

2020 TRAVEL GUIDE

SULLIVAN CATSKILLS



**GD
USA**
2020 WINNER

HERMES
CREATIVE AWARDS
2020
GOLD WINNER

2020 ANNUAL REPORT: THE YEAR IN REVIEW



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

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VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Paul Carlucci,
Villa Roma Resort & Conference Center

TREASURER: Tanya Hahn, Jeff Bank

SECRETARY: Brian Rourke, Downtown Barn

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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Rick Lander, Lander's River Trips

Elaine Giguere, Immediate Past Co-Chair

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Anthony Bruno, Resorts World Catskills

Emily Casey, Bethel Woods Center for the Arts

Stacy Cohen, Catskill Distilling Co.

Brian Facquet, Do Good Spirits

Jennifer Grimes, Red Cottage Inc.

Shawn Lang, The Farmhouse Project

Dan Paradiso, The Kartrite Resort & Indoor Waterpark

Ariel Shanberg, Delaware Valley Arts Alliance

Franklin Trapp, Forestburgh Playhouse/Forestburgh Tavern

Phil Vallone, Rolling V Bus Corp./Roscoe Beer Co.

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Donna Hemmer, Sullivan County BOCES

Johnny Pizzolato, Upper Delaware Scenic Byway

Joshua Potosek, Sullivan County Manager

Jay Quaintance, SUNY Sullivan

VISITORS ASSOCIATION TEAM

Roberta Byron-Lockwood, President/CEO

Herb Clark, Vice President of Marketing

Lori Solomon, Director of Business Development

Holly Gassler, Administrative Operations Specialist

Tialisa Whipple, Administrative Assistant

SULLIVAN COUNTY LEGISLATORS

Robert Doherty, Chair

Luis Alvarez

Nadia Rajsz

Joseph Perrello

Michael Brooks

Ira M. Steingart

Nicholas Salomone Jr.

