Tompkins County
Strategic Tourism Planning Board

Wednesday July 16, 2014
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
CVB

Meeting Agenda	**Start Time**
1. Remembering Stuart Stein – 15 minutes	3:00
2. June Meeting Minutes – 5 minutes	3:15
3. Privilege of the Floor – 5 minutes	3:20
4. Chair's Report – Rick Adie – 5 minutes	3:25
5. Staff Report – Tom Knipe – 10 minutes	3:30
6. Discovery Trail – Nancy Grossman	3:40
PRESENTATION – Annual report to the STPB – 20 minutes	
7. CVB Monthly Report – Bruce Stoff – 15 minutes	4:00
8. STPB Budget Committee - 15 minutes	4:15
ACTION – Recommend 2015 Tourism Program Budget	
9. Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan – Tom Knipe	4:30
PRESENTATION – 25 minutes	
10. Comments on recently attended funded events	4:55

Agenda Packet

- Stuart Stein's contributions to tourism in Tompkins County
- Draft June 2014 STPB Meeting Minutes
- Discovery Trail Report
- CVB Monthly Report
- Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail Plan
  Link: http://cayugablueway.weebly.com/documents-and-maps.html
- Memo and Attachments – 2015 Tourism Program Budget – Recommendations of the STPB Budget Committee. Detailed budget request link: http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/budget/2015requests

Next Meeting
September 17, 2014
No August meeting

MISSION:
The Strategic Tourism Planning Board is charged by the Tompkins County Legislature with providing oversight and strategic direction for tourism initiatives that ***promote economic development*** and ***enhance the quality of life*** in Tompkins County.

Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)
Meeting Minutes Draft – June 2014

Date: June 18, 2014
Time: 3:00-5:00pm
Location: **CVB / Chamber of Commerce**

Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation
Anne Kellerman	✓	At-Large
Ian Golden	✓	Recreation
Ethan Ash	✓	Arts-Culture
John Gutenberger	✓	Cornell
Lynette Scofield	✓	Lodging
Rick Adie	✓	Lodging
Rita Rosenberg	✓	Agriculture
Andy Zepp	✓	At-Large
Stephen Nunley	E	At-Large
Steve Hugo	✓	At-Large
Ken Jupiter	✓	At-Large
Mike Mellor	✓	At-Large
Anne Gossen	✓	At-Large
Sue Stafford	E	TC3
Christy Agnese	✓	At-Large

Name	✓	Representation
Sue Perlgut	✓	Arts-Culture
Susie Monagan	✓	Arts-Culture
John Spence	A	*CAP, Non-Voting*
Bruce Stoff	✓	*CVB, Non-Voting*
Dwight Mengel	E	*Transportation, Non-Voting*
Gary Ferguson	✓	*DIA, Non-Voting*
Martha Armstrong	A	*TCAD, Non-Voting*
Will Burbank	✓	*TC Legislature, Non-Voting*
Beverly Baker	A	*Associate Member*
Carol Kammen	A	*Associate Member*
Jon Reis	✓	*Associate Member*
Stuart Stein	A	*Associate Member*
Tom Knipe	✓	Staff
Jennifer Turner	✓	Staff

Also in attendance: Jennifer Tavares, Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, Michael May, Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce Board, Kristy Mitchell, Jodi LaPierre, Convention and Visitors Bureau

<u>Meeting Agenda</u>
May Meeting Minutes
Privilege of the Floor
Chairs Report
Staff Report
CVB Monthly Report
Presentation – Listening to Artist - Entrepreneurs in the West of Ireland – Susie Monagan
CVB Visitors Services Program – Bruce Stoff
STPB Budget Committee
Comments on recently attended funded events

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 PM.

May 2014 STPB meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

Chair's Report - Rick Adie opened the meeting with the announcement that there will be no Strategic Tourism Planning Board Meeting for the month of August. Plans to meet at the Cayuga Nature Center in September are in the works. Gavin Landry from I Love NY has agreed to present and plans are tentative for the month of October. The Heritage Tourism Task Force had its first meeting on June 10th led by Stuart Stein. A special committee to review the Arts and Culture Organization Development Grant Program has been formed that will focus on how ACOD's grants have been established and its recipients. Will Burbank will serve on the committee as well as 4 people who occupy the Arts and Culture seats who are Anne Gossen, Susie Monagan, Sue Perlgut, and Ethan Ash. Martha Armstrong, Tom Knipe, Rick Adie and Anne Kellerman will also sit in on the special committee meetings. A Higher Education Tourism Committee will kick off in the fall. The Marriott, The Hampton Inn and Hotel Ithaca will create an additional 280 rooms downtown.

Introductions – Jennifer Tavares was introduced as the new President of the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce to the members of STPB by Mike May the Chair of Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce. Mike went on to describe Jennifer as having great energy, enthusiastic, and as having great leadership

skills. Jennifer introduced herself and noted that she will be making weekly visits for the next month before she becomes full-time. STPB members went around the room introducing themselves.

Staff Report – Tom Knipe reported that phase 1 of Tompkins County Wayfinding Interpretive Signage Plan has been completed by the consultants as of May 22nd. The Heritage Tourism Task Force has met. An Ag & Culinary Tourism Task Force member, Emma Frisch has appeared on the Food Network's Food Network Star Show and has been promoting Ithaca and farm to table. Rita Rosenberg mentioned her successful showing at Cinemapolis in which she received top honors. The show airs every Sunday a 9 pm. The Heritage Tourism Group's newest members Jeff Chusid, Professor in City and Regional Planning and Sherene Baugher who is the president of the Statewide Archeology Group and professor at Cornell have already started contributing new ideas to the Heritage Group, such as about Main Street programs and historic preservation. Program evaluation has been moving forward. The CVB has been working with Cooperative Extension and will be ready with a report on their efforts to the P&E Committee the 3rd week of July. They will share the preliminary results of the program modeling work and systems evaluation protocol. Tom has also been meeting with other tourism programs including the Discovery Trail and the WIB to begin thinking through logic models and evaluation plans for their programs.

CVB Monthly Report – Bruce Stoff announced that the occupancy rate for the month of May was at 63%, which is 7.2% higher than May last year. The average room rate is $177.87 a night. Compared to May last year, in May 2014 total room supply was up 6.8%; demand was up 14.5% and revenue was up 16.6%.

