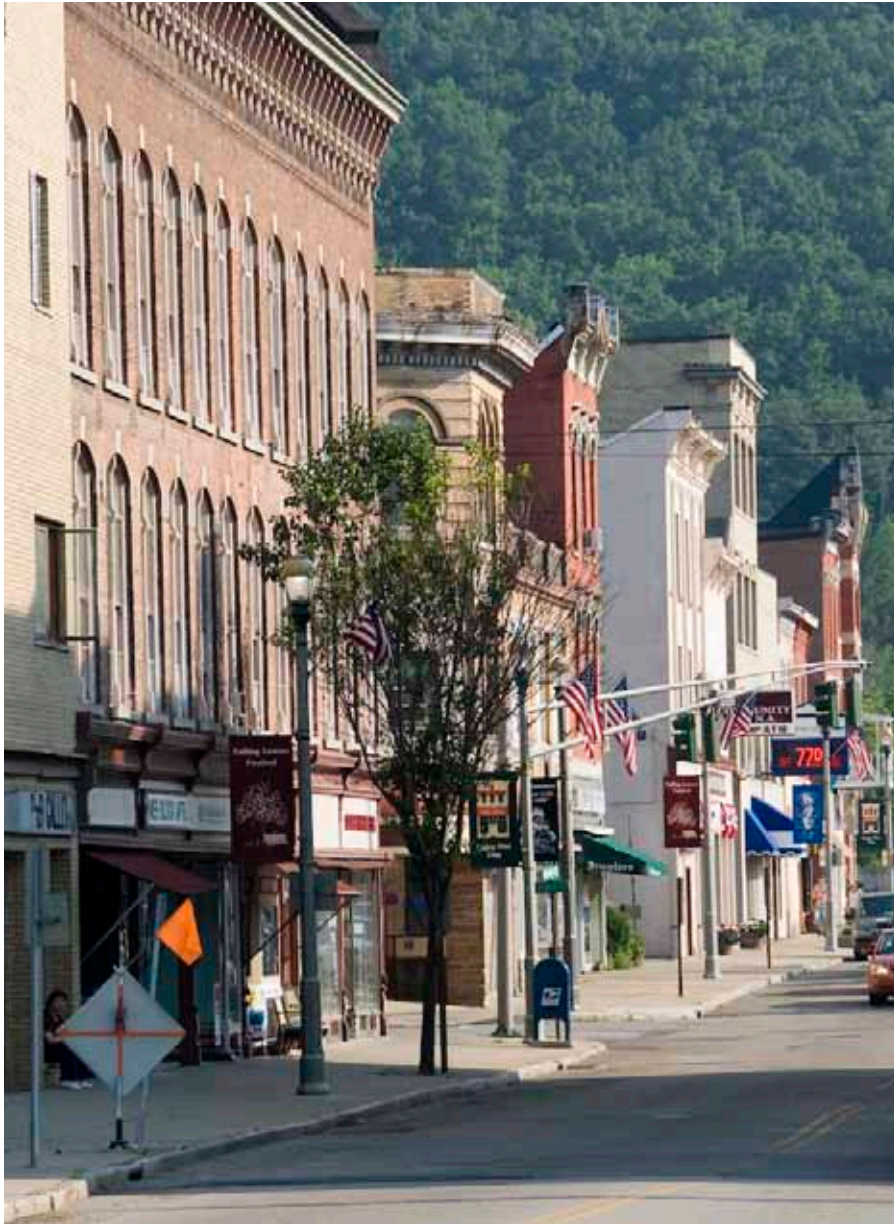


Salamanca, New York
July 2008



Assessment Findings & Suggestions Report



Ideas to increase tourism spending

In July of 2008, a Community Tourism Assessment of Salamanca, New York, was conducted, and the findings were presented in a three-hour workshop. The assessment provides an unbiased overview of the community – how it is seen by a visitor. It includes a review of local marketing efforts, signage, attractions, critical mass, retail mix, ease of getting around, customer service, visitor amenities such as parking and public restrooms, overall appeal, and the community’s ability to attract overnight visitors.

In performing the “Community Assessment,” we looked at the area through the eyes of a first-time visitor. No prior research was facilitated, and no community representatives were contacted except to set up the project, and the town and surrounding area were “secretly shopped.”

There are two primary elements to the assessment process: First is the “Marketing Effectiveness Assessment.”

How easy is it for potential visitors to find information about the community or area? Once they find information, are your marketing materials good enough to close the sale? In the Marketing Effectiveness Assessment, we assigned two (or more) people to plan trips into the general region. They did not know, in advance, who the assessment was for. They used whatever resources they would typically use in planning a trip: travel guides, brochures, the internet, calling visitor information centers, review of marketing materials, etc. - just as you might do in planning a trip to a “new” area or destination.

The community has five opportunities to close the sale:

- 1) Personal contact (visitor information centers, trade shows, etc.)
- 2) Websites
- 3) Brochures and printed materials
- 4) Publicity (articles)
- 5) Word of mouth - the most effective means

We tested all of these methods by contacting area visitor information services and attractions, searching the internet for activities, requesting and reviewing printed materials, looking for articles and third-party information, and questioning regional contacts. We reviewed both commercial and organizational

websites promoting the area, state tourism websites, read travel articles, and looked at AAA Tour Book reviews and suggested activities.

The marketing assessment determined how visible the community was during the research, and how effective the marketing was in convincing a potential visitor that the community would be worth a special trip, a stop, or an overnight stay. The key to the marketing assessment is to see if you have a primary lure that makes you worth a special trip of a two-hour drive - or further away. The question on most visitors' mind is: what do you have that I can't get closer to home? What makes you worth a special trip?

Where most communities fail is when they merely provide a "list" of what the community has, whether it's truly "unique" or not. Nearly every community in North America promotes the usual list of diversions: local museums, unique shops and restaurants, plenty of lodging, golf, outdoor recreation (bird watching, hiking, biking, boating, etc., etc.), historic downtowns, scenic vistas, and so on. Of course, nearly every visitor can do this closer to home. So, what makes your community worth a special trip?

Always promote your primary lure first - what makes you worth that special trip, THEN your diversionary activities. Would you go to Anaheim, California if Disneyland wasn't there? Do you think that Universal Studios and Knott's Berry Farm get upset that Disneyland gets all the glory? That they are diversions? Of course not. Eighty percent of all tourism spending is with diversionary activities. Disney does the heavy lifting in terms of advertising and promotion, and the diversionary activities ride on those coattails.

In a nutshell, the Marketing Effectiveness Assessment looks for things that make you worth a special trip and an overnight stay. The secret shoppers look for details, details, details. To be successful you must provide itineraries and specifics - not just generalities. Are your marketing efforts good enough to close the sale?

The second part of the assessment process is the On-site Assessment. During this part of the assessment, we spent several days in the community, looking at enticement from freeways and highways (signs, billboards, something that would get a visitor to stop), beautification and overall curb appeal, way-finding (ease of getting around), visitor amenities (public restrooms, visitor

information, parking), activities, overall appeal, retail mix (lodging, dining, shopping), critical mass, customer service, area attractions, pedestrian friendliness, gathering spaces, evening activities, and the availability of marketing materials and their effectiveness.

The community benefits from tourism when visitors spend money, and they do that in the local gift shops, restaurants, hotels, etc. Therefore, the On-site Assessment includes a candid look at private businesses as much as public spaces and amenities.