Alan Sorensen

George Conklin III

SULLIVAN COUNTY MANAGER

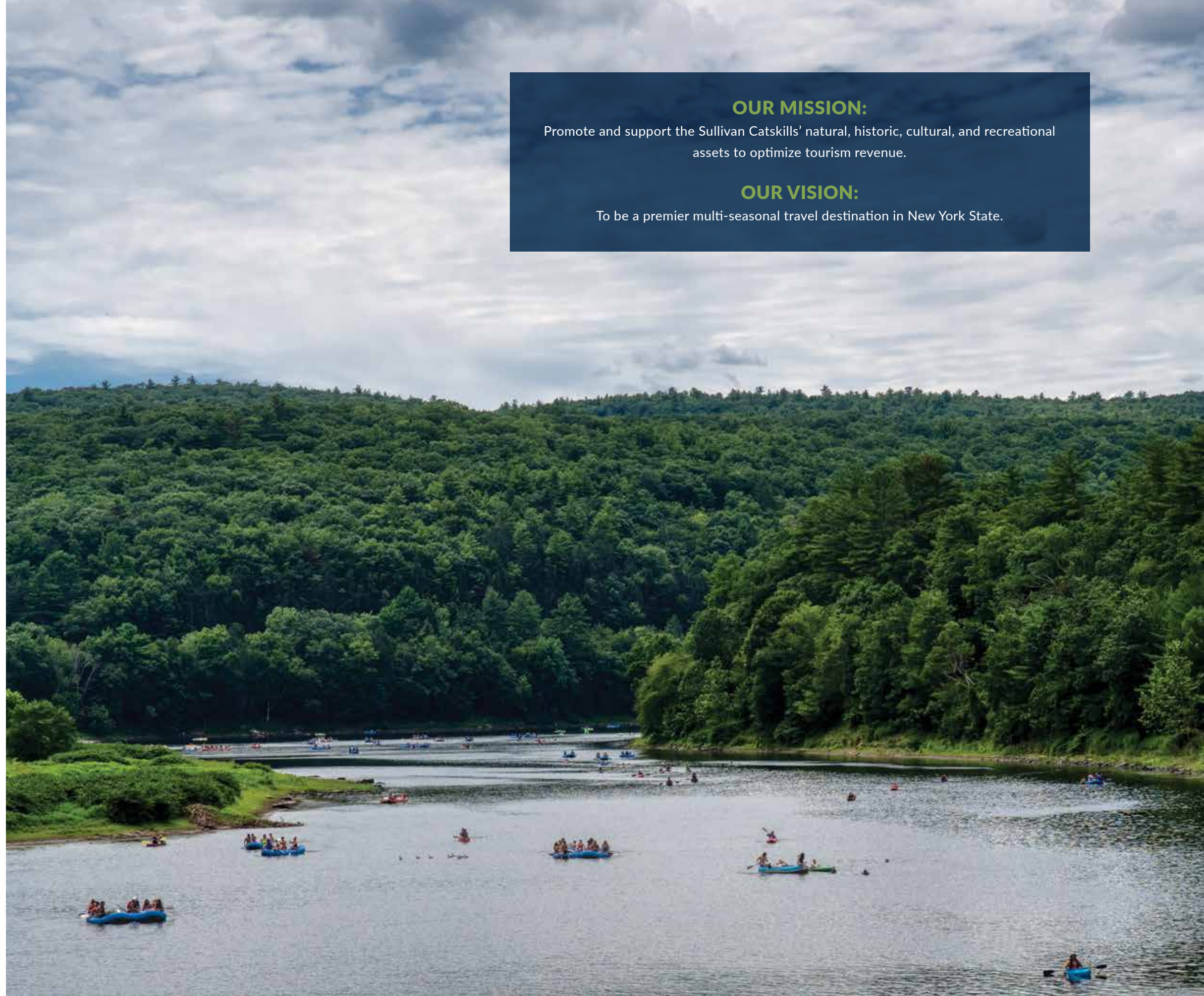
Joshua Potosek

OUR MISSION:

Promote and support the Sullivan Catskills' natural, historic, cultural, and recreational assets to optimize tourism revenue.

OUR VISION:

To be a premier multi-seasonal travel destination in New York State.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT/CEO, ROBERTA BYRON-LOCKWOOD