Listening to the Artist-Entrepreneurs in the West of Ireland – Susie Monagan opened her presentation by mentioning her interest of creative economy in a rural context. Her Fulbright Grant allowed her to travel to Galway on the west coast of Ireland. Her central research question was "How do artists and entrepreneurs in the west of Ireland's creative enterprises make sense of their role and value their remote location?" The Creative Edge was mentioned as the project she was involved with that focuses on developing creative industries in remote areas and believes that creative industries will have huge growth potential as well as competitiveness to other parts of the world. Their project is funding these initiatives in different countries. Most of the data that Creative Edge looked at were census related and mapping information while Susie focused on speaking with the creative workers. The constant festivals are huge draws in Ireland. Some of the questions that were asked of artist/entrepreneurs about their roles, where they developed their skills and what are some of the opportunities and challenges of being in a rural area. She found that behavior of creative economy actors are not money motivated and are probably more interested in accessible art and social change. The lifestyle and landscape support of the community, fewer distractions, and good talented people to work are some of the positive points of working in a rural area. Challenges of working in rural communities mentioned were isolation, cost of travel, low standards expected, lack of support and or professionalism and immigration due to lack of opportunity. Recommendations made to Ireland were to reframe broader networking and to develop cottage industries. (Susie's presentation is available online: http://prezi.com/t3upkciledmq/stpb-june/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy

CVB Visitors Services Program – Bruce Stoff discussed the national benchmarks and the transparent budget that he and Tom Knipe worked on. The Visitors Center opened in 1985. Room tax was implemented in 1987 which allowed for the move to the current location in 1989. Jodi LaPierre discussed the fulfillment and database management and mentioned the in-house fulfillment rather than the outsourcing that most centers use. Bulk Lead Management, email lists, newsletters, as well as marketing and advertising that include design support and internal marketing. Additional sales support includes research and marketing and design work that is developed to bring people into Tompkins County. Partnerships include Downtown Ithaca Alliance as well as lodging and attraction properties, campus community and the Wayfinding Program. She noted the Hospitality Star Program success of being full for the past 3 years. The CVB has learned that most visitors' centers are located in high traffic areas and feel that the new center at Taughannock Falls will be a good move. 90% of travelers have cellphones and use them when trying to navigate and plan their excursions. One of the goals of the visitors' services team is to streamline communications and create partnerships with social media sites. Bruce noted that although the average county stay is 1.4 nights, groups that visit the visitor's center the average stay is 3.5 nights. Of the surveyed 65 counties in New York State, the majority have agreed that walk in visitors have declined due to the use of cellphones. The visitors centers that are doing well have incorporated technology and or have made their

locations more of a tourist attraction through displays of art and architecture. Discussions centered on the idea of making information available around the clock to visitors and tourists by live agents working from home. The CVB's presentation is available online: http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/files/tourism/CVB%20Visitor%20Services%20Benchmarks%20June%202014.pdf

STPB Budget Committee – Rick Adie reported that the July meeting will be used to vote on the recommended budget. The projection of revenue was informed by a forecast from PKF. The projection of revenue growth is 5% for both 2014 and 2015. The first quarter of 2014 had a decrease from 2013, down 3%, so this will be watched closely. The reserves have been cut down to 3% of revenues. The current reserve is at $45,000 and is expected to grow to $63,000 by the end of the year. The submissions of budget requests came in line with guidance; all programs were asked to decrease their budgets by 3.5%. Tom Knipe highlighted the effort to grow reserves to 3%; $10,000 will need to be taken from revenues. The tourism marketing spending will be allocated to at 60% and the remainder 40% will be used for product development. Responding to STPB guidance from May, the Budget committee has recommended $150,000 for Strategic Tourism implementation. Specific projects have not been identified for 2015 Strategic Tourism Implementation; a process will be identified later this year or early next year and will be guided by the P&E Committee. The County's obligation to TCAD in 2015 is $60,000. The Budget Committee has recommended ACOD Grants, Beautification, Tourism Capital Grants, CAP, CVB and Discovery Trail all at the target budgets. A small amount of funding above the targets of about $11,000 will allow these programs to stay at flat funding: Community Celebrations, Tourism Project Grants, Hospitality Workforce Investment and New Tourism Initiative Grants. More support was recommended for the County Historian, to $7,500 from the current $5,500. An allocation of $900 was recommended for Board Development, which will be administered through the County Planning Department.

Comments on Recently Attended Events – Ian Golden reported that the Cayuga Trails 50 was a successful event with a turnout of about 350 and an average of 3 room night stays. He noted the trails endured minimal impact and hopes to keep the event running yearly. Gary Ferguson praised Ian for having the registrations downtown and promoting potential multi day experiences.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:04pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Turner, Administrative Assistant
Tompkins County Planning Department

Next Meeting Scheduled
Wednesday, July 16, 2014

DRAFT

Remembering Stuart Stein
Founder of the Tompkins County Tourism Program
by Scott Wiggins, 7/11/14

Stuart Stein was an amazing visionary and team leader for what is today a robust and extensive tourism program in Tompkins County.

I first met Stu when the STPB was being formed…and I had applied to be a board member and in my enthusiasm, started meeting with CVB staff to get up to speed. Stu explained to me he wasn't certain he wanted me on the board and it was inappropriate for me to be meeting with CVB staff. When I did get appointed to the first board – I expected to find a difficult person leading the group in the form of Stu Stein.

What I found was much the opposite…….a thoughtful, caring visionary who clearly saw that tourism and the room tax could enhance both the economy and the quality of life for residents. A program that would not only put heads in beds, but also butts in theatre and restaurant seats. Stu's encouragement of tourism development grant programs for not-for-profits in the early years of the program were unique to room tax programs, and set the stage for a major expansion of the uses of room tax funds.

When Stu first proposed adding an additional 2% to the room tax to support product development, my constituency – the innkeepers – were strongly opposed. Increases in taxes always depressed prices, and this was going to be the beginning of a slippery slope. But Stu's ideas and enthusiasm and perseverance quickly transformed my thinking – and many others – to the benefits of a more robust tourism product. And what an amazingly rich and comprehensive room tax program we have today. Business is healthy for tourism businesses of all types, and the range of tourism grant programs that benefit our community are inspiring – beautification grants, capital grants, stabilization grants, development grants, new tourism initiative grants, marketing grants, festival grants, workforce development grants – have all grown from Stu's ideas of what a tourism program could be.

