2014 Rochester Legislative Roundtable Discussion

“Eggs & Issues”

Friday, February 7, 2014
Breakfast Reception: 8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

Hyatt Regency Rochester
125 East Main Street, Rochester, NY 14604
Grand Ballroom

New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association
visit Rochester
Rochester Hotel Association
Rochester Legislative Roundtable Discussion
“Eggs & Issues”
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Program

8:30 a.m.
Registration & Breakfast Buffet

9:15 - 10:00 a.m.
Welcome and Presentation of State Issues
    Jan Marie Chesterton, President, NYS Hospitality & Tourism Association
    Don Jeffries, President & CEO, VisitRochester
    Michael Marsch, President, Rochester Hotel Association

Networking Opportunities with State and Local Elected Officials

Sponsors
New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association

The New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association (NYSH&TA) is a not-for-profit trade organization representing nearly 1,000 lodging properties, totaling over 122,000 guest rooms, or 70% of total guest room inventory in the state. NYSH&TA’s membership is also comprised of approximately 50 parks and attractions, over 100 industry suppliers, and more than 100 cooperating organizations, tourism educators, students and individuals combined. Founded in Saratoga Springs in 1887, NYSH&TA’s mission is to lead and protect the New York State hospitality and tourism industry by providing advocacy, education, and resources. The Association provides benefits in three major categories: representation and advocacy on behalf of the industry before state lawmakers and regulatory agencies; resources in the form of money-saving programs, networking opportunities and marketing exposure via the website; educational offerings that help members best serve their customers.

Issues:

Tourism Funding – Support Revenue for the I Love NY Tourism Matching Grant Program

The State’s Matching Grant Program is a local assistance program which is used by local and regional tourism entities for advertising, promotion and tourism marketing programs. Given the Matching Grant Program’s track record as a revenue source for State and local governments, as well as, a job generator, tourism is not only a wise investment, but a critical one that yields unmatched and well sustained returns for New York’s economy. NYSH&TA supports the 2014-2015 Executive Budget proposal that allocates $3.815M for the Matching Grant Program plus $2.5M for the I Love NY Program. In addition to these key programs, the Association supports the $5M allocation for Market NY and the $1.1M for Taste NY which are also included in the Governor’s Budget Proposal.

Support Round 4 of the Regional Economic Development Councils

In his State of the State Address, Governor Cuomo called for a 4th round of Regional Economic Development Councils. NYSH&TA supports this initiative as it is critical that the tourism projects continue to be emphasized during this 4th round. The Association supports the 2014-2015 Executive Budget proposal that allocates $150M in new economic development capital funding and $70M in State tax credits that are available for the fourth round of Regional Economic Development Councils.

Support Round 2 of Tourism Related Summits

Adirondack Challenge and summits relating to Tourism, Beer/Wine, Parks/Trails. NYSH&TA supports the Governor’s plan to hold round 2 of these summits as well as the Governor’s Bass Master Challenge to be held on Owasko Lake in 2014. In 2013, Governor Cuomo suggested that the State
VisitRochester

Visit Rochester is a marketing and sales organization with initiatives to attract conventions, meetings, tourists and to support economic development. Visit Rochester’s role is that of a leader working with stakeholders to promote the Greater Rochester area improving the economic well being and quality of life for the region.

**Support Additional Regulatory Relief for NYS Businesses**

In 2013, the Governor and the Legislature implemented workers compensation and insurance reforms. To that the end, NYSH&TA has and will continue to seek member input on further needed reforms to workers compensation and other laws/regulations that make it difficult for all businesses, especially small businesses to operate in New York. Owners and operators of small businesses across New York seek relief from government mandates, duplications and administrative burdens that affect not only their bottom line but their ability to provide customer services at a high and consistent level. NYSH&TA applauds the Governor and Legislature for a willingness to tackle further reforms, laws and regulations in the State. As the discussions on making New York more business friendly continue and the Governor creates a Joint Executive-Legislative Commission on Regulatory Reform this session, we will work towards being an industry participant in bringing our needs and suggestions to the attention of this much needed commission.

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**Issues:**

**Recognizing Successes of 2013**

VisitRochester would like to acknowledge some of the successes we’ve had with New York State this past year, as 2013 provided some great moments for our industry:

- The PGA Championship had a tent devoted to Taste NY
- VisitRochester receiving $200,000 through the CFA grants to promote the area to Canadian visitors, and still more CFA grants for VisitRochester members like Geva Theatre Center, The Strong, Rochester Museum & Science Center, and many more.
- The success of bed tax generation (up more than $660,000 during the first three quarters of 2013 when compared to the same time in 2012)

We expect more recognition of the hospitality and tourism industries in 2014.
Rochester Hotel Association

The Rochester Hotel Association is a not-for-profit trade organization representing member businesses and individuals in the lodging and hospitality industries in the Rochester and Monroe County areas.

Issues:

- Over supply of hotel rooms (new builds receiving public funding)
- Government per diem too low (although it has recently increased, and that is a step in the right direction)
- Workers Compensation costs/State Unemployment Insurance rates too high
- Wage Theft reporting process is too cumbersome and is not beneficial
- Minimum wage increase not helpful to our industry
- Potential increase in FMLA compensation will result in increased costs to employers