

ALLEGANY COUNTY
STRATEGIC TOURISM MARKETING
PLAN

JULY 17, 2007

PREPARED FOR

THE ALLEGANY COUNTY OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT

BY

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I. OVERVIEW

In November 2006, the Allegany County Office of Development issued a request for proposals from planning consultants for assistance to prepare a County strategic tourism marketing plan. The Allegany County Office of Development conducted a pre-proposal conference on December 18, 2006 to provide additional background information and to answer any questions planning consultants had regarding the request for proposals. John Foels, Director of the Allegany County Office of Development, Charles Kalthoff, Director of ACCORD, and Wendall Brown, Executive Director of the Friendship Empire Zone represented Allegany County at the pre-proposal conference. Following the receipt of proposals on January, 12, 2007, the Allegany County Office of Development selected Stuart I. Brown Associates, Inc. to assist Allegany County in developing the marketing strategy.

Two significant events had occurred in the region which precipitated Allegany County's decision to prepare a strategic tourism marketing plan. One event was the upgrading of the Southern Tier Expressway a/k/a NYS Route 17 to Interstate Highway status. The upgraded highway has been designated as Interstate 86 (I-86). I-86 runs east and west through the middle of Allegany County. By the end of 2006, the highway had been upgraded between Erie, Pennsylvania to the west and the City of Corning to the east. When fully completed, I-86 will extend to the segment of Interstate I-84 at Middletown, NY connecting to the New York State Thruway that runs between the City of Albany and New York City. I-86 will also link to I-88 and I-85 in the vicinity of Binghamton, New York. The second event was the construction of a gambling casino and resort hotel at Salamanca, New York. Salamanca is located within the I-86 corridor in neighboring Cattaraugus County, approximately 30 miles west of the Allegany County border.

The construction of the casino / resort hotel and the conversion of the Southern Tier Expressway to an Interstate Highway is expected to bring much higher volumes of motor vehicle traffic through Allegany County along I-86. The anticipated increase in traffic along with the fact that there are six (6) I-86 interchanges in Allegany County was viewed by County officials as a tourism marketing opportunity. The additional volume of traffic provides the opportunity for the County to attract more motorists off the Interstate Highway and into the business districts of Allegany County villages. The hope is that motorists drawn from I-86 will stop and spend time touring the County and patronizing Allegany County businesses increasing county sales and bed tax revenues. To achieve this end, two things must occur. One, motorists must be attracted off the Interstate Highway so they will at least temporarily stop their journeys, and two, after motorists stop in Allegany County they must be lured along the byways into the "Main Street" business districts within the County.

II. PLANNING METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to prepare this strategy involved the following activities and steps.

1. Public focus group meetings were conducted to brainstorm potential ideas and suggestions to market Allegany County attractions.
2. Allegany County stakeholders were interviewed to obtain their thoughts, insights, ideas and suggestions for marketing the County.
3. Existing plans, strategies, studies, and reports were reviewed to identify information that that would be appropriate to incorporate into the marketing strategy as well as to ensure that the recommendations formulated for the marketing strategy would be consistent with goals, recommendations and strategies contained in these various documents.
4. The consultant conducted independent research on matters and topics germane to marketing in Allegany County, including identifying strategies used elsewhere.

A Steering Committee was established to guide the project. The Steering Committee was comprised of John Foels, Charles Kalthoff, Wendall Brown, all previously identified, and Gretchen Hanchett, Business and Community Development Director for the ACCORD Corporation.

III. PUBLIC FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

A series of three (3) public focus group meetings were conducted on consecutive Saturdays during March 2007. The dates were March 17th, 24th and 31st. Saturdays were selected in order to facilitate increased public participation. Newspaper display advertisements were placed in the *Wellsville Daily Reporter* and *the Cuba Patriot and Free Press* to invite business owners and operators as well as members of the public to attend. Notices were mailed to members of the Allegany County Board of Legislators, the Allegany County Planning Board and the Board of Directors of the Allegany County Industrial Development Authority. In addition, notices were mailed via postal mail or electronic mail to the mayors and clerk-treasurers of each village and the supervisors and clerks of each town. These local government officials were requested to post the notice in their respective town and village halls and to distribute the notice to the members of their respective governmental boards and committees. Several business owners were also requested to post the notice in high traffic areas within the County.

The meetings were held at the Crossroads Commerce and Conference Center which houses the Allegany County Office of Development and the offices of the Friendship Enterprise Zone. This location was selected for three reasons. First, it is centrally located in Allegany County near the I-86/Route 19 interchange and, therefore, convenient for participant travel. Second, the facility has a large and comfortable conference room that can accommodate up to 75 people. Third, the

Crossroads Commerce and Conference Center is perceived to be in a “neutral location as it is not located within any village. The concern was that if the meetings were held in any of the villages, the location would not be perceived as neutral and attendance might adversely be affected. It was also decided that Allegany County residents, government officials and business owners and operators from across Allegany County be invited to each focus group meeting, rather than have separate meetings for different geographic areas of the County. This was deemed to be important as Allegany County residents, municipal officials, and businesses owners have nearly no experience working collaboratively with people and organizations outside their respective home communities. Bringing people together from all parts of the County was viewed as an opportunity to initiate collaboration and set the stage for future collaborative action.

The meetings were structured to be progressive, building on the work achieved at each prior meeting. Nineteen people attended the March 17th meeting, 27 attended the March 24th meeting and 21 attended the last meeting on March 31st. At the initial meeting the consultant made a presentation to describe the purpose of the focus group meetings and to describe the planning process. At the beginning of second and third meetings, the consultant briefly presented the same information for the benefit of persons who had not attended the preceding meetings. The results of the prior meetings were summarized as well. During the first and second meeting, the attendees were divided into smaller groups for a portion of the meeting for the purpose of brainstorming and developing ideas and suggestions. After an allotted period of time, the full group was reconvened and each of the smaller groups presented their ideas and suggestions to the group as a whole. This often resulted in group-wide discussions. Appendix A contains meeting minutes that were prepared for each of the focus group meetings.

Although many ideas and suggestions were proffered during the focus group discussions (see Appendix A), five suggestions were made repetitively on a recurring basis indicating that participants viewed these as being of paramount importance. At the end to the final focus group meeting, participants were asked to rank the five recurring suggestions in order of priority. The suggestions and the resulting ranking is as follows:

1. Develop and maintain a high-quality, user-friendly website specifically to market Allegany County.
2. Create a County Events Coordinator position to work with local special events and festival organizers in each Allegany County community to better coordinate, promote and market the events and festivals.
3. Establish a county-wide Chamber of Commerce to serve as a vehicle through which Allegany County businesses and communities can work together in a more organized, coordinated and collaborative manner.
4. Improve marketing signage, attraction signage, roadway directional signage and historic site interpretive signage.
5. Develop a theme and image for Allegany County and incorporate it into a graphic design for use on print materials, signs, the County website and other visual displays

IV. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The Steering Committee provided the consultant with the names of stakeholders to be interviewed. The stakeholders came from various backgrounds representing a broad range of interest. Included were several local business owners as well college professors and officials, realtors, bus tour representatives, and community events organizers. The following list identifies the stakeholders interviewed and their business or organizational affiliation.

<u>Stakeholder Name</u>	<u>Business / Organizational Affiliation</u>
Craig Braack	Allegany County Tourism Director
Steven Havey	Wellsville Area Chamber of Commerce Director
Andrew Glazman	Northern Lights Candle Co. / Wellsville Creative Arts Center
Wendy Skinner	Fountain Art Center
Stephen Walker	Allegany Artisans President
Dr. Michael Doyle	Cattaraugus-Allegany BOCES / Village of Cuba
Lee James	Cuba Chamber of Commerce President
Dr. William Hall	Alfred University, College of Business / County Legislator
Susan Goetschius	Alfred University Communications Department
Denise Garrison	Digitek Advertising
Robert Volk	Tinkertown Hardware (Alfred)
William Schuler	Century 21 Realty Company
Theresa Baker	D&F Travel (bus tours)
Carl Gunther	K Ventures (bus tours)
Bruce Hand	Wellsville Trout Derby
Dr. Shirley Mullen	Houghton College President
Professor Kenneth Bates	Houghton College Business Department
Professor David Huth	Houghton College Communications Department
Wayne MacBeth	Houghton College Marketing Communications

As the stakeholders represented a wide variety of organizations and interests, and as each stakeholder had specific areas of knowledge and expertise, a rigid line of questioning was not used to conduct the interviews. Often stakeholders would broach a topic or respond in a manner that would open up different avenues of questioning. The following summarizes the information obtained during the interviews.

A. Allegany Theme and Image

Allegany County's image and theme need to be based on the abundant natural resources and rural attributes Allegany County has to offer. Hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, hiking, camping, equestrian trail riding, cross-country and down hill skiing opportunities abound. Although the County can boast a reasonably wide range of other types of attractions and events, such as antique shops, museums, artist and artisan galleries, and entertainment venues, they are small attractions and do not exist in sufficient quantities to make Allegany County a vacation destination. The only significant exception may be the campgrounds and hunting lodges in which visitors and the owners of the hunting lodges may stay for a week or two at a time. Any effort to characterize Allegany County as something it is not for tourism promotional purposes will create false expectations and disappoint tourists. This would be counterproductive in the long run and would harm rather than enhance tourism. Disappointed tourists are unlikely to return.

Allegany County's greatest appeal is as a place for weekend getaways principally for people who wish to pursue outdoor recreational activities in a beautiful rural environment or for those who wish to escape the stresses and strains of urban living for a couple of days to quietly poke around in antique shops, artist and artisan studios, have a leisurely meal in a fine restaurant, attend a small-town special event or just drive around viewing spectacularly beautiful Fall foliage. Allegany County's image and theme should revolve around the natural beauty, outdoor recreation and relaxing interludes.

One possible (and compatible) alternative would be to promote Allegany County as an artistic community. Alfred University has a nationally renowned art and ceramic program. A significant number of artists reside and have studios in the Alfred area. In addition, Allegany County is home to approximately 33 artisans, loosely organized as the Allegany Artisans. The Allegany Artisans have and continue to organize an annual artisans' during which time they open their studios to the public. This is a self-guided tour and involves travel throughout the County as the artisans' studios are geographically scattered about the County.

A Belmont based not-for-profit corporation has been recently formed; has acquired the former Belmont Hotel and is actively involved in refurbishing and converting the structure into The Fountain Art Center. Currently, the ground floor houses an artist studio, a small art gallery and a small performance studio. Efforts are currently underway to obtain funding to provide inexpensive apartments on the upper floors for "starving artists" working to establish themselves. Other plans for the building include a coffee house in the former dining room and tavern area and a conference facility in the former banquet hall. The corporation is also exploring the potential to convert the former (and now vacant) Belmont High School into an art gallery/museum with residential apartments on the upper floor.

The recent opening of the Wellsville Creative Arts Center contributes to an artistic theme. The Creative Arts Center is providing an array of art and creative classes for the Allegany County community not heretofore available. In addition, the Creative Arts Center boasts a coffeehouse where nationally known musicians perform weekly providing an eclectic assortment of music likely to appeal to an array of people, young and old. Standing-room-only performances on

Saturday evenings are common occurrences. People from outside the area are very pleasantly surprised to find a cultural and entertainment venue of this caliber in rural Allegany County. The Creative Arts Center has created excitement in the local community.

Alfred University has plans to construct a ceramics museum in 2008. The intent of the University is to capitalize on its nationally known ceramics program and the high volume of tourist traffic visiting the Corning Glass Museum in neighboring Steuben County. Tourists attracted to the Corning Glass Museum will likely also enjoy visiting a ceramics museum “just down the road” from Corning. Tourists from New York City, Philadelphia and other portions of the eastern seaboard use I-86 to travel to Niagara Falls as well as points west, As Alfred is positioned near the I-86 corridor, the museum will be near a route used by many tourists.

Another alternative theme could possibly capitalize on the history of the area and its historic resources. The gracious “painted ladies” (Victorian houses) found lining Main Street in picturesque Angelica “where history lives”, and in Alfred, Cuba and Wellsville coupled with the small museums scattered throughout the County and the antique shops found in Angelica and along “Antique Trail” (County Route 20) could provide the basis for a historical theme with self-guided pedestrian and motorist tours.

B. Absence of a Common Informational and News Medium

One of the greatest problems confronting Allegany County is a lack of a common news and information medium. No one newspaper provides news coverage for the entire County. The *Wellsville Daily*, the only daily newspaper published in Allegany County, has a limited circulation area primarily encompassing the Wellsville area. The *Cuba Patriot and Free Press* and the *Alfred Sun*, are two other newspaper published in Allegany County, but are weekly publications with very limited news coverage. Many residents on the west side of Allegany County rely on the *Olean Times Daily* as the source of their daily news while many residents on the eastern side of the County rely on the *Hornell Evening Tribune*. Although these are daily newspapers, the foci of their coverage are Olean (and Cattaraugus County) and Hornell (and Steuben County) areas. Some news coverage of portions of Allegany County is provided, but is not sufficient to keep Allegany County subscribers informed of all of the news and events occurring within Allegany County. There are two local radio stations in Wellsville serving the entire county, in which provide very little news coverage of local events. There are no television stations in or primarily serving Allegany County. As a consequence, residents of Allegany County are often unaware of events taking place in other parts of the County outside of their home communities. The end result is that Allegany County is fragmented with a lack of cohesiveness and sense of community.

