



February 28, 2015

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Your support through state wide programs and the support our regional tourism office, the Goshen Stampede, Inc. has expand and enhance its economic impact regionally and state wide. By doing so, our associate vendors and non-profit partners have also increased their economic foot print. These activities can be track as simply as following them on Facebook, observing their business practices, or watching the smiles of members reap the benefits of their hard work and perseverance.

With your continued funding for the three regional agencies, that are the creation of the legislature (CGS 10-397). Regional tourism can continue to partner with the state central tourism agency in generating the revenues and jobs associated with tourism in the state. The regional agencies provide a local and diverse complement to the overarching and general efforts of the central office. This partnership and its shared responsibilities should be maintained for the good of the whole state and its individual towns and various regions.

Without the three regional agencies constantly stimulating the grass roots of the Connecticut's tourism initiative, I believe the budget of the proposed \$10 million will be squandered away on incidentals and will never have the chance to reach the new tourism ventures such as "The Goshen Stampede" and its supporting tourism event producers. After all the states social media campaign, is based on the vigorous support of grass roots tourism which come from hundreds of small offices that have personal relationships with the three regional agencies, which in turn circle these smaller tourism initiatives into the "Still Revolutionary" program.

I urge you to consider reinstating these three regional agencies, which have been directly responsive to the needs of your local and regional constituencies. Please find the \$1.5 million needed to sustain the three regional tourism agencies.

## Regional tourism agencies

- Generate significant revenue and support numerous jobs.
- Have been established by the Connecticut State Legislature to promote tourism in the state and to represent the regions, and have evolved over 30 years
- Provide every Connecticut town a direct voice in decisions regarding marketing tourism in their community and in their region.
- Provide a corps of knowledgeable volunteers dedicated to marketing regional tourism in cooperation and partnership with the Office of Tourism's overall brand campaign
- Offer a vehicle for tourism industry representatives to participate in decisions that directly affect their business and cultural heritage.
- Generate financial investment and involvement by private entities in tourism marketing activities.
- Provide input and services to the State Office of Tourism.
- Support and augment the efforts of the State Office of Tourism as partners in Connecticut tourism
- Generate millions of dollars of free media exposure for the regions.
- Focus regional public and private sector marketing efforts through shared objectives and strategies with the State Office of Tourism presenting an integrated campaign that showcases each of the five regional brands represented by the Central, Eastern and Western Regions that tell the story of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

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