

**VERMONT** Attractions Association  
Together We Are Stronger



**2019 YEAR END REVIEW**  
OCTOBER 30, 2019

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# VERMONT ATTRACTIONS ASSOCIATION

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## VERMONT ATTRACTIONS ASSOCIATION

### MISSION STATEMENT

**The Vermont Attractions Association is a statewide member trade association that supports and strengthens individual businesses, leveraging this collective voice to influence and enhance the Vermont tourism industry.**

## VERMONT ATTRACTIONS ASSOCIATION 2019 MEMBERS

63 years	Lake Champlain Ferries
63 years	Rock of Ages
63 years	Shelburne Museum
63 years	Quechee Gorge
63 years	St. Anne's Shrine
61 years*	Vermont Marble Company
57 years*	Maple Grove Farms of VT
42 years*	Bromley Mountain
48 years*	Bennington Museum
47 years*	Univ. of VT Morgan Horse Farm
45 years	Cabot Farmers (Cabot Creamery)
36 years	Morse Farm
35 years	Spirit of Ethan Allen
34 years	Hildene
34 years	Billings Farm & Museum
33 years	Quechee Gorge Village
32 years	Cold Hollow Cider Mill
31 years *	Green Mountain Railroad
31 years	Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium
28 years	Dakin Farm
28 years	Lake Champlain Maritime Museum
28 years	Vermont Teddy Bear Company
27 years*	Jay Peak Aerial Tramway
26 years	Simon Pearce
26 years*	The Vermont Country Store
25 years	Shelburne Farms
25 years	Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial
24 years	Sugarbush Cheese & Maple Syrup Farm
24 years	Montshire Museum
24 years	Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
21 years	Boyden Valley Winery
21 years	Lake Champlain Chocolates
21 years*	Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory Tours
21 years*	Church Street Marketplace
20 years	Bennington Potters
20 years	Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park
19 years	Magic Hat Brewing Company
18 years	Maple Landmark Woodcraft
17 years	ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain
17 years	Bragg Farm Sugarhouse & Gift Shop

17 years*	Hogback Mountain Scenic Overlook (Southern VT Natural History Museum, etc.)
16 years	Danforth Pewter
15 years	King Arthur Flour-The Baker's Store
13 years	Green Mtn. Coffee Roasters Visitors Center & Café
12 years	Shelburne Vineyard and Wine Tasting
11 years	Great Vermont Corn Maze
11 years	Lincoln Peak Vineyard
10 years	Farm-Way
9 years	ArborTrek Canopy Adventures at Smugglers' Notch
9 years	Artesano Meadery
9 years	The Chocolatorium/Village Peddler
9 years	Hathaway Farm & Corn Maze
9 years	Okemo Mountain Resort
9 years	Norman Rockwell Exhibition/Sugar Shack
8 years	Goodrich's Maple Farm
8 years	Vermont Folk Rocker
7 years	Fresh Tracks Farm Vineyard & Winery
6 years	ClearLake Furniture
6 years*	Rockledge Farm Woodworks
5 years	Champlain Orchards
4 years	Farmhouse Pottery
3 years	Dog Mountain
3 years	Northeast Kingdom Artisans Guild
2 years	Retreat Farm
2 years	von Trapp Brewing Bierhall
2 years	Vermont Flannel Company
Joined in 2019	Barr Hill Gin
Joined in 2019	Hogback Mountain Country Store
Joined in 2019	Lake Morey Resort – Nordic & Ice Skating Center
Joined in 2019	Mad River Distillers/Mad River Taste Place
Joined in 2019	Old Route Two Spirits
Joined in 2019	Wild Hart Distillery

\* Not consecutive years

## **Vermont Attractions Map distribution-875,000 printed**

- **375,000 PP&D Distribution**  
Map distribution to VAA member racks and 700+ tourism racks at destinations statewide and in NH Upper Valley and NY Adirondack region.
- **20,550 Vermont Chamber of Commerce.** Fulfillment of tourism information inquiries and bulk requests.
- **250,000 Maxham Warehouse.** Mailed out in fulfillment packets in response to requests received by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce; Vermont Dept. of Tourism & Marketing from: 1-800-Vermont. Distributed at 17 state-run welcome and information centers; the Big E in Springfield, MA; and tourism shows.
- **115,000 CTM.** Bennington/Manchester Region; Boston Attractions/Hotels; NYC Region; Brattleboro and NH Area; Northern New England AAA; I-95 Connecticut Hotels
- **35,000 Berkshire Brochure Display.** Berkshire County, MA; Eastern New York State Capital Region; Columbia County and Saratoga County, NY.
- **10,000 Travel Plaza Information Centers:** I-87 New York State Thruway Sloatsburg Info Center, New Baltimore Info Center, Plattekill Info Center.
- **5,200 Brochures Unlimited.** Albany/Schenectady.
- **24,000 Adirondack Distribution Service.** Greater Lake George Area.
- **20,000. Brochure Distribution - P.D.S.** New Haven, CT to Hope Valley, RI on Rte. 1 and from New Haven to Windsor Locks near the Hartford Airport on I-91.
- **15,000. North Country Distribution Service.** 125 points in the Jefferson/Lincoln area of New Hampshire. Includes: Bretton Woods, Twin Mountain, Jefferson, Whitefield, Littleton, Franconia, Wentworth, Plymouth, Woodstock, and Lincoln.
- **8,000 New England Tourism Center.** Distribution at consumer and CAA meetings in Ontario, Canada; Quebec Welcome Center and tourism information requests.
- **2,250 Vermont Campground Association.** Distribution at association member campgrounds statewide.