Thank you Stu – for your vision, your leadership, your wisdom, and your persistence. Our entire community is a richer, better place because Stuart Stein chose to get involved.
……Scott Wiggins

<u>Stuart Stein and the Tompkins County Tourism Program</u>

- Tompkins County Legislature – 1982-2001. Legislature Chair 1994-1996. Spearheaded establishment of the room occupancy tax in 1986, and led the growth of the program in 1989 and again in 2001 when the tax was increased from 3% to 5%. Author of the white paper establishing Arts & Culture Stabilization Grants, Beautification Program, Tourism Capital Grants.
- STPB Member 13 years, 12/4/2001 – 12/31/2013. Board chair for several years and Chair of the Planning & Evaluation and Festivals Committees.
- 2014 – Founding chair of the STPB Heritage Tourism Task Force

July 9, 2014

2014 First and Second Quarter Report to the Tompkins County Tourism Program

Marketing Update
This spring we started work on planning a mobile responsive design overhaul to our website. Since our last website update the majority of visitors now use a mobile device and we determined that it was high priority for our site to function properly with the many mobile platforms. The updated site went live the first week of June.

Our What's Hot campaign continues to highlights two specific events or exhibitions at one of our eight sites each month. Our Facebook page cover image reflects the current feature and our website What's Hot sunburst on the home page and top banner directs viewers to a specific feature page which also lists previous features from 2013 and 2014. Our CVB feature listing is updated to reflect the What's Hot item.

Brochures are being distributed through Brochures Unlimited, Grapevine Distribution, Ithaca Mall, Preble Visitors Info Center on Rt 81, the 1,000 Islands International Tourism Council and I-86 Visitor Center on Chautauqua Lake.

Cayuga Wine Trail, CVB and Fingerlakes Tourism Alliance brochure exchanges were attended in May.

Discovery Trail goodie bags were hand delivered to front end hotel staff at the new properties on route 13 to help promote guest referrals.

Recent press includes an Ithaca Times: Family Matters story on what to do with your children on the Discovery Trail during the summer with a Lab of O photo. DT sites were included in the CVB's Star Hospitality program and familiarization tours in June.

We were featured on the June 26 WBNG Action News segment and are in the process of finalizing a commercial promo that will run for the summer months.

Print promotion in select out of area markets plus select regional travel publications include: CVB Travel Guide and Winter Recess program, Edible Fingerlakes, Fingerlakes Tourism Alliance Travel Guide, Ithaca Child and Ithaca Times spring travel guide. The Discovery Trail continues the joint map printing with the Ithaca Downtown Alliance and is noted in their quarterly Dining-Shopping-Events guides.

Web ads/banners are featured on Edible Fingerlakes, FingerLakes Tourism Alliance (FLTA), Ithaca Child and Visithaca.com and weekly event listings on Edible, Facebook, FLTA and Life in the Fingerlakes.

Our marketing committee met on March 4 and meets next on July 9.

Financial Update:
Tompkins County Tourism Program has paid the Discovery Trail a total of $18,680.00, two installments out of four, for 2014. Please reference the attached spreadsheet for the financial reporting.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Grossman
Discovery Trail Coordinator

Tompkins County Tourism Program

Quarter 1 and 2 - 2014 Financial Reporting for the Discovery Trail

7/10/2014

		Actual
Q1 payment	$	9,340.00
Q2 payment	$	9,340.00
Total available funds	$	18,680.00
Advertising - FLTA web banner	$	770.00
Brochure distribution (including shipping)	$	5,100.00
Coordinator	$	5,125.00
Website - domain & hosting	$	475.00
Website - mobile redesign project	$	7,260.00
Total spent	$	18,730.00
Balance	$	(50.00)

CVB Report
June 2014

STR County Tourism Numbers YTD
The local lodging industry ticked upward in May, turning annual revenue strongly positive, year-to-date. Here are the May numbers from Smith Travel Research (STR).

Occupancy:	63.2%, +7.2%
Ave. Daily Rate:	$177.87, +1.8%
RevPar:	$112.35, +9.1%
Supply:	+6.9%
Demand:	+14.5%
Revenue:	$5.76m, +16.6%
YTD Revenue:	$18.57m +7.3%

CVB Dashboard
Visitor Information Services-June 2014
Both Visitor Centers are bucking the recent trends!
DVC: 1810 +50% over 2013
ESD: 1105 +13% over 2013

VisitIthaca.com Stats:
January 1st 2014 – July 1st 2014:
Desktop – 47,752 unique hits +32% over 2013/243,737 pageviews +31%
Mobile – 10,148 unique hits +74% over 2013/66,102 pageviews +52%

Facebook (as of 7/9/14):
17,095 likes

Group Sales Activity – June 2014

Leads Distributed	5
Sales Kits Distributed	46
Prospects Generated	15
Prospects converted to Leads	5
Groups Assisted/Serviced	9
Site Visits Conducted	1

Lead sent	Event account	Event status	Event start	Event end	Total Requested Room Nights	Multiplier	Economic Impact	Source
6/3/2014	MACLAS Conference 2015	Booked	4/16/2015	4/18/2015	120	260	$31,200.00	Accommodation Referral
6/16/2014	Aurora Consortium Fall Meeting	Lead	10/6/2014	10/9/2014	85	260	$22,100.00	CVB Generated
6/24/2014	Boyes-Mrozinski Wedding	Lead	6/26/2015	6/28/2015	60	353	$21,180.00	Local Referral
6/25/2014	Can You Canoe Cayuga	Lead	9/5/2014	9/7/2014	60	250	$15,000.00	Local Referral
6/26/2014	Men's Hockey Room Block	Lead	10/25/2014	10/26/2014	16	250	$4,000.00	Accommodation Referral

CVB 2015 Budget Accepted
The STPB Budget Committee accepted the proposed Tourism Budget which contained a requested 3.5 percent across-the-board spending cut for all programs, including CVB. As previously discussed, this will not adversely affect CVB operations due to cost-savings implemented earlier in 2013 and 2014. The downside is we won't be able to reinvest those cost savings in additional marketing, as we had hoped.

STPB Visitor Services Benchmarking Report
In May CVB staff was asked by STPB to create a benchmark report on our visitor services department. We presume the request was due to:

1. Our visitor center traffic is declining without a commensurate reduction in costs.
2. Our plan to open a small satellite visitor center at Taughannock Falls in 2015.
3. Our plan to increase visitor center outreach via technology

We presented the report to STPB this month. Interesting findings:

- We spend four times more on visitor services than the national average, $2.75 vs $11.50
- Our visitor services department does much more than national and statewide peers due to requirements of the community and the county tourism plan
- Visitor centers statewide are losing foot traffic due to adoption of smartphones
- There are no national benchmarks of ROI on visitor services, however, we discovered in the raw data of the Chmura Study that visitors surveyed at the CVB spend 3.5 nights in county vs 1.4 nights for those surveyed elsewhere.

