and partners. We developed 30 Pro-Tip infographics to share insights, hosted a tourism conversation in Moravia to engage stakeholders, and utilized platforms to track spending and trends in tourism. Additionally, we supported growth by hosting a grant writing and fundraising training, equipping local organizations with tools to succeed.

# Awards and Recognitions

In 2024, Tour Cayuga's dedication to excellence shone brightly, earning our office two prestigious awards from the New York State Travel Industry Association (NYSTIA). Our achievements were further recognized through numerous nominations and invitations to speak at industry events, showcasing our leadership in promoting tourism and our unwavering commitment to our mission.

## Awards & Nominations

NYSTIA Excellence in Tourism  
Marketing Campaigns:  
Projects & Programs:  
**Public Relations Campaigns**

NYSTIA Excellence in Tourism  
Marketing: Projects & Programs:  
**Trails & Itineraries**

- **eTourism eTSY Awards** - Finalist
- **Skift Ideas Awards** - Submission
- **City Nation Place Awards** - Finalist
- **Travel Unity Awards / Outstanding Organizational Initiative** - Finalist
- **HSMIAI Adrian Awards** -  
Winners announced Feb 18, 2025
- **City Nation Leader Awards** - Submission



In 2024 our efforts have also been recognized & quoted by:

- Women Leading Travel & Hospitality Magazine
- Destinations International
- City Nation Place



## Speaking Engagements:

- Destinations International
- Social Inclusion Summit
  - eTourism Summit
  - Nomadness Fest
- City Place Nation – Ottawa 2025
- Erie Canal Bicentennial Commission
- 250 Commemoration Summit



Telling our Story

## Publications



In 2024, we launched two exciting publications: **Exploring Rural Museums Magazine** and an updated **Visitor Guide**. The magazine showcases the remarkable rural museums and historical societies dedicated to preserving our heritage and sharing our stories. It has quickly become the most sought-after piece of collateral this year. We collaborated with Maryland to create a collateral piece that highlights our shared Harriet Tubman narrative, celebrating and honoring her enduring legacy.

## Campaigns

**Sweet Treat Trail** (May-Nov): An agriculturally focused initiative that has been highlighting locally sourced sweet treats for 11 years.

**Hibernation** (Jan-Mar): Encourages visitation in the winter months. Part vacation, part hibernation and 100 percent good for the soul.

**Pride of Place**: Highlights individuals and organization's pride of living and working in Harriet Tubman's Chosen Hometown.

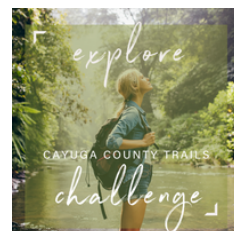
**Make It Count**: This culturally conscious marketing campaign has received over 7.3 million impressions.

**Go Beyond**: Invites visitors to go beyond their comfort zone and discover unique adventures.

**Cayuga Cuisine**: Brings together some of the best personalities in Cayuga County's amazing food scene to share their stories and favorite creations.

**Brave Women**: Invites you to explore a region that showcases Mother Nature's most beautiful bounty while honoring the strength and determination of its women, past and present.

**Cayuga County Parks and Trails**: Encourages everyone to experience, explore, and enjoy the great outdoors on one of Cayuga County's well groomed parks and trails.