C. County-wide Chamber of Commerce

Several years ago, a former Wellsville Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director initiated an effort to establish a county-wide Chamber of Commerce. The recollections of stakeholders who participated is somewhat inconsistent and varies. Apparently, someone from most, but not all, of the business associations and betterment groups within Allegany County participated to varying degrees in a series of meetings that were held over approximately 12 months to explore

the feasibility of establishing a county-wide Chamber of Commerce. According to information provided by the stakeholders, the businesses associations and betterment groups that participated were quite disparate. Information provided by stakeholders suggests that the meetings were not goal oriented and tended to ramble, which may have been a contributing factor. For whatever the reason or reasons, the effort failed to gain traction and was abandoned after the then Wellsville Chamber of Commerce Executive Director resigned his post and relocated out of Allegany County.

The establishment of a county-wide Chamber of Commerce could offer many benefits to member businesses. Among these, for example, would be reduced product and services costs such as discounted cellular telephone service and shipping rates. Discounted health insurance rates may be available as well. Furthermore, participation of a county-wide Chamber in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce would make a wide variety of on-line training programs available to members. The on-line training is free of charge to members and covers a wide array of topics including, but not limited to: marketing and merchandizing, human resources, taxes, and insurance. The Wellsville Area Chamber of Commerce is affiliated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and currently makes such benefits available to its members. Furthermore, a larger Chamber would have a much larger membership roster and pool of volunteers from which to draw. This would enable the Chamber to undertake many more activities and programs that would benefit members. Most small Chambers are unable to offer a variety of programs due to a lack of resources.

Stakeholders think that if efforts to form a county-wide Chamber of Commerce are to succeed, the following approach needs to be used:

1. The offices of a county-wide Chamber of Commerce need to be located in a neutral location, such as at the Crossroad Conference Center. The fragmentation and lack of cohesion within Allegany County has contributed to jealousy and distrust between and among communities. A neutral location is essential to overcome this obstacle.
2. A county-wide Chamber of Commerce must be perceived by business owners and operators as providing something of value. If business owners do not see any benefit, they will unlikely support the formation of an Allegany County Chamber of Commerce or become members.
3. Chamber meetings need to have the following characteristics in order to maintain member businesses:
 - a. be goal oriented,
 - b. be organized, brief and to the point; the use of meeting agendas is essential,
 - c. not be scheduled too frequently; most business owners have very limited time to spend at meetings,
 - d. be enjoyable and not serious all the time; members are much more likely to attend meetings they enjoy on a regular basis.

D. Small Business Support Through Student Internships and Class Projects

Students attending the colleges located in Allegany County represent under an utilized resource that local business owners and operators could utilize to improve various aspects of their businesses including merchandizing, marketing, accounting, finance and human resource management. The colleges in Allegany County offer degrees in business administration, communications and accounting and finance. Students and their professors are constantly looking for internships in businesses to provide students with real-life business experiences. Student chapters of the American Marketing Association and Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) also exist on at least one college campus. Although students pursuing degrees in business administration and related fields and members of the student chapters of the American Marketing Association and SIFE currently undertake class or chapter projects by assisting local small business owners with various aspects of their businesses, there are many more opportunities for small businesses to participate and benefit.

E. County Special Events Coordinator Position

Stakeholders have expressed support for the creation of a County Special Events Coordinator position. If a Special Events Coordinator position is created, care must be taken in order for it to be successful. Local special events and festival planning committees are unlikely to embrace a County Special Events Coordinator, if they perceive the Coordinator as a threat to their control over their respective special events. Accordingly, the following conditions are essential:

1. The local events planning committees will need to remain intact. Most of the special events planning committees are long-standing committees comprised of many members who have served numerous years. Members have a history of working with each other. Any efforts to restructure these committees will be extremely disruptive and will probably be viewed with resentment if not hostility. This could result in large numbers of members resigning en masse.
2. The local events planning committees must retain control of planning and carrying out their respective events and festivals. The local committees have spent years refining their respective events, making changes to eliminate problems and adding, subtracting and/or modifying features of the events to make them more successful. Local events planning committees will likely resent and resist any efforts by a Special Events Coordinator to make changes to community events.
3. The Special Events Coordinator must be perceived as providing something of value to the local events planning committees. Supplying volunteers to work the special events (if needed) to lighten the duties of the local event planning committees is one measure that would be of value to the local planning committees. Enhanced marketing and promotional campaigns to increase the attendance at and success of the special events would also be of value.

F. Committee of 44

Circa 2000 an informal group comprised of business, educational and governmental leaders was formed calling itself the Committee of 44. The group was formed by the newly retired President of Alfred University in an effort to stem deteriorating economic conditions in Allegany County. In 2001, the Committee of 44 issued a whitepaper enumerating the economic woes of Allegany County and proffering numerous recommendations to turn the economy around. The white paper included several recommendations pertaining to tourism.

According to information provided during the stakeholder interviews, the Committee of 44 initially met monthly. At some point, the leadership often Committee proposed that the Committee should endorse local political candidates. As some members were uncomfortable with this change in direction, internal discord occurred and some members resigned. Sometime thereafter, the retired President of Alfred University relocated out of the area, committee meetings became less frequent, and the Committee becomes more or less dormant. As a consequence, the Committee of 44 has not been a driving force in Allegany County. A remnant of the Committee of 44 remains, however, and there is an effort currently underway to breathe new life into the Committee of 44 so that it will be active once again.

G. The Presence and Role of the Colleges in Allegany County

Each year thousands of parents and other relatives and friends of the students attending Houghton College, Alfred University and the SUNY Technology College at Alfred visit the college campuses. Many prospective students and their parents also visit the campuses each year as do alumni. Many of these visits are not simple day trips, but involve overnight or weekend stays. Despite this large group of visitors, the business community in Allegany County has done little, if anything, to reach out to such visitors to make them feel welcome or to market their goods and services to this “built-in” market segment. As a result visitors with “time and money on their hands” who are looking for things to do while visiting Allegany County are unaware of what Allegany County has to offer. Opportunities to increase tourism revenue are being missed.

Deteriorating buildings and unkempt properties along the access routes to the colleges especially those at or near the gateways of the municipalities in which the colleges are located create a poor first impression of the Allegany County community. This image can cause the parents of prospective students to have second thoughts about spending tens of thousands of dollars sending their children to a collage located in an environment containing blighted and unsightly properties. This makes recruiting students more difficult for the colleges as well.

College officials are receptive to forging relationships with the business community and local governments for efforts that would improve the image of Allegany County and that would increase Allegany County’s hospitality toward the parents of students and other college visitors. Opportunities for other types of collaboration exist. A successful collaboration that took place occurred in Alfred serves as an example of the possibilities. A couple of deteriorating residential properties (single-family homes that had been converted to multiple-family dwellings) were purchased by the Alfred 21st Century Group, a local not-for-profit betterment group. The 21st Century Group collaborated with SUNY college officials to arrange for SUNY vocational-

technology students to rehabilitate the two structures and to restore them to single-family homes. The project had a two fold benefit: (1) it provided the students with a hands-on learning experience and (2) the appearance of the property was greatly improved. After the project was completed, the 21st Century Group sold the houses.

Alfred University, renowned for its ceramics and art program, has plans to construct a ceramics museum on the campus in 2008. Using its reputation and by establishing linkages to the nearby Corning Glass Museum, Alfred University officials hope draw many visitors to the campus in order to showcase the University. A new performing arts theater is also scheduled for construction on the Campus of Alfred University in near future.

The colleges in Allegany County offer a host of cultural and entertainment events which are open to the public. These include musical performances, live theater performances, art exhibits and lecture series. Public attendance at these events is low. The reasons for this are not known, but may be due to a lack of public awareness that the events and exhibits are open to the public. The lack of communications media to keep Allegany County residents informed appears to be a substantial contributing factor. There is potential for incorporating the colleges' cultural and entertainment events into the County's tourism program.

H. Local Betterment Groups

Some of the communities have betterment groups working to improve the appearance of their respective communities. The Alfred 21st Century Group, the most prominent one, was formed in 1989 and incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation. The group was formed in response to physical deterioration within the Village of Alfred. The 21st Century Group has successfully undertaken and completed several improvement projects. The organization's most significant projects include:

- The purchase and rehabilitation of two deteriorated and unsightly multiple-family dwellings near a major gateway into the Village. The structures were refurbished, converted back into single-family homes and sold after the project was completed.
- The installation of decorative community signs with landscaping at the gateways leading into the Village of Alfred and the Hamlets of Alfred Station and Tinkertown.
- The installation of ornamental, pedestrian scale lamps, brickpaver sidewalks and pedestrian benches in the downtown business district of the Village of Alfred.

In addition to undertaking project, the 21st Century Group provides technical advisory services. Advice is available to businesses and homeowners relating to:

- façade improvements,
- selection of paint colors,
- landscaping, and
- sign design.

The 21st Century Group also administers a small revolving loan pool to assist businesses and homeowners to make improvements.

Currently, the 21st Century Group is in the midst of restoring the façade to the Village Hall. Grant funds and donated money have both been used for various projects. Nearly all of the work that has been performed has been carried out by volunteers. The 21st Century Group has a pool of 125 volunteers from which to draw. The following have contributed to the 21st Century Group's success:

- The 21st Century Group is comprised of a broad cross-section of community residents who have much enthusiasm.
- The projects of the 21st Century Group have a high profile that have noticeably improved the appearance of the community.
- A semi-annual newsletter published by the Executive Director and monthly newspaper columns entitled *Around the Corner* keep the 21st Century Group and its project in the public eye.
- Much is done to publicly thank and recognize volunteers in the newsletter and newspaper articles. Many photographs of volunteers as they work on projects are prominently displayed on a bulletin board in a display window in the downtown business district.

I. Lodging in Allegany County

The limited number of lodging rooms in Allegany County deters tourists from overnight stays. At peak times, such as during college graduations (and other significant college events) and during the Wellsville Hot Air Balloon Rally, motels and Bed and Breakfast Inns are filled to capacity. This situation forces many tourists to drive to adjoining counties for lodging or simply to return home. During commencement weekend Alfred University even utilizes its dormitories to lodge the parents of students attending graduation ceremonies due to the shortage of motel lodging.

The limited amount of lodging may account for the lower attendance at the Wellsville Hot Air Balloon Rally on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Attendance is substantially higher on Friday and Saturday evenings. The speculation is this that the limited lodging prevents many visitors from spending the night and attending the morning launches. The limited amount of lodging in Allegany County clearly impedes the County's tourism efforts.

J. Bus Tours

Bus touring companies have a few scheduled stops at locations in Allegany County for their day tours. The clientele for most of the day tours are retired people. Good meals at unique or quaint restaurants and entertainment are the main attractions for the retired bus touring clientele. Most of the retired clientele reside in urban areas and enjoy tours that involve attractions or events different from that to which they are accustomed. One bus touring company has arrangements with an Amish family which provides those touring with a home-cooked meal in

their home. Museums and architecture tours are not popular themes for bus tours. Shopping stops are fine and can be incorporated into the day tours, but the shops must be close together and easily accessible as many of the tourists are elderly and have physical impairments. Bus touring companies are always looking for new and fresh attractions for their tours and would appreciate being informed of new attractions as they are established. The attractions, however, must be of high quality for the bus touring companies to include them in a bus tour itinerary. One bus touring company has actually eliminated tour stops in one Allegany County community citing the increasingly rundown appearance as the reason.

K. Art and Cultural Tourism

Efforts are being made in the Village of Belmont to preserve, refurbish and convert the former Belmont Hotel into an art center. The historic building is listed on the State and Federal Register of Historic Places. A not-for-profit corporation, the Fountain Art Center, was formed for the purpose of purchasing and preserving the former Belmont Hotel. The building is in very poor condition; a portion had to be demolished and repairs to the foundation are needed to make the building structurally sound.

The concept is to establish an art and conference center that will serve as a downtown anchor and bring tourists into the heart of Belmont. The ground floor contains three storefronts which are currently being used; one as an artist studio, one as an art gallery and one as a performance area. The corporation hopes to be able to secure funding to be able to convert the space formerly used for a tavern into a coffeehouse with an artistic theme and the former banquet hall into a conference center. The corporation would also like to convert the upper floors into low rent apartments for use by art students and artists who are attempting to establish themselves. The corporation is also exploring the potential for the former and vacant Belmont Public School building to be rehabilitated and converted to mixed uses including artist studios, residential apartments and possibly offices. The vision is for arts and culture to function as an economic engine in Allegany County with the Torpedo Factory Art Center in Alexandria, serving as its model.

Although the Allegany Artisans offer an annual tour of their studios, there is little interest in establishing a co-operative retail store for selling their products on consignment for several reasons. First, many of the artisans by nature are very independent and are not accustomed to or interested in working with other artisans on a retail business venture. Second, the artisans would rather spend their time in their studios creating products than they would operating a cooperative business. Third, some of the artisans in Allegany County are retired, have pensions and do not rely exclusively or extensively on the income they derive from the sale of their products. Such artisans have less incentive to produce and sell as much art work as would be required if their livelihood depended on it. Fourth, art and artisan cooperative ventures that have been attempted in other places have, with few exceptions, not been successful. Fifth, artists and artisans can sell significantly more of their products at large arts and craft shows in major metropolitan areas than they could sell through a cooperative in Allegany County.