For every shortcoming or challenge we note during the assessment process, we provide a low-cost "suggestion," where possible, on how the challenge can be corrected or overcome. The suggestions are not termed "recommendations," as they were developed without consulting the community first about possible restraints, future plans, or reasons the suggestions may not be appropriate. Hopefully this assessment process will open dialogue within the community, leading it to adopt some or all of the suggestions, taking them from suggestions to recommendations.

It's important to note that to increase the community's tourism industry, fulfilling one or two of the suggestions may have little impact, but implementing a number of them, if not all, can have a profoundly successful impact on the community's ability to tap into the tourism industry.

Implementation of these suggestions must be a community-wide effort, involving both privately owned businesses as well as local, county, and state agencies, where appropriate. Every local organization plays a role in tourism, downtown revitalization, or economic development efforts. A Destination Marketing Organization (DMO, CVB, Chamber, TPA, etc.) cannot be successful if the tourism effort is not community-wide.

In many cases, issues may come up that you are already aware of and are already working on. In that case, the assessment validates those efforts. But more often than not, the assessment will point out things that you are painfully aware of but can't mention or bring up without paying a political price. Local politics can be a killer of the tourism industry.

While marketing efforts are important, product development is the most important factor of a successful tourism industry. Visitors want activities, not just things to look at. How much time can a visitor spend enjoying activities - that cater to their interests - in your community? Does your community have truly unique attractions the visitor can't get closer to home? You must be able to deliver on your marketing promises - otherwise visitors might come once, but they won't come back. It's much more cost effective to bring people back, than to always go out and entice new visitors into town. "Been there, done that" communities eventually run out of visitors and find they don't have a sustainable tourism industry, or simply become pit stops or gateways on the way to somewhere else.

After spending several days reviewing marketing materials and assessing the community, we have looked at all of these issues, developed some suggestions and ideas the community can discuss and possibly implement to help increase tourism spending locally.

SUCCESSFUL TOURISM TRANSLATES TO CASH

Tourism is successful when the community imports more cash than it exports. When residents spend their hard-earned money outside the community, the community is exporting cash - often referred to as "leakage." Tourism helps fill that gap, importing cash into the local economy without the necessity of having to provide extended social and other services. Visitors come, spend money, then go home. When you import more cash than you export, you have a positive "balance of trade." Communities with successful tourism programs easily see that the industry subsidizes the community, whereas other communities find that they subsidize visitors - providing services visitors use without them leaving enough money behind to cover the cost of those services.

The primary goal of the tourism industry is to bring more cash into the local economy. This doesn't happen when visitors come into the community, get out of their cars, and take photographs. And it doesn't happen when visitors go swimming in the lake at your city park all day, sunning, and eating the lunch they brought from home. And it doesn't happen when visitors hike down your trails, enjoy your interpretive centers, or stroll through your lovely arboretums. These are all great things to do, and, of course, you do want your visitors to do these - but, you also want to entice them into your shops,

your cafes, espresso stands, restaurants, galleries, B&B's, hotels, ultimately opening their wallets to make purchases. That is what helps your local economy, your small merchants, your hoteliers, and your tax coffers.

To entice visitors to spend money in your community, you need to have places for them to spend it - you need to have the right mix of shops, restaurants, entertainment, and lodging facilities, all in an attractive setting, as well as the attractions that make them want to visit you in the first place.

THE THREE TYPES OF TOURISM

1. Visiting friends and family

The number one reason people travel is to visit friends and/or family. If you did nothing to promote tourism, you would still have tourism in your community. However, when friends and family come to visit, do local residents take them out to eat, shop, dine locally? Or do they head to a neighboring community? Do your locals even know what you have to offer? An effective tourism marketing effort also includes educating locals as to what you have and how to find it through effective wayfinding signage, gateways and advertising.

2. Business travel

The second most popular reason for travel is business. Included in this category is educational travel: colleges and universities, as well as conventions and meetings, corporate travel, vendor travel, etc. Like leisure travelers, this group is looking for things to do "after hours" while in the area. The most successful convention and trade show towns are the result of their secondary activities or "diversions," not simply because of their convention and exhibition facilities. Think DisneyWorld, Disneyland, San Antonio's River Walk, to name a few.

3. Leisure travel

The third, and most lucrative of all types of visitors, is the leisure traveler. They have no personal connections to the community, but are coming purely to enjoy themselves. They stay in commercial lodging establishments, eat virtually all their meals in local restaurants, and their top diversionary activity is shopping and dining in a pedestrian-friendly setting.

The average leisure visitor is active 14 hours a day, yet typically only spends four to six hours with the primary lure. They then spend eight to ten hours with diversionary activities - things they could do closer to home, but will do while in the area. A good example of this is Branson, Missouri, the “live music-theater capital of the world.” This town of 6,500 residents hosts 7.5 million visitors a year. The primary “lure” is the 49 music theaters. The average visitor attends two shows a day over about four hours. During the other hours of the day, the visitor will shop in local outlet malls, head to the water parks, theme parks, and other attractions, play a round of golf, hike, bike, fish, do some bird watching, and participate in any number of other activities they could do closer to home, but will do while visiting Branson.

THE THREE STAGES OF TOURISM

1. Status quo

If you take no action to develop the tourism industry, you will still have an element of tourism, simply because some travelers will pull off local highways or freeways for gas, food, or lodging, as well as the fact that the number one reason for travel is to visit friends or family. If you have residents, you will have some tourism.

2. Getting people to stop

The first priority of developing a successful tourism industry is getting people to stop. Imagine how successful businesses in the community would be if just 50% of the vehicles traveling through pulled off the highway and spent just 30 minutes in your community – buying gas, an ice cream cone, a sandwich, a gift or souvenir?

If there’s a strong pull, imagine the money spent if visitors stayed two hours in the community, which nearly always translates to additional spending.

The first goal is to get those travelers to stop.



3. Becoming the destination

To become a destination community you must have attractions and supporting amenities that convince visitors to spend the night. And those attractions must be different from what the visitor can get closer to home.

Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors, and nearly ten times that of visitors using your community as a pit stop on the way to somewhere else.

THE FOUR-TIMES RULE

Visitors will make a point of stopping or staying in a community if it has enough activities that appeal specifically to them and will keep them busy four times longer than it took them to get there.

In other words, if a person has to drive 15 minutes to visit you, do you have enough for them to do to keep them busy for an hour? (4 times 15 minutes) If a visitor has to drive an hour, do you have the activities and amenities to keep them busy for four hours?

The more you have to offer, collectively, the further visitors will come, and the longer they will stay, and of course, the more they will spend. This is why it is so important for communities to market more than just their immediate geographic areas. By marketing neighboring activities and attractions, you present much more for a visitor to do, and you make the visit worth the trip. Visitors don't care about city limits or county lines – so market the broader package and you'll be able to keep people in the area long enough to translate to another meal, some more shopping, and hopefully, an overnight stay.

SELL THE EXPERIENCE, NOT GEOGRAPHY

Nearly every destination marketing organization is charged with promoting a geographic area, yet visitors couldn't care less about those boundaries. They are looking for activities that cater to their interests, and location is second to the experience. ALWAYS promote the primary lure first, then the location. If I want to go see Andy Williams, I don't care whether he's in Muskogee, Oklahoma or in Branson, Missouri. Visitors, by the millions, head to Disneyland, DisneyWorld, Dollywood and other attractions. They are not going to Anaheim, Orlando or Pigeon Forge.