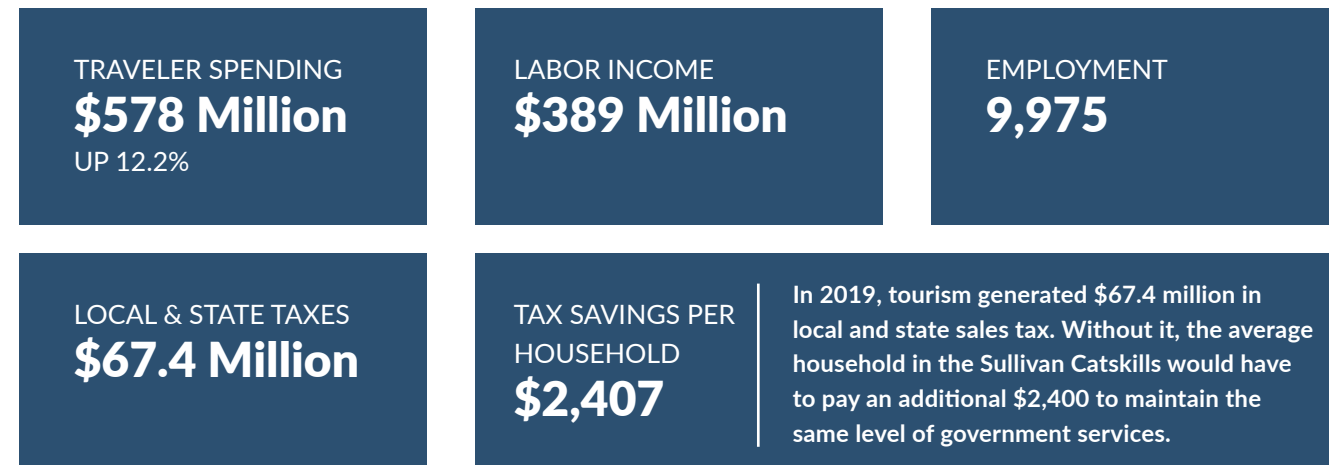


Since the 19th century, when people flocked to our Sullivan Catskills— first by train, then by car for outdoor adventure, relaxation, and escape— tourism has been an integral part of our economy, driving business sales, employment, and tax revenue.

The economic benefits of our industry to households, businesses, and government alike are significant. In an industry that regionally generates \$1.6 billion and supports nearly 20,000 jobs, our Sullivan Catskills accounts for 37% of the region’s tourism spending and 20% of total employment.

Our work encouraging visitation here is producing unprecedented success. The latest *Tourism Economics Report* by Oxford Economics— a foremost global advisory firm— reveals that our Sullivan Catskills generated \$578 million in 2019— an increase of 12.2% over the previous year. This growth has a direct impact on jobs and labor income. Also, it lowers the tax burden on local taxpayers.

SULLIVAN CATSKILLS: BY THE NUMBERS



Our achievement is by design and is the direct result of a cohesive effort by staff, board leadership, marketing communications, digital media, and public relations teams, all of whom are expert strategists in building and expanding brand profiles and reach. It should come as no surprise that since 2017 the Sullivan Catskills tourism economy has grown by an impressive 28%.

TOURISM GROWTH IN THE SULLIVAN CATSKILLS: CRITICAL TO OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE

	2017	2018	2019
TRAVELER SPENDING	\$450M	\$515M	\$578M
STATE & LOCAL TAXES	\$54.8M	\$61.9M	\$67.4M

POISED TO GROW, BUT FORCED TO REINVENT

We headed into 2020 on a path to surpass our already record-shattering growth. With plans to expand our wildly successful Sullivan Catskills Dove Trail and relocate our Visitors Center— COVID-19 threw up a caution light. Suddenly, a world-wide shutdown devastated the tourism economy with expected industry losses of \$400 billion— seven times the impact of 9/11.

But we didn't let it stop us.

Because if there's one thing we know for sure— We humans are resilient and we are caring. County officials and front-line workers, community organizations and businesses all came together to support each other. And we saluted them all through our social media efforts.

We listed restaurants offering take out, and established a gift certificate program to help provide immediate revenue to restaurants and other small businesses. We identified social distancing activities and programs to engage families and send thank you's to front line workers. We also distributed gloves and masks to lodging facilities who were in short supply.

Through our social media channels, we honored **hometown heroes** who went above and beyond in service to our community. And we established a **gift certificate program** to help provide immediate revenue to restaurants and other small business affected by the economic shutdown.

When it was time to reopen we launched **Catskills Confidence**, a campaign to inform visitors about protocols we put in place to help instill confidence in travelers' minds." And that's just one small part of the work this organization did all year to encourage visitation.



We relocated our Visitors Center and offices to 100 Sullivan Avenue in Liberty to be part of the economic revitalization of the Liberty Mall. We are now a full-service visitor and resource center for travelers, residents, and, able to accommodate member-business marketing training sessions and webinars. It is a full-functioning separate space that includes high-speed internet, telephone conferencing equipment, a mini-kitchen, restroom facilities, and big-screen TVs.



The Farmhouse Project

Visit our YouTube channel and social media pages for a series of interviews with a handful of member businesses to learn how they reinvented their business models in the face of COVID-19.

