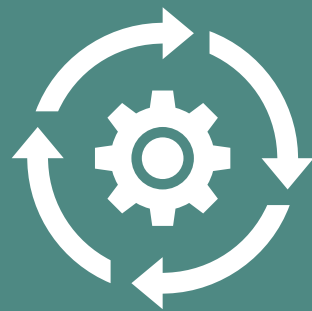


Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Report

2022-2023



Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce

Mission: Act as a catalyst for business and community development in the Greater Saranac Lake Area.

Vision: Providing services and representation for its membership and generating economic development through promotional and marketing strategies.

Each year the Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce continues to align our goals with our strategic plan with a focus on three core areas:

- Services - Develop benefits and services that provide value to our members
- Promotion - Raise the awareness of locals and visitors to the services and products the chamber and members provide through promotional and marketing strategies
- Convening - Build fellowship through social functions and community events and convene conversations that are important to our members and the community

Over this past year we engaged with our business community, supporting organizations, area residents, and visitors in numerous ways. The annual report allows us to look back over the past year and celebrate our success, review ways in which we can improve, and plan for the future.

Staff:

Rachel Karp, Executive Director

Adrienne Oliveras, Membership & Engagement Coordinator

Membership

Membership remains steady with 225 current members. Our membership is 67% business memberships, 27% non-profit memberships, and 6% dual (with Tupper Lake), community, or associate members. The largest portion of our membership is in Saranac Lake with 69% and other areas include Bloomingdale, Vermontville, Paul Smiths, Gabriels, Lake Clear, Lake Placid, Tupper Lake, Malone, Plattsburgh, Raybrook, and other areas. Lodging, retail, restaurants make about about 30% of membership, professional services are also about 30%, home improvement/construction is 10%, and 30% are all other categories including health, wellness, outdoor recreation, etc. Over the past year we welcomed 27 new members to the chamber with 11 of those new members joining during our March Membership Campaign.



225 Members Strong

Welcome Center

At the Saranac Lake Welcome Center, located at 39 Main St, Suite 2 in the Harrietstown Town Hall, we engaged with 1250 visitors (30% increase from previous year) and 550 phone calls. We also provide assistance to area residents with questions about where things are in the village, who to go to for village services, town services, and area events. We provide a welcoming smile when visitors and residents first enter the Town Hall. Over the past year we gave the Welcome Center a “face-lift” with a new coat of paint, new brochure and magazine holders, local framed photography for the walls (donated by Skip Murray), Saranac Lake branded decal, Saranac Lake posters, and new digital signage. This project was supported by the Town of Harrietstown and the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism.



1250 Visitor
Conversations



Serve

We hosted 6 workshops over the past year with a variety of topics reaching various industry sectors of our membership. Our workshops are available to members and non-members.

The **Non-Profit Charity Review Accreditation Workshop** was co-hosted by the Better Business Bureau with 5 attendees and covered the 20 standards charities must meet to be accredited as well as the opportunities and benefits available for those that complete the process.

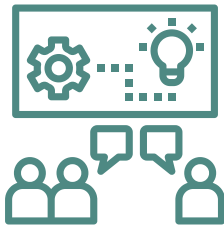
The **Health Insurance Webinar**, with 14 attendees, was co-hosted by the North Country Chamber of Commerce to provide information to our membership about the health insurance benefits and programs offered through the chamber.

An **Innovation for Results workshop** was planned to be a 2-day interactive workshop led by Bob Eckert of New & Improved, LLC. But, with not enough participants to run the full workshop it was shortened to a 1 hour introductory workshop to problem solving and creative thinking with 4 participants.

We offered an in-person **Marketing workshop** co-hosted by Justin Stearns, from Chimera Integrations, with 2 attendees. While the attendance was low these two business members were able to ask specific questions relative to their business needs and challenges with the offer of one on one follow-up and guidance.

In April we partnered with the North Country Chamber of Commerce to host an **OSHA Confined Space training**. This 4-hour course had 15 attendees, many of whom were village employees, and each attendee left with a certificate of completion and a better awareness of safety on the job.

And, finally we held a five day **Lunch & Learn Series** in celebration of National Small Business Week with a different topic each day. For each day attendance ranged from 2-4 people.