Always sell the activity - the experience - THEN the location.



LURES, DIVERSIONS AND AMBIANCE

Too often communities promote the list of diversions that nearly every community has. The primary lure is the activity that a visitor can't find closer to home.

Always promote your primary lure, then the diversions. Do not try to be all things to all people. Have you ever gone anywhere because they had "something for everyone?" Of course not - you go there because they have something specific for you. Find your niche and promote it like crazy. Historic downtowns provide ambiance - they are not attractions, diversions, nor are they a primary lure. It's what's in the buildings that makes a downtown a destination.

The same can be said for scenery. Unless your vista is a world-class scene, such as Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon, scenic vistas create wonderful ambiance, but don't translate to spending, and they only last a few minutes. Then what?

All too often communities promote their heritage as a primary draw. How far would you travel to visit a mining museum? A timber museum? An agricultural center? A county historical museum? Heritage must be outstanding and pervasive throughout the community to be a primary lure, such as Plimoth Plantation or Salem, Massachusetts.



Thousands of communities are the "capital" of something. For instance, in California, Borrego Springs is the grapefruit capital of the world. Gilroy is the garlic capital. Modesto is the tomato capital. Gridley is the kiwi capital. Oxnard is the strawberry capital. Fallbrook is the avocado

capital. But here's the question: Have you ever gone anywhere because it was the capital of a fruit or a vegetable?

Your local heritage is important to the community and can set the ambiance, even becoming a diversionary activity. But to the vast majority of potential visitors, it's not a reason to make a special trip.

BE DIFFERENT OR THE BEST

Why should a visitor come to your community if they can enjoy the same activities closer to home? Too many communities promote "outdoor recreation" as their primary draw. Unfortunately, that is the same attraction promoted by nearly every community in North America.

If you are different, then you have a reason for travelers to choose to visit you. If you are the best, then visitors will generally flock to your doors.

If you have great hiking trails, then market their unique qualities. Be specific and paint the image of how wonderful they are in the minds of your potential visitors. If you have one fantastic restaurant in town, let people know about it – a unique dining experience is something many people will travel far to enjoy.

Ashland, Oregon, previously a depressed timber town, began its Shakespeare Festival, which now runs nine months of the year and draws hundreds of thousands of visitors who spend an average of six nights in the community. The Shakespeare Festival made Ashland different from any other community.

Leavenworth, Washington, another dying timber town, adopted a Bavarian architectural theme and produces dozens of Bavarian events every year. Some now say the town looks more genuinely Bavarian than towns in Bavaria. It is now one of the primary tourist destinations in Washington state, hosting more than 2.5 million visitors annually. They offer a different experience, an experience that is pervasive throughout town.

Okanogan County, Washington is an outdoor recreational paradise – just like 37 of the 38 other counties in Washington. So why go to the Okanogan? Because they are the best. They researched guidebooks, newspaper and magazine articles, and pulled quotes they could use in their advertising

efforts. Like, "Pinch yourself, you're in Okanogan Country with perhaps the best cross country skiing on the continent." This, and other quotes like it, make it worth the drive to visit Okanogan Country. The third-party endorsements show that they are the best.

Set yourself apart from everyone else, and you'll see that in being unique, you'll become a greater attraction.

CRITICAL MASS MEANS CASH

Although it may not be the primary reason why visitors come to your community, shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting is the number one activity of visitors. Besides lodging, it is also how visitors spend the most amount of money.

Do you have a pedestrian-friendly shopping district? If not, can you create one? Many communities have been highly successful with the development of a two or three block long pedestrian "village" including visitor-oriented retail shops, dining, visitor information, restrooms, etc., all in an attractive, landscaped setting.

The general rule of thumb in those two or three blocks (not spread out all over town) is 10+10+10: Ten destination retail shops, which includes galleries, antiques, collectibles, home accents and furnishings, artists in action, book stores, logo gear (clothing), souvenirs, outfitters, tour operators, activity shops such as kites, jewelry, wine or tobacco shops, and other specialties. The second ten is for food: ice cream, fudge and candy stores, soda fountains, sit-down dining, coffee shops, cafes, bistros, delis, etc. And the final ten are businesses open after 6:00 pm. This includes entertainment: bars, dance clubs, theaters (movies and performing), retail shops with activities (piano bar in a wine shop), etc.

The important point is to group these businesses together to create the "critical mass" in a pedestrian-friendly setting. This will attract visitors as well as locals, and make it worth their while to stop and shop. People are always drawn to the critical mass – the opportunity to have multiple choices, multiple experiences, all in a convenient and attractive setting.

TOURISM IS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The goal of successful tourism is for people to come into the community, spend money, and go home. Tourism is nearly a \$650 billion dollar industry in the U.S., supporting millions of jobs. Ninety percent of tourism industry

businesses are small businesses of which 90% have less than 15 employees. Tourism provides the opportunity for entrepreneurs to get started, for small family-run businesses to thrive, for artisans and craftspeople to find a market, and creates a basis for unique niche-retail environment including wineries, artists, crafts, etc. Tourism provides a diverse market within the community, expanding its potential. Enhancing the community through beautification efforts creates an attractive setting for both locals and visitors, key in revitalizing a community's downtown. And a tourism-friendly town will attract non-tourism industries faster than others – new businesses will see the community as a visitor before they make a final determination about the community. Tourism is the front door to your economic development efforts.

The benefits of a healthy tourism industry can rejuvenate a town, foster community pride, encourage economic diversity, and lead the way to a vital, successful community.

NEXT STEPS

The findings and suggestions in this report can provide your community with many ideas, strategies, and goals to reach for. We hope that it fosters dialogue in the community and becomes a springboard for the community in enhancing its tourism industry, leading to greater prosperity, rejuvenation, and enjoyment by all the citizens.

This report offers a first step in reaching that goal. To fully realize the benefits of this assessment, the community should take these findings and suggestions, discuss them and evaluate them, and develop a plan for implementation.

A detailed "Community Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan" builds on the results of this assessment, adding in-depth research, evaluation, and community input to develop a unique brand and implementation program. The assessment process essentially provides a look at where you are today.

The next steps in the planning process is interviewing local stakeholders, providing public outreach, and reviewing past and current planning efforts. This determines where you want to go as a community.

The third step involves research, feasibility and market analysis, and determining your brand - what you are or hope to be known for. Then comes the "development" portion of the plan or the "how to get there" program: determining what product development initiatives need to be undertaken to reinforce and grow the brand. This also includes defining the roles of the various local organizations. Brand-building takes a village - everyone pulling in the same direction, each with its own "to do list."

Finally, there's the detailed marketing plan: how and when you will tell the world who you are and what makes you special: the place to live, work and play.

This Branding, Development & Marketing Plan should be an "action plan" as opposed to a "strategic plan." You want a to do list, by organization, not just general strategies, goals and objectives.

For every recommendation the following elements should be detailed:

1. A brief description of the recommendation
2. Who would be charged with implementation
3. When it would be implemented
4. How much it will cost
5. Where the money will come from
6. The rationale for making the recommendation

The recommendations should provide all the necessary steps for your community to be successful in attaining its goals of a more diverse economy with an enhanced tourism industry and to become a more attractive and enjoyable community for both visitors and citizens.