Selling their products on consignment through retail businesses also does not appeal to the Allegany Artisans for at least two reasons. One reason is that, a retail business owner has much more incentive to sell a product he or she has purchased for resale than a product which has been placed in the retail store on consignment. Retail business owners will sell products they have purchased more aggressively rather than products that have been consigned. Two, it is not uncommon for retail business owners to delay paying persons whose products are sold on consignment. Collecting sales revenue from a retail business owner can be difficult and problematic.

L. Quality of Life

In order to attract tourists to Allegany County, it is important to provide a high quality of life for residents. This includes making the individual communities within Allegany County visually attractive and providing residents with an array of artistic, cultural, educational and recreational opportunities. Doing so will engender pride in Allegany County residents, will improve the perception residents have of their communities and themselves and will make Allegany County more attractive to tourists. This would be supported by the pleasing appearance of the communities, as well as the positive attitude exhibited by residents.

M. Advertising and Promotion to Draw Visitors Across the Threshold

Advertising and promotion should be designed to entice tourists to “cross the threshold” into Allegany County. Once they have stopped in the County or have deliberately come to the County for an event or attraction, they may discover something else in Allegany County that appeals to them and, if so, would be more likely to return. It may be very difficult to attract motorists to drive off of I-86 except to refuel and to eat. Most traffic along I-86 is through traffic traveling to destinations outside of Allegany County. These motorists will be more interested in making quick stops for fuel and food than they will be in stopping to tour Allegany County. Once they stop for fuel and/or food, they will have crossed the threshold at which time there will be a brief opportunity to expose them to Allegany County and its attractions.

N. Wellsville Hot Air Balloon Rally

The Balloon Rally which has been staged for 32 years is one of, if not the largest, tourist-drawing special events occurring in Allegany County. The event is held on the third weekend in July, begins Friday evening and ends Sunday afternoon. There are four hot air balloon launches, one Friday evening, another on Saturday morning, a third on Saturday evening and the last on Sunday morning. On Saturday, between the morning and evening launches, the Village of Wellsville holds a Main Street festival on Main Street that involves approximately 100 vendors. Main Street is closed to motor vehicle traffic during the day long event. The New York State Police estimates the combined event attracts 45,000 to 60,000 visitors annually. Balloon Rally sponsors estimate that the event results in approximately \$3 million of sales revenue.

V. EXISTING PLANS, STUDIES, STRATEGIES AND REPORTS

Several existing local, county and regional plans, studies, strategies and reports were identified and reviewed. The purpose of the review was to determine, (1) if the plans contained any information that would be useful in the preparation of this marketing strategy, (2) if any of the previous studies contained any recommendations to this marketing staging, (3) which of these recommendations, of any, had been carried out, and (4) to ensure that the actions recommended in this marketing strategy are compatible with those contained in the existing documents.

The following is a list of the documents that were identified and examined:

1. ***I-86/Rt. 19 Crossroads Market Feasibility Study*** (October 2004) prepared by Carr Marketing Communications, Inc.
2. ***Allegany County Board of Legislators Focus 2004 – A Strategic Planning Document*** (March 2004) prepared by Carr Marketing and Communications, Inc.
3. ***Draft Angelica Comprehensive Plan*** (December 2006)
4. ***Wastewater and Potable Water Service Extension to Belvidere Expansion*** (August 2004) prepared by LaBella Associates, P.C.
- 5.a. ***Map, Plan and Report for Allegany County Crossroads Project Proposed Water District*** (August 2006) prepared by LaBella Associates, P.C.
5. b. ***Map, Plan and Report for Allegany County Crossroads Project Proposed Sewer District*** (August 2006) prepared by LaBella Associates, P.C.
6. ***Canaseraga Watershed Region Eco-Tourism Strategy-Final Report*** (August 2000) prepared by Peter J. Smith and Company, Inc.
7. ***Village of Cuba Strategic Plan for Downtown Revitalization*** prepared by Stuart I. Brown Associates, Inc.(November 2006)
8. ***A Comprehensive Plan for the Town and Village of Alfred Allegany County, New York*** prepared by the Angelica Comprehensive Plan Committee (May 2004 – Not yet adopted)
9. ***Cattaraugus Allegany Workforce Investment Areas 2005-2008 Strategic Plan*** (September 2005) prepared by the Cattaraugus Allegany County Workforce Investment Board
10. ***Regional Economic Development Strategy*** (2006) prepared by Southern Tier West Regional Planning Agency
11. ***Improving the Economic Viability of Allegany County*** (January 2001) – A white paper prepared by the Committee of 44.

12. ***Allegany County HUD Consolidated Plan*** (October 1999) prepared by Joan Sinclair.
13. ***Proposal to Privatize the Allegany County Office of Tourism and Culture*** (undated) prepared by Karen Ash, Mark Christenson, Lee James, Joel Kassirer, Fleurette Pelletier and Sharon Rader.
14. ***Friendship Empire Zone Development Plan*** (July 11, 2007) prepared by Friendship Empire Zone Administrative Board.

Relevant excerpts from the foregoing documents and review comments are provided in Appendix B.

VI. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In order for Allegany County to successfully market itself to tourists, it is essential to consider the extent and quality of existing resources and assets. Existing conditions should also include constraints that will impede efforts to market the County to tourists, but opportunities that can be used to extol Allegany County. The following description of existing conditions is presented to provide the context for the recommended actions.

A. Fragmentation, Lack of County-Wide Cohesion and Identity

Allegany County is rural, sparsely populated and remotely located from urban areas. With a population of just 49,927 (2000 U.S. Census) and a geographical area of 1,034 square miles, the County has a low population density; 45.28 persons per square mile. The County contains 10 small villages geographically dispersed and no cities. The populations of the Villages range from 5,171 to 430. Five of the Villages have populations of less than 1,000.

Most of the Villages in Allegany County cannot be considered “full-service” municipalities as they lack a sufficient number and variety of businesses to meet the needs of residents and visitors. All but the Village of Canaseraga are located in the southern half of the County. Wellsville, in the south central portion of Allegany County, is the largest of the ten villages. Alfred, the second largest Village, with a population of 3,954 is located in eastern Allegany County a short distance from the Steuben County line. Cuba, the third largest Village, with a population of 1,633 is located in western Allegany County near the Cattaraugus County line. The Village of Belmont, the County Seat, is geographically located near the center of Allegany County.

Allegany County lacks a large centrally located municipality to function as a commercial and industrial hub and focal point for the County. Wellsville, a bustling, full-service municipality, has the most significant concentration of retail, commercial and industrial businesses of all the villages in Allegany County. Its location in the southern quadrant of the County, along with limited highway-access, renders it somewhat remote from much of the remainder of the County. Communities in eastern Allegany County fall within the sphere of influence of the City of Hornell in neighboring Steuben County. The Villages of Almond and Alfred which have very limited numbers of small businesses are also closer to the City of Hornell than to Wellsville. Hornell is easily accessible from these two communities, and with a population of 9,019, is nearly twice the size of Wellsville. The concentration of businesses in Hornell serves the Alfred residents from the Almond and Alfred areas. Similarly, the Village of Cuba in western Allegany County is within the zone of influence of the City of Olean in Cattaraugus County a short distance from the Allegany County border. Although Cuba has its own small business district, the City of Olean, with a population of 15,347, is several times larger than Cuba and provides a much larger array of businesses. Olean is easily and quickly accessible from Cuba via I-86. Allegany County residents who travel to Hornell or Olean for shopping, services and entertainment are more likely to identify with those communities than they are with other municipalities in Allegany County.

Three small, local newspapers are published in Allegany County. The *Wellsville Daily Reporter* is the only daily newspaper and has a small circulation area that encompasses the Village of Wellsville and environs. The size of the news staff and the small circulation area limits the ability of the newspaper to provide news coverage on news and events that occur outside of the Wellsville area. The *Cuba Patriot and Free Press* and the *Alfred Sun* are published weekly. Although both weeklies provide some news articles concerning county-wide matters, they predominately provide news and information on the two communities in which they are published.

Many Allegany County residents rely on newspapers published outside of Allegany County for their source of news, the *Olean Times Herald* and the *Hornell Evening Tribune*. Although the *Olean Times Herald* and the *Hornell Evening Tribune* carry some news stories of events in Allegany County, their primary focus is on news centered on Olean and Hornell respectively. As a consequence, Allegany County residents do not have access to a daily newspaper that provides news coverage of all or even most of Allegany County. In addition, there are local radio stations that focus news coverage on Allegany County, however, they cover the local daily police reports and do little reporting of community events. As a result, it is very likely that many County residents are unaware of news and events that occur elsewhere in the County or even in nearby communities.

Telecommunications within Allegany County is problematic due to the fact that the County is divided among three telephone area code service areas. The eastern portion of the County is within the 607 area code service area, the central part of the County is within the 585 area code service area and the western part of the County is within the 716 area code service area. Furthermore no single telephone directory is published that covers the entire County. This situation impedes telephonic communications within Allegany County.

Travel between several Allegany County communities is somewhat constrained by the highway network serving the County and by the topography. Much of Allegany County is comprised of low mountains with steep slopes separated by relatively wide valleys. Many of the State highways that traverse Allegany County are twisting, winding two-lane highways containing numerous curves and steep grades that conform to the hilly topography. Such roadway features restrict the speed and flow of traffic. County and township roads display similar characteristics. The Southern Tier Expressway, formerly NYS Route 17, and now designated as Interstate 86, is the only highway that facilitates quick and easy movement of vehicular traffic within Allegany County. The Villages of Almond, Angelica and Cuba are located along the I-86 corridor, and the Villages of Belmont, and Alfred are a short distance from the Interstate. As such, travel between these communities is relatively easy. Travel within Allegany County on most of the other roadways, however, can be circuitous and slow.

All of the foregoing conditions contribute to a weak social fabric and a lack of identity. Allegany County residents often are unaware of events occurring in other parts of Allegany County and even if they are aware may not be interested in such events as they perceive that they have nothing in common with those who reside elsewhere in the County. Municipalities have little experience collaborating with one another. Business organizations and local events

committees in each Allegany County community rarely, if ever, communicate with their counterparts in other communities, let alone cooperate or collaborate on matters of mutual interest or concern. The absence of communications and cooperation can create an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion which can perpetuate County fragmentation.

B. Lack of a County-Wide Business Network and Association

Only two communities in Allegany County have functioning Chambers of Commerce. These are the Wellsville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Cuba Chamber of Commerce. Other small informal business associations exist in some of the other municipalities, but research indicates that many are not especially active. The small number of businesses in most communities limits their capacity support business associations or Chambers of Commerce. Such business associations rely almost exclusively on volunteers to carry out programs and activities. Even the largest Allegany County business association, the Wellsville Area Chamber of Commerce, employs a staff of just two persons and relies heavily on volunteers. In small business associations with limited members, each member must assume greater responsibility and a heavier workload for any project or activity the business association chooses to undertake. Members can grow weary of constantly being responsible for activities in functions of the association. This can and often does lead to membership “burnout” and may result in members withdrawing from the business association or to a decision by the association to carry few, if any, programs. Allegany County business associations are severely constrained in their ability to provide a meaningful level of programming and services for the benefit of their respective members.

C. Attractions

The research conducted for this strategic marketing plan revealed that tourist attractions in Allegany County are small and geographically dispersed throughout the County. The County does not have a large tourist attraction that serves as a destination for tourists. In addition, the attractions are not sufficiently clustered in a particular area that would form a “critical mass” to function as a destination point. This is not to say that some of the more significant special events, such as the Wellsville Hot Air Balloon Rally, are not significant traffic generators, which attracts 30,000 to 50,000 visitors, although special community events, such as the Balloon Rally, attracts large amounts of visitors, the durations of each event are typically very short, usually a weekend or a few days. The amount of time any single event or festival serves as a traffic generator is very small. Special events can augment, but not serve as the main focus for a sound tourism strategy designed to draw tourists into the County year round.

Outdoor recreation appears to be Allegany County’s strong suit. The large amount of NYS forest land available for hunting, the many hunting camps, the large areas of public fishing access to rivers and streams, the many miles of groomed snowmobile trails, and campgrounds, hiking and bicycling trails, golf courses and a paintball course currently serve as the most significant tourist attractions Allegany County has to offer. Although the number of visitors who travel to Allegany County to pursue one or more of these outdoor recreational pursuits has

not been documented, the combined impact of these attractions is quite large. Many of the visitors who pursue such outdoor recreational activities are likely to return each year and may even visit Allegany County several times during the course of a year to pursue a variety of outdoor recreational activities. Such outdoor recreational attractions, however, are unlikely to draw motorists from I-86 as they pass through Allegany County.

Most of the remainder of attractions in Allegany County (i.e., museums, historical sites, historical architecture, antique shops, specialty shops, and agricultural-tourism attractions) are not only small, but appeal to limited audiences. As the many small attractions are scattered about the County, travel between attractions can consume much of a visitors time as the routing network is not convenient. The annual Allegany Artisans' Tour is a good example of such a concern as visitors who want to visit each artisan's studio will spend most of their day in an automobile if they intend to visit several artisan studios. The extensive travel time between attractions may deter some visitors.

A lack of roadway directional signs and directional signs for attractions impede the travel of tourists who are willing to spend the time required to travel though Allegany County going from one small attraction to another. The lack of directional and roadway identification signage in Allegany County is problematic. Many intersections in Allegany County, especially intersections of County and township roads, lack signs identifying the name of the roadways and directional signs indicating the direction and distance to Allegany County villages, hamlets or major highways. It is not easy for visitors who are not familiar with local roads to navigate through and around Allegany County. It is easy for visitors to become lost or disoriented. The lack of effective signage deters tourism.

