



NEWS RELEASE

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Montauk's Economy Benefits from Tourism, Chamber of Commerce Poll Shows



Montauk's tourism and related businesses are doing well notwithstanding stricter code enforcement in the hamlet in the past two years, announced the Montauk Chamber of Commerce.

Findings from a member poll to help assess the effects of code enforcement on visitor business in 2016 versus 2015 shows 70 percent experienced up to 10 percent growth, said Laraine Creegan, executive director.

"Montauk businesses embraced stricter code enforcement after the disruptions in summer 2015 and we wanted to gauge its short- and long-term effect on the tourism economy, our number one industry," said Creegan. "We're pleased that the local economy thrived despite some negative publicity and a decrease in millennial age visitors from one year to another."

Creegan said the Chamber increased marketing to attract families, nature lovers and mature adults to offset a potential decline in young visitors and that the strategy worked. These visitors are more likely to respect codes and the community.

The poll was conducted in January 2017 and drew 119 participants. Seventeen businesses (14 percent) reported a 10 percent or greater increase, 22 (18 percent) a three to 10 percent increase and 44 (37 percent) broke even with the prior year. Ten (8 percent) reported a decrease of three to 10 percent and 26 (22 percent) a decrease of more than 10 percent.

"The business community understands that tourism can only be sustainable if it is carefully managed so that potential negative effects on the Montauk community at large and the environment are not permitted to outweigh the financial benefits," said Arden Gardell, co-owner of 668 The Gig Shack. "We at the Chamber call it 'responsible tourism' and we're encouraged that it's working."

Bill Mavro, owner of Montauk Clothing Company, said, “The summer of 2016 was serene, young bar-hoppers were subdued and our hospitality businesses adjusted to the desires of visiting families and adults, as well as the community.”

“Tourism brings many economic and social benefits to our community,” added Orla Reville, business manager of the Viking Fleet.

By all industry standards, tourism creates jobs and opportunities for small businesses and families through direct employment within Montauk’s tourism industry and indirectly in retail, transportation and real estate. When these people spend their wages on goods and services, it leads to what is known as the "multiplier effect," creating more jobs. Montauk’s tourism industry also provides opportunities for small-scale businesses which are especially important in the hamlet. Tourist dollars generate extra tax revenues, such as Suffolk County hotel taxes, which are used for enhancing Montauk and Long Island parks, museums, historic sites and harbor front. Tourism dollars also help fund Montauk’s visitor promotion via a Discover Long Island matching grant administered by the Montauk Chamber. Tourism revenue collected on attractions such as the Montauk Lighthouse, a source of pride for the local community, help save the site from destruction.

In addition to revenue, tourism allows Montaukers to look at their history and cultural heritage to continue to define and develop their own community identity. This helps to maintain traditions and culture, while also showcasing it for all the visitors.

Moreover, through the years and continuing into the future, tens of thousands of dollars collected from Chamber special events such as the Farmers Market, Fall Family Festival, Montauk Friends of Erin St. Patrick’s Day Soup Sale and A Taste of Montauk have been and will be donated back to the Montauk community through organizations including the Montauk Food Pantry, Friends of Erin and Montauk student scholarships. In addition, Chamber funds, combined with generous donations from Montauk businesses and residents, go to fund the July 4th Fireworks, a tried and true American tradition and community institution.

Montauk Chamber of Commerce is a member business organization dedicated to providing community leadership for the development of and sustaining a sound economy, primarily through responsible tourism, for Montauk, NY. It provides leadership in the creation of constructive community action and a forum for the exchange of ideas and information for the betterment and care of the hamlet.

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