If you move forward with the development of the Action Plan and hire outside services, always hire the most qualified team you can find (issue a request for Statement of Qualifications) and then negotiate the scope of work and cost with them. If you are not able to reach an agreement, then move to number two on your list. A good plan will provide a program to get local residents and the business community pulling together to enhance the community, building its unique image in the minds of visitors and residents alike. The result of your efforts will be a prosperous, enjoyable environment to live, work, and visit.

Real Men Don't Ask For Directions The rule of wayfinding

First we stopped at the visitor information center (bottom left) along I-86. What a beautiful visitor center! The staff was very helpful and the facility is spotless and very well maintained. The reason to visit Salamanca, according to staff, is the casino. When pressed, the rail museum was also mentioned, but beyond that, Salamanca (the town) doesn't have a lot to offer visitors. We appreciate the honesty and proves that product sells itself.

Finding the exit to Salamanca from the interstate (bottom right) was easy enough. Visitor information was also noted, which is nice.



Suggestion:

Looks good. (top) Gas. Food. Lodging. All to the right.

At the base of the exit, all attractions (bottom left) seem to be to the left. There's no wayfinding, though, to tell visitors which way to turn to find Salamanca. Where is it?

Heading south on Highway 219. (bottom right)

The two primary signage issues that are critical to the success of any community are gateways and directional (or wayfinding) signage. Gateways introduce visitors to your community and provide a sense of arrival. Directional signs help visitors (and residents) navigate the area, telling them what attractions and amenities are available and where to find them. It's important to "connect the dots" with your wayfinding signs to make it as easy as possible for visitors to find you. The wayfinding process has proven to increase both visitor and local spending.



Suggestion:

This is a very nice gateway sign. (top) Make the silver bells sign more decorative so that it matches the character of the beautiful gateway sign. Gateways offer travelers their first impression of a community, giving a sense of arrival, and a feeling of what the community is like. It's more than just the sign, too - the whole area surrounding the sign is important. This sign and setting creates a good first impression.

Place the auxiliary signs (top) as part of an attractive monument sign, and replace it in a location where visitors can stop, get out of their cars, and check on the meeting times. Gig Harbor, Washington (bottom left) has placed their auxiliary signs at their local visitor information center to make it easy for visitors to peruse.

Why are you routing people through a residential area (bottom right) to get downtown? It doesn't make any sense. You might want to reconsider these directional signs.



Suggestion:

The state is directing people another way (top), which does make more sense. Instead of “Salamanca Business District” consider “Downtown Salamanca.” Downtowns are more of a destination than are business districts.

The good first impression created by the nice gateway sign shown on the previous page diminishes immediately as you approach the downtown core area (bottom left). This is NOT good advertising for the town and the Seneca Nation. The lawn should be kept neatly mowed, the weeds should be pulled, and the barricades removed.

The sign clutter here - seven signs (bottom right) also adds to the poor first impression - when there are too many signs, or too much information on one sign, drivers tend to ignore them all. Develop two decorative signs to alleviate the clutter: the state highway sign and one for local businesses. Straighten the state sign.



First Impressions Are Lasting Impressions The rule of perceived value

Studies show that curb appeal can account for 70% of visitor sales at restaurants, wineries, lodging, retail shops, golf courses. We all make judgments based on appearance, especially when we're in a place that's new to us. If a building is painted and tidy, the lawn is trim, flowers are lush, and weeds are cleared out, if there's a cheerful sign, and cars are parked in the lot, visitors are four-times more likely to stop.

First impressions of downtown Salamanca: Not bad, but not great either. (top right) Screen the air conditioning units, paint the sign pole, add beautification, such as potted plants and flowers.

The area (bottom photos) looks economically depressed. Empty houses with broken windows, many seem to be falling down, and others are boarded up. Seems as though many of the locals don't care. Assumption: the lease-land syndrome where there is no real "ownership" in terms of caring.

Does this look like the kind of community you'd want to invest in? Move to? Visit? There are too many of these (bottom right) in Salamanca. Those who are still in business need to stand out as being attractive, welcoming, and open for business.



Suggestion:

It's hard to tell which businesses are operating and which are permanently closed. If this business (top right) is open or soon to open, use the read-erboard. Invite customers in, or invite them back when the place is open. Remove the trash. Make the appearance inviting with a few potted shrubs.

Many of the businesses in town (bottom left) do little to attract customers and most don't understand the power of curb appeal.

This is one business (bottom right) that is obviously open, and has added some beautification with the pots and planters, and the flags. There's more that could be done too. Mow the lawn, add some color with flowers.

Curb appeal is what convinces visitors to walk into your shop or restaurant. Just as developers create beautiful, sometimes elaborate, entries into their residential communities to increase the perceived value of the development, merchants can increase the perceived value of their shop or restaurant by making the entrance attractive and inviting.



Suggestion:

Dumpsters, old furniture, and trash in the heart of downtown (top right) don't help the overall image or appeal of the community. Organize a clean-up along the major roads in town. Place dumpsters in less prominent locations or behind cedar fence screens.

There is so much sign clutter at this store (bottom left), as well as at others, it dampens the appeal that can pull customers in. Use the readerboard or move it. There are 14 signs here. Look into creating signage guidelines for merchants in the community. Passers-by typically spend between four and eight seconds looking at signs. In this case, there are so many signs (sign clutter) that many customers will simply ignore them all. The good news: It's easy to tell that this is an operating business!

Travelling down the road a little further, we can see that there is more to downtown than what we just drove past, including what looks like a railway station.



Suggestion:

This flower shop (top) is at THE key intersection in town, and it should set the standard for curb appeal. There's lots of potential for a very attractive shop here. Pull the weeds. Add pots, planters, benches. Make it look like a park. Flower shops should always set the standard - be the benchmark. Work with the Chamber on beautification. Is there a local garden club that can help?

The "Enjoy Our City" banners are nice (bottom left) but always sell a "feeling" or the history as opposed to buildings. We're already downtown and can see the buildings, so change the focus when designing pole banners.

The businesses, (bottom right) for the most part, do a very poor job of attracting customers. That hurts the businesses that actually try. This shop could be much more appealing if the tattered facade were spruced up a bit with a new awning and paint job, some potted shrubs under the windows.



Suggestion:

Suggestion: Consider painting murals on the boarded up shops. (top and bottom left) It's amazing the difference it can make, as in the example in the photo bottom right.

When empty shops are decorated with murals, they can suddenly look fun, colorful, and vibrant. Instead of looking like a vacant storefront, it can look like an active part of town. It tells visitors that locals actually care about the downtown.

These buildings (bottom left) are some good candidates for a trompe l'oeil program. Trompe l'oeil is French for "fool the eye" referring to architecturally designed murals. Consider developing a "facade easement" program, to allow building owners to update and enhance their building fronts through grants or low-interest loans. The example shown bottom right, is of a trompe l'oeil mural turning an unattractive building into an inviting shop. Most of what you see here is painted on.



Suggestion:

Trompe l'oeil can turn any wall into a work of art or an incredible scene and can actually be a visitor attraction, if done right.

These photos show a trompe l'oeil artist painting the flat side of a large concrete block building (top right and bottom left). The finished wall (bottom right) is stunning - and all of it is an architectural mural, including all the architectural elements including the man on the "balcony."

Salamanca could create an entire downtown "street scene" using this type of mural art. It's a terrific way to tell a story of the town, in essence creating a "storybook town."



