



# Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance

## 2010 Annual Report

NEW YORK'S  
*Finger Lakes*<sup>®</sup>

Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance  
309 Lake Street, Penn Yan, NY 14527  
315.536.7488, [www.fingerlakes.org](http://www.fingerlakes.org)

#### MISSION:

Lead economic growth and development through exemplary promotion of the Finger Lakes region as a world class tourism destination.

#### VISION:

Be the recognized leader for destination marketing strategies and resources in the Finger Lakes region.

## A Message from Our President and Chairman of the Board

In 2010, the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance experienced substantial change in both structure and funding sources. Through our Strategic Planning Committee and approval from the Board, the structure of FLTA was re-worked to ensure a focus on our partners. Now, rather than having private sector partners and public sector members, everyone is a partner. The County Tourism Promotion Agencies (previously public sector members) are now considered partners of the organization.

During 2010, FLTA developed a marketing plan inclusive of cooperative programming for our partners. All partners were presented with a plate of options to choose from including everything from consumer show participation to electronic media purchases. One electronic media program, the Vacation Fun Lead generator, proved to be very successful. Well over 12,000 leads were received by FLTA, with many requesting our travel guide. Of course, we also produced our valued Travel Guide and Mini-Guide, both of which offered advertising opportunities to our partners.

As FLTA continues to look at the importance of our web site, additional upgrades were unveiled in April 2010. An interactive map allows the visitor to see what offerings are available. For example, the visitor can see the accommodations in a particular area, and then overlay that with the nearby wineries. This page is certainly attracting the traffic. Another new feature is the partner profile page. Through this page the partner can maintain their own listing, to ensure up to date information and to allow our partners to react quickly in the ever changing marketplace.

In the fall of 2009, the Board met to develop a 3 to 5 year strategic plan, with the final document being delivered in the 1st quarter of 2010. The outlined goals include the following:

- Grow tourism by 20% over three years (January 2010 to December 2012).
- Increase FLTA revenues by 10% annually, through the use of a consistent value based investment structure.
- Develop a communications plan that meets FLTA marketing needs and stakeholder expectations for FLTA accountability for success.
- Establish and maintain an informed, engaged representational structure that enhances FLTA program effectiveness.
- Develop a high performance and accountable FLTA Board of Directors and staff while maintaining an effective evaluation process for operations and programs.
- Obtain membership investment from all 14 counties and secure Matching Funds Administration.

The Committee worked through metrics to measure these goals, which the Board approved in Spring 2011. During each quarter of 2010, the Strategic Committee conducted a review of the plan to ensure progress was taking place on action items that will assist as we strive to meet the previously listed goals.

The 2010 Oxford Economic tourism numbers are not yet published. It is hoped that they will be made available in the Spring/Summer of 2011. Please watch the research section of our website as this report will be posted once it is made available. For 2009, the last Oxford report on file, tourism to the region contracted by 7.9%, but far out paced many other regions in New York State. In fact, the Finger Lakes region was the second best performing region in the state. The state, as a whole, saw its tourism numbers go down by 13.9%.

As we look forward to 2011, we are planning to deliver cooperative marketing programs that focus on electronic marketing medias while still providing collateral materials, show participation, the AAA program and manning the Thruway Information Centers. We look forward marketing the region in a way that allows visitation to experience a rebound from last year. It will be through the efforts of the staff, Board and private/public partners' investment and cooperation that we will continue to promote the region as a desired destination.

**Cynthia Kimble**  
*FLTA President*

**Gene Pierce**  
*FLTA Chairman of the Board*

## Our Staff and Board of Directors

### 2010 FLTA Staff

Cynthia Kimble, President – cindyk@fingerlakes.org  
Scott Butler, Director of Marketing  
Tom Cappon, Director of Sales  
Michelle L. Radcliffe, Office Coordinator  
Alison Petsky – Publications Coordinator  
Jack Carlson, IT/E-Marketing Administrator – jackc@fingerlakes.org  
Sarah Osterling, Marketing Assistant – saraho@fingerlakes.org  
Beulah Decker, Office Assistant – bdecker@fingerlakes.org  
Kristy LaManche, FL-LOWPA Program Coordinator – kristyl@fingerlakes.org  
Helan Bagley, FL-LOWPA Program Assistant