## 2019 Strategic Plan progress: Year 2 of 5 year plan!

### VAA Strategic Plan Core Strategies 2019 Status

*The VAA is a statewide member trade association that supports and strengthens individual businesses, leveraging this collective voice to influence and enhance the Vermont tourism industry.*

**Theme:** Charting growth

**Goals:**

- 1) Build upon the newly-solidified foundation of member engagement with additional tools and programs.
- 2) Identify viable opportunities for increasing VAA resources to fund future ideas.
- 3) Evaluate and improve rack card and brochure distribution program to increase effectiveness and expand opportunities for success.

**Core Strategies:**

1) Build on member foundation:

- Improve/enhance training series. **Member portal nearly complete; content being prepared to populate. Spring regional meeting: Making Vermont Welcoming & Inclusive workshops (Boyden Valley Farms & President Calvin Coolidge Homestead).**
- Merchandise successes of 2018 with written and in-person summary of achievements. **Presented via member email newsletters and at Fall Membership meeting.**
- Recast leadership positioning within VAA to promote board and committee roles as coveted appointments that are earned and respected. **Two new board members to fulfill remainder of terms for Laurie Callahan (retiring) and Josh Palace (resigning): Mimi Buttenheim (owner, Mad River Distillers) and Kristin Bogovich (marketing director, Spirit of Ethan Allen).**

2) Identify funding opportunities:

- Create and launch a viable sponsorship program to establish sustainable funding for ongoing training and networking programs. **Ideas being investigated and discussions have taken place to get the gears turning.**
- Explore additional funding increases that come directly from members, such as: new member categories, varying dues levels, pay-to-play programs and more. **Newly created Tier Two membership category.**
- Explore potential grants and funding opportunities from government (and other) sources that match specific VAA programs and needs.
- Develop funding strategy to revamp VAA website in 2019. **New website launched February 2019.**

## **2019 Strategic Plan progress: *continued***

3) Assess strengths and weaknesses of VAA current system, programs, policies.

- **Increased map distribution:**
  - 1) **Quebec Welcome Centers.**
  - 2) **Seven Canadian consumer shows through New England Tourism Center.**
  - 3) **Expanded distribution to New York and Boston regions through CTM Media.**
  - 4) **Expanded distribution timeframe with other select distributors.**
- Identify additional opportunities to increase the value of this program (to both members and consumers). **New VAA website 2/19; Diversity and Inclusion session Spring membership meetings.**
- Member-to-member Reciprocal Program: **Updated to help members understand how the program works, how to present an offer and share within their attraction. Promoted participation through e-newsletters and the Member Portal of the VAA website.**
- Communicate—and celebrate—new program to members and Vermont tourism industry.
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> FAM tour conducted to Burlington area attraction members on April 2019, with 18 tourism industry participants; visited 10 attractions.**
  - **Six e-newsletters sent.**

### **VAA 2019 Membership meetings:**

- **Regional meeting 1:** April 30, 2019  
Hosted by President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site, Plymouth - 30 people attended
- **Regional meeting 2:** May 2, 2019  
Hosted by Boyden Valley Winery, Cambridge - 24 people attended
- **Annual membership meeting:** October 30, 2019  
Hosted by ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, Burlington

### **Education Presentations**

- **Regional Meetings:** Making a Visit to Vermont Welcoming and Inclusive; GM Consulting, from Norwich, VT presented an interactive session focused on creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive environment at your attraction.
- **VAA at Vermont Tourism Summit:** 17 people joined VAA on a tour of attractions in the region of Burlington, VT. Attendees included area attractions, lodging representatives, VDTM and others.
- **Fall Membership Meeting:** Following the annual business meeting, VAA welcomes back GM Consulting for an interactive presentation/discussion, Debate to Dialogue: Providing a model for moving from debate to dialogue about difficult or controversial topics.