D. Advertising and Promotion

Except for the "I Love New York" campaign, which is a regional marketing approach, efforts to advertise and promote Allegany County to tourists are minimal. There are no tourist information centers in Allegany County. The County publishes a very attractive (and award winning) tourist directory. Unfortunately, the directory is not readily available throughout the County where motorists are most likely to stop, such as gas stations, convenience stores and fast food restaurants. It has not been determined if the reason for this is due to a limited supply of tourism guides or if other factors are involved. Although the directory is available at the Crossroads Commerce Center, the facility does not qualify as an official visitor information center and, as a reward, there is no signage on Route 19 or I-86 directing motorists to the Crossroads Commerce Center for information. The tourist directory is also expensive to produce. Focus group meeting participants also pointed out the information contained in the current guide is outdated as some of the business attractions listed had gone out of business after the guide has been printed.

Information regarding some of Allegany County's most significant outdoor recreation attractions are not available at all. For example, focus group participants pointed out that despite the fact that Allegany County has an abundant amount of high-quality groomed snowmobile trails, maps depicting the locations of the trails were not available last year.

No billboard promotional advertising for Allegany County currently along I-86 exists. This may be due to the high cost of such advertising and the lack of a clear message or image.

Although Allegany County government maintains an Internet website to provide information about the County, it is designed exclusively for conveying information about Allegany County governmental operations. It is not designed nor was it intended to serve as an advertising or promotional tool. The Wellsville Area and Cuba Chambers of Commerce maintain websites to promote businesses and events occurring in their respective communities. Some Allegany County municipalities also maintain their own respective websites to provide information about municipal activities as well as local events. Some small businesses and tourist attractions in Allegany County also maintain websites to advertise and promote their business. Overall however, there is no single website for promoting and marketing Allegany County or to serve as a single point of access that provides comprehensive information about attractions, businesses, lodging, community events and festivals.

E. Neglected Marketing Opportunities

Allegany County is a destination point for many visitors who attend local special events and festivals. Among these are: the Wellsville Hot Air Balloon Rally, the Cuba Garlic Festival, Alfred Hot Dog Daze, Rushford Labor Days, Amity Days and Angelica Heritage Days. Although these events draw thousands of visitors into the heart of Allegany County, little, if anything, is done at these special events and festivals to market and promote Allegany County. In addition, there is little effort to cross-promote the County at various events. This represents a significant, but neglected marketing opportunity.

Another neglected market are the parents of college students and alumni who visit Houghton College, SUNY Alfred and Alfred University each year. Parents typically descend on the college campuses in large numbers immediately prior to and following each academic semester or term. This occurs in transporting children to and from school, to visit for commencement, parents' weekend, honors day, the senior art shows, and other occasions. It is also common for parents to make two or three trips each semester or term to visit their children. Significant numbers of alumni also visit the campuses for homecoming and reunion weekends. Parents and alumni will often stay overnight during these visits. Parents and other family members often look for leisure and recreational activities to pursue, yet little or no effort is made to reach out to parents and alumni to market Allegany County attractions and businesses.

As noted previously, Alfred University has plans to construct a ceramic museum on the university campus in 2008. The purpose of the museum is to showcase Alfred University's world renowned ceramics program. University officials intend to capitalize on the many tourists who travel to Corning to visit the Corning Glassworks Museum to its advantage by establishing linkages with this facility. Tourists interested in the glass museum in Corning will likely be interested in visiting a nearby ceramics museum as well. The establishment of the ceramics museum is expected to attract many more visitors to the County and particularly to the Alfred area.

F. Physical Appearance of Communities

The rural, natural features of Allegany County are magnificently beautiful. Mountains, forests, pristine streams and creeks, the brilliance of fall foliage, panoramic vistas, etc. are some of Allegany County's most significant tourist assets. Despite all the natural splendor, visitors are also exposed to unattractive sights. A considerable number of developed properties in the County are unsightly. Some are blighted, others, although not blighted, display evidence of deterioration due to deferred maintenance. Yards may have an unkempt appearance or contain debris and junked cars. In some cases, poverty undoubtedly is the root cause of blighted and unsightly properties, in other cases it may simply be the neglect of the property owners. Such properties, especially along the gateways leading into Allegany County villages where they are highly visible will create a negative perception of Allegany County. One bus tour director stated that his tour buses no longer stops in one of Allegany County's quaint villages due to the extensive deterioration. First impressions are important and unsightly and unkempt properties and structures create the wrong impression if Allegany County hopes to increase tourism.

G. Low Profile along Interstate 86

Allegany County does not present an uninviting profile to motorists traveling along Interstate 86. There is little evidence of commercial development, gas stations, convenience stores, restaurants or motels from the interstate highway at Exit 29 (Friendship), Exit 31 (Angelica), Exit 32 (West Almond) and Exit 33 (Almond). Natural features screen or partially screen nearby development. Motorists are often reluctant to exit at interchanges where services and facilities are not visible from the highway for fear of being delayed due to having to search for needed services. Even when gas stations and hospitality businesses signs are posted along an interstate highway if the businesses or their on-premises signs are not visible from the highway, motorists may be reluctant to stop. The need for visible evidence of facilities is even more important for motorists travelling at night along the Interstate highway.

The areas surrounding Interchanges 28 (Village of Cuba) and 30 (Hamlet of Belvidere) have the highest visibility to passing motorists. Interchange 28, the western most interchange, is actually within the Village of Cuba's corporate boundaries. Fast-food restaurants, gas stations/convenience stores and a motel are located in close proximity to the interchange and the businesses or their on-premises signs are readily visible to motorists on I-86. Interchange 28 is the only illuminated interchange within Allegany County.

Interchange 30 is located in the center of the County. The area surrounding Interchange 30 is flat and visible for a significant distance to motorists traveling in either direction along the Interstate highway. A truck stop with fueling facilities and a restaurant is located at this interchange and its on-premises sign is visible to motorists traveling the interstate highway. The County's Crossroads Commerce and Conference Center, which houses the offices of the Allegany County Office of Development, the Friendship Empire Zone, and the Allegany Tourism Office, is less than 1/4 mile north of this interchange on NYS Route 19. This interchange has the best potential for increasing Allegany County's profile to passing motorists. Accordingly, County officials have been working on plans to extend municipal water and sewer service to this interchange to support the development of hospitality businesses to draw passing motorists from I-86.

H. Organizational Capacity / Limited Resources

In addition to the research involved in the preparation of this marketing strategy, existing plans, studies and reports were reviewed to ensure that the recommendations formulated a part of this plan are compatible and consistent with the recommendations contained in the existing plans and studies. During this review, it was noted that several of the plans and studies contained recommendations for actions, projects or programs that would either directly or indirectly enhance tourism in Allegany County. The research revealed that some of the recommendations were either not implemented or efforts were initially undertaken, but abandoned before implementation had been achieved.

Additional research and stakeholder interviews suggest that the recommendations in earlier plans and studies were not implemented for four reasons, i.e., (1) the lack of an implementation strategy, (2) the lack of organizational capacity, (3) the lack of financial resources, and (4) the lack of accountability. In some cases the steps necessary for implementing recommendations were not identified. In other cases the agencies responsible did not have the knowledge, experience and/or capability to implement the recommendations. Although it appears that all four reasons combined were involved to varying degrees in the failure to implement recommendations, the lack of organizational capacity appeared to be the dominant impediment followed by inadequate financial resources. The agencies and organizations in Allegany County simply have very limited capacity to implement plans and strategies due to inadequate staffing and/or inadequate members and/volunteers.

Allegany County is not a wealthy community. The County government, municipal governments, businesses and business associations have very limited resources. Most governmental organizations and municipalities are small with few employees and staff. Business associations and community organizations comprised of volunteers are also small and have limited resources as well. Despite the best intentions, mobilizing the financial and human resources necessary to carryout planning recommendations can be difficult at best and impossible at worst. This is especially true when each governmental entity, community committee and business association works alone using only its own resources to implement plan recommendations.

VII. MARKETING STRATEGY

The marketing strategy presented in this plan has been formulated taking the foregoing and other current conditions in Allegany County into consideration. Many recommendations have been formulated to address and reduce existing deficiencies and constraints. Others have been formulated to take advantage of existing and anticipated opportunities. Although the marketing strategy has been prepared specifically for the Allegany County Office of Development, the County government, working alone, cannot implement a successful tourism marketing strategy. Many recommendations fall outside the direct authority of Allegany County government. Accordingly, each municipal government, each community betterment committee, each community special events and festival committee, each business association, and individual business owners and operators must become involved and must assume varying degrees of responsibility for implementing the strategy. Extensive collaboration and cooperation will be necessary if the recommended strategy is to succeed.

A. *Improve Communications, Cooperation, County Cohesion and Community Pride*

The following recommendations have been formulated to improve the cohesiveness of County residents so they perceive themselves as members of a larger, county-wide community. The recommendations are designed to: increase communication, to foster cooperation and collaboration within and across Allegany County; communities, generate increased involvement of residents, including students, in community projects; and, to improve the appearance of Allegany County communities and to build community pride. Significant effort needs to be taken to get Allegany County residents involved in their communities and to work together across municipal boundaries. Such measures will help to engender public enthusiasm and community pride.

1. **Establish a county-wide pool of volunteers to provide labor and other types of assistance when needed for special community events and festivals.**

A standing pool of ready volunteers could be assembled for this purpose.

2. **Conduct an annual county-wide recognition dinner to fete volunteers from across the County.**

Efforts should be made to publicize the recognition dinner and the volunteers recognized for their efforts. The press should be invited to attend.

3. **Organize community betterment committees in communities that have none.**

High school students, school student groups and other youth organizations should be recruited to participate in community betterment projects.

4. Conduct an annual county-wide beautification contest similar to the Tidy Town program originating in Australia.

This could be an activity organized and carried out by high school students to channel natural school rivalries and the students' competitive energy into the program. A panel of impartial judges would need to be established to judge the competition. Publicity should be generated to engender community enthusiasm and support for the program.

5. Improve the appearance of deteriorated structures and unkempt properties at and near gateways leading into Allegany County Communities.

This could be achieved by implementing façade and building improvement programs (low-interest loans and grants), stricter enforcement of property maintenance laws and related efforts of each community's betterment committee.

6. Conduct an annual county-wide summit meeting or workshop involving County and municipal elected officials.

The meetings should be goal oriented and serve to:

- (a) examine the state of Allegany County and to identify the achievements and successes of the preceding year; County government officials, municipal government officials, business associations, community betterment groups and community committees would report on the progress made within their respective communities;
 - (b) share information about activities, programs and projects each community has successfully implemented; and
 - (c) to exchange ideas for activities, projects and programs.
- 7. Conduct a contest among the school districts in Allegany County to develop a County slogan and logo.**
- 8. Publish a periodic newsletter on the Allegany County government website with columns written by town supervisors and village mayors.**

Each Town Supervisor and Village Mayor should be provided with space for a column and arrangements made with each to write and submit columns containing information and news of events occurring within their respective communities.

9. Appoint a Strategic Marketing Implementation Committee with responsibility to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in this Strategic Marketing Plan.

The Committee would make annual progress reports at the annual summit meeting recommended above or to the County Board of Legislators.

10. Publish an annual Allegany County business directory and distribute it to every household and business in Allegany County.

B. Organizational Restructuring to Build Capacity

Allegany County government, municipal governments, local businesses associations such as the Cuba Chamber of Commerce and the Wellsville Area Chamber of Commerce, and local committees and community groups have limited organizational capacity to carry out programs and activities. This is due primarily to their small size, and limited resources, staffing and/or membership. If the recommended actions in this marketing strategy are to be successfully implemented, organizational restructuring will be necessary in order to increase the capacity of existing groups and organizations. Funding limitations will present an on-going impediment to the implementation of this strategy. Thus, organizational restructuring and capacity building will require collaboration and cooperation between and among County and municipal governments, business associations, the local events planning committees, local betterment committees in Allegany County. None of the existing organizations has the capacity and resources needed to independently implement the recommendations set forth in this strategy. Past experience demonstrates that these organizations will have limited success working in dependency. Collaborative efforts are essential to achieve many of the recommendations of the strategy.

There are a sufficient number of businesses within Allegany County to create and support a county-wide Allegany County Chamber of Commerce. Such a Chamber would have a relatively large membership pool with large numbers of volunteers to carry out activities and to serve its members. The large membership base would permit a division of labor, which is not possible in smaller Chambers and business associations. Each individual member would each have fewer responsibilities than they currently have in the smaller Chambers or business associations which exist. The result is that the organizations will be able to function more effectively offering a broader range of programs, activities and member services which smaller organizations are not able to provide. The old saw, “many hands make light the load” captures this concept.

A county-wide Chamber of Commerce would also serve as the vehicle to bring small businesses together to work collaboratively on projects, programs and activities that benefit individual Chamber members and their respective businesses, but the Allegany County business community as a whole. A countywide Chamber would also be able to represent the viewpoint of Allegany County businesses on pending legislative matters more effectively.