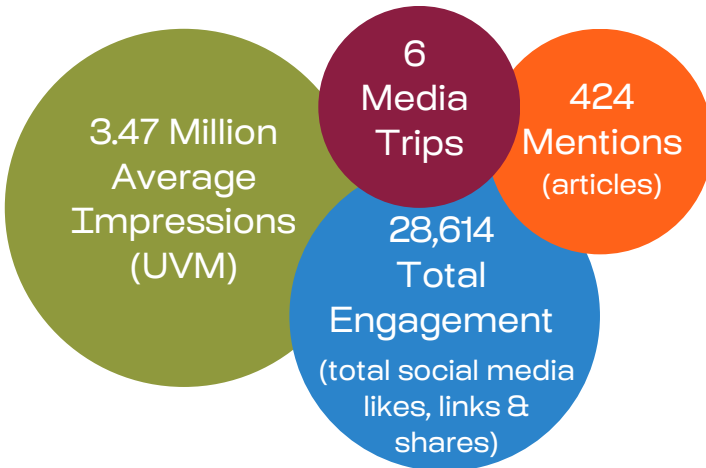
## Group Sales

IGNITE  
CREATIVITY &  
COLLABORATION  
IN CAYUGA



This year, we experienced a large resurgence in the group tours market. In October, we hosted a conference with over 250 participants. We will continue our digital marketing and e-communications with Black Dog LLC.

## Media Placements & Public Relations



Our PR efforts generated placements online, in print publications, radio and television. Contracts with TAP (Travel Alliance Partnership), La Lew Public Relations and The Culturist Group continue into 2025. This year significant placements were secured in **Travel and Leisure**, **Forbes** and the **Washington Post**, just to name a few.

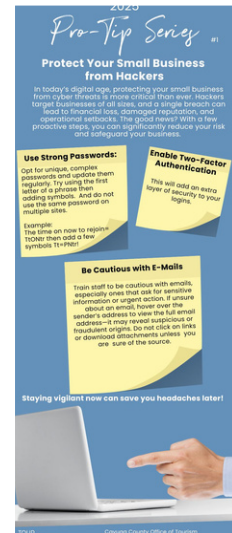
## Digital Marketing & Website

Monthly E-Mail Newsletter & Pro-Tips continue to produce above average open rates.

Facebook & Instagram views & engagement increased in 2024.

Website received over **197,318 page views** in 2024.

The **top** visited pages in 2024 were: Home Page, Route 90 Garage Sale, Solar Eclipse, Hibernation, Meetings, Events, Things to Do, Juneteenth, and Sweet Treat Trail.



## Videos

Pride of Place

Erie Canal

Where you go Matters

Cayuga Cuisine

Go Beyond

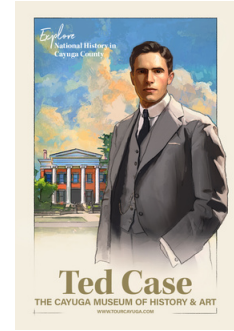
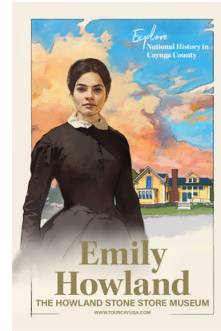
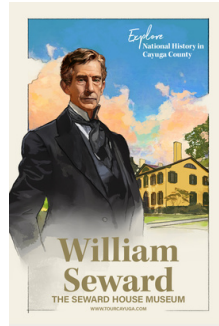
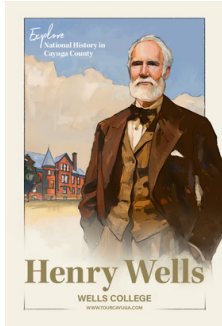


## Event Grant



This grant offers Cayuga County businesses and organizations the chance to secure funding for public events, activities, or programs that educate, entertain, or inspire through connections to Harriet Tubman's life and legacy. In 2024, we awarded \$30,000 to 16 businesses to bring their ideas to life!

## Poster Series: Historical Figures

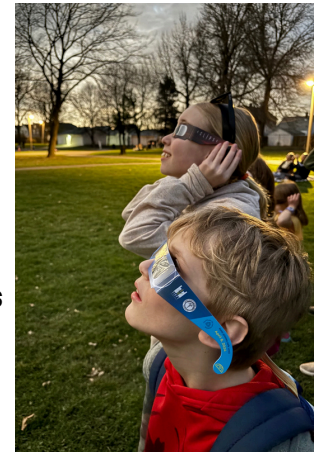


This year, we launched a poster series inviting both residents and visitors to explore national history in Cayuga County. We're so proud to tell the story of the prominent individuals and the locations that tell their stories. Throughout 2024, the posters showcased notable historical figures who once called the county home. Available free of charge, the posters could be picked up at the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center, at select community events, and individual requests.