Not to be outdone, every one of our member businesses leaned in on the strengths of one another and rallied together to adapt, pivot, and reinvent their business models. Some stood out: **Forestburgh Playhouse**, **Bethel Woods Center for the Arts**, **Do-Good Spirits**, **Foster Supply Hospitality**, **Resorts World Catskills**, and **The Farmhouse Project**, to name a few. These members shifted gears to survive (and in some cases thrive), keep employees on the payroll, and keep our tourism economy opened. In new and creative ways, they rolled out new social-distant entertainment, dining, and other fun events to attract visitors guided by federal, state, and local safety protocols.



Forestburgh Playhouse



ALWAYS A DESTINATION FOR WELLBEING

Guided by industry research and capitalizing on consumer sentiment about transportation, we developed marketing strategies to promote drive trips and staycations, and we rolled out our brand's revamped messaging: **"Always a Destination for Wellbeing."** Rolled out across our owned, earned, and paid media channels, the campaign positioned the Sullivan Catskills as a short drive for a safe, healthy escape perfect for a socially distant lifestyle. The campaign's theme is flexible and adjustable to the seasonal nature of our Sullivan Catskills.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

COVID-19 has hurt. But one thing we know for sure is that **travel always comes back**. With that mantra as our guide, we will continue to press ahead. In 2021, we will pick up where we left off when COVID-19 interrupted our plans. Market research with a renowned strategist, Berkeley Young of Young Strategies, will help develop a strategic plan to elevate the Sullivan Catskills into the next decade. The project will help inform additional ways to reach external markets to drive visitation while at the same time uncovering new ways to ensure and sustain internal stakeholder buy-in. We will add ten more doves and develop original programming around the introduction to build on visitation to our communities and member businesses.

OTT (over the top) and Travel Blogger Influencer Programs are paying off. We will continue to explore additional owned, earned, and paid media outlets to maximize our marketing efforts through high visibility, highly targeting channels to increase visitation.



Stroller in the City Blog

Our partnerships with international and national partners **Brand USA** and **I LOVE NY** will continue. We will continue our relationships with our marketing communications, social media, and public relations teams: FisherMears Associates, Awestruck Marketing, The Door, and Finn Partners.



Eldred Preserve

We will again welcome new properties to the fold, including **Eldred Preserve**, **Callicoon Hills**, and **Chatwal Lodge at The Chapin Estate**, and **The Hampton Inn**.

The **Eldred Preserve**, a project of local residents Dan and Joan Silna is a wholly unique hospitality offering on a 60-acre property that weaves together the best of three Sullivan County legacy brands - The Eldred Preserve, The Bradstan Country Hotel, and The Old Homestead Restaurant. The resort property includes an event space, luxury accommodations, and a classic steakhouse offering a unique farm-to-table experience. The property also features three large ponds and an adjoining 600-acres including a 75-acre lake, hiking, and boating amenities.

Chatwal Lodge will open on April 1, 2021. Nestled within 30-acres of environmentally protected land, it overlooks the 1,000-acre Toronto Reservoir. It features ten suites with private patios. Vaulted ceilings, arched windows, reclaimed-wood walls, log-treaded stairs, hand-carved headboards, faux fur, and woolen upholstery are just some of the custom-designed elements. Select accommodations will have larger lakeside decks, outdoor showers, deep soaking tubs, kitchens, dining and living areas. It also features a 1,000 square foot treehouse and an 850 square foot glam tent with luxury accommodations.



Callicoon Hills, in Callicoon Center, is a story of transformation. A new form of leisure and vacation is taking shape at the old farmhouse on Gulf Road in Callicoon Center. From its glory days as a retreat for weary Polish New Yorkers, through a winding tale of identities found and lost, we arrive in our present as the purest form of the relaxed vacation “resort.”

All of us at SCVA are grateful to our County Manager, and our County Legislature. We also appreciate our federal and state representatives, Board of Directors, members, and economic development partners for providing us with resources to effectively market our destination and expand our legacy as America’s premier vacationland to visitors from around the world.