1. Establish a county-wide Chamber of Commerce.

In order for this effort to be successful, the following are essential:

- (a) the offices need to be located in what is perceived as neutral locations, e.g., the Crossroads Commerce Center.
- (b) the benefits to small business owners that would result from membership in a county-wide Chamber of Commerce will need to be clearly enumerated so that small business owners and operators fully understand the substantial value they would derive from membership in a county-wide Chamber.
- (c) the Chamber Board of Directors and committees would need to have broad representation from across Allegany County.
- (d) the Executive Director will need to be a person perceived as a neutral party.

2. Establish a County Special Events Coordinator position

Assist with scheduling, promoting and marketing local special events and festivals.

3. Convert the part-time County Tourism Director position to a full-time position.

4. Collocate the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce, the Allegany Business Center, and Special Events Coordinator, with the already collocated County Office of Development, County Tourism Office, Friendship Empire Zone and the Allegany Community Development Services offices.

Each of these entities are (or would be) involved in various aspects of economic development and working to improve the business climate in Allegany County. Accordingly, they have many common goals. They have a natural symbiotic relationship that would complement and supplement each other. The collocation of these organizational entities would enhance and increase opportunities for collaboration including, but not limited to, the sharing of staff, equipment, and ideas.

In Wyoming County, the County IDA, the County Department of Planning and Development and the Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce, and the Wyoming Business Education Council are collocated. Not only do they share staff, the Wyoming County IDA actually contracts with the Chamber of Commerce to market Wyoming County thereby freeing the IDA's Executive Director to focus more on business retention and project financing arrangements. This enables the two agencies to use their resources more efficiently and effectively.

5. Encourage and facilitate the formation of business improvement districts (BIDs) in the “Main Street” business districts within Allegany County.

BIDS are special assessment districts used to raise property tax revenue to fund physical improvements and/or enhanced services within the BID. Such improvements are typically undertaken to enhance the physical appearance of the business district and to make shopping more convenient and pleasurable. Funds are often used, for example, to install decorative sidewalks, ornamental lamps, pedestrian benches and landscaping improvements or to provide a higher level of maintenance (i.e., snow removal) or increased police presence.

6. Develop a pool of volunteer tour guides and make them available to bus tour companies.

7. Establish a standing “Town and Gown” committee comprised of representative of the three colleges in Allegany County, the County Tourism Director, the County Special Events Coordinator and the to-be-established Allegany County Chamber of Commerce to work on activities and programs of mutual benefit.

The committee could identify collaboration opportunities that would:

- (a) Make Allegany County more attractive to prospective students and their parents, and families as well as the parents and families of current students and tourists.
- (b) Make Allegany County more hospitable and inviting to prospective students and their parents, and families to existing students and their parents, and to college alumni and others who visit the college campuses. For example, lodging establishments, restaurants, and entertainment businesses could collaborate to offer parents and alumni with package deals for discounted lodging, meals and entertainment.
- (c) Identify ways in which college students pursuing degrees in business, accounting and finance, communications and marketing, and related fields could gain real-life business experience while providing assistance to the owners and operators of small businesses.

Student internships could be arranged or class projects developed to assist small business owners and operators with specific aspects of their businesses. Students could assist small businesses with designing and launching websites, developing and implementing advertising and marketing strategies, improving financial control systems, writing employee manuals, etc. A formal mechanism should be established to link the appropriate students or classes with the appropriate businesses.

C. Business Support

Small local business owners and operators typically have very little time and resources to spend trying to improve their businesses. As one stakeholder, a business owner, stated, “business owners are often so busy running their business, they have no time to spend on improving their businesses.” The following are recommendations that would provide small business owners and operators with services that would help to support their businesses.

1. Arrange for college students to assist small business owners and operators through internship programs and class projects.

See B.6. (c) above.

2. Provide members of local Chambers of Commerce and business associations with free membership in the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Online training courses are available on a wide range of topics including, but not limited to: marketing and merchandising, taxes, human resources, insurance, and training employees. The potential for lower health insurance premiums may also be available. Access to U.S. Chamber of Commerce benefits would be provided through memberships in the to-be-established Allegany County Chamber of Commerce.

D. Promotion and Marketing

Allegany County tourism marketing efforts are nominal. The County designs and prints a tourism guide which, although very attractive and thorough, is not widely distributed or available. The County has no tourism information center. Tourism information and brochures are available at the Crossroads Commerce Center when it’s open, but there are no signs to make tourists aware of this fact. The Tourism Director’s position is half-time which limits the number of activities the Tourism Director plan and implements. There is no County Special Events Coordinator to promote special community events and festivals. Each special events committee promotes its own event or festival. The County has no marketing website. The following recommendations are designed to address the foregoing deficiencies.

1. a. Establish a tourist information center at the Crossroads Commerce Center and arrange for appropriate directional signage to be installed on I-86 and NYS Route 19.

To qualify for a tourist information center sign, a tourist information center must be open at least eight (8) hours per day, seven days per week and have public telephone service available at all times. If the proposed Allegany County Chamber of Commerce is collocated at the Crossroads Commerce Center, opportunities may be available to meet the foregoing criteria.

1. b. Establish a tourist information center at or near the Alfred University Ceramic Museum to be constructed in 2008.

Working collaboratively with the Village of Alfred, Alfred University and SUNY Alfred, arrangements be made for the three entities to establish a tourism information center in Alfred that would meet the NYSDOT criteria to qualify for tourist information center directional signage.

1. c. **Establish a tourist information center at or near the Cuba I-86 interchange.**
2. **Establish and maintain an attractive, high-quality, user-friendly Allegany County website specifically for promoting and marketing Allegany.**

The website must be continually maintained and kept up to date. Local business websites could and should be linked to the County marketing website as well. Linkages between the Allegany County website and the Alfred University, SUNY Alfred and Houghton College websites should also be established. These linkages would provide tourists, college students, and their parents, and families, and college alumni with information about lodging, restaurants, attractions and special events and festivals scheduled in Allegany County. The website would also provide Allegany County residents with access to the schedules of cultural and educational events at the colleges that are open to the public such as plays, concerts, art shows, and lectures.

3. **Develop and carryout an on-going consolidated and coordinated marketing campaign for major Allegany County special events and festivals.**

Use the proposed Allegany County marketing website and well as other advertising media, such as radio, newspaper display ads, etc. Cross-promote other Allegany County special events and festivals at each special event and festival.

4. **Prepare and distribute a county-wide special events calendar and post the calendar on the County marketing website.**

It is recommended that the calendars be designed using a conventional calendar format with a grid layout and the entire month visible at one time and be downloadable from the County's website. Such formatting makes it easier and quicker for viewers to process the information. The hardcopy calendars should encourage tourists to confirm the date of events by checking the County website to ensure that the event is still scheduled on the date appearing on the events calendar. Tourists who travel to Allegany County for an event that has been cancelled or rescheduled are likely to be annoyed and may avoid returning.

5. **Place Allegany County tourism promotional materials in the Corning Visitor Center.**

Membership in the Corning Chamber of Commerce is open to businesses and organizations outside of Allegany County and is a prerequisite for the placement of tourist print materials in the Corning Visitor Center. Only one promotional brochure or booklet per member may be displayed at the Corning Visitor Center. Digitek advertising also has plasma display screens sited at the Corning Visitor Center. Still ads are displayed on a rotating basis for six (6) seconds each for a fee. As more than 55,000 people visit the Corning Visitor Center annually, tourism materials placed in this location would receive high exposure.

6. Develop hospitality packets and distribute to parents and alumni visiting the campuses of colleges located in Allegany County.

The hospitality packets would contain tourism information, maps and discount-package deals for lodging, meals and recreation and/or entertainment. Welcome packets should be distributed to students and parents at the beginning of each academic year. (See Recommendation B.7. (c) above.)

7. Develop various self-guided tours with maps with tour narrations downloadable to i-POD and MP3 devices.

Downloadable versions of these guides and tour maps should also be posted on the County's marketing website. Audio tour narrations downloadable to i-Pods/MP3 devices should also be developed and posted on the County's website to enhance the touring experience for visitors. Some signage may need to be installed to facilitate the tours as well.

The following are some possible (and recommended) types of tours:

- (a) Amish Farms tours
- (b) Antique shop tours
- (c) "Painted Lady" [Victorian house] tours
- (d) Museum and historic tours
- (e) Culinary, lodging and entertainment guide
- (f) Agricultural-tourism tours
- (g) Scenic tours
- (h) Allegany Artisan's tour (continue)
- (i) Artistic and cultural attractions and events guide

8. Develop an outdoor recreation guide with a map that identifies outdoor recreational attractions on a single map for distribution at outdoor recreational businesses and businesses that sell outdoor recreational equipment.

Locate display racks of the guides and maps in sporting goods stores, archery shops, gun shops, golf courses, bicycle shops, at snowmobile dealers, etc. A downloadable version of the guide and map should also be posted on the County's marketing website.

9. Develop less expensive tourism pamphlets containing maps that identify attractions to replace the more expensive comprehensive tourist guide.

The display racks should be designed to have a high profile and to be easily recognizable.

10. Cross-promote Allegany County community events, festivals and attractions at each major Allegany County special event and festival.

This could be achieved by setting up a display booth at each major community event and festival and stacking it with community events calendars and other tourist promotional materials. The booth could be unmanned or manned with volunteers, although a manned booth would be preferable.

11. Develop a hospitality training program for frontline employees who are likely to be the initial contact for visitors and tourists. Develop a training booklet to use for this purpose.

The training should be designed to make frontline employees aware of accommodations and attractions in Allegany County so they are capable of providing visitors with referrals and directions.

12. Encourage local businesses to collaboratively run promotions, to cross-promote each other and to utilize cooperative advertising.

Books such as 1,001 Ideas to Create Retail Excitement by Edgar A. Falk and similar types of books can provide business owners and operators with abundant ideas.

13. Incorporate geocaching into local marketing and promotional efforts to draw tourists into Allegany County and through the “Main Street” business districts.

Geocaching is recreational and leisure pursuit that involves using personal global positioning system devices to locate caches, i.e., hidden prizes or “treasures.” Individuals hide the “treasures” and then post the geographical coordinates on a website. Participants then use their GPS devices to locate the hidden “treasure.” Geocaching is a rapidly growing recreational pursuit that appeals to people of all ages including families and provides opportunities to attract tourists to Allegany County. Caches could be located in strategic locations within Allegany County in a way so as to steer geocachers through the “Main Street” business districts as they attempt to locate the caches. Caches could include discount coupons for various goods and/or services at sponsoring businesses or could be tokens redeemable at the sponsoring businesses for a prize.

14. Develop a discount coupon booklet (or electronic swipe card) to sell at a nominal cost to encourage visitors and residents to patronize Allegany County businesses.

The discounts could be used to lure tourists into Allegany County businesses and would encourage residents to patronize local businesses.

15. Place high-profile, easily recognizable display racks containing tourism brochures in high-traffic businesses, visitors and tourists are likely to patronize.

Appropriate locations for display racks include the to-be-established information centers as well as gas stations, convenience stores and fast-food restaurants at or near I-86 interchanges, at motels and at tourist destination attractions.

16. Periodically provide bus tour companies with information about Allegany County attractions. Host and provide guided tours to bus company tour operators to expose them to Allegany County attractions.

17. Periodically invite newspaper and magazine travel writers from urban areas in New York State and adjoining states to Allegany County. Host and provide guided tours to travel writers to expose them to Allegany County attractions.

Travel writers for newspaper and magazines published in Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse, New York; Erie and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Cleveland, Ohio would be the most appropriate.

18. Develop an image of Allegany County as a relaxing weekend get away destination.

Possible slogans that could be used to help develop the foregoing theme are:

“Allegany County: tranquility, history and the great outdoors”

“Visit Allegany County: the land of cozy valleys and leisurely pursuits”

[Each community could have some sort of a valley theme, e.g. Alfred - the Terra Cotta Valley or Ceramics Valley, Bolivar - the Oil Valley, Cuba - the Cheese Valley.]

The slogan should appear on all Allegany County governmental publications and on the County’s website for branding purposes.

19. Use common colors and a County logo on all Allegany County promotional and advertising documents and advertising materials.

The logo should appear on all Allegany County governmental publications and on the County’s website for branding purposes.

20. Explore the feasibility of producing a high-quality tourism video for broadcasting on the Travel Channel. (See D.23 also. D.20 and D.23 could be combined into a single action.)

The Travel Channel would need to be contacted in advance to determine if the company would accept such a video for broadcast and to ascertain the Travel Channel’s specifications and requirements for such videos.

21. Establish an Allegany County Ambassador Program to extend hospitality to visitors attending major County events and festivals and students enrolled in the local colleges and their parents. (See A.1 also)

Provide Ambassadors with colorful tee shirts, smocks or blazers that identify them as “Allegany County Ambassadors” and which invite visitors to ask the Ambassadors about attractions and events in Allegany County. Arrange for Ambassadors to attend special events and festivals to circulate among attendees. (This would be an ideal way to involve students in community service.) Ambassadors should also circulate on campuses of the three colleges in Allegany County just before the beginning of the fall term when parents transport their sons and daughters to the campus. The Ambassadors could hand out hospitality packages or host a temporary tourist information booth on each campus. The permission and collaboration of college officials would be required for this activity to occur on the campuses.

22. Work collaboratively with the local colleges to develop a video leisure, recreational and entertainment attractions in Allegany County for the Colleges to show to new parents and their students.