Suggestion:

These photos show additional trompe l'oeil examples. The building (top right) shows very realistic architectural painting - this wall is actually flat concrete block, but to fit the historical significance of the town, the walls appear to be whitewashed brick. All of the architectural elements, including shadows are part of the mural. This is in Huntsville, Texas.

This example (bottom left) shows a different artistic concept, perfectly suited for this long, low, blank brick wall. The finished wall (bottom right) shows a fantastic scene - the visitors, waterfall, and bridge are all painted, giving a feeling of openness that makes it hard to realize there's a large building right there.

Some towns have created "facade easements" where the property owners grant an easement to the city so that public funds and grants can be used to offset the cost of having this type of work done.





Another example of trompe l'oeil. Imagine scenes that depict a thriving downtown, along with telling the story of the Native American culture.



Suggestion:

Note the dramatic change in the wall on the page opposite.

Trompe l'oeil, if done right, has a stronger visitor pull than do traditional murals. Particularly if they tell a story. People in windows in period dress, stores muralized to showcase their original uses, etc.

This building (top right) is great candidate for a trompe l'oeil mural. But while at it, remove the weeds.

This building (bottom left and right) is the best trompe l'oeil candidate in town and in a perfect location to really “make a statement” about Salamanca.

The mural on the right is nice, but an architectural mural would be more fitting and could be part of a larger story. Imagine a mural walking tour that transports visitors back to another time, another era.



Suggestion:

Assuming that Trail of Smoke (top right) is out of business, this would be a great candidate for a window trompe l'oeil.

Additional possibilities for trompe l'oeil art, bottom right.

The “Winslow” photo, bottom left, is a very good example of trompe l'oeil that has become a major tourist attraction. Based on the famous hit Eagles song “Take it Easy,” the art depicts a reflection of a red flatbed Ford. The couple in the upstairs window, and even the lamps, are all part of the mural. This mural, in Winslow, Arizona attracts 1.5 million visitors a year, who also spend time and money in downtown Winslow. Think of the words: “Standing on a corner in Winslow, Arizona, such a fine site to see. It’s a girl, my Lord, in a flatbed Ford, slowing down to take a look at me.” What you see in the photo, below, tells the story in what is otherwise a vacant building.



Suggestion:

Once you have a theme, this effort could be a lot of fun and could become an attraction in itself. This building (top right) is another a good candidate for trompe l'oeil art.

Trompe l'oeil isn't only used on exterior walls. Note the brewery wall in the photo, bottom left, and after the artwork is complete (bottom right.) The art makes it appear there are numerous interesting hallways branching off. It creates a much friendlier, fascinating place.

The possibilities are endless with trompe l'oeil. Develop a central theme and create an engaging story to carry that theme throughout town.



Suggestion:

More examples of interior trompe l'oeil art on interior walls. The artwork on the wall in the photo top begins at the shadow on the floor, while the entire pictures you see in the bottom two photos are trompe l'oeil, including the woman reading at the table.

These types of murals, if done right, can become a visitor attraction, increase community pride, and can create a hub of activity that provide incentives for small businesses to locate downtown. A means to an end, so to speak.

Salamanca, needs people spending time downtown if it hopes to ever become a viable business community.

The first order of business is to create a great engaging story, apply it to downtown in the form of murals, then dress up the town so its beautiful. People (both locals and visitors) are attracted to beautiful places.



Invest in Beautification

The rule of invitations and staying power

Curb appeal is an investment with tremendous return, and it begins with the merchants. The LaRua Restaurant in Whistler, BC (near right) is an excellent example of how to beautify and attract customers. Whistler, with roots as a ski resort, now sees more visitors in the summer than in the winter - due in part to the beautiful ambiance created by the merchants.

Sisters, Oregon, population 1,100 (bottom left) has created stunningly beautiful streetscapes, and now can boast of having the highest retail sale per capita of any city in the state of Oregon. A local garden club takes the lead.

A research study had four towns plant street trees every 30 feet along one block (bottom right) and then surveyed sales in that block for a year, comparing them to sales in the rest of the town. The results? Sales in the block with trees increased 18% - three to four times that of the rest of town. Consider joining the Keep America Beautiful organization for information and more ideas.



Suggestion:

It's obvious that a lot of people in town are working hard to make a difference (top right). This beautiful pocket-park is very nice, but is hidden from view as people pass through town.

Continue working to create "softscapes." Soften the transition between building facades and the concrete sidewalks with planters of shrubs and flowers. It can make a huge difference in downtown's ambiance.

Neenah, Wisconsin (population 5,000) did a downtown makeover. Notice the bottom right photo where the typical building facades meeting the sidewalks. Now look at the shops shown, bottom left, just a block away. Which set of shops would get your attention? After the beautification enhancements in this block, retail sales increased nearly three times faster than in the rest of the town.



Suggestion:

People are attracted to beautiful spaces. Studies show sales increases of more than 20% in many well-landscaped downtowns. Beautification is an investment with tremendous return.

The city is doing its part (two right photos). It's time for the businesses to do theirs (bottom left). State travel organizations, visitor and convention bureaus, chambers of commerce, and local tourism bureaus do everything they can to bring visitors into the state and local regions, but none of that will make a customer walk into a shop and make a purchase. It's up to the merchant to pull customers into their store, and beautification is one of the most effective ways to pull customers into a shop.

This gateway location is very nice. (top right)
 And this is an outstanding park. (bottom right) We'd bet that events there are well-attended. Very nice. Now spread this throughout town. Property owners should follow suit.

But you might consider working on the areas (bottom left) that already exist. Suggestion: Remove all the sandwich boards and advertising, pull weeds. Sign clutter is unattractive - detracting from any curb appeal.



Suggestion:

There are a tremendous number of weeds right downtown (top), grass growing through the sidewalks and along curbs, trash along the streets. The business community should take the lead in these types of clean-up efforts.

Businesses need to add pots of shrubs, trees, and flowers, and benches to pull customers in and to make the town feel safe. Is this place still in business (bottom left)? What is it?

Even the hotel could use some color, beautification, paint, curb appeal. (bottom right) Is it an apartment complex now? Or is it an operating hotel?

The most successful downtowns are attractive places. People enjoy walking through them because of their ambiance. It requires a lot of effort on the part of the merchants to create and maintain that atmosphere, but the efforts are well worth it. Think Ellicottville. Bemis Point.

Imagine yourself as a visitor, and take a look at Salamanca through those eyes. Would you stay here? Spend time or money here? What is your first impression?

The town has terrific “bones,” in terms of architectural appeal, to work with, but the town lacks a branding focus, which could be antiques, food, history, entertainment, or even art.



Suggestion:

Is the theater (top right and bottom left) for performing arts? Museum? Movies? Is it open for business? Performances? It's hard to tell. Use the display spaces (bottom left) to inform potential customers of coming attractions! Invite us back!

The pots are very nice. Add more to make a grand statement. Then spread them throughout downtown.

Put up holiday banners (bottom center) closer to the holiday season. They look out of place in the summer.

Consider limiting sandwich boards (bottom right) to one per business. This sign clutter detracts from the nice setting, with the trees, potted plants, and benches and makes the town look like a second-class garage sale type of community.



Suggestion:

Remove the barricades - throughout town. (top right) This is a dangerous situation. Why is this here? If there is construction going on here, put up a temporary sign that says “please excuse the inconvenience. We’re investing in our downtown. Please come back to see what we’ve done.”