The full report is available on the STPB's web page:
http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/board

CVB Evaluation Program
In mid-June, CVB staff completed an in-depth departmental analysis and evaluation program with Cornell Cooperative Extension. The evaluation program, conducted at the behest of STPB, is intended to identify performance goals and metrics to use in the annual budgeting process. Current goals and metrics are somewhat arbitrary. STPB's Planning and Evaluation Committee will review program findings over the summer.

The evaluation program, which is partly designed to serve as a model for other room tax funded programs, will identify evaluation questions, performance measures, and agreed upon methods of collecting and reporting evaluation information. It will be used by CVB staff internally as well as for use in reporting to the STPB and other stakeholders. Over the summer the STPB Planning and Evaluation Committee will review a draft of logic models and pathway models along with proposed evaluation questions and measures for each of the CVB's core programs – visitor services, group sales, and marketing. The goal is to implement the new evaluation plan and reporting beginning in January 2015.

Group Sales: Meetings & Conventions: We continue to face customer objections based on price and facilities and look forward to a new conference center hotel in the market in the near future. In the meantime, the sales staff reported a major success in May landing the 2015 International Food Security Conference. This event will bring 500-

700 attendees to Cornell for four nights during fall break, 2015. Economic Impact from this event is roughly $500,000 with $15,000 in room tax. It is safe to say that this event would not have come to Tompkins County without Sales Director Mary Rachun who put together the winning bid, beating out Columbia and Princeton. The sales department has also over-delivered on sales prospecting, generating 50 leads for hotel room-blocks in 2014 VS 22 in 2013.

Marketing YTD

Advertising: We made a dramatic shift in advertising this year, moving almost exclusively to online banners and videos from a mix of legacy print and broadcast. We did it for affordability, trackability and because 90 percent of consumers use the web for travel information. Our first integrated online effort is a campaign designed to call attention to the county's key attributes (waterfalls, campuses, downtown & dining) with a specific call to action to stay midweek. The campaign started last week on June 3rd. We are planning to invest $50,000 in the effort this summer and will be able to report hard numbers on impressions, clicks and ultimately room bookings.

Travel Guides: We're a bit concerned that the new, smaller travel guide is too good. Though we increased the print run from 80,000 to 100,000 this year anticipating increased demand, it might not have been enough. Roughly 45,000 copies remain in stock. Typically, this is the inventory level we have in August, however we have invested in several new low-cost distribution channels, requiring bulk numbers of guides We may explore a second printing, if we have advertiser support.

Websites: We're launching a major rebuilt of Visitithaca.com this fall. Included is a rebuild of our mobile site, our retail sales site and IthacaEvents.com which we will take over from CAP.

NYS Governor's Tourism Summit

Mary Rachun attended, May 14. The governor announced new initiatives including a program linking NYC & Co. to upstate locations to encourage visitor travel to the rest of the state. The event also included an appointment-based sales component with international tour operators. We're talking to NYC & Co. to see how we can get involved. The Tourism Summit report includes detailed statewide tourism statistics along with an in depth report on ILNY marketing plans. The report is online here: http://fallgetaways.iloveny.com/psa/NYS-TOURISM-eSUMMIT-2014.pdf

REDC Mobile Tech Initiative Grant

The CVB filed a $40,000 grant request with the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) to fund phase-one research and development of a "mobile technology initiative." The initiative will explore ways to maximize interaction with visitors via their mobile phones. While this is the most significant technological change in the travel industry, we found no NYS CVB adapting its workforce, workspace and workplace tools to capitalize on the new technology. If funded, Ithaca will be a national leader in the area. Related, we are also working with Cornell's Design-User Experience-Technology (DUET) Research Lab to explore ways to reimagine the visitor center space to take advantage of new technology.

PR: National Culinary Review, Mayor's Splashdown,
Three solid PR hits in the past month.

National Culinary Review, a trade publication for professional chefs, ran a feature article on Hazelnut Kitchen. http://ge.tt/2PjNrok1/v/0?c CVB coordinated the coverage with Quinn PR.

Mayor Svante Myrick opened the 2014 waterfall swimming season with a ceremonial cannonball at Treman State Park. While the media event was overshadowed by the Simeon's tragedy, it provided a welcome distraction from the news while attracting a sizable social media audience. Thus far, the event has seen the most response on Facebook, with 8178 overall impressions and a combined 1814 likes, as well as 156 shares. Twitter response has been very positive as well, with 201 tweets and retweets. Overall, the campaign has generated 15,000 views at a cost of $355.

Outside "Best Town" Marketing coordinator Cassie Jenis and Visitor Services Manager Jodi LaPierre coordinated a major social media push in support of Ithaca in Outside magazine's "Best Town" competition. Ithaca lost in the final four but the PR results were still spectacular, yielding an estimated audience of 1+ million viewers. The largest hit to come from this is the Outside Magazine online feature (1,011,777 impressions), "Voters' Choice: The 4 Best Towns in America," with a full pint feature to follow in Outside Magazine's Best Towns issue, on newsstands in September, 2014 (2,025,000 impressions). Cassie's report is below:

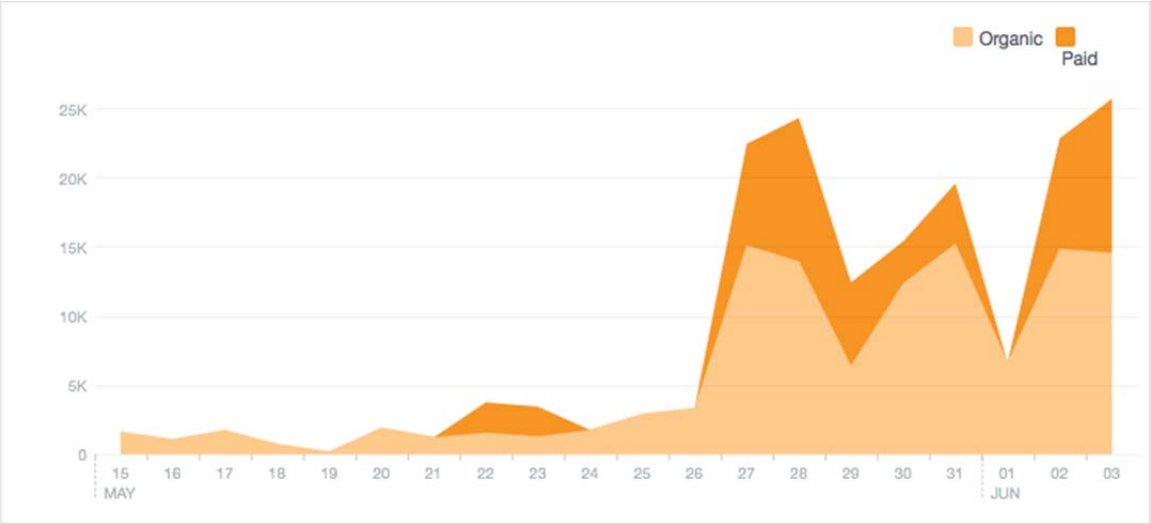
Outside Magazine's Best Place to Live Contest Results