Houghton College (and perhaps the others) has already developed such a video to respond to the frequently asked question, “What is there to do while attending collage in rural Allegany County?” Houghton’s video encompasses the entire region, but there may be an opportunity to incorporate a segment focusing exclusively on Allegany County attractions.

E. Infrastructure to Support Tourism

Constructing and installing infrastructure to support tourism will be the most costly of the recommended actions to carry out. Some of the actions will require the very large investments. Some recommended actions would have to be undertaken and completed fully at one time as a single project, such as extending municipal water and sewer mains to serve the Crossroads site. Other recommendations could be accomplished in phases over a longer period of time to reduce the financial impact. Certain investments such as extending municipal water and sewer to the Crossroads site can be anticipated to result in a quick and measurable return on investment. Other investments such as installing highway and tourist-oriented directional signage will probably not result in a quick or easily measurable return on investment.

1. Construct municipal water sewer service to the Crossroads site to catalyze the development of hospitality businesses at the site.

The construction of a motel and restaurants at this high-profile site would generate substantial sales tax and bed tax revenues. The high visibility of hospitality businesses at this location would draw much larger numbers of motorists off I-86 than any other of the recommendations contained in this marketing strategy. Once a motorist stops at this interchange (crosses the threshold) for a meal, to refuel or for lodging, Allegany County will have opportunities to entice the motorist to visit other attractions in Allegany County. Even if many of the motorists do not visit other attractions, they will be exposed what Allegany County has to

offer and will be more inclined to plan for or schedule future stops for exploring these other attractions.

2. Improve highway and roadway directional signage and tourist-oriented directional signage in Allegany County.

Signs identifying the names of highways and roads should be installed at all intersections. Directional signage, indicating the direction and distance of villages, hamlets and major highways, should be installed at all intersections of County Roads and State Highways to ensure that tourists are able to navigate through Allegany County without getting lost.

The installation of tourism-oriented directional (TOD) signage along the primary State highway, i.e., Routes 243, 19, 417 and I-86 are governed by regulations promulgated by the Federal Transportation Administration and enforced by the NYSDOT. The size and design of such signs and the locations where they may be installed are highly regulated by the state. TOD signage along secondary State highways is much less restrictive; generally any size and design is permitted provided the sign is located outside the highway right of way.

Customized TOD signage that is quickly and easily recognizable would be preferable to identify self-tour routes and directions to attractions. Customized signage is, however, more expensive than stock signage and would not be permitted to be used along any primary NYS highway. In addition, the fact that attractions are spread out over a very large geographical area will necessitate the installation of a large number of signs. Therefore, it is recommended that NYSDOT standard stock TOD signage be used instead of customized signs to minimize the cost. Many TOD signs would be required in Allegany County if TOD signage is installed for all attractions. The sheer number of signs required could very well be cost prohibitive so phasing will likely be necessary.

3. Utilize software capable of capturing and tracking tourist telephone inquiries and requests for tourist information.

This could be integrated with the County marketing website. Local hospitality and tourism businesses should be encouraged to capture information about tourists who patronize their businesses and visit their attractions and to forward this information to the County Tourism Director. At a minimum, the information collected should include the demographic profile, home address and the reason for visiting Allegany County. This information can be compiled, analyzed and used to target promotional and advertising campaigns.

4. Encourage the Villages to construct or provide public restrooms accessible in the evenings and on weekends, as well as during weekdays.

Due to the susceptibility of public restrooms to vandalism, they should, when feasible, be located adjacent to police stations or in locations with high visibility and much pedestrian traffic. The lack of public restrooms was cited during the focus group meetings as a deterrent to tourism.

- 5. Encourage and lobby NYS to construct a rest stop along I-86 between Friendship and Angelica interchanges.**

F. Tourist Attractions

Although Allegany County has numerous tourist attractions, all are small and dispersed throughout the County. The development of additional attractions increases the range of offerings and increases the likelihood that there will be some sort of attraction or attractions in Allegany County that will appeal to a broad range of tourist with disparate interests. Larger numbers of attractions may also help to reduce the distance tourists must travel between attractions for the self-guided tours making the experience more pleasurable for them.

- 1. Establish a County Park**

Allegany County is one of the few counties in New York State that has no county park. A County Park would provide an additional attraction.

- 2. Encourage and lobby State Legislators to create a State Park in Allegany County.**

There are no State Parks in Allegany County, despite the fact that owns large tracts of forested land within the County. The development of a State Park would provide an additional attraction to Allegany County.

- 3. Work with Houghton College and Alfred University to establish equestrian trails in the State forests in Allegany County.**

The development of equestrian trails in Allegany County that would be open to the public could serve to attract horse owners to Allegany County for scenic trail rides. The abundant NYS forest land would provide an ideal setting for such trails.

- 4. Establish a Fire Department museum with donations of antique fire equipment provided by local fire departments.**

According to focus group participants, the volunteer fire departments in Allegany County own a significant number of antiquated and historically-significant fire apparatus and equipment. A fire department museum unique to the region could be established if the volunteer fire departments would be willing to donate or lend their historically-significant apparatus and equipment for use as exhibits in a fire department museum

- 5. Explore establishing a consolidated market place with high visibility for displaying and selling Amish produced goods and foods.**

In order for this recommendation to be implemented, the approval of the Amish bishop or other high-ranking leader in the Amish community will be necessary.

6. Encourage the establishment of more artist and artisan studios, art and artisan retail shops and venues and cultural attractions in Allegany County.

Allegany County is beginning to develop an artistic/cultural image. The Allegany Artisans and their annual tour, the artist community in Alfred, and the Alfred University ceramics program have contributed to this image. If additional artistic and cultural businesses and venues are established, a sufficient number (“critical mass”) could be reached so that Allegany County could become an arts and cultural tourism destination.

7. Increase the profile of Allegany County along I-86 and NYS Route 19 by facilitating the development of a hospitality business at this location.

Conveniently located hospitality businesses visible from I-86 are attractions that have a highest probability of getting motorists to “cross the threshold” of Allegany County. When motorists stop to fuel, eat or for lodging, the pause in their travels provides Allegany County with opportunities to make the motorists aware of the variety of attractions Allegany County has to offer. Motorists who stop may not visit any of Allegany County’s attractions at that time, but by making them aware of the attractions they are likely to see something that appeals to them this may encourage people to stop on their return trip or to schedule a stop schedule a future trip with an Allegany County attraction or attractions as their destination.

Alfred University and SUNY Alfred draw many people into Allegany County to visit the campuses, especially prospective students, their parents, the parents of current students and alumni. The ceramics museum at Alfred University will increase the profile of Allegany County and will become a destination point for bona fide tourists, unlike many if not most of the motorists traveling along I-86 who do not have destinations within Allegany County. The museum will draw tourists “across the threshold” and as they are tourists they will likely be more receptive to exploring other Allegany County attractions. The construction of the ceramics museum provides Allegany County with a very significant marketing opportunity.

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

A. Implementation Strategy by Topic

**Allegany County Tourism Strategic Marketing Plan
Implementation Strategy**

Improve Communications, Cooperation, County Cohesion and Community Pride

Revised 6/25/2007

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
A.1.	Establish a county-wide pool of volunteers to provide labor and other types of assistance when needed for special community events and festivals.	M	Within 3 years	Allegany County Special Events Coordinator w/ assistance from Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	No additional cost. The cost will be covered within Special Events Coordinator salary.
A. 2.	Conduct an annual county-wide recognition dinner to fete volunteers from across the County.	H	Within 3 to 4 years & ongoing thereafter	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	Chamber fund raising activities, business donations, ticket sales
A.3.	Organize community betterment committees in communities that have none.	M	Within 4 to 5 years	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	No additional cost.
A.4.	Conduct an annual county-wide beautification contest similar to the Tidy Town program originating in Australia	M	Within 4 to 5 years	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce with assistance from community betterment committees	Fund raising activities and business donations
A.5.	Improve the appearance of deteriorated structures and unkempt properties at and near gateways leading into Allegany County Communities.	M	Ongoing	Town & Village Code Enforcement Officers. Considered a shared municipal services approach.	Town and Village code enforcement budgets. Restore NY grant program for façade improvements and/or building refurbishment. Shared Municipal Services Incentive Program is there is a shared services approach.
A.6.	Conduct an annual county-wide summit meeting or workshop involving County and municipal elected officials.	H	Within 1 year & ongoing thereafter	Allegany County Board of Legislators	No additional cost.
A.7.	Conduct a contest among the school districts in Allegany County for developing a County slogan and logo.	M	Within 3 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	No additional cost. The cost will be covered within the Tourism Director's salary.
A.8.	Publish a periodic newsletter on the County government website with columns written by town supervisors and village mayors.	L	Within 3 years	Town Supervisors & Village Mayors	No additional cost. Cost for County government website is covered within County budget appropriation for existing website
A.9.	Appoint a Strategic Marketing Implementation Committee with responsibility to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in this Strategic Marketing Plan.	H	Within 1 year	Allegany County Board of Legislators	No additional cost.
A. 10	Publish an annual Allegany County business directory and distribute it to every household and business in Allegany County.	M	Within 4 to 5 years	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	Business donations and advertising sales revenue for display ads

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Organizational Capacity Building

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
B.1.	Establish a county-wide Chamber of Commerce	H	Within 3 years	Allegheny County Office of Development to inform municipalities and business of benefits.	Nominal costs associated with establishing Chamber. / Chamber membership dues and fund raising events will support Chamber operation.
B.2.	Establish a County Special Events Coordinator position	H	Within 1 year	Allegheny County Board of Legislators or Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	County budget appropriation to fund position or Allegheny County Chamber could fund the position.
B.3.	Convert the part-time County Tourism Director position to a full-time position.	H	Within 1 year	Allegheny County Board of Legislators or Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	County budget appropriation to fund position or to contract with Allegheny County Chamber
B.4.	Collocate the Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce, the Allegheny Business Center, and Special Events Coordinator, with the already collocated County Office of Development, County Tourism Office, Friendship Empire Zone and the Allegheny Community Development Services offices.	M	Within 3 years	Allegheny County Board of Legislators and the Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	County budget appropriation to cover the cost of moving the museum.
B.5.	Encourage and facilitate the formation of business improvement districts (BIDs) in the "Main Street" business districts within Allegheny County.	L	Within 5 years	Allegheny County Office of Development to inform municipalities and business of benefits. / Business owners and municipal boards to create BIDs.	Cost of distributing and sharing information on benefits of BIDs covered in County budget appropriation for Office of Development. / Funding necessary to establish BIDs to be contributed by municipal boards.
B.6.	Develop a pool of volunteer tour guides and make them available to bus tour companies.	M	Within 2 years	Allegheny County Tourism Director	Cost covered within Allegheny County budget appropriation for Tourism Director salary or contract with Allegheny County Chamber.
B.7.	Establish a standing "Town & Gown" committee comprised of representatives of the three colleges in Allegheny County, the County Tourism Director, the County Special Events Coordinator and the to-be-established Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce to work on activities and programs of mutual benefit.	H	Within 1 year	Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce, County Special Events Coordinator, County Director of Tourism, Houghton College, Alfred University and SUNY Alfred.	No cost.

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Business Support

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
C.1.	Arrange for college students to assist small business owners/operators through internship programs and class projects.	M	Within 3 years	Town and Gown Committee	No additional cost
C.2.	Provide members of local Chambers of Commerce and business associations with free membership in the Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Chamber of Commerce.	H	Within 2 years	Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	Cost will be covered under Chamber of Commerce membership

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Tourism Promotion and Marketing

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
D.1.a	Establish a tourist information center at the Crossroads Commerce Center and arrange for appropriate directional signage to be installed on I-86 and NYS Route 19.	H	Within 3 years	Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce with assistance of County Tourism Director	The cost to purchase tourism-materials-display racks could be paid with County tourism appropriation. Collaborative staffing arrangements may be able to be worked out between the County Tourism Office and Chamber of Commerce. A pool of volunteers could be used to provide weekend coverage. Space at the Crossroads Commerce Center could be provided at not additional cost.
D.1.b	Establish a tourist information center at or near the Alfred University Ceramic Museum to be constructed in 2008.	H	Within 3 years	Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce with assistance of the County Tourism Director, Alfred University and Village of Alfred	The cost to purchase tourism-materials-display racks could be paid with County tourism appropriation. Collaborative staffing arrangements may be able to be worked out among the County Tourism Office and Chamber of Commerce, and Ceramics Museum staff utilizing a pool of volunteers for weekend coverage. Space at the Crossroads Commerce Center could be provided at not additional cost.
D.1.c	Establish a tourist information center at or near the Cuba I-86 interchange.	H	Within 2 years	Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce with assistance of Tourism Director	The cost to purchase tourism-materials-display racks could be paid with County tourism appropriation. Arrangements may be able to be worked out for placement of display racks in a business that operates seven (7) days a week.
D.2	Establish and maintain an attractive, high-quality, user-friendly Allegheny County website specifically for promoting and marketing Allegheny County.	H	Within 2 years	Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	Advertising sales revenue and membership fees
D.3	Develop and carryout an ongoing consolidated and coordinated marketing campaign for major Allegheny County special events and festivals.	H	Within 2 years and ongoing thereafter	Allegheny County Special Events Coordinator with assistance of local events planning committees	Annual Allegheny County budget appropriation
D.4	Prepare and distribute a county-wide special events calendar and post the calendar on the County marketing website.	H	Within 2 years	Allegheny County Special Events Coordinator with assistance of local events planning committees	Annual Allegheny County budget appropriation
D.5	Place Allegheny County tourism promotional materials in the Corning Visitor Center.	H	Within 2 years	Allegheny County Tourism Director	County Tourism Office annual budget allocation.

