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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Putting Businesses First & Building Sullivan Catskills Confidence

Sullivan County, NY--The Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association (SCVA) during the pre-vacation season historically is bustling with dozens of calls per day from visitors asking questions on where to stay and visit. Staff is also busy attending trade shows, hosting travel writers and vigorously promoting must-see experiences throughout the Sullivan Catskills through digital, print and social media advertisements.

COVID-19 changed all of this! Today, the SCVA team is working harder than ever and even gaining in popularity. Since travel is not encouraged during this crisis, staff slightly altered the organization's direction to empower its small businesses, residents, and front-line workers. "It is a time for us to reflect on those who have made the Sullivan Catskills a world recognized destination," stated Roberta Byron-Lockwood, CEO/President. "Our community is the foundation of what makes the Sullivan Catskills a special place. Though it is our pristine beauty, distinctive lodging & resorts, Michelin quality restaurants, and thriving arts & culture scene that initially brings visitors here, it is our people that makes them return year-after-year," Byron-Lockwood elaborated. "We are now strategically planning to recover by building consumer trust in our destination. We have the formula for success: hospitality, top-notch experiences and businesses that are taking extra safety precautions to ensure visitor confidence, post COVID-19."

The SCVA team are still tourism concierges, but the organization is now serving as an essential informational resource for its community as well as economic and recovery stewards for its member businesses—and engaging new followers each week as a result.

The SCVA's new programs

Distributing ENews: Three times a week staff distributes article updates on COVID-19 from the Hospitality industry, NYS Governor Cuomo's Office and the Center for Disease Control. The newsletter also highlights Hometown Heroes which features businesses and people who have gone above-and-beyond to serve others in need during this crisis. **The newsletter has gained almost 3k new subscribers since March 20th, increasing readership just under 30K!**

Established the "Gift Certificates to Support Our Local Businesses" program: This initiative has **generated \$22,000 to date, but participation is increasing daily.** All money collected goes directly to participating SCVA members.

Social Media: Daily posts showcase members through featured stories, photos, and videos. **Since the start of the pandemic, Facebook followers increased to 41k, a 30% increase.**

Planning for its tourism recovery is important. The SCVA is working behind the scenes to strategically position its businesses for recovery and to once again, serve its visitors and gain their confidence. Its goal is for the Sullivan Catskills to rebuild quickly and align growth with its, pre COVID-19 projected numbers. Member-focused educational Webinars; creating videos to gain visitor confidence on businesses COVID-19 best practices; and sending high profile travel writers a gift box with donated local items to encourage them to visit in





the future are just a few things the SCVA team is doing to lay the foundation for rebuilding post pandemic crisis. Staff is also participating in daily Hospitality virtual seminars and planning to attend its first virtual tour operator trade show at the end of the month.

For more information about the SCVA and its programs, visit www.sullivancatskills.com.
Building Sullivan Catskills Confidence, visit <https://sullivancatskills.com/covid-19-news-information/>