Keep signs (bottom left) clean and up to date, including window signs. Our assumption is that the Great Wall Chinese Restaurant has been closed for years. Add beautification. - some potted shrubs and a bench. Is the restaurant still operating? It’s difficult to tell.

Make sure potential customers can tell if you’re an operating business - add outdoor touches, such as the potted shrubs at the entries of these businesses in the bottom right two photos. These pots make the entrances look more inviting and welcoming - they make people WANT to walk into the shop or restaurant.



Suggestion:

Here are some great examples of different towns and the beautification efforts of their merchants. The top photo shows the entrance to a restaurant in Fredericksburg - the most visited small town in Texas. With a population of only 12,000, it hosts two million visitors a year. People make the drive from Dallas or Houston - driving across the state, up to three and half hours - to spend the day there. The appeal? More than 150 shops, galleries, boutiques, in a gorgeous historical setting. The town is always “decked out.”

The bottom left photo shows downtown Gowanda, NY, and the two bottom right photos show Ellicottville, NY. What makes these towns attractive? They start with clean sidewalks, fresh paint, pots of blooming flowers and shrubs, outdoor decorations, and tables and chairs.

Think of your favorite places to visit - are they beautiful? Salamanca has this potential, particularly considering its location next to a major interstate freeway and the casino, one of the area’s top attractions.



Suggestion:

The parking in Salamanca is confusing. (top) Is it really necessary to have so many different rules right here at one parking space? Suggest combining these into one single sign to help reduce the sign clutter and confusion.

Does this make any sense? (bottom left) Suggestion: Simplify it. How does this work? Is the space no parking or two hour parking? The space to the left is two hour parking, yet the space to the right is no parking. Why?

To park, or not to park? (bottom right) The signs say no parking, yet this seems to be the primary parking area for downtown. Why isn't parking allowed here? There are more weeds to remove here around the power poles.

Don't make parking difficult and confusing. Visitors may just give up and pass you by.



Great Stories Make the Campfire Memorable

The rule of stories versus artifacts

Is this building (top right) a museum or historical society offices? Always promote the experience, not the organization. Visitors wouldn't be looking for the historical society - but they would look and visit a museum.

For both businesses and attractions, never use "Closed" signs. (bottom left) Closed can mean closed for lunch; closed today but not tomorrow; or closed permanently. Instead of saying "closed," invite customers back. Let them know when you will be open, as in this sign, bottom right.

The local Chamber could develop a sign like this one (bottom right) and have businesses add their hours to the sign. These can be easily printed on a laser or inkjet printer, then laminated. Create invitations, not rejections.



Make sure your museum and historical attractions tell stories and not just display artifacts. People are drawn to stories - it keeps them in the museum longer, creates "ownership" of the community, and will help increase spending. If you can keep visitors captivated for two hours, spending downtown will increase.



Suggestion:

We were driving out to find the rail museum, and it looks like a classic train station (top right) up the road.

When I saw this sign (bottom left), I thought perhaps the museum was no longer operating, because the sign is so dated and faded. The sign should be repainted - signs, like this, tell a visitor a lot about you, so always put your best foot forward with your signage.

It's a stunning building. (bottom right) Suggestion: Add flags to the poles to let people know you are an operating entity. Otherwise, people might assume you are closed, as I did.



Suggestion:

Museums should “tell the story” - not simply display artifacts. (top right)
 Collections of old furniture, equipment, and memorabilia have meaning, but no context. What makes a museum successful is its ability to tell stories, either oral, written or visual. Without the story, artifacts are boring to most people. That’s why the average museum visit is between 20 and 40 minutes. A story brings the artifact alive, makes it real and memorable. And that makes the museum visit much more interesting. When visitors are interested, they’ll stay longer. If you can give visitors enough to do for two hours, they’ll spend more money while in town.

Signage should ALWAYS be perpendicular to the street. (bottom left) Repaint the sign and pressure-wash the stone facing.

I also visited the Seneca Iroquois National Museum. (bottom right)



Suggestion:

At the Seneca Iroquois National Museum, also work to tell the stories. (top) Captivate visitors with stories of people's lives and the land, how they used the artifacts, etc. Focus on individuals, what they did, how they solved a problem or met a challenge. Make an emotional connection with the visitor. Also, work on the staff hospitality. I was chastised for not paying the entrance fee. I waited for nearly ten minutes at the entrance and finally decided to look around until I was asked what I was doing there. In the gift shop, it was more of a local hangout and not one person every even acknowledged that I, and another visitor, even existed. Not a good way to get gift shop sales.

Idea: This is a great old building. (bottom left) It looks like this could be a great facility for some type of incubator activity - an arts incubator possibly?

There seems to be a healthy industrial area. (bottom right) That's a good sign.



A wild idea

Is the Antique Mall (top) perhaps one of the largest in Western New York or even in the Lake Erie region? If so, then make it the “anchor tenant” and promote it. This could be the start of a brand for the town.

Could Salamanca become Western New York’s “Antique Capital”?

There are, literally, hundreds and hundreds of dealers here and a tremendous variety of goods, collectibles, and antiques. It certainly doesn’t seem to be well promoted and we almost missed it entirely. It should be promoted at the casino and in the area. Cars in the parking lot were not just from New York, but from Pennsylvania, Ontario, Massachusetts, and other states so, to some, it is already well known.



Suggestion:

Jefferson, Texas, (all photos this page) is a great example of a town whose focus is antiques. Their brand is “The Antique Capital of Texas.”

Population is 2,500, and they have 125 antique shops in the town.

Still a small, quaint town, they attract hundreds of thousands of visitors a year with their antique and gift shops. Jefferson also has horse-draw carriages and trolleys giving rides through their brick streets, and riverboat tours operate one block from downtown. Because people drive three to four hours to go antique shopping in town, most spend the night and it is now the “B&B Capital of Texas.” The town now hosts antique car shows, motorcycle rallies, and has become an event hub for this Northeastern area of Texas.

Salamanca has this type of potential.



Suggestion:

The photos on this page show additional scenes from Jefferson's antique shops.

Focusing on specialty retail to encourage economic development in a downtown can be an excellent strategy. In order to make it successful, it's important for the business community and property owners to take the lead, working in cooperation with each other and the town leaders.

Start with one or two lineal blocks, and work to make those blocks become a showcase. Recruit more shops and dining to create the critical mass needed to attract visitors. Make it beautiful.



Suggestion:

This is a great invitation (top) to bring visitors back downtown.

West Salamanca:

The Holiday Inn Express (bottom left) looks like a very nice property, and an asset to the town. Having a vibrant downtown could pull these visitors not only to the casino, but to downtown.

The new hotel looks very nice - but is shockingly expensive and so I opted to stay elsewhere where there were more reasonable rates.



Suggestion:

Suggestion: Replace the chain link fence (top right) with wrought iron to play up the historic significance of this beautiful home.

It's obvious this business (bottom left) is still operating. Good job. It's inviting and really pulls customers in. It seemed to be one of the busier businesses in Salamanca. Add hanging baskets, additional planter barrels.

Add beautification here (bottom right). Make it more inviting - the building looks stark. Add some potted trees and flowers, a couple of benches.



Suggestion:

The casino (all photos this page) is, obviously, the big draw - perhaps the major draw to the county - and is very, very nice. The hospitality could use a lot of work, and hotel prices are extraordinarily high.