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D.6.	Develop hospitality packets and distribute to parents and alumni visiting the campuses of colleges located in Allegany County.	H	Within 2 years	Town and Gown Committee	Cost to print materials and packages could be included in Tourism Directors annual budget and/or could be funded with advertising sales revenue of participating businesses.
D.7.	Develop various self-guided tours with maps and tour narrations downloadable to i-POD and MP3 devices.	M	Tours - within 3 / Narrations within 5 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	Cost to develop of the tour maps covered under County Tourism Office annual budget allocation. / Cost to print tour maps to be paid with advertising sales revenue from display ads appearing on the guide.
D.8.	Develop an outdoor recreation guide with a map that identifies outdoor recreational attractions on a single map for distribution at outdoor recreational businesses and businesses that sell outdoor recreational equipment.	H	Within 3 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	Cost to develop of the guide covered under County Tourism Office annual budget allocation. / Cost to print guide to be paid with advertising sales revenue for display ads appearing on the guide.
D.9.	Develop less expensive tourism pamphlets containing maps that identify attractions to replace the more expensive comprehensive tourist guide.	H	Within 2 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	Cost to develop the guide covered under County Tourism Office annual budget allocation.
D.10.	Cross-promote Allegany County community events and festivals and attractions at each major Allegany County special event and festival.	H	Within 1 year and on- going thereafter	Allegany County Tourism Director with assistance of Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	No additional cost. The cost will be covered within County budget appropriation for Special Events Coordinator salary. There is potential to use volunteers to reduce costs.
D.11.	Develop a hospitality training program for frontline employees who are likely to be the initial contact for visitors and tourists. Develop a training booklet to use for this purpose.	M	Within 3 years	Allegany County Tourism Director in conjunction with the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce and/or Cattaraugus-Allegany County Workforce Investment Board	Cost covered within Allegany County budget appropriation for Tourism Director salary or contract with Allegany County Chamber.
D.12.	Encourage local businesses to collaboratively run promotions, to cross-promote each other and to utilize cooperative advertising.	M	Within 3 years and ongoing thereafter	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	No additional costs
D.13.	Incorporate geocaching into local marketing and promotional efforts to draw tourists into Allegany County and through the "Main Street" business districts.	M	Within 3 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	No additional cost. The cost will be covered within County budget appropriation for Allegany County Tourism Director salary
D.14.	Develop a discount coupon booklet (or electronic swipe card) to sell at a nominal cost to encourage visitors and residents to patronize Allegany County businesses.	H	Within 3 years	Allegany County Tourism Director with assistance of Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	Advertising sales revenue
D.15.	Place high-profile, easily recognizable display racks containing tourism brochures in high-traffic businesses visitors and tourists are likely to patronize.	H	Within 2 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	Allegany County budget appropriation for display racks. Could be phased, with initial emphasis on highest traffic locations.

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D.16.	Periodical provide bus tour companies with information about Allegheny County attractions. Host and provide guided tours to bus company tour operators to expose them to Allegheny County attractions.	H	Within 1 year and ongoing thereafter	Allegheny County Tourism Director	No additional costs
D.17.	Periodically invite newspaper and travel writers from urban areas in New York and adjoining states to Allegheny County. Host and provide guided tours to travel writers to expose them to Allegheny County attractions.	M	Within 3 years and then periodically thereafter	Allegheny County Tourism Director	No additional costs
D.18.	Develop an image of Allegheny County as a relaxing weekend getaway destination.	H	Within 2 years & ongoing thereafter	Allegheny County Tourism Director	No additional costs. Funds used for existing marketing would be utilized, only the message would be different.
D.19.	Use common colors and a County logo on all Allegheny County promotional and advertising documents and advertising materials	M	Within 3 year	Allegheny County Board of Legislators	No additional cost
D.20.	Explore the feasibility of producing a high-quality tourism video for broadcasting on the Travel Channel. (See D. 23 also. D.20 and D.23 could be combined into a single action.)	L	Within 5 years	Allegheny County Tourism Director	No additional cost to explore feasibility. Use I Love NY funding to produce the video
D.21.	Establish an Allegheny County Ambassador Program to extend hospitality to visitors attending major County events and festivals and students enrolled in the local colleges and their parents. (See A.1 also)	H	Within 2 years	Allegheny County Tourism Director	The cost will be covered within County budget appropriation for Special Events Coordinator salary.
D.22.	Work collaboratively with the local colleges to develop a video highlighting leisure, recreational, and entertainment attractions in Allegheny County for the Colleges to show to new parents and their students.	M	Within 5 years	Town and Gown Committee	No additional cost

**Allegheny County Tourism Strategic Marketing Plan
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Infrastructure to Support Tourism

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
E.1.	Construct municipal water and sewer service to the Crossroads site to catalyze the development of hospitality businesses at the site.	H	Within 3 years	Allegheny County Board of Legislators	Economic Development grant funds.
E.2.	Improve highway and roadway directional signage and tourist-oriented directional signage in Allegheny County.	M	Within 4 to 5 years & ongoing thereafter	Allegheny County Highway Department	Annual County Highway Department budget allocation. Could be phased over several years to reduce annual financial impact.
E.3.	Utilize software capable of capturing and tracing tourist telephone inquiries and requests for tourist information.	L	Within 5 years	Allegheny County Tourism Director	No additional cost if Microsoft Outlook software is used.
E.4.	Encourage the Villages to construct or provide public restrooms accessible in the evenings and on weekends as well as during weekdays.	L	Within 2 years & ongoing thereafter	Allegheny County Tourism Director	No additional cost to encourage the provision of restrooms. The cost to construct restrooms would come from municipal budget appropriations. If constructed in parks, EFP/Bond Act Grant funds may be available.
E.5.	Encourage and lobby NYS to construct a rest stop along I-86 between the Friendship and Angelica interchanges.	L	Immediately & ongoing - lobbying efforts. 4 to 5 years for	Allegheny County Board of Legislators	No additional cost

**Allegheny County Tourism Strategic Marketing Plan
Implementation Strategy**

Expanding Tourist Attractions

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
F.1.	Establish a County Park	M	Within 5 years	Allegheny County Board of Legislators	Environmental Protection Fund / Bond Act Grant programs
F.2.	Encourage and lobby the State Legislature to create a State Park in Allegheny County.	L	Immediately & ongoing	Allegheny County Board of Legislators	No additional cost
F.3.	Work with Houghton College and Alfred University to establish equestrian trails in the State forests in Allegheny County.	L	Within 5 years	Town and Gown Committee with assistance of NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation	OPRHP Recreation Trails Program
F.4.	Establish a Fire Department museum with donations of antique fire equipment provided by local fire departments.	L	Within 5 years	Allegheny County Historian with assistance of local fire departments	Private funding. NYS Museum Funds.
F.5.	Explore establishing a consolidated market place with high visibility for displaying and selling Amish produced goods and foods.	M	Within 5 years	Allegheny County Tourism Director	NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets.
F.6.	Encourage the establishment of more artist and artisan studios, art and artisan retail shops and venues, and cultural attractions in Allegheny County.	M	Within 5 years and ongoing thereafter	Allegheny County Tourism Director	No additional costs. The cost will be covered in the annual appropriation for the Tourism Director salary.
F.7.	Increase the profile of Allegheny County along I-86 and NYS Route 19 by facilitating the development of a hospitality business at this location.	H	Within 3 years	Allegheny County Office of Development with assistance of the Friendship Enterprise Zone Committee	Nominal additional cost above existing annual County appropriation for staffing. Costs may be shared

B. *Implementation Strategy by Responsible Agency*

Allegheny Chamber of Commerce Responsibilities

Improve Communication, County Cohesion and Community Pride

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
A.1.	Establish a county-wide pool of volunteers to provide labor and other types of assistance when needed for special community events and festivals. (This recommended action could be combined with D.21.)	M	Within 3 years	Allegheny County Special Events Coordinator w/ assistance from Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	No additional cost. The cost will be covered within Special Events Coordinator salary.
A. 2.	Conduct an annual county-wide recognition dinner to fete volunteers from across the County.	H	Within 3 to 4 years &	Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	Chamber fund raising activities, business donations, ticket sales
A.3.	Organize community betterment committees in communities that have none.	M	Within 4 to 5 years	Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	No additional cost.
A.4.	Conduct an annual county-wide beautification contest similar to the <i>Tidy Town</i> program originating in Australia	M	Within 4 to 5 years	Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce with assistance from community betterment committees	Fund raising activities and business donations
A. 10	Publish an annual Allegheny County business directory and distribute it to every household and business in Allegheny County.	M	Within 4 to 5 years	Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	Business donations and advertising sales revenue for display ads

Organizational Capacity Building

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
B.2.	Establish a County Special Events Coordinator position	H	Within 1 year	Allegheny County Board of Legislators or Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	County budget appropriation to fund position or Allegheny County Chamber could fund the position.
B.3.	Convert the part-time County Tourism Director position to a full-time position.	H	Within 1 year	Allegheny County Board of Legislators or Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	County budget appropriation to fund position or to contract with Allegheny County Chamber
B.4.	Collocate the Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce, the Allegheny Business Center, and Special Events Coordinator, with the already collocated County Office of Development, County Tourism Office, Friendship Empire Zone and the Allegheny Community Development Services offices.	M	Within 3 years	Allegheny County Board of Legislators and the Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	County budget appropriation to cover the cost of moving the museum.
B.7.	Establish a standing "Town & Gown" committee comprised of representatives of the three colleges in Allegheny County, the County Tourism Director, the County Special Events Coordinator and the to-be-established Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce to work on activities and programs of mutual benefit.	H	Within 1 year	Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce, County Special Events Coordinator, County Director of Tourism, Houghton College, Alfred University and SUNY Alfred.	No cost.

Business Support

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
C.2.	Provide members of local Chambers of Commerce and business associations with free membership in the Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Chamber of Commerce.	H	Within 2 years	Allegheny County Chamber of Commerce	Cost will be covered under Chamber of Commerce membership

Allegany Chamber of Commerce Responsibilities (continued)

Tourism Promotion and Marketing

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
D.1.a	Establish a tourist information center at the Crossroads Commerce Center and arrange for appropriate directional signage to be installed on I-86 and NYS Route 19.	H	Within 3 years	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce with assistance of County Tourism Director	The cost to purchase tourism-materials-display racks could be paid with County tourism appropriation. Collaborative staffing arrangements may be able to be worked out between the County Tourism Office and Chamber of Commerce. A pool of volunteers could be used to provide weekend coverage. Space at the Crossroads Commerce Center could be provided at not additional cost.
D.1.b	Establish a tourist information center at or near the Alfred University Ceramic Museum to be constructed in 2008.	H	Within 3 years	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce with assistance of the County Tourism Director, Alfred University and Village of Alfred	The cost to purchase tourism-materials-display racks could be paid with County tourism appropriation. Collaborative staffing arrangements may be able to be worked out among the County Tourism Office and Chamber of Commerce, and Ceramics Museum staff utilizing a pool of volunteers for weekend coverage. Space at the Crossroads Commerce Center could be provided at not additional cost.
D.1.c	Establish a tourist information center at or near the Cuba I-86 interchange.	H	Within 2 years	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce with assistance of the County Tourism Director	The cost to purchase tourism-materials-display racks could be paid with County tourism appropriation. Arrangements may be able to be worked out for placement of display racks in a business that operates seven (7) days per week.
D.2	Establish and maintain an attractive, high-quality, user-friendly Allegany County website specifically for promoting and marketing Allegany County.	H	Within 2 years	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	Advertising sales revenue and membership fees
D.10	Cross-promote Allegany County community events and festivals and attractions at each major Allegany County special event and festival	H	Within 1 year and on-going thereafter	Allegany County Tourism Director with assistance of Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	No additional cost. The cost will be covered within County budget appropriation for Special Events Coordinator salary. There is potential to use volunteers to reduce costs.
D.12.	Encourage local businesses to collaboratively run promotions, to cross-promote each other and to utilize cooperative advertising.	M	Within 3 years and ongoing thereafter	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	No additional costs
D.14	Develop a discount coupon booklet (or electronic swipe card) to sell at a nominal cost to encourage visitors and residents to patronize Allegany County businesses.	H	Within 3 years	Allegany County Tourism Director with assistance of Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	Advertising sales revenue

Allegany County Board of Legislators Responsibilities

Improve Communication, County Cohesion and Community Pride

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
A.6.	Conduct an annual county-wide summit meeting or workshop involving County and municipal elected officials.	H	Within 1 year & ongoing thereafter	Allegany County Board of Legislators	No additional cost.
A.9.	Appoint a Strategic Marketing Implementation Committee with responsibility to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in this Strategic Marketing Plan.	H	Within 1 year	Allegany County Board of Legislators	No additional cost.

Organizational Capacity Building

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
B.2.	Establish a County Special Events Coordinator position	H	Within 1 year	Allegany County Board of Legislators or Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	County budget appropriation to fund position or Allegany County Chamber could fund the position.
B.3.	Convert the part-time County Tourism Director position to a full-time position.	H	Within 1 year	Allegany County Board of Legislators or Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	County budget appropriation to fund position or to contract with Allegany County Chamber
B.4.	Collocate the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce, the Allegany Business Center, and Special Events Coordinator, with the already collocated County Office of Development, County Tourism Office, Friendship Empire Zone and the Allegany Community Development Services offices.	M	Within 3 years	Allegany County Board of Legislators and the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	County budget appropriation to cover the cost of moving the museum.