Sincerely,

Roberta Byron-Lockwood
President/CEO
Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association

POSITIONING THE SULLIVAN CATSKILLS IN A COVID-19 WORLD

A valued marketing communications partner since 2002, FisherMears Associates continues to guide, direct and implement the Sullivan Catskills brand messaging to B2C and B2B markets via owned (SullivanCatskills.com) and paid print and digital media.



Chief among their tasks as we reopened, the FisherMears team developed and implemented an advertising campaign, *Always a Destination for Wellbeing*. We placed print and digital ads in local, regional, and national publications including *Yankee Magazine*, *Martha Stewart*, *Newark Star-Ledger*, *Food and Travel Magazine*, *Newsday*, *USA Today*, *Adventure Outdoor Magazine*, *Catskills Confidential*, and others. A series of three TV ads supported the campaign, which incorporated research findings conducted by the US Travel Association and encouraged drive trips, outdoor activities perfect for social distancing, take out and dining opportunities, and sanitation in accommodations. The campaign’s theme was designed with the flexibility to work through the four reopening phases and was adjustable to the seasonal nature of our Sullivan Catskills.

BRAND MARCOM HIGHLIGHTS:

- Developed and implemented an online COVID-19 resource guide to member business
- Established an online Gift Certificate program to support small businesses during the shutdown
- Developed and executed three :30 Catskills Confidence TV ads to run on streaming video service
- Redesigned home page of SullivanCatskills.com informed from Heatmap findings on page usage
- Designed and implemented consumer-facing and member-facing COVID-19 website landing pages
- Prepared and presented a joint marketing webinar to assist members with reopening
- Reimagined and execute weekly design and content for weekly Eblast mailed to 25,600 fans
- Developed and implemented three :30 Wintertime TV ads to run on streaming video



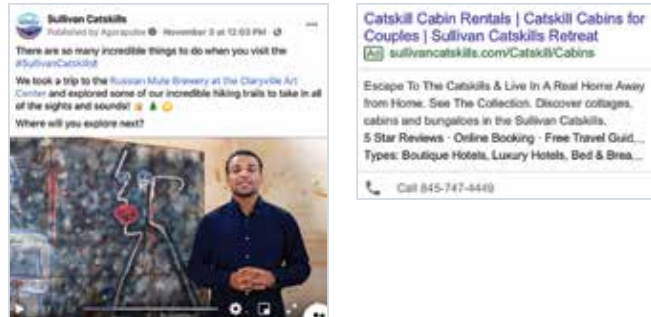
AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

For the 8th time, our TRAVEL GUIDE was recognized for its creativity—this time, a **GOLD HERMES CREATIVE AWARD** and an **AMERICAN GRAPHIC DESIGN AWARD**. Our 2019 Sullivan Catskills Winter TV ad campaign received a **PLATINUM HERMES AWARD**, and it too was awarded an **AMERICAN GRAPHIC DESIGN AWARD**. The Hermes Creative Awards is an international competition for creative professionals involved in the concept, writing, and design of traditional and emerging media recognizes outstanding work in the industry. There were some 6,500 entries, and only 22% of entrants received the Gold Award. The American Graphic Design Awards competition spotlights areas of creative excellence. The 2020 awards exceeded 10,000 entries, and the top 10% were selected as winners.

DIGITAL MARKETING WITH A NEW PARTNER BRINGS US TO NEW HEIGHTS

In the digital space, 2020 was a year of marketing progression and reinvention. Working with our new Digital and Social Media partner, **Awestruck**, we've achieved significant growth despite COVID-19. We've sharpened our ability to target visitor intention and implemented new and aggressive digital marketing techniques.