I wanted to stay here, so walked in and asked the front desk for some rates. They would not give me any pricing information and told me I had to call a toll-free number for rates, which is absurd. So, I called and was quoted rates that varied all over the place depending on the day. For instance, one day would be one price, the next day would be another price, and the third day would be yet another price, and the fourth day I couldn't be guaranteed a room because they "might sell out" - even though it wasn't sold out yet. I assumed that I was NOT a welcome customer and only people arriving via bus could get rooms. The average nightly rate was between \$300 and \$400 a night. Because the attitude was so poor I, personally, would never consider going back to what is, otherwise, a stunning, gorgeous, property. The security there was also very intimidating making it seem like an unsafe place.



Suggestion:

The entries and wayfinding are excellent at the casino (top).

Suggestion: Develop wayfinding to downtown Salamanca. (bottom right)
Inform travelers where to turn to find downtown, and be sure to “connect the dots” between the casino and other area attractions and services.

The river (bottom left) is a great asset for Salamanca. Are there any facilities developed to allow visitors (and residents) to enjoy it, such as trails, view-points, interpretive signs, small parks along the riverfront, activities? If there are, be sure to promote them with signage, and if there aren’t consider developing them. People love water - even just to be able to sit or walk beside it. Take advantage of it. The biggest draws for visitors revolve around water, whether beaches, lakes or rivers. Take advantage of it! It’s beautiful.



Suggestion:

Salamanca has some terrific architecture to work with. (top)
Buildings like this (bottom left) are exceptional and create some tremendous opportunities.

Some ingredients for a successful downtown include:

- Intimate setting - pedestrian friendly with gathering spaces
- Beautiful surroundings
- Outdoor dining
- A retail focus (perhaps antiques)
- Critical mass of businesses (The 10+10+10 Rule)
- Gateways and wayfinding for vehicles and pedestrians
- Activities and entertainment
- Public restrooms
- Good retail signage and displays
- Enthusiasm and cooperation among business and property owners
- Open evening hours



There are some beautiful neighborhoods in the community as well (bottom right).



Suggestion:

There are also some beautiful homes in the area. (top)

You have several historical attractions (bottom right), which could be redeveloped into some even greater experiences.

This little pocket park, as noted previously, is outstanding. (bottom left) Now if there was just some place in town to buy a sandwich or ice cream cone, which could be eaten in this great little park.



Suggestion:

A core group of businesses are doing what they can to make the town more attractive. (top right) This is a great base to work from, but they can't succeed by themselves. They need help.

Consider another "pocket park" in this alley (bottom left). Add some potted shrubs and trees, some flowers a couple of tables, chairs, and a coffee vendor? That would turn this alleyway into an attractive place to sit for a bit and enjoy downtown.

Salamanca has a lot to offer, and a lot already going for it.



Marketing Assessments

The following few pages contain a review of marketing materials and assessments by our secret shoppers, who researched the area from a distance, reviewing marketing materials to see if they could find the area, and if the materials were convincing enough to make them want to visit.

Review of Marketing Materials

Enchanted Mountains Guide

The overall look and quality of the piece is good. It has a lot of great photography – people enjoying things in the region, as well as shots showcasing the beauty of the area. The layout is clear and easy to follow, and the copy is broken up well with photos, captions, headers and white space.

The only thing it lacks is a very brief welcome or description of Cattaraugus County. The Welcome Page is listed as page 2, which is adjacent to the table of contents; this page has a bulleted list of areas and attractions. However, I think a two or three sentence paragraph introducing the reader to the area (where it is, as well as a very quick synopsis of what there is to see and do) would help open the piece and set the stage for the rest of the information.

Salamanca rack card

The photo could be stronger; it's actually a little difficult to discern what you're looking at, especially when you look closely at the photo on the front of the card.

It does give a good, quick overview of Salamanca that is easy to read.

Seneca Nation of Indians rack card

This is a very nice, professional looking piece. The photograph is precious and draws the reader in. I would recommend highlighting the museum as the first section on the back side; it seems more relevant to promote the museum, which is an attraction, over a campground.

Seneca Allegany Casino brochure

This is also a very nice, professional looking piece. It has good photography, a nice layout that is easy to read, and the information is presented in a clear, easy to read fashion.

Salamanca Rail Museum brochure

This piece looks very homemade. It's too copy heavy; the layout doesn't invite readers to dive in and read the material. It would be better to lay it out as an actual tri-fold brochure, rather than as an 8-1/2x11 sheet that is folded in thirds. Adding actual photos would also be helpful.

Salamanca and Olean, New York, Distance Marketing Assessment

I began my search for travel information by Googling Cattaraugus County (CC), New York, where I found several listings. The third item seems the most promising for tourism information; however, it is a website (<http://www.cattco.org/nyconnects/>) for “choices for long term care.” It does have a visitor tab, though, and I am off to the Enchanted Mountains website (<http://www.EnchantedMountains.info/>) where I continue my search for Salamanca, the Seneca Nation and Olean. Going through the regions of Cattaraugus County, I find Salamanca and the Seneca Nation of Indians listed in the South West region. Olean is the largest city in the South East region. I like these “Get to Know Us” pages as they give quick overview of the region and provide links to the cities.

Olean's direct link is to the Chamber of Commerce site (<http://www.oleanny.com/2/>), which needs a little technical work. Its “Upcoming Events” are listed over the title, and the listing of pages has a line running through them. The misty picture of the rock park looks very flat and not particularly inviting with what appears to be a warning sign tacked to a tree in the foreground. Perhaps the information will be better than the graphics.

Area Accommodations provides a very thorough listing of everything in the area with direct links to all the Olean lodgings. Nothing stands out as far as a great resort or four-star hotel. The Arts & Culture page is wonderfully full and gives the idea of a vibrant town with many interests. The Dining and Shopping page would look nice if it didn't have the big JC Penney sign; all

the other pictures are portray a quaint town. Having to go to the membership directory is annoying, and then do you search under retail or shopping? Visitors don't care who is a member, they're more interested in easily finding the information they need. This list needs work too, and so does the dining list. Both lists need some graphics or logos to spice them up. I do appreciate the descriptions for many of the listings. Moving on to recreation, it seems there are some options in and around Olean. The Allegheny River Valley Trail looks like it would give you a good workout and view of Olean and St. Bonaventure University. I nearly missed the listings for Golf, Fishing and Hunting and Winter Fun at the bottom of the page, as their type is so small. It seems like a nice place, but do I really want to visit? I'll give them a call.

The helpful woman at the Chamber said that Olean wasn't a very big town but St. Bonaventure and the Village of Allegany are nearby. She immediately thought my sons would enjoy the squirrel sculptures that had been commissioned and placed throughout the town. Based on the website I believe it is called Woodlands in the City. She also suggested Rock City Park, but it is not listed on the recreation page of the Chamber's site. Other ideas included the Salamanca Casino, the museum in Seneca, and I asked about canoe rentals, and she thought A-1 Rentals in Allegany could help us. She gave me four possible hotel/motel listings, and said, "They are all very nice accommodations." I asked her to send me information as soon as possible as we were planning to visit at the end of August. Our call lasted nearly 12 minutes. I received my batch of information in four days.

The information included one full size, color brochure entitled The Enchanted Mountains of Western New York, a map of Olean and 14 slender brochures. The first thing I noticed about the full size guide is that every picture has a caption so that you know exactly where to find that particular activity. It makes for a lot of text, but then you know they just aren't stock photos. I will say that the guide does a great job of showcasing the great variety of this area. It seems like you could have fun there summer or winter. The Calendar of Events was very impressive, too, along with the fold out map in the center of the book. The maps include great details of the area and excellent coverage of all the major attractions.