6 Business Builder Workshops 50 Participants

We also serve our members and the business community through partnerships and programs:

The **Carry Co-Working Space** – the Chamber assists with promotion and general information, general oversight of the space and users, and with programming including the new monthly "Up-Lift" Think Tank program series.

The Center for Businesses in Transition (CBIT) – assisting businesses who are planning to retire or sell their business so that they may have a successful transition for their business. We work to promote the program and services offered, have one on one meetings with business owners, assist with providing valuations for their business, and celebrate when a successful transition is accomplished.

See two successful transitions from this past year: [ADK Awards & Promotions](#) and [The Belvedere](#).

As a liaison with CBIT, Rachel went through a "Train the Trainer" series to then be able to offer training sessions to sellers. The Chamber coordinated with fellow CBIT liaison, Russ Kinyon (FCEDC), to offer a Seller's workshop series this past fall. This workshop provided an overview of the selling process and information on the best next steps forward for those businesses.

This year, through the CBIT partnership, we also helped plan the Small Communities, Big Opportunities 2-day conference at the Hotel Saranac connecting sellers with buyers and connecting entrepreneurs with resources and information about the buying and selling process.

We worked with the **Short-Term Rental Committee** and assisted with the initial draft of the Short Term Rental Regulations for the Village of Saranac Lake.

We continue to partner with the North Country Chamber of Commerce to offer health insurance including dental and vision plans to our members. We coordinate times to offer informational sessions as well as individual appointments in the Saranac Lake area.

Promote

We continued to distribute our 2022-2023 Saranac Lake Visitor Guide with 7000 copies being distributed to area businesses in the Tri-Lakes area as well as rest stops and welcome centers along I-87. Representatives from the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST) also brought visitor guides to various expos and conferences that they attended. This spring ROOST funded an additional 5000 copies to be printed for distribution this spring, summer, and fall. We will soon be moving forward with plans to develop the new 2024-2025 visitor guide.

Over this past winter and spring we worked with Great Range to develop a new tri-fold Saranac Lake Visitor's Map. The map offers visitors a tool to use for directions and guidance through the Saranac Lake area and also highlights some points of interest. 10,000 of these maps were printed and will be used by area hotels, rentals, and the Welcome Center. This map was supported by ROOST and Adirondack Frontier.

We continue to promote our members through Membership Spotlights, Ribbon Cuttings, Social Media, and the Support Local campaign focused around the holiday shopping season. We hosted ribbon cuttings for The Belvedere, the Shop at the Blu, Traverse Lodge, and Adirondack Riverwalking.



Online Engagement



“Chamber Chat” – our weekly newsletter sent to 1600 contacts with an average open rate of 37%.



Website – 7,855 visits to the website (increase of 28% from previous year) and 4,999 unique visits (number of people) (13% increase from previous year). Our home page receives the most visits with the job board as the next most visited page.



5,348 Facebook followers with a reach of 54,664



1175 followers on Instagram with a reach of 2580

Convene

The Chamber brings people together. Our events encourage connections and community conversations, promote tourism and support local initiatives, and financially support the chamber so that we are able to provide free workshops, networking events, advocacy and support for our business members as well as help out with other community events.

Our **Annual Dinner** and Celebration brings together the business community with 120 attendees. This annual celebration offers a time for us to celebrate the businesses we serve, the successes of the chamber, and look to the future of our area.

Business After Hours – 7 networking events at area businesses with 206 attendees.

Coffee Hours – 11 coffee hours with a variety of guest speakers and relevant subject matters with 90 attendees.

Play ADK Benefit Bash – a summer benefit event to raise money for the Chamber and Play ADK; raised \$2500 for each organization with 150 attendees and brought awareness to a wider audience for both the Chamber and Play ADK.

Saranac Lake First Fridays – co-hosted 9 First Fridays with 20-25 participating businesses each time, engaged with 25 college students, and promoted downtown Saranac Lake.

Listen to NCPR’s story on [Saranac Lake First Friday](#).



Sparkle Village – annual craft show and sale the first weekend in December with 45 vendors and 760 attendees.