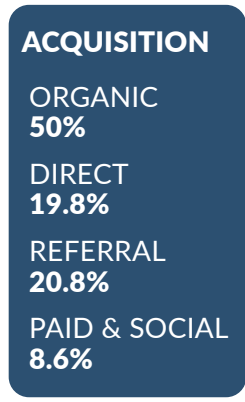
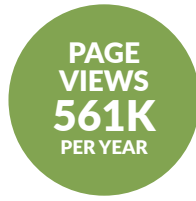
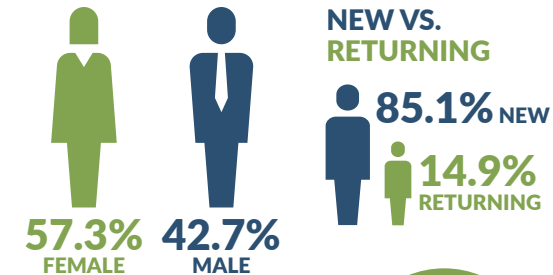
DIGITAL MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS



- We entered the world of OTT (Streaming Television) paid advertising, executing a Fall Campaign that delivered well over 400,000 highly targeted television impressions.
- We successfully increased our Facebook and Instagram fanbase by 45% over 2019 and delivered a record-breaking 7.2 million impressions on Facebook and Instagram.
- Socially, we saw over 80,000 interactions with #SullivanCatskills and #MySullivanCatskills.
- We introduced fun and engaging Social Media videos highlighting our Member Businesses.
- We presented two viral visitor contests, which added an incredible 3,000+ email addresses to our database.
- Our Google and Bing Search campaigns yielded a Cost Per Click 26% below the industry average and a Click Through Rate 116% above the industry average. Search ads delivered an 88% increase in YOY click traffic.
- We introduced some innovative heat mapping and data-harvesting techniques on our website, giving us the ability to learn more about our visitors and increase our ability to target meaningfully.

WEBSITE VISITOR SNAPSHOT

BY AGE			
18-24	10.3%	45-54	16.3%
25-34	25%	55-64	17.6%
35-44	15.6%	65+	15.2%



INFLUENCER AND MEDIA RELATIONS GENERATES BILLIONS OF IMPRESSIONS

The Door and the Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association have worked together since 2016. Over 3.6 billion media impressions have been generated with an ad value estimate of \$77.4 million. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. True enough. But the written word can be equally important.

PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Even when faced with challenges in light of COVID-19, press efforts this year generated more than 45 pieces of press, leading to 1.7B+ impressions and an equated ad value of \$34M.



1.7 Billion Impressions Generated
\$34 Million in Estimated Ad Value Equivalency

INFLUENCER HIGHLIGHTS

This fall, mommy blogger @StrollerintheCity (Followers: 187K) and foodie influencer @FoodBabyNY (Followers: 320K) visited the Sullivan Catskills, seeking a safe escape from quarantining in NYC. Their travels included stops at more than 15 members, generating more than 50 pieces of content and nearly 20,000 likes on in-feed Instagram posts.

More than 25 press and influencer visits to the Sullivan Catskills

"After a long hibernation, the western Catskills has come alive again as a weekend retreat for New Yorkers with a yen for the great outdoors."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"A lovely mountain getaway in summer, the Sullivan Catskills offer a variety of outdoor activities, art, theater, lodging, campsites, and entertainment venues."

TRAVEL+LEISURE

"Sullivan County's Catskill Mountains may be a quick jaunt from New York City, but you'll feel like you're light years away from city life. With unforgettable sunsets, inviting locals, and a bustling culinary scene, you'll wonder why you haven't visited sooner."

COUNTRY LIVING



WITH THANKS AND GRATITUDE TO OUR SPONSORS:

SNOW ANGEL

AWESTRUCK

Awestruck is a fast-rising digital media company that provides Travel, Tourism, Hospitality and Entertainment companies with brand positioning, increased revenue, immediate upticks in web traffic and a streamlined, more efficient approach to traditional advertising that re-imagines and reallocates marketing budgets to maximize return. Using a combination of technology and proprietary features we give clients a strong voice in today's digital landscape where influence and desirability can change in a flash.

SNOWMAN



SNOW FLURRY



SNOW FLAKE