Tourism Promotion and Marketing

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
D.19.	Use common colors and a County logo on all Allegany County promotional and advertising documents and advertising materials	M	Within 3 year	Allegany County Board of Legislators	No additional cost

Infrastructure to Support Tourism

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
E.1.	Construct municipal water and sewer service to the Crossroads site to catalyze the development of hospitality businesses at the site.	H	Within 3 years	Allegany County Board of Legislators	Economic Development grant funds.

E.5.	Encourage and lobby NYS to construct a rest stop along I-86 between the Friendship and Angelica interchanges.	L	Immediately & ongoing - lobbying efforts. 4 to 5 years	Allegheny County Board of Legislators	No additional cost
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Allegany County Board of Legislators Responsibilities (continued)

Expanding Tourist Attractions

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
F.1.	Establish a County Park	M	Within 5 years	Allegany County Board of Legislators	Environmental Protection Fund / Bond Act Grant programs
F.2.	Encourage and lobby the State Legislature to create a State Park in Allegany County.	L	Immediately & ongoing	Allegany County Board of Legislators	No additional cost

Allegany County Tourism Director Responsibilities

Improve Communication, County Cohesion and Community Pride

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
A.7.	Conduct a contest among the school districts in Allegany County for developing a County slogan and logo.	M	Within 3 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	No additional cost. The cost will be covered within the Tourism Director's salary.

Organizational Capacity Building

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
B.6.	Develop a pool of volunteer tour guides and make them available to bus tour companies.	M	Within 2 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	Cost covered within Allegany County budget appropriation for Tourism Director salary or contract with Allegany County Chamber.
B.7.	Establish a standing "Town & Gown" committee comprised of representatives of the three colleges in Allegany County, the County Tourism Director, the County Special Events Coordinator and the to-be-established Allegany County Chamber of Commerce to work on activities and programs of mutual benefit.	H	Within 1 year	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce, County Special Events Coordinator, County Director of Tourism, Houghton College, Alfred University and SUNY Alfred.	No cost.

Tourism Promotion and Marketing

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
D.1.a	Establish a tourist information center at the Crossroads Commerce Center and arrange for appropriate directional signage to be installed on I-86 and NYS Route 19.	H	Within 3 years	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce with assistance of County Tourism Director	The cost to purchase tourism-materials-display racks could be paid with County tourism appropriation. Collaborative staffing arrangements may be able to be worked out between the County Tourism Office and Chamber of Commerce. A pool of volunteers could be used to provide weekend coverage. Space at the Crossroads Commerce Center could be provided at not additional cost.
D.1.b	Establish a tourist information center at or near the Alfred University Ceramic Museum to be constructed in 2008.	H	Within 3 years	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce with assistance of the County Tourism Director, Alfred University and Village of Alfred	The cost to purchase tourism-materials-display racks could be paid with County tourism appropriation. Collaborative staffing arrangements may be able to be worked out among the County Tourism Office and Chamber of Commerce, and Ceramics Museum staff utilizing a pool of volunteers for weekend coverage. Space at the Crossroads Commerce Center could be provided at not additional cost.

Allegany County Tourism Director Responsibilities (continued)

Tourism Promotion and Marketing

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
D.1.c.	Establish a tourist information center at or near the Cuba I-86 interchange.	H	Within 2 years	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce with assistance of Tourism Director	The cost to purchase tourism-materials-display racks could be paid with County tourism appropriation. Arrangements may be able to be worked out for placement of display racks in a business that operates seven (7) days per week.
D.5.	Place Allegany County tourism promotional materials in the Corning Visitor Center.	H	Within 2 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	County Tourism Office annual budget allocation.
D.7.	Develop various self-guided tours with maps and tour narrations downloadable to i-POD and MP3 devices.	M	Tours - within 3 / Narrations within 5 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	Cost to develop of the tour maps covered under County Tourism Office annual budget allocation. / Cost to print tour maps to be paid with advertising sales revenue from display ads appearing on the guide.
D.8.	Develop an outdoor recreation guide with a map that identifies outdoor recreational attractions on a single map for distribution at outdoor recreational businesses and businesses that sell outdoor recreational equipment.	H	Within 3 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	Cost to develop of the guide covered under County Tourism Office annual budget allocation. / Cost to print guide to be paid with advertising sales revenue for display ads appearing on the guide.
D.9.	Develop less expensive tourism pamphlets containing maps that identify attractions to replace the more expensive comprehensive tourist guide.	H	Within 2 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	Cost to develop the guide covered under County Tourism Office annual budget allocation.
D.10.	Cross-promote Allegany County community events and festivals and attractions at each major Allegany County special event and festival.	H	Within 1 year and on-going thereafter	Allegany County Tourism Director with assistance of Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	No additional cost. The cost will be covered within County budget appropriation for Special Events Coordinator salary. There is potential to use volunteers to reduce costs.
D.11.	Develop a hospitality training program for frontline employees who are likely to be the initial contact for visitors and tourists. Develop a training booklet to use for this purpose.	M	Within 3 years	Allegany County Tourism Director in conjunction with the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	Cost covered within Allegany County budget appropriation for Tourism Director salary or contract with Allegany County Chamber.
D.13.	Incorporate geocaching into local marketing and promotional efforts to draw tourists into Allegany County and through the "Main Street" business districts.	M	Within 3 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	No additional cost. The cost will be covered within County budget appropriation for Allegany County Tourism Director salary.
D.14	Develop a discount coupon booklet (or electronic swipe card) to sell at a nominal cost to encourage visitors and residents to patronize Allegany County businesses.	H	Within 3 years	Allegany County Tourism Director with assistance of Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	Advertising sales revenue

Allegany County Tourism Director Responsibilities (continued)

Tourism Promotion and Marketing

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
D.15.	Place high-profile, easily recognizable display racks containing tourism brochures in high-traffic businesses visitors and tourists are likely to patronize.	H	Within 2 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	Allegany County budget appropriation for display racks. Could be phased, with initial emphasis on highest traffic locations.
D.16.	Periodically provide bus tour companies with information about Allegany County attractions. Host and provide guided tours to bus company tour operators to expose them to Allegany County attractions.	H	Within 1 year and ongoing thereafter	Allegany County Tourism Director	No additional costs
D.17.	Periodically invite newspaper and travel writers from urban areas in New York and adjoining states to Allegany County. Host and provide guided tours to travel writers to expose them to Allegany County attractions.	M	Within 3 years and then periodically thereafter	Allegany County Tourism Director	No additional costs
D.18.	Develop an image of Allegany County as a relaxing weekend getaway destination.	H	Within 2 years & ongoing thereafter	Allegany County Tourism Director	No additional costs. Funds used for existing marketing would be utilized, only the message would be different.
D.20.	Explore the feasibility of producing a high-quality tourism video for broadcasting on the Travel Channel. (See D. 23 also. D.20 and D.23 could be combined into a single action.)	L	Within 5 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	No additional cost to explore feasibility. Use I Love NY funding to produce the video
D.21.	Establish an Allegany County Ambassador Program to extend hospitality to visitors attending major County events and festivals and students enrolled in the local colleges and their parents. (See A.1 also)	H	Within 2 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	The cost will be covered within County budget appropriation for Special Events Coordinator salary.

Infrastructure to Support Tourism

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
E.3.	Utilize software capable of capturing and tracking tourist telephone inquiries and requests for tourist information.	L	Within 5 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	No additional cost if Microsoft Outlook software is used.
E.4.	Encourage the Villages to construct or provide public restrooms accessible in the evenings and on weekends as well as during weekdays.	L	Within 2 years & ongoing thereafter	Allegany County Tourism Director	No additional cost to encourage the provision of restrooms. The cost to construct restrooms would come from municipal budget appropriations. If constructed in parks, EFP/Bond Act Grant funds may be available.

Allegany County Tourism Director Responsibilities (continued)

Expanding Tourist Attractions

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
F.5.	Explore establishing a consolidated market place with high visibility for displaying and selling Amish produced goods and foods.	M	Within 5 years	Allegany County Tourism Director	NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets.
F.6.	Encourage the establishment of more artist and artisan studios, art and artisan retail shops and venues, and cultural attractions in Allegany County.	M	Within 5 years and ongoing thereafter	Allegany County Tourism Director	No additional costs. The cost will be covered in the annual appropriation for the Tourism Director salary.

Organizational Capacity Building

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
B.1.	Establish a county-wide Chamber of Commerce	H	Within 3 years	Allegany County Office of Development to inform municipalities and business of benefits.	Nominal costs associated with establishing Chamber. / Chamber membership dues and fund raising events will support Chamber operation.
B.5.	Encourage and facilitate the formation of business improvement districts (BIDs) in the "Main Street" business districts within Allegany County.	L	Within 5 years	Allegany County Office of Development to inform municipalities and business of benefits. / Business owners and municipal boards to create BIDs.	Cost of distributing and sharing information on benefits of BIDs covered in County budget appropriation for Office of Development. / Funding necessary to establish BIDs to be contributed by municipal boards.

Expanding Tourist Attractions

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
F.7.	Increase the profile of Allegany County along I-86 and NYS Route 19 by facilitating the development of a hospitality business at this location.	H	Within 3 years	Allegany County Office of Development with assistance of the Friendship Enterprise Zone Committee	Nominal additional cost above existing annual County appropriation for staffing. Costs may be shared.

Allegany County Special Events Coordinator Responsibilities

Improve Communication, County Cohesion and Community Pride

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
A.1.	Establish a county-wide pool of volunteers to provide labor and other types of assistance when needed for special community events and festivals. (This recommended action could be combined with D.22.)	M	Within 3 years	Allegany County Special Events Coordinator w/ assistance from Allegany County Chamber of Commerce	No additional cost. The cost will be covered within Special Events Coordinator salary.

Organizational Capacity Building

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
B.7.	Establish a standing "Town & Gown" committee comprised of representatives of the three colleges in Allegany County, the County Tourism Director, the County Special Events Coordinator and the to-be-established Allegany County Chamber of Commerce to work on activities and programs of mutual benefit.	H	Within 1 year	Allegany County Chamber of Commerce, County Special Events Coordinator, County Director of Tourism, Houghton College, Alfred University and SUNY Alfred.	No cost.

Implementation Strategy

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
D.3	Develop and carryout an ongoing consolidated and coordinated marketing campaign for major Allegany County special events and festivals.	H	Within 2 years and ongoing thereafter	Allegany County Special Events Coordinator with assistance of local events planning committees	Annual Allegany County budget appropriation
D.4.	Prepare and distribute a county-wide special events calendar and post the calendar on the County marketing website.	H	Within 2 years	Allegany County Special Events Coordinator with assistance of local events planning committees	Annual Allegany County budget appropriation

Town and Gown Committee Responsibilities

Business Support

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
C.1.	Arrange for college students to assist small business owners/operators through internship programs and class projects.	M	Within 3 years	Town and Gown Committee	No additional cost

Tourism Promotion and Marketing

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
D.6.	Develop hospitality packets and distribute to parents and alumni visiting the campuses of colleges located in Allegany County.	H	Within 2 years	Town and Gown Committee	Cost to print materials and packages could be included in Tourism Directors annual budget and/or could be funded with advertising sales revenue of participating businesses.
D.22.	Work collaboratively with the local colleges to develop a video highlighting leisure, recreational, and entertainment attractions in Allegany County for the Colleges to show to new parents and their students.	M	Within 5 years	Town and Gown Committee	No additional cost

Expanding Tourist Attractions

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
F.3.	Work with Houghton College and Alfred University to establish equestrian trails in the State forests in Allegany County.	L	Within 5 years	Town and Gown Committee with assistance of NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation	OPRHP Recreation Trails Program

Allegany County Historian Responsibilities

Expanding Tourist Attractions

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
F.4.	Establish a Fire Department museum with donations of antique fire equipment provided by local fire departments.	L	Within 5 years	Allegany County Historian with assistance of local fire departments	Private funding. NYS Museum Funds.

Municipalities / Town / Village Responsibilities
Improve Communication, County Cohesion and Community Pride

	Recommended Actions	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Agency / Entity	Potential Funding Sources
A.5.	Improve the appearance of deteriorated structures and unkempt properties at and near gateways leading into Allegany County Communities.	M	Ongoing	Town & Village Code Enforcement Officers. Considered a shared municipal services approach.	Town and Village code enforcement budgets. Restore NY grant program for façade improvements and/or building refurbishment. Shared Municipal Services Incentive Program is there is a shared services approach.
A.8.	Publish a periodic newsletter on the County government website with columns written by town supervisors and village mayors.	L	Within 3 years	Town Supervisors & Village Mayors	No additional cost. Cost for County government website is covered within County budget appropriation for existing website

Allegany County Highway Department Responsibilities

Infrastructure to Support Tourism

E.2.	Improve highway and roadway directional signage and tourist-oriented directional signage in Allegany County.	M	Within 4 to 5 years & ongoing thereafter	Allegany County Highway Department	Annual County Highway Department budget allocation. Could be phased over several years to reduce annual financial impact.
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APPENDIX A

Minutes of Focus Group Meetings

APPENDIX B

***Excerpts and Summaries of Existing Plans, Studies and Reports Relevant to
Tourism***