### 2010 FLTA Board of Directors

Gene Pierce – Chair – Glenora Wine Cellars – Yates County  
Allen Fusco - Vice Chair – Holiday Inn Elmira/Horseheads – Chemung County  
Scott Wiggins – Past Chair - La Tourelle Resort & Spa - Tompkins County  
Sam Kryger – Secretary - Hope Lake Lodge & Resort – Cortland County  
Peggy Coleman – Treasurer - Steuben County CVB – TPA Representative  
Nancy Tisch - Bet the Farm – Cayuga County  
Lynne Stewart - Bristol Harbour – Ontario County  
John Pulos - Rosemary's Legacy B & B – Schuyler County  
Joe Gober - Americana Vineyards Winery – Seneca County  
Debbie Meritsky - Black Sheep Inn – Steuben County  
Stella Reschke - Tioga County Tourism – TPA Representative  
Jim Dempsey - Cortland County CVB – TPA Representative  
Fred Bonn - Ithaca/Tompkins County CVB – TPA Representative

### 2010 FL-LOWPA Board of Directors

Scott Ingmire, Chair - Madison County  
Craig Schutt, Vice Chair - Tompkins County  
Elizabeth Mangle, Secretary - Hamilton County  
Russ Nemecek, Treasurer - Onondaga County  
Brian Wohnsiedler, Eastern Regional Rep - Jefferson County  
Jim Malyj, Central Regional Rep - Seneca County  
Victor Digiacomio, Western Region Rep - Niagara County



## FLTA History

Founded in 1919, Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance (FLTA) is an association of private sector attractions, tourism related businesses and participating county tourism offices working together to enhance and promote visitor businesses for the 9,000 square mile region. FLTA represents partners in all 14 counties of the region which include Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Livingston, Monroe, Onondaga, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne and Yates.

At 91 years of age, the Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance is one of the oldest destination marketing organizations in the nation.



## New Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance Partners in 2010

Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance was happy to welcome the following organizations as new partners in 2010:

Angelic Dreamz  
At The Corner  
Auburn Public Theater  
Bass Pro Shops  
Belhurst - Isabella's Spa  
Billsboro Winery  
Bluff Point of View  
Cayuga Community College  
Country Inn & Suites Cortland  
Crystal City Wedding & Party Center  
Eleven Lakes Winery  
Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor  
Ferenbaugh Campground  
Finger Lakes Farmstead Cheese Co  
Finger Lakes Golf Trail  
Finger Lakes Images  
Finger Lakes Museum  
Finger Lakes Wine Center  
First Niagara Bank  
Genesee Country Inn  
Genesee House (The)  
Gentle Giants B&B  
Grouse Haven Cabin  
Grow Monroe  
Hampton Inn - Elmira/Horseheads  
Hampton Inn - Syracuse/Clay  
Hampton Inn - Webster  
Hampton Inn Genesee  
Hayfield Quality Tours  
Heron Hill at Bristol  
Hill Cumorah Visitors Center  
Hyatt Regency Rochester  
Idea Works (The)  
Imagine Moore  
India House Restaurant  
J.R. Dill Winery  
L.L. Bean, Inc.  
Lake Ontario Wine Trail  
Lakecrest Manor Vacation Rentals  
Lakeland Winery  
LaQuinta Inn - Lyell Ave.  
Life Path Spa  
Microtel Inn & Suites



Microtel Inn & Suites  
Microtel Inn & Suites  
Microtel Inn & Suites Seneca Falls  
Mirbeau Inn & Spa  
Monica's Pies  
NutraMetrix  
Phelps Business Dev. & Tourism Council  
Pumpkin Hill Bistro  
Reagan's Canoe & Kayak  
Reynolds Media  
Rosemary's Legacy B&B  
Rudolph & Company Nugent Hardware  
Sciencenter, The  
Seneca Lake Cottage  
Sky Lodge vacation  
Skyland Gallery of Arts & Fine Crafts  
Skyland Weekly Rental Farm House  
Special Events Network  
SRAC  
The UPS Store  
Warren Real Estate  
Waterloo Harbor Campground

## Finger Lakes in the News

In 2010, FLTA's public relations function was brought in house. Even without the help of an agency, FLTA was able to generate over \$121,000 in ad equivalency directly from their PR efforts. Below is a sampling of the coverage that the Finger Lakes region received in 2010.

