

Testimony by
Roger Wierbicki
Director of Sales, DATTCO, Inc., New Britain, CT
Before the Appropriations Committee
Wednesday, February 20, 2013

I had the opportunity to take my mother and my wife to see the Jersey Boys musical. Prior to attending the show, we took in a museum and had a great meal prepared for us by a renowned chef.

We did not do this in Boston.
We did not do this in New York City.
We did this in Hartford, Connecticut.

Members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Roger Wierbicki. I am a Board Member of the Connecticut Convention and Sports Bureau. I am the Director of Sales at the DATTCO Bus Company located in New Britain, Connecticut.

I have a prepared statement.

I am testifying today to impress upon you the importance of continuing funding for regional tourism. It is important to not only the State of Connecticut as a whole, but to the local communities, the local businesses and the people they employ.

Being involved in the tourism industry, I am proud to say that tourism is one of the few enterprises that not only operates as a revenue generating mechanism, but also as a job creator. Tourism is a true working engine for the State of Connecticut.

The Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau began operation in July of 2012 and receives its public funding through DECD, the Office of Tourism. We recognize the need to support the organization financially in addition to state dollars. The organization is now 236 members strong, supporting the organization with membership dollars in the amount of \$231,000. These dollars sustain the public/private funding model. Total sales revenues to the state exceed \$25 million to date, supporting over 8,500 hospitality jobs and returning over \$2.2 million in Connecticut state sales tax. This is just the beginning! The Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau is having a direct impact on the quality of life for Connecticut citizens.

DATTCO currently employs about 200 people who are directly impacted by tourism dollars that are spent in Connecticut. Destinations Marketing Association International's Event Impact Calculator developed by Tourism Economics (an Oxford Economics Company) estimated the Connecticut Convention and Sports Bureau returns approximately \$6 for every state dollar spent. This is a true figure that I see every day at DATTCO with drivers, mechanics and office staff.

Last year, thanks to the Connecticut Convention and Sports Bureau, the University of Hartford hosted the America East Basketball Tournament. That tournament generated revenue streams to not only DATTCO for providing extra shuttle service, but also to local hotels and restaurants. In addition, the America East title game was broadcast nationally on cable television, driving awareness of the state.

This July, the New Britain Rock Cats are hosting the 2013 Eastern League All-Star game, another event secured by the Connecticut Convention and Sports Bureau. Through combined efforts, we are able to promote the region and all we have to offer.

I hope when line items are being reviewed, these three minutes had an impact.

Connecticut is Still Revolutionary.

I hope we can continue to operate in that capacity.