After reviewing the Enchanted Mountains brochure I gave them a call (1-800-331-0543). The woman on the other end was friendly, yet hesitant with her

enthusiasm. We spoke for about 9 minutes, and she told me about Allegheny State Park, and that it is the largest park in NY. She said the Allegheny Reservoir is one of "our hidden jewels." I asked if we could rent boats at the Onoville Marina and she explained that right across the street at the Bay View Lodge is where you rent the boats. She suggested I make a boat reservation especially if we were visiting on a weekend. She said there were "lots of historical places" and that all the info was in the brochure. I asked about the Seneca Iroquois Museum and she said, "They do a nice job." When I inquired about boutique shopping she suggested Ellicottville, and that my husband and sons could go to the nearby 18-hole golf course while I shopped. The Amish country is nearby, and I asked her about that, and she said it was pretty and they sell all sorts of crafts. She reminded me that everything was closed on Sundays and to not take pictures of the Amish. I did most of the asking and she seemed almost reluctant to give me too much of a description about any location.

Going through the other information from the Olean Chamber I was surprised there is only one hotel listing and only a few dining options—not very informational for the tourist. The "Amish Trails" brochure has a great map, and I liked the description of Amish life and beliefs. I would say it is the best Amish map/guide I have seen so far. "Antique Trails" brochure is also produced by CC, and it too has a very clear map. The "Activities for a Rainy Day" brochure is a great idea and another good map. The CC brochure regarding the "Wagon Train ..." is filled with bicentennial information and looks like it would be quite an adventure.

Other leaflets covered the Allegheny River Valley Trail, Onoville marina, a bad copy of the Fannie E. Bartlett Center leaflet, The Seneca-Iroquois National Museum, Rock City Park, Olean, NY Calendar of Events, Sprague's Maple Farms, Cutco Ka-Bar Visitors Center, and the Eldred WWII Museum. They all had the necessary information, obviously color ones are more interesting. My top three choices out of the pile would be: Onoville marina, the Valley Trail and the Seneca-Iroquois Museum. The Eldred museum appears to be maybe an hour south of Olean and might just be worth the visit for an avid WW II history buff.

Moving onto Salamanca and their chamber website (<http://salamancachamber.org/>). It is a little busy with advertisers, and the photo at the bottom the

page is not very pretty; however I do like the revolving pictures at the top of the page. “Area Attractions” is a short list with descriptions of some of the attractions including direct links. The “Visit Salamanca” page lists accommodations, shopping and dining with direct links. They need to make shopping look more fun – the photo is a bit boring, and not very many shops are listed. I gave the Chamber a call (716-945-2034) and spoke with a representative for about 8 minutes. She explained that Salamanca was surrounded by a reservation and that they had a “great” museum. She told me about some upcoming events and that CC was celebrating their bicentennial so there were lots of celebrations all year long. I told her we were coming in a couple of weeks and could she please me information soon. I received my envelope in exactly one week!

Included was the CC “Enchanted Mountains ...” brochure, accommodation listings from their website, and 15 leaflets. Two leaflets were repeats from Olean (Wagon Train and Onoville Marina). Another CC production features the “Driving Tour of the Old Chautauqua Road” which is very, very detailed with driving instructions, but looks like it could be fun in the fall. The other leaflets cover three museums: historical society, the rail museum and the Seneca-Iroquois; along with two accommodations, rental property (Brookhaven), summer Sunday concert series, Crosspatch horseback riding, Hampshire Mills, Welcome to Salamanca, an Allegany State Park map, and a Seneca Nation of Indians brochure.

Purusing all this information quickly, I wanted to check out the Park map. The park appears to be very large and it would be fun to explore especially on horseback. There are numerous ads that caught my eye, especially the Lucille Ball Desi Arnaz Center— only a half hour away in Jamestown, NY. The accommodations are two extremes – a B & B and Holiday Inn Express. I get the idea that Salamanca is not as big as Olean and seems a bit more rural.

I was curious to see how Olean and Salamanca are portrayed on the NY state website (<http://www.iloveny.com/>). Olean’s page features a picture of Big Rock Park. The sentence that refers to Olean as “the major commerce and industrial center” for CC and the surrounding area doesn’t exactly make it sound as bucolic as it appears to be. The aforementioned attractions are

highlighted, but missing from this list is the Allegany State Park and the Onoville Marina. There is a direct link to the Chamber’s website.

Salamanca does not have a picture but has a short page listing all its best attractions, including the park, Seneca Iroquois Museum, and the casino. There is a link to the CC Visitors Bureau. I also explored the Seneca Nation of Indians website (<http://www.sni.org/>), which is graphically pleasing, but this website is not really for tourists. I explored the Seneca casino websites (<http://www.senecaniagaracasino.com/>, <http://www.senecaalleganycasino.com/>, <http://www.senecagamingcorporation.com>) and they are all very dynamic.

Gave NY state tourism a call (1-800-CALL-NYS), and they very quickly told me that I needed to call the Finger Lakes region – I was on the phone less than two minutes. Calling Finger Lakes (1-800-548-4386), I spent most of the seven minutes waiting for the consultant to find out where Olean is and whom to call. She said it was near Jamestown and that I needed to call them, and then she found Olean’s number and gave me the Chamber’s number. Clearly, the state needs some geography lessons along with the nearby regions.

In conclusion, if I lived about two hours away I might go to the Allegany State Park and definitely the Onoville Marina. I do love knives and would go to the Cutco Visitor Center and would probably stay in Olean. I’m not sure why, but I just like the sound of Olean better. I think you could visit the Enchanted Mountain region at anytime of year; summer and fall would be my preference. I think it is a great family location, although I could see escaping to a cabin in the park with my husband or having a rustic girlfriend weekend. The Enchanted Mountain area could increase their tourism if they let the state and surrounding regions know about their location. I think the Enchanted Mountains have done a good job with their brochure, and it already seems very family focused. I think they should continue to work this angle. It is a great weekend place, and you could probably spend a week in the area in summer. I would not drive more than two hours to visit this region.

P.S. Why is Allegheny/Allegany spelled two different ways? It is very confusing!!!!

Salamanca, NY Distance Marketing Assessment

Salamanca, NY is a town like many out there – probably a nice place with a few attractions, but nothing enormous or really jaw dropping to brag about. They have the proximity to the Allegany State Park, and of course, the Casino. As for the rest, their list of attractions seems to be limited to the Seneca Iroquois National Museum and the Salamanca Rail Museum.

Casinos aren't particularly my cup of tea, but this one is a full resort, including a spa. If I had another reason to be in Salamanca, I could see staying at the casino hotel and if time and money allowed, booking some spa treatments. But I doubt you'd see me pulling the slots.

From what I found, it seems that the two biggest assets Salamanca has are their rich cultural heritage and the outdoor activities in the area, including Allegany State Park. If they could find a way to capitalize on those, they might be able to attract more visitors. It would also help to have more detailed trip-planning information available. The current website has a few links to outside websites, but that quickly takes you away from the Salamanca website and doesn't guarantee you'll find good information. For example, the Seneca Iroquois National Museum website is only one page, giving potential visitors very little to go on. It could be a fantastic museum, but based on their website alone, I'd skip it. I certainly wouldn't drive out of my way to see it.

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