Light up the Town – holiday decorating contest with 11 participants and 91 voters.

Trivia - hosted 2 trivia nights with 115 participants.

Grounded: Get Down to Earth in Saranac Lake – a community event held on the first Saturday in May at Dewey Mountain with a 5K Run/Walk and a Disc Golf Tournament. Additional activities included arts, history, healing, and exploring with pinecone mobile making, forest bathing, an interactive history tour, live music, and food. There were 46 participants in the 5K and 26 disc golf participants.

Community Resource Day and Job Fair – a free annual event on the 2nd Thursday in May co-hosted with the Saranac Lake Central School District with 58 participating businesses and organizations, 150 student and community attendees.

Event Support

The Chamber supports a variety a community events in different ways as an effort to assist with ensuring the event is successful and building partnerships with our membership.

Saranac Lake ArtWalks – assist Saranac Lake ArtWorks with promotion and share information on this popular event that happens on the third Thursday of the month from June-September. We assist with communication between organizers, businesses along the streets, artists/vendors, and visitors/area residents.

Art Markets – assist Saranac Lake ArtWorks on the day of the event with artists and vendors layout at the park, assisting with set up, parking, and clean up.

Celebrate Paddling – coordinate organization meetings with the outfitters and promote the event to visitors, businesses, and area residents.

90-Miler Canoe Race – Assist with finish line logistics & food by directing vendors to their correct location in Riverfront Park, answering questions, cleaning up garbage.

Northern Current Music Festival – assist with merchandise sales and sales tax reporting.

Supporting Community Events
12 Events, 1000s of people



Event Support

Saranac Lake Winter Carnival – volunteered 24 hours at the History Hut, handled printing and distribution of sporting event applications and liability forms, sold buttons and posters, promoted and provided information about activities and events.

Saranac Lake 3P - assisted with administrative set up of the online auction, served as a pick up and drop off location for auction items, and set up on day of event.

Savor SLK – served on the committee for Sip & Savor Saranac Lake, week-long event. We assisted with planning, communication with businesses, business participation, financial reporting, and helped to create a plan to expand and grow the event.

Community Conversations

We partnered and co-hosted 4 community conversations reaching 85 attendees:

Q & A Session about the Energize Lake Flower Grant with the Village of Saranac Lake and the Saranac Lake Local Development Corporation.

Rail Trail Public Meeting with the Adirondack Rail Trail Association to provide updates on the Rail Trail and plans for moving forward.

World University Games informational session for businesses and area residents to learn about the games and answer questions.

LGBTQI+ Training with the Town of Harrietstown and facilitated by the Adirondack North Country Gender Alliance. This was a free 2 hour training open to the public to help make our community and workplace a safe, welcoming space for all people



**4 Events, 85 attendees
Connections and Conversations**

Energizing Entrepreneurs Scholarship

Each year the Chamber provides the “Energizing Entrepreneurs” High School Scholarship for \$1000. This is awarded to a student who is civically minded and interested in studying business or a related field OR has a strong entrepreneurial spirit and is interested in starting their own business, vocation, or trade. We partner with St. Joe’s Addiction and Treatment Recovery Center to be able to provide this scholarship and North Country Community College and Paul Smith’s College offer a match if the student attends their college.



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Committee - After a series of trainings, assessments, discussion, and brainstorming the chamber has created a three year DEIB Strategic Plan with a focus on 4 key areas:

- To provide staff, board members, volunteers, members, stakeholders, and supporters with educational resources and training opportunities with a focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging to foster a welcoming community.
- Facilitate four DEIB related events that encourage participation from the BIPOC community and/or provide exposure of multicultural practices, traditions to the Saranac Lake community.
- Assist with executing the final product of the Welcoming and Belonging Micro Credential Program and encourage business participation to coincide with the goals of the program.
- Develop and review internal strategies to ensure an inclusive, equitable and sustainable culture and work environment and increase diversity within the chamber community.



The Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce continues to focus on supporting the business community and economic development working closely with local government and partner organizations. The Welcome Center provides information and resources to our visitors, area residents, and our business community.

**Moving forward.
Embracing change.
Forming partnerships.**