"Rolling out the yoga mat," The New York Times, February 7

"Black History Month Family Travel Ideas," About.com, February 5

"New York, New York: What a Wonderful State!," Essentially America, Winter 2010

"New York's lakes are a natural and culinary paradise," Philadelphia Daily News, March 10

"The land of wine and Woodstock," Abroad magazine, Spring 2010

"See why guys love Corning and the Finger Lakes," Taiwan News Online, April

"Uncork! New York Wine," Wingspan magazine, June

"Tracing the story of North America's earliest inhabitants," Courier magazine, June

"Crossing the Canal," Mariv Daily Newspaper (2nd largest in Israel), June 11

"Last blast of summer vacation," Chicago Tribune, July 6

"New York State of Wine," Budget Travel, October

"Discover wine country," In Jersey, November 5

"Gilded Age Glory on Display at New York's Historic Mansions," Courier magazine, November

"If you love winter fun, then the Finger Lakes is the place to be!," Horizon magazine (insert in Toronto Star and Ottawa National Post, November/December 2010



## Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance: By the Numbers IN 2010, FLTA...

- Received **6,275** toll free calls to the office.
- Was listed as the **third** best performing tourism region in New York State per Oxford Economics. In 2009 tourism spending in the region did contract by **7.9%**, while with the state showing an average contraction of **13.8%**. Most of this can be attributed to the economic downturn.
- The attendants at the Thruway Information Centers in Warners and Pembroke handed out **108,639** brochures while answering questions for over **55,250** visitors.
- Recorded **372,834** unique visits to FingerLakes.org with **2,771,934** page views.
- Visited **90** AAA/CAA offices in **10** states and provinces.
- Trained **615** AAA/CAA agents on the assets of the Finger Lakes.
- A total of **65** new partners joined FLTA.
- Over **8,500** visited the FLTA booths at various shows, with FLTA handing out **5,700** travel guides to interested parties.

## 2010 Consumer Shows

In order to measure the pulse of visitors from key markets areas throughout the Northeast and showcase the many new attractions and events the Finger Lakes has to offer, FLTA attends multiple consumer shows each year. FLTA attended the following shows in 2010:

January- Toronto Ultimate Travel Show- 482 booth visitors  
February- Eastern Sports & Outdoor Show- 2,131 booth visitors  
February- New Jersey Flower & Garden Show- 1,224 booth visitors  
February- NY Times Travel Show- 1,200 booth visitors  
February- AAA Philadelphia Mid-Atlantic- 600 booth visitors  
March- AAA Travel Marketplace Foxboro- 1,665 booth visitors  
May- Ottawa Women's Show- 850 booth visitors  
October- Southern Tier Sportsman Show- 127 booth visitors  
November- Toronto Women's Show- 574 booth visitors

Altogether, 8,553 people visited the Finger Lakes booth at consumer shows. 5,732 Travel Guides were distributed.



## FingerLakes.org Redesign

Redesigning the website was a major undertaking that started in 2009 and continued throughout 2010. With initial support in 2009 from the regional TPAs, Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance worked with Rochester-based interactive marketing agency Corporate Communications to completely revamp its website.

The new website design was launched in April 2010. In addition to being more aesthetically-pleasing and reflective of the nature's beauty, it also includes the following new features:

- Interactive Map
- Search Bar
- Profile Pages for all partners (including description, photo, contact info, and link)
- Photo and Video Galleries
- Customizable Trip Planner
- Partner Login section
- News Section & Events Calendar
- Blog

As perhaps our most important marketing tool, FLTA will continually invest in and update FingerLakes.org. The new design has won several awards, which will be listed in depth in the 2011 Annual Report.

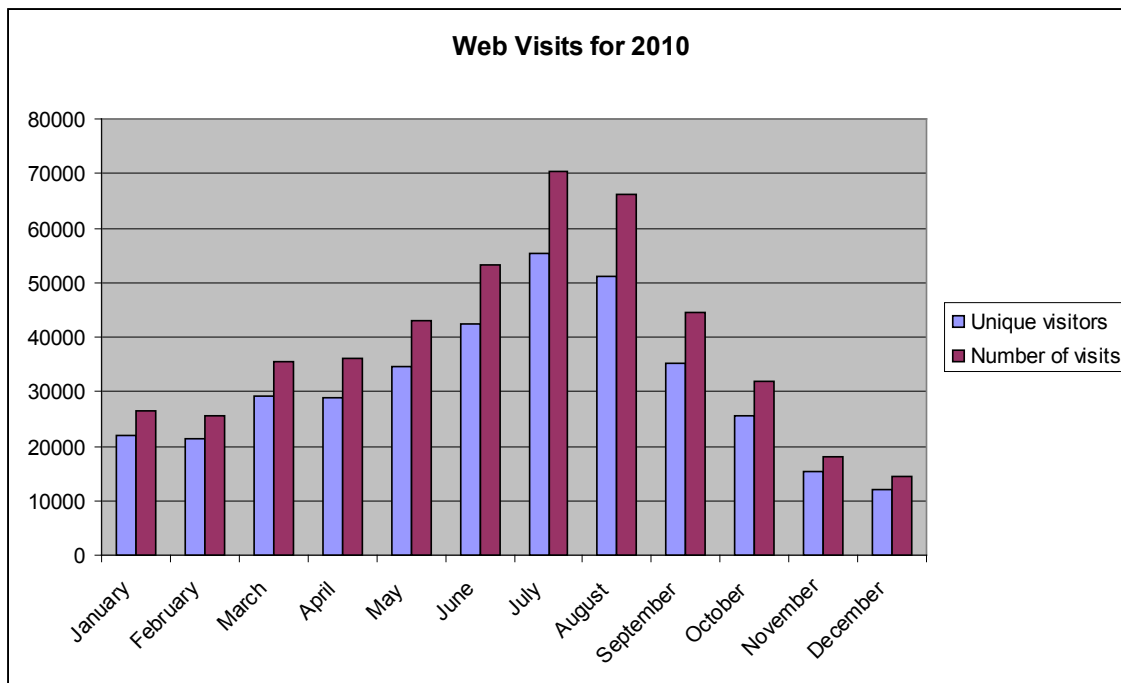
## HELP US HELP YOU!

If you or someone you know might be interested in joining FLTA as a partner, contact Director of Sales Mark Illig at 315-536-7488 for more information today!

## 2010 Digital Media Statistics

FLTA's web site FingerLakes.org is the Internet's premier source for Finger Lakes travel information. In 2010, there were 372,834 unique visits to FingerLakes.org, and 2,771,934 page views. As is typical, visitation numbers spiked during the summer months, with July being the strongest month.

Thanks to the website redesign (see page 6), time on site increased after the new layout went live. The average time on site jumped more than a minute, from 4 minutes and 14 seconds to 5 minutes and 18 seconds. This is an indication that visitors to the site are pleased with what they are finding and are exploring more sections than they originally intended.



## Social Media

Since social media burst onto the scene a few years ago, it has continued to grow by leaps and bounds. Facebook and Twitter were the two main social media accounts used by Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance in 2010, and both grew at an extremely rapid pace.

### Facebook

At the end of 2009, FLTA started a Fan page in addition to the Friend page it already was maintaining. The Fan page allows the user to reach more people and analyze growth. The Fan page also is the preferred method for business and organizations to keep in touch with customers. At year end, 1,173 people have "liked" the FLTA fan page and were receiving daily updates. That represents an increase of 394% year over year. According to Facebook Insights, FLTA's posts were viewed 22,969 times.

### Twitter

On Twitter, followers grew by 344% for a total of 688 followers at the end of the year. Twitter was used for one-to-one interaction with consumers, travel writers, travel agents, and other industry professionals.

As this new media continues to develop, FLTA will continue to maximize its use as a marketing tool.

## 2010 Fam Tours

Fam (“familiarization”) Tours are a great way for writers and group tour planners to experience the region. FLTA helped with the following Fam trips in 2010:

### AAA/CAA Agents- Fam Assistance

- Janine Hoffman of AAA Mid-Atlantic- June
- Susan Clift of CAA Waterloo- Coming in September

### Wine, Water & Wonders- Fam Assistance

- Robin Sammartino - May
- International Travel Agents with Sally Barry - May

### Tour Operators

- Micki Segmon & Carol McDonald of Above & Beyond Tours - May

### Travel Writers

- Sophia Dembling, of website “Flyover America,” also writing a book 100 Places in the USA Every Woman Should Go- June
- Charlotte Ward, a writer for Verve, a high-end British Magazine - August
- Charlene Mixa of TravelRoads.com- August



## Email Marketing

FLTA has put out a partner e-newsletter for several years. This has proven to be an effective way to keep in touch with partners. So, in May 2010, FLTA also began sending a bimonthly consumer e-newsletter. This e-newsletter allows the marketing department to take advantage of the 20,000+ contacts that have been collected from travel guide requests, lead generation campaigns, and at consumer shows and other events. It features a variety of Finger Lakes-related articles, upcoming events, and the latest partner promotions.

### Partner E-Newsletter

Time Frame	Bounce Rate	Open Rate	Click Rate
Q1	4.90%	28.70%	24.50%
Q2	9.60%	33.10%	36.70%
Q3	9.40%	27.30%	32.60%
Q4	5.70%	27.30%	30.20%
2010 Average	7.40%	29.10%	31.00%



### Cosumer E-Newsletter

Time Frame	Bounce Rate	Open Rate	Click Rate
Q2	12.20%	17.10%	31.20%
Q3	4.20%	20.20%	31.80%
Q4	7.10%	14.20%	30.20%
2010 Average	7.83%	17.17%	31.07%

*The July 2010 consumer e-newsletter*

# 2010 Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance Achievements

## January 2010

- Joe Veneto presented an Educational Seminar/ Workshop on packaging.
- FLTA joined the newly formed Finger Lakes branch of the Academy of Wine Communicators.
- FLTA attended the ABA Marketplace trade show and Toronto Ultimate consumer show.
- The 2010 Business Plan draft was delivered to the Strategic Planning committee.
- FLTA reshaped the Marketing Committee to include more partners in diverse business sectors and geographic locations.
- As a direct result of FLTA's PR efforts with I Love NY, the New York Times published an article about yoga getaways that included the Savannah House.



*An early booth concept from JEMCO, the company that produced FLTA's new consumer show display.*

## February 2010

- FLTA attended the Heartland Travel Showcase in Columbus, OH.
- The 2010 Official Finger Lakes Regional Travel Guide was released.
- FLTA attended several consumer shows including the Eastern Sports & Outdoor Show, the NJ Flower & Garden Show, the AAA Mid-Atlantic Expo, and the NY Times Travel Show.

## March 2010

- FLTA purchased a new booth for use at consumer shows.
- FLTA President, Cindy Kimble, attended the Empire State Tourism Conference in Albany, NY.
- FLTA attended Legislative Action Days in Albany, NY. FLTA conducted 19 legislative meetings.
- FLTA developed a lead sharing policy, approved by the Board.
- FLTA shared newly developed Finger Lakes video with TPAs and Marketing Committee.

## April 2010

- A completely redesigned version of FingerLakes.org was introduced.
- FLTA began the Vacation Fun Lead Generator cooperative program with six partners.
- Opened the Warners Thruway Travel Plaza for the season.
- Participated in a Canadian television interview about the Finger Lakes.

## May 2010

- FLTA attended the International Pow Wow in Orlando, FL.
- FLTA attended the Ottawa Women's Show in Ottawa, ON.
- FLTA received a clean audit.
- FLTA held a successful literature exchange with about 120 in attendance.
- FLTA attended NAJ East and through Wine Waters and Wonders hosted a luncheon. FLTA had the opportunity to present to the group in attendance. In conjunction with Wine Waters and Wonders partners, created a video that was used to share the Wine, Waters and Wonders itinerary.

*Continued on page 10*

# 2010 Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance Achievements



*Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance partners enjoyed a beautiful, sunny day at Waterloo Premium Outlets for the Annual Literature Exchange.*

## June 2010

- The final report for Matching Funds 2009 was issued.
- FLTA represented the tourism industry when they led a Fam tour for Leadership Finger Lakes.
- FLTA hired two summer interns.

## July 2010

- FLTA presented the first draft of 2011 Marketing Plan to the Marketing Committee.
- Applied for a \$1 million federal grant with FL-LOWPA.
- Hosted Senator Gillebrand's office for a tour of the region.

## August 2010

- FLTA hosted a Finger Lakes regional tourism booth at the New York State Fair. Partners were invited to exhibit free of cost.
- The 2011 Marketing Plan was finalized, presented, and approved by the Board of Directors.
- A new sales catalog was created to call attention to FLTA's 2011 Partner Advertising Opportunities.

## September 2010

- The 2011-12 Finger Lakes Group Travel Planners were delivered and distributed.
- FLTA delivered satisfaction surveys to partners.
- The New York Metro Area Email Campaign was concluded.

## October 2010

- FLTA received a total of \$2500 (the total grant amount available) from Canal NY. Funds helped with the development and production of the Group Travel Planner.
- Developed a special Holiday Happenings section on FingerLakes.org. Sold ads at a discounted rate of \$50, bringing in \$600 in ad revenue.

## November 2010

- FLTA attended the Toronto Women's Show.
- Nate Kelsey, a new sales representative in the Ithaca area, brought in five new partners for 2011.

## December 2010

- FLTA brought closure to the Finger Lakes Interpretative Center organization.
- FLTA secured our shared appointment to the NYS regional task force executive committee.