Overview

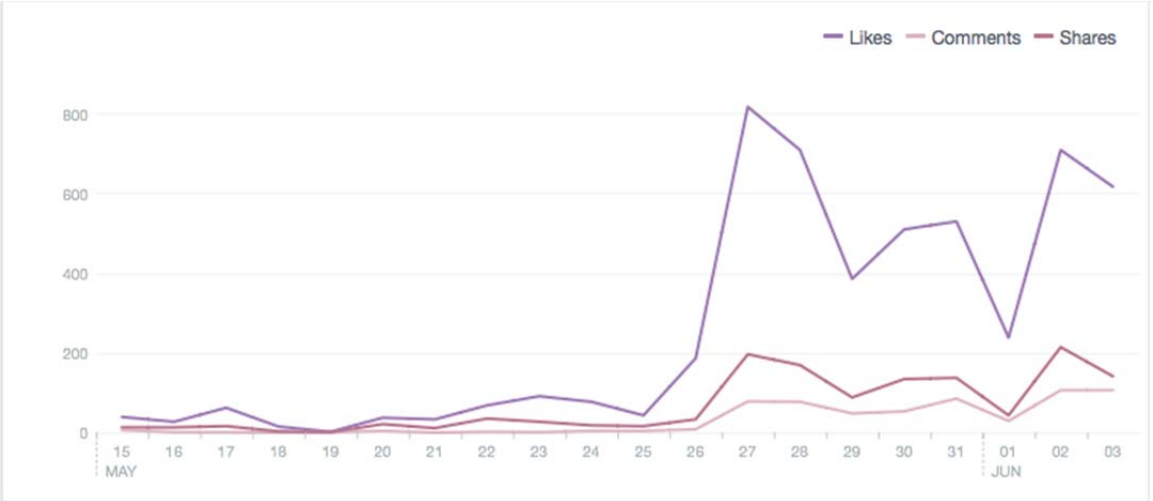
The Outside Magazine Best Towns Contest only cost the CVB $335 and 15 hours of work, yet the promotion yielded incredible results in both local markets and markets all over the US.

Facebook

Ithaca was in the contest from May 15th to June 3rd. In that time period, the CVB saw a significant increase in the use and interest in our social media, especially from Facebook. The CVB Facebook page gained 933 new followers, bringing the total to 16,361.



Post Reach- The number of people the post was served to.



Likes, Comments, and Shares

Twitter

The CVB Twitter page also saw an increase. The contest was shared on Twitter well over 50 times by both Ithaca businesses and locals and places like I Love NY and CNY central. In sum, the CVB gained 46 new Twitter followers, bringing the total to 637.

News

5 local news outlets wrote articles about the contest including:
CNY Central
14850 Today
Ithaca Journal
Press Connects
WENY

Both Ithaca Journal and 14850 Today wrote about the contest more than once.

http://www.cnycentral.com/news/story.aspx?id=1054959#.U58YeV6laCg

http://today.14850.com/stories/06042-outside-ithaca

http://www.ithacajournal.com/article/20140605/NEWS01/306050077/Ithaca-Outside-s-final-four

http://www.pressconnects.com/article/20140530/NEWS01/305300052/Ithaca-advances-best-town-contest

http://www.weny.com/news/All/ithaca-moves-to-2nd-round-052314

However, with 64 different towns in the original contest, countless articles were written about the bracket that mentioned Ithaca in some capacity, especially from direct competitors like Provo, UT, and Burlington, VT.

Reach

During the entire contest span, there were 2,242,987 votes, with 86,418 total votes for Ithaca. Even accounting for repeat voters, there were several hundred thousand people aware of Ithaca's presence in the contest.

Looking just at post views from Facebook alone, there were an estimated 304,763 individuals who saw contest promotions. The posts on the CVB page alone were shared and liked a combined 10,895 times.

Twitter is more difficult to track, as it doesn't use an in-site analytics system like Facebook, but with over 50 shares from the CVB twitter posts alone and considering the multiple contest tweets from local individuals and businesses, one can assume a lowball estimate of at least 5,000 views.

Finally, looking at the local press that covered the story one can see a huge jump in the amount of press that the story received. The biggest station on the list, CNY Central, has an estimated 80,000 hits a day on their website. WENY has 17,950 viewers per day, 18,000 daily website hits and 44,000 Facebook likes.

Considering all these numbers and the numerous posts, articles, and press given to Ithaca offhand by the other competitors in the contest, the estimated total reach from the contest is near a million views.

Tompkins County

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

121 East Court Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

Edward C. Marx, AICP
Commissioner of Planning
and Community Sustainability

Telephone (607) 274-5560
Fax (607) 274-5578

TO: Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)

FROM: Tom Knipe, Senior Planner / Tourism Coordinator

DATE: July 11, 2014

RE: **Recommended 2015 Tourism Program Budget**

Action Requested
The purpose of this memo is to describe the recommended 2015 Tompkins County Tourism Program budget and the process used to develop it. The STPB is asked to vote on a recommended 2015 Tourism Program budget at your July 16th meeting.

Link: 2015 tourism budget requests are available through the following page on the County website: http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/budget/2015requests

Background – Revenues
Between April and June, the STPB Budget Committee developed preliminary projections of 2014 and 2015 room tax revenues and associated changes in room tax reserves, with input from tourism program administrators and lodging industry experts. 2014 members of the STPB Budget Committee are Rick Adie (Chair), Christy Agnese, Stephen Nunley, Sue Perlgut and Sue Stafford. We are currently maintaining a projection of 5% growth for 2014 and establishing a projection of 5% growth for 2015, using actual 2013 revenues as a base.

