

QUARTER 2: APRