



**Visitor Industry Council  
Meeting Agenda  
Aboard the Finger Lakes Railway  
Tuesday, October 21, 2008  
8:30a.m. – 10:00a.m.**



**I. Welcome**

- a. Ms. Donna DeFord, VIC Chairperson
- b. Deb Najarro, The Finger Lakes Scenic Railway

**II. Introductions**

**III. Spotlight Presentation- Finger Lakes Scenic Railway-Deb Najarro, Media Relations**

The Finger Lakes Railway is predominately a freight company. The freight business is vitally important for passenger services. In 1995 Finger Lakes Railway purchased 118 miles of track from Conrail. The system was then known as the Geneva Cluster. Now, The Finger Lakes Railways has grown from 6 employees to 50; 2 locomotives to 12; and from 12 local customers to 40. They have 118 miles of track and have just added 12 more miles. The Challenges they face are that they are still growing, still trying to find their niche in the market place, and fine tuning their management and operations. There are many opportunities this growing industry as well. People are still shipping by rail even in the current economy.

The Finger Lakes Railway is a member of "Explore New York Rail": a partnership of New York passenger railways and museums. All the members, except Finger Lakes Railway are non-profit agencies that look for fundraising to run their operations.

The Finger Lakes Railway has been doing passenger services since 2000. They recently purchased and refitted two touring coaches. They kept some of their older features to bring a historical nostalgia to rail travel. They also began doing sponsored trips. In the first year of major marketing (2007), they saw 11,000 passengers in 61 operating days. In this, the second year, they have seen 7,300 passengers so far with 16 operating days left. They also run Santa trains every weekend in December. For more details and schedules please visit their website at, [fingerlakesrailway.com](http://fingerlakesrailway.com).

**IV. Spotlight Presentation- Trains! Exhibit at George Eastman House-Dresden Engle, Public Relations**

The George Eastman house is currently showing three train exhibitions, spanning three centuries of train photography. These photographs depict the beauty, power and excitement of life on the railroad. This work includes the first photograph of a train wreck, 20<sup>th</sup> century videos of trains, and a diorama from the RIT model railroad club. These exhibitions represent a fabulous display of collaboration, between the George Eastman House, Carpe Diem Travel, Visit Rochester and the Finger Lakes Scenic Railroad. The George Eastman House is also offering a lecture series that will continue into January and feature lectures about trains and photography. They are also showing a series of films featuring trains, called "Locomotive Movies".

## V. **VIC Projects and Task Forces Updates-** Chairs and Staff Liaisons

**Lisa Altman:** Who's Talking Rochester Committee—This committee is looking on the internet to see what people are saying about Rochester. They have been focusing on the tourist sites, including AAA.com, Social networking sites, and trip advice sites. Their aim is to help VisitRochester, and its members to know which online sites they should be monitoring, and which member are getting mentioned online . They have one more meeting left for the year.

## VI. **VisitRochester Program Updates-** VisitRochester Staff

**Greg Marshall:** 2009 update—You have asked us for some reaction to the economic situation and how it will affect you into 2009. The upside is that we are seeing a drop in gas prices. The Leisure industry will do well—such as the train industry, and holiday season shows. We anticipate that travel within a 150 mile radius should be in a better state. People are concerned about money. Those of you who do mature travel (adults) will see that. We expect to see as much as 15% declines over the next 6 months for mature travel. Younger people and their night life pursuits are not as affected. Mid range family are going to constrict spending, and we will most likely see that in family restaurants and family attractions over next 3 months. Close to home travel will be better. Air travel costs look to stay high and this means visiting friends and family over the next 5-6 months is probably going to be significantly impacted. In the Long term, the Canadian dollar jumped up from on par to the American dollar. For those involved in programs with Canada, we need your help. If you see Canadian travelers or Canadian business and can measure their business we would appreciate it if you could share it with us. The meeting and convention business will be affected but not as you would think. We are having a good year, but there may be a decline in how long they stay. Sporting events will see very little decline. Donna and Bill should be congratulated for the visitor programs they have put together this year. They have provided a blue print for the 2009 business plan. In that, it tells us what is important to you. We will meet with steering committee and with leadership to prioritize our 2009 programs. We do not have a firm schedule right now, because we feel our major responsibility this year is to maintain flexibility, to see where things are going for the next 90 days. Expect a schedule probably in early January.

This is a time when membership in VisitRochester is important to you and to us. We need support to get more members. Go visit the website, view your fellow members and see what you can be doing with them. We have been having a great visitor year. This is the time to work together. Call Greg if there is anything you feel we should be doing for you. Also, please see Patti Donohue who heads up our traveling writer program, if there are any angles or stories that we can project for you.

**Amanda Norsen**--Next Tues Oct 28<sup>th</sup> there will be an open house for members about benefits VisitRochester can offer. The meeting is from 3-5 at the little theatre café. Bring prospective members.

**Michael Hardy**-- Wendy Ford just joined us in our Sales Department. Please continue to welcome Wendy.

**Bill Gormont**--Bill is serving as Vice Chair but as of January 1st, as always, we will be changing roles. We are looking for vice chair once Bill becomes Chair. If anyone is interested in serving on leadership for VIC, or has a nomination, please see Amanda, Donna or Bill.