2014 and 2015 room tax revenue projections are based on analysis of several sources including Tompkins County room tax revenues to date, local hotel industry data from Smith Travel Research, projected increases in local room supply due to hotel construction, other local conditions, and national industry forecasts by a prominent hotel industry research firm. Detailed calculations of the unallocated reserve balance and revenue projections are available upon request.

First quarter 2014 room tax revenues showed a decrease of 3% from the first quarter of 2013. County Finance has not yet delivered second quarter revenue reports. If second quarter revenues are also weaker than anticipated, these preliminary budget recommendations may need to be revisited. We expect to have second quarter results available before the 7/17 meeting when STPB will be asked to vote on a recommended budget.

Background - Reserves
The current unallocated reserve balance is just over $45,000 (from County Finance). This is after meeting the County's 2014 obligation of $150,000 to TCAD from room tax. The unallocated reserve balance is expected to grow to nearly $63,000 by the end of 2014. This anticipated growth in the reserve balance is mostly due to the elimination of the Ticket Center expense in 2014. The recommended 2015 budget places spending at about $10,000 less than revenues in order to add this amount to unallocated reserves. This would grow projected unallocated room tax reserves to about $73,000 by the end of 2015, which is 3.1% of revenues. This will meet a goal of keeping reserves above 3%.

Budget Request Process
The Tompkins County Tourism Program solicited budget requests from tourism programs and heard presentations from each program at a May 28th meeting at TC3 Tioga Place. All STPB Budget Committee members were present. Program administrators and committee chairs were asked to limit their 2015 requests to a 3.5% reduction from their adopted 2014 room tax allocations. All programs responded to the budget target guidance, and each budget request included:

- Standard budget request form and budget worksheet template.
- Information on how the requested budget will support implementation of the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan.
- Clear program goals and measures of achievement.

Following budget presentations, the STPB Budget Committee explored several possible budget schemes, weighed opportunities presented by each program and developed preliminary 2015 budget recommendations.

Outline - 2015 Tourism Budget Recommendations

- The following programs are funded at the target level of -3.5%: Arts & Culture Organizational Development Grants, Beautification, Signage and Public Art; Tourism Capital Grants; Community Arts Partnership General Operating Support and Market the Arts; Festivals Program; CVB; and Discovery Trail.
- Several lines are restored to flat with 2014 levels: Community Celebrations Grants, Tourism Project Grants, Hospitality Workforce Investment, and New Tourism Initiative Grants.
- The Historian stipend is increased to $7,500.
- Two programs requested less than the budget target, in line with anticipated need: Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants and Recognition Awards. These are funded at the requested amounts.
- Funding for the Ticket Center is at zero as the Ticket Center is no longer in operation.
- $150,000 is set aside for Strategic Tourism Implementation.
- $900 in funding for STPB board development (travel, training, etc) is made available for the first time in 2015. These funds will go through the tourism administration budget within the Planning Department.
- Strategic Planning and Staffing – program funds needed for this function are reduced 1.4% due to expectation of reduced fringe rates and flat salaries. A 75/25 split between program funds and "County 10%" funds to support tourism administration services by the Tompkins County Planning Department is maintained.
- TCAD – The room tax contribution in 2015 is $60,000 and is shown in the "County" section of the tourism budget. It will rise to $125,000 in 2016; $200,000 in 2017; and $205,000 in 2018.

Strategic Tourism Implementation funds
A special budget line is recommended to be funded for Strategic Tourism Implementation. The guiding concept is to set aside a flexible portion of room tax funds to take advantage of timely and meaningful opportunities to implement the 2020 Strategic Tourism Plan. Three projects were funded in 2013 through this line: the IthacaFork.com Farm to Fork Culinary Tourism Initiative, electronic kiosks for the new Ithaca Commons and the Tompkins County Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Plan. There is no funding in 2014 for Strategic Tourism Implementation. 2015 Strategic Tourism Implementation funds are not earmarked for specific projects. A process for award of these funds will be established in late 2014 or early 2015.

Contact Information
Tom Knipe, Tompkins County Planning Department, 607-274-5560
Rick Adie, STPB Chair and Budget Committee Chair, 607-254-2545
Tompkins County Tourism Program website: http://www.tompkins-co.org/tourism/

Attachments:
- Tompkins County Tourism Program Descriptions (one page)
- 2014 Tourism Program Recommended Budget – Summary (one page)
- 2014 Tourism Program Recommended Budget – Detailed (three pages)
- 2001 – 2013 History of Room Tax Revenues and Reserve Balances (one page)

Current Programs

The Tompkins County Tourism Program currently funds the following programs.

Product Development (known as the 40%)

- **Beautification, Signage & Public Art** improve way finding signage to direct travelers to key destinations and beautify communities to welcome visitors, especially at gateways.
- **Arts & Culture Organizational Development Grants** strengthen large existing arts and culture organizations with long term financial planning and development tools.
- **Community Celebrations Grants** support observances, commemorations, jubilations, inaugurations, presentations, or other "red letter days" or salutes that have meaning for the community.
- **Workforce Development/TC3 Customer Service** creates a career ladder for entry-level jobs in the tourism industry and provides training to improve the visitors' experience.
- **Community Arts Partnership – Assistance with CAP Operating Expenses** strengthens the visibility of Tompkins County's thriving arts community.
- **Festivals Program** provides technical assistance, coordination, and resource sharing for local festivals at a macro level to enhance their effectiveness.
- **Tourism Project Grants** support tourism-generating single projects.
- **County Historian** provides a historical connection to today's tourism events and projects.
- **Strategic Planning and Staffing** maximizes tourism program effectiveness and reduces volunteer STPB workload on program administration through sustainable staffing, leadership and research.
- **Tourism Capital Grants** expand major visitor-generating facilities, and fund feasibility studies for potential projects.

Marketing (known as the 60%)

- **Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)** enhances economic development through promotion of local activities and assets to visitors as well as residents. The CVB is the County's designated Tourism Promotion Agency.
- **Tourism Marketing and Advertising Grants** help promote events and projects likely to attract visitors in a manner consistent with the CVB's marketing strategy.
- **Discovery Trail** provides collective marketing for eight local organizations that have a dual mission of education and tourism promotion: PRI- Museum of the Earth, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Cornell Plantations, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cayuga Nature Center, Sciencenter, The History Center, and Tompkins County Public Library.
- **New Tourism Initiative Grants** support significant new tourism generating initiatives that flow from and are consistent with the Strategic Tourism Plan.
- **Market the Arts** collectively markets Tompkins County's artists and features them on one website to allow them to sell their work; includes but is not limited to the members of the Greater Ithaca Art Trail.
- **Tompkins Tourism Partner Award** recognizes volunteer efforts to attract large groups, meetings or conventions to Tompkins County.

Government Tax Administration

- **County 10%** NYS law permits the County to retain 10% of room tax collections for administration and auditing of room tax funds.

2015 Tompkins County Tourism Program Budget - Preliminary Recommendation

Summary--Room Tax Budget, 2011-2015 Recommended

	2011 Modified	2012 Modified	2013 Modified	2014 Adopted	2014 Modified	2015 Recommend	Change 2014 Adopted to 2015
Expenses							
Product Development	707,886	739,560	774,992	783,649	765,948	742,349	(41,300)
Tourism Marketing	1,068,498	1,073,702	1,101,879	1,134,980	1,134,980	1,094,555	(40,425)
County Allocation/STPB Staffing	224,051	278,058	291,689	306,203	306,203	316,441	10,239
TCAD			-	150,000	150,000	60,000	(90,000)
Strategic Tourism Implementation			147,000	-	-	150,000	150,000
Total	2,000,435	2,091,320	2,315,561	2,374,832	2,357,131	2,363,346	(11,486)
Revenue							
Current Year Collections	1,859,659	2,036,716	2,152,700	2,260,335	2,260,335	2,373,352	113,017
Applied Reserves	140,776	54,604	162,861	114,497	96,796	(10,006)	(124,503)
Total	2,000,435	2,091,320	2,315,561	2,374,832	2,357,131	2,363,346	(11,486)

2015 Tompkins County Tourism Program Budget

STPB Budget Committee Recommendation to STPB - 6/11/14

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT	2011	2012	2013	2014	2014	2014	2015	2015	% Change
	Modified Budget	Modified Budget	Modified Budget	Adopted	Proposed To/From Reserves	Proposed Modified	Requested	Recommended	2014 Adopted to 2015
Function									
Arts and Cultural Organizational Development									
Direct Funding	178,673	178,673	198,210	196,755		196,755			
Program Management (CAP)	22,100	22,100	10,000	10,000		10,000			
Subtotal	200,773	200,773	208,210	206,755	1,899	208,654	199,519	199,519	-3.5%
Beautification, Public Art & Signage									
Direct Funding	124,897	121,009	124,398	128,081		128,081			
Program Management (Chamber)	7,865	8,000	8,200	8,495		8,495			
Subtotal	132,762	129,009	132,598	136,576		136,576	131,796	131,796	-3.5%
Tourism Capital Grants									
Direct Funding	155,456	175,788	187,950	186,493		186,493			
Program Management (TCAD)	17,273	19,532	14,832	20,722		20,722			
Subtotal	172,729	195,320	202,782	207,215	2,155	209,370	199,960	199,962	-3.5%
Community Arts Partnership-Ticket Center	21,755	21,755	21,755	21,755	-21,755	0	0	0	-100.0%
Community Arts Partnership-Operating Asst.	37,000	37,000	38,110	39,250		39,250	37,876	37,876	-3.5%
Community Celebrations	26,600	26,600	35,024	32,548		32,548	31,409	32,548	0.0%
Tourism Project Grants	62,017	69,103	76,013	78,300		78,300	75,560	78,300	0.0%
Festivals	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,750		25,750	24,849	24,849	-3.5%
WIB/TC3 Customer Service Program	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000		30,000	28,950	30,000	0.0%
County Historian	5,000	5,000	5,500	5,500		5,500	5,500	7,500	36.4%
Subtotal	207,372	214,458	231,402	233,103		211,348	204,143	211,073	-9.5%
Grand Total-Product Development	713,636	739,560	774,992	783,649	-17,701	765,948	735,418	742,349	
% of total		40.8%		40.8%		40.3%	40.2%	40.4%	

MARKETING Function	2011 Modified Budget	2012 Modified Budget	2013 Modified Budget	2014 Adopted	2014 Proposed To/From Reserves	2014 Proposed Modified	2015 Requested	2015 Recommended	
Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)									
CVB Tourism Marketing Operations									
Personnel (salaries and fringe)	450,054	436,001	485,203	468,946		468,946			
Supplies and Materials	61,100	65,995	69,075	72,500		72,500			
Downtown Visitor Center Rent	11,000	11,330	11,670	12,020		12,020			
Subtotal	522,154	513,326	565,948	553,466		553,466			
Chamber Support									
Staff	38,630	39,563	36,785	39,426		39,426			
Facilities	85,158	87,199	88,843	90,619		90,619			
Subtotal	123,788	126,762	125,628	130,045		130,045			
Program Costs:									
Marketing	286,000	277,250	270,200	366,250		366,250			
Public Relations	10,200	4,350	16,750	3,000		3,000			
Visitor Services	11,000	11,100	11,500	26,500		26,500			
Group Sales	39,250	38,750	44,250	46,450		46,450			
Subtotal	346,450	331,450	342,700	442,200		442,200			
Gross CVB Budget	992,392	971,538	1,034,276	1,130,711		1,130,711			
Less: Program Revenue/Applied Reserves	109,842	75,750	120,500	168,211		168,211			
Subtotal--CVB Allocation	882,550	895,788	913,776	957,500		957,500	924,000	924,000	-3.5%
Other Marketing Programs									
Marketing and Advertising Grants	50,699	50,699	54,444	52,220		52,220	48,000	48,000	-8.1%
Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance*	11,500	11,500	12,000	0		0	0	0	
New Tourism Initiative Grants	62,015	66,445	73,090	75,300		75,300	72,665	75,300	0.0%
Discovery Trail	35,734	36,270	36,270	37,360		37,360	36,055	36,055	-3.5%
Recognition Awards	0	3,000	2,000	2,000		2,000	1,000	1,000	-50.0%
Market the Arts	10,000	10,000	10,300	10,600		10,600	10,200	10,200	-3.8%
Sub-total Other Marketing	169,948	177,914	188,103	177,480		177,480	167,920	170,555	-3.9%
Grand Total--Tourism Marketing	1,052,498	1,073,702	1,101,879	1,134,980		1,134,980	1,091,920	1,094,555	-3.6%
% of total		59.2%		59.2%		59.7%	59.8%	59.6%	