## Solar Eclipse



Cayuga's webpage promoting events highlighting the Total Solar Eclipse and educating visitors was our highest-visited page for months leading up to the event, with over **11,000 page visits**. Our newest map feature gathered close to **5,000 views** in only a month and our digital efforts were well received. We gave out over **9,000 pairs** of eclipse glasses and over **500 posters**. After the eclipse, we collected over **9,000 pairs** of glasses to be recycled and reused.



## Black Owned Businesses/Traveler Web Page



In 2024, inspired by Tubman's entrepreneurial legacy and in celebration of Black History Month, we launched the Black-Owned Businesses webpage. This platform serves as a dynamic resource, showcasing Black-owned businesses across the county, while providing a space for these businesses to grow and thrive.

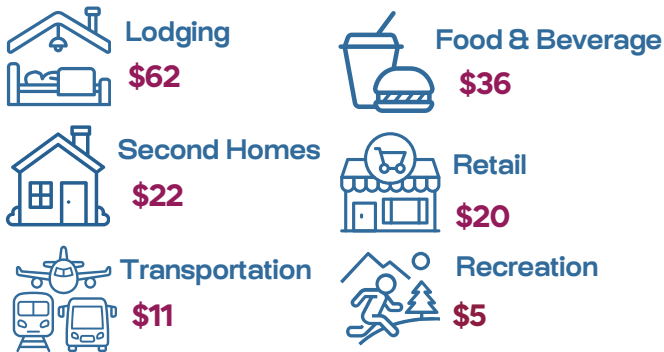
In 2025, we plan to expand the webpage, enhancing its representation of both Black-owned businesses, and the experiences of Black travelers in our community.



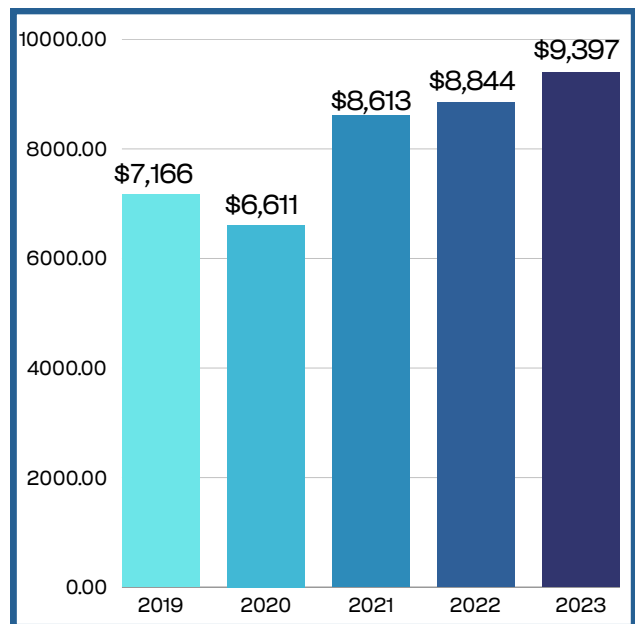
# Economic Impact

Travel plays a crucial role in the economy of Cayuga County. Tourists provide substantial economic benefits to households, businesses, and government. In 2024 travelers spent **\$157 million** in our county and generated **\$18,660 million** in state and local taxes. Tourism is responsible for the employment of **1,541 people** in our county and provided **\$604 dollars** in tax relief per household.

## Where Visitors are Spending in millions



## Tourism Fuels Tax Revenue in millions of local taxes



# Regional Partnerships

2024 was an incredibly productive year for regional partnerships. Collaborating with regional organizations has been instrumental in ensuring our brand and tourism initiatives reach potential visitors effectively.