## VII. Member Announcements

**Shared Adventures Travel and Training**--November and December, why not try wine tours and teambuilding? We are now offering training and teambuilding from great locations such as, the zoo and Coach Limo's. Call for more information. 442-5462.

**Technology Rentals of America** has used Laptops for sale starting at \$ 250. Also free mini screw drivers available from Lisa. 585-370-5800.

**George Eastman House**—through January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Trains! Exhibition showcasing hundreds of photographs depicting the power, excitement and beauty of life on the railroad. Contact eastmanhouse.org/271-3361.

**Business and Leisure Connection**—December 4<sup>th</sup> 2008, Park Ave Holiday Open House. We are looking for volunteers and sponsorship. Angela Cerame 467-8143.

**Staybridge Suites/ Brooks Landing Ribbon Cutting.** November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Speeches and dedication starting at 11 a.m. in the hotel lobby. Ribbon cutting ceremony is at 12 noon. A long ribbon will be stretched from the University of Rochester to Boulder Coffee to Staybridge Suites Hotel. Joanne Giuseppetti, 733-7798.

**Memorial Art Gallery** is featuring Russian Icons through January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Also, November 15<sup>th</sup> Symposium and November 16<sup>th</sup> Free Day. Contact Donna at MAG 276-8900.

## VIII. Adjournment

### Save the Date!

#### **November VIC Meeting**

Tuesday, November 18, 2008

Eros Restaurant

3:00 p.m. - Registration

3: 30 p.m. - Meeting

#### **December VIC Meeting**

Tuesday, December 16, 2008

Hyatt Regency Rochester

3:00 p.m. - Registration

3: 30 p.m. - Meeting

**If you are interested in hosting a VIC meeting in 2009,  
please contact Amanda Norsen 585-279-8302.**

## Steering Committee Representatives

*The Steering Committee is a representation of the membership. They are here to communicate the needs of each business they represent and be able to "bring to the table" any comments or concerns members might have. As well as make decisions about VIC meetings, guest speakers, and educational seminars.*

### Chairperson

Donna DeFord, Memorial Art Gallery  
585/276-8945

### Vice Chairperson

Bill Gormont, Empire Magic/ Motivational Vision  
585/227-9760

### See & Do

Colleen Brown, Geva Theatre Center  
585/232-1366

Jenna Chard, George Eastman House  
585/271-3361 x238

### Community

Cindee Gray, Rochester Institute of Technology  
585/475-4987

### Sleep

Cheryl Mantia, Clarion Riverside Hotel  
585/546-6400

Nancy Sweazy, Hampton Inn North  
585/663-6070

### Regional Representative

Michael Fults, Ramada Geneva Lakefront  
315/789-0400 ext. 2602

### Eat & Drink

Karen Heroux, Simply Crepes  
585-314-6036

### Shop

Karen Dodson, Waterloo Premium Outlets  
315/539-1100

### Services

Joe DeMars, Carpe Diem Travel  
585/295-9393

Eric Van Camp, Enterprise Rent-A-Car  
585/729-7122

## 2008 VIC Meeting Schedule

VIC Meeting Date	Time	Location
November 18, 2008	3:30 pm	Eros Restaurant- Rochester
December 16, 2008	3:30pm	Hyatt Regency Rochester

**Attendees:**

Steve Ouriel	Artisan Works
Bob Scott	Bob Scott Productions
Angela Cerame	Business and Leisure Connection.
Melanie Plummer	By the Basketful
Helen Gormon	Carpe Diem Travel
Bill Gormont	Empire Magic
Eric VanCamp	Enterprise Rent-A-Car
Judy Salone	Finger Lakes Railway
Deb Najarro	Finger Lakes Railway
Sue Schmidt	Finger Lakes Visitor's Connection
Dave Goldman	Friends of Ganodagan
Dresden Engle	George Eastman House
Jenna Chard	George Eastman House
Eliza Kozloski	George Eastman House
Colleen Brown	Geva Theatre Center
Dawn Kellogg	Geva Theatre Center
Nancy Sweazy	Hampton Inn--Greece
Carolos Mercado	KCM Services
Donna DeFord	Memorial Art Gallery
Miranda Kenyon	Monroe County Sports
Brain Mount	Rares
Trish Lambiase	Rochester Downtown Development Corporation
Michelle Segar	Rochester Institute of Technology
Cindee Gray	Rochester Institute of Technology
Terri Goebel	Rock Ventures
Kent Winchester	Rock Ventures
Pat Rebholz	Society of Genesee and the Lakes
Eileen Cash	Springdale Farms
Joanne Giuseppetti	Staybridge Suites
Lisa Altman	Technology Rentals of America
Bill Gilchrist	The Dealers
Emily Vick	Unite Here
Amanda Norsen	VisitRochester
Suzanne Strassell	VisitRochester
Michael Hardy	VisitRochester
Greg Marshall	VisitRochester
Peter Hahn	VisitRochester
Barbara Leisten	Wayne County B&B Association
Bob Leisten	Wayne County B&B Association

**First Time Attendees:**

Vickie Ouriel  
Allison Simonian  
Bob Gabbey  
Kathleen Houser  
Lauren Melenric

Artisan Works  
Bounce It Out  
George Eastman House  
Grandma Hattie's Tea Party and Gardening Accessories  
Park Place