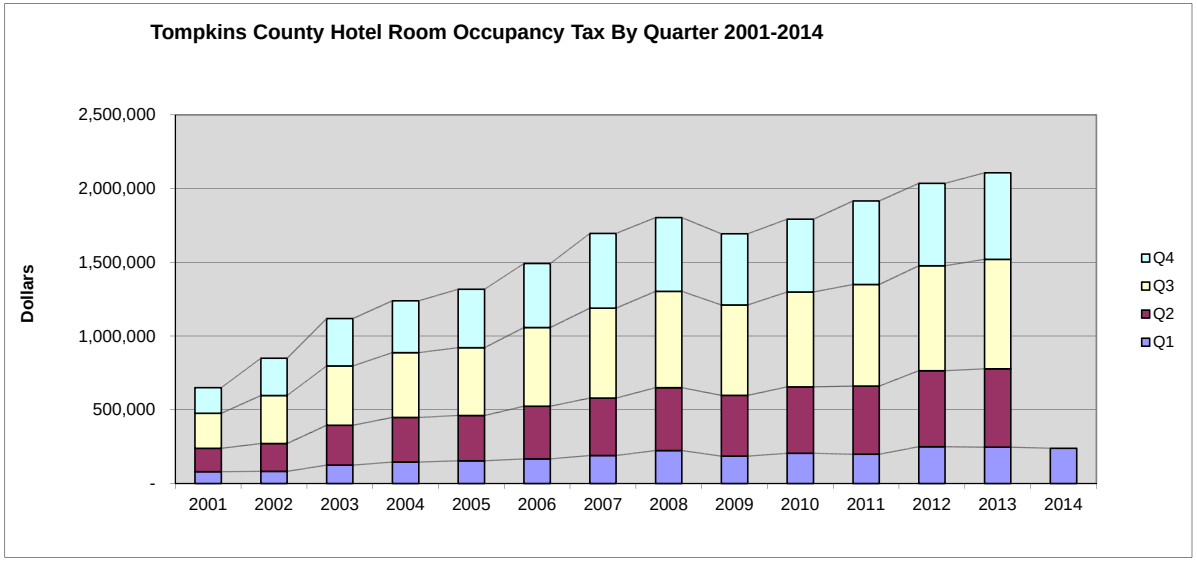
COMBINED PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING	2011 Modified Budget	2012 Modified Budget	2013 Modified Budget	2014 Adopted	2014 Proposed To/From Reserves	2014 Proposed Modified	2015 Requested	2015 Recommended	
County									
Countribution to County for programmatic support and tax administration (County 10%)	185,966	203,672	213,855	226,034		226,034	237,335	237,335	5.0%
STBP Staff/Tourism Coordination	43,392	74,386	77,834	80,169		80,169	79,106	79,106	-1.3%
Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD)	0	0	0	150,000		150,000	60,000	60,000	-60.0%
Grant Total-- County	229,358	278,058	291,689	456,203		456,203	376,441	376,441	-17.5%
Strategic Tourism Implementation			147,000	0		0	150,000	150,000	
Product Development and Marketing	1,766,134	1,813,262	1,876,872	1,918,629		1,900,928	1,827,337	1,836,904	-4.3%
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,995,492	2,091,320	2,315,561	2,374,832		2,357,131	2,353,779	2,363,346	-0.5%
REVENUES AND RESERVES									
Projected Room Tax Revenues	1,859,659	2,036,716	2,152,700	2,260,335		2,260,335	2,373,352	2,373,352	5.0%
Projected Use of Reserves		54,604	162,861	114,497		96,796	-19,573	-10,006	
Total Budget Available to County and Programs		2,091,320	2,315,561	2,374,832		2,357,131	2,353,779	2,363,346	-0.5%
Unallocated Reserve Balance (From County Finance)			Balance 1/1/13	Balance 4/25/14					
Projected Year-End Unallocated Reserve Balance		251,111	156,276	45,162		62,863	82,436	72,869	
% of revenues		12.3%	7.3%	2.0%		2.8%	3.5%	3.1%	

* 2013 and prior, FLTA included as revenue line in CVB budget; beginning in 2014, all regional cooperative marketing (including FLTA) is directly in the CVB budget.

**A negative number in this line represents putting that amount back into reserves from current year's revenues.

Tompkins County Hotel Room Occupancy Tax Revenues 2001-2014

Quarter	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Delta 13-14
Q1	80,227	82,981	125,579	146,117	154,478	166,984	190,237	224,245	185,733	205,629	198,559	249,508	246,795	239,394	-3.00%
Q2	159,057	188,101	269,348	302,502	306,373	357,732	389,309	425,802	411,982	450,117	462,564	515,379	530,995		
Q3	237,120	325,523	402,308	439,543	459,899	532,705	609,916	652,904	613,173	642,496	688,976	712,305	742,300		
Q4	173,243	252,605	321,522	350,683	396,604	434,023	506,389	500,553	482,818	493,815	566,231	558,170	586,547		
TOTAL	649,646	849,209	1,118,757	1,238,845	1,317,354	1,491,443	1,695,852	1,803,504	1,693,706	1,792,057	1,916,329	2,035,361	2,106,637		
ADDITIONAL TAX COLLECTED DURING QUARTER (i.e.NOT FOR CURRENT QUARTER)	12,651	1,268	18,028	1,107	28,210	32,791	42,400	-8,616	(22,625)	-8,759	5,102	45,069	42,079		
TOTAL Revenue	662,297	850,477	1,136,784	1,239,952	1,345,564	1,524,234	1,738,251	1,794,887	1,671,081	1,783,299	1,921,431	2,080,430	2,148,716		
Budgeted Revenue	617,850	683,300	1,115,530	1,220,000	1,349,200	1,328,865	1,461,752	1,773,138	1,552,161	1,700,000	1,859,659	2,036,716	2,138,552		
												Modified '13	2,152,700		
INTO RESERVES (Actual revenue less budgeted revenue; does not include expenditure side)	44,447	167,177	21,254	19,952	(3,636)	195,369	276,499	21,749	118,920	83,299	61,772	43,714	(3,984)		
Reserve Balance (Reserve balances from County CFO)	12/31/2001	12/31/2002	12/31/2003	12/31/2004	12/31/2005	12/31/2006	12/31/2007	12/31/2008	12/31/2009	12/31/2010	8/3/2011	4/27/2012	1/1/2013	4/1/2014	
	97,973	275,409	408,360	239,978	389,484	332,253	643,291	434,692	384,202	252,411	186,228	165,892	156,000	45,162	



Prepared by tknipe@tompkins-co.org, 6/13/2014