## **Legislative Representation by Vermont Chamber of Commerce**

### **2019 Session Outcome**

The following items were initiated and/or supported through the work of the Vermont Chamber four-person advocacy team:

#### Economic Development & Workforce

- Secured ongoing funding for economic development marketing.
- Maintained funding for the Vermont Training Program with added focus on small businesses.
- Supported the provision of resources to better enable populations with traditional barriers to employment to enter the workforce, with emphasis placed on the corrections population, workers in recovery and new Americans.
- Continued to address workforce needs with an incentive to attract remote workers.
- Passed an initiative to enable development at the state's airports, which serve as economic drivers.
- Supported legislation to bring broadband to the 50,000 Vermonters who lack high-speed internet.
- Passage of legislation that clearly defines state-owned master permits for airports, including Act 250, Agency of Natural Resources and other applicable permits.

#### Tourism

- Maintained tourism funding of \$3 million.
- Stopped an effort to increase the rooms and meals tax and implement an occupancy tax.
- Assisted in organizing Tourism Day at the State House to raise awareness of the vital importance of the tourism industry and gain support for tourism-related legislation.

#### Tax Policy

- Repealed a proposal to tax software as a service, known as a "cloud tax."
- Maintained current tax levels for home heating fuel.
- Prevented an increase in the rooms and meals tax.

#### Labor Policy

- Maintained current minimum wage increase rate.
- Maintained current family and medical leave policies.
- Prevented the passage of a bill that would have prohibited employer use of non-compete agreements.

#### Manufacturing

- Prevented passage of regulations that would have created unsustainable legal and financial risk for manufacturers.

#### Setbacks

- Capital gains tax exclusion reduced from \$450,000 to \$350,000.
- Manufacturers will see additional regulations governing the production of certain products.



## **VAA WEBSITE - [www.vtattractions.org](http://www.vtattractions.org)**

VAA launched the new website February 1, 2019. We continue to update and add information and content to the site.

The following items are new or updated features to the site:

### 1. Updating your Attraction website listing

VAA is maintaining updates to Attraction member listings upon request.

Members NO longer have access to update, add to or change website content.

- Members can request changes through Karen Foote, [attractions@vtchamber.com](mailto:attractions@vtchamber.com).
- An online form for update requests is available in the Member Portal (log in credentials required, see below).
- Updates and changes to your website listing can be made at any time. Please allow up to one week for the change to be made and appear online.

### 2. Member Portal Access

This is a password protected Portal only for VAA Members.

- Users are required to request log in credentials (Username and password).

### 3. Member Portal Content

VAA will continue populating the Member Portal. Current information includes:

- Member and Board lists
- Committee members and opportunities
- Year-end Review
- Attraction listing update request form
- Information about VAA benefits and programs VAA benefits, Member to Member Reciprocal Program; VAA Spring and Fall meetings, partner contacts and more
- VAA meeting registration form
- Presentations from previous VAA meetings

Future updates will include:

- Market research
- Logo/photo library
- Articles of interest

## **IMPORTANT: Fewer than 50% of VAA members have logged in to the new site.**

Analytics are tracking well, but as this is a new site, these results are still growing. A new feature is that we can now track referrals to the VAA site from sites where a link was clicked (directing to [vtattractions.org](http://vtattractions.org)).

*NOTE: The bulk of these referrals to the VAA new website came through [rails-vt.com](http://rails-vt.com) and [trainridesvt.com](http://trainridesvt.com). This is member Green Mountain Railroad website. This results shows that VAA site visitation numbers would greatly increase if all VAA members had links from their site to [vtattractions.org](http://vtattractions.org).*

## Key Contacts

### **Vermont Dept. of Tourism & Marketing (VDTM)**

The VAA map is distributed by VDTM and representatives at trade and tourism events, domestic and internationally, and is a sales tool in training and sales missions.

Heather Pelham, Acting Commissioner and Chief Marketing Officer  
heather.pelham@vermont.gov

Sara DeFilippi, Sales Manager for International & Domestic Tourism  
sara.defilippi@vermont.gov

Nate Formalarie, Director of Communications  
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VAA is managed by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce. The president and administrator, housed at the Chamber offices, facilitate conducting the duties of managing the VAA. The current management contract (six-year term) expires 2025.

Karen Ballard, VAA President kballard@vtchamber.com  
Karen Foote, VAA Administrator attractions@vtchamber.com 802-229-4581

### **VAA Board of Directors for FY2019**

**Chair** Amy Weller, Ben & Jerry's  
**Vice Chair** Jim Szabo, The Vermont Country Store  
**Treasurer/Secretary** Paul Brown, Cold Hollow Cider Mill

Laurie Callahan, Cabot Creamery Cooperative – Retired June 1, 2019  
Paula Maynard, Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home  
Josh Palace, Spirit of Ethan Allen – Resigned from the Board June 1, 2019  
David Simmons, Billings Farm & Museum  
John Tunnicliffe, King Arthur Flour  
Gail Albert, Shelburne Vineyard  
Trish Palao, Montshire Museum of Science  
Mimi Buttenheim, Mad River Distillers  
Kristin Bogovich, Spirit of Ethan Allen  
Bonnie MacPherson, Okemo Mountain Resort  
Nicole Carlson, Green Mountain Railroad  
Tracy Martin, Vermont Div. for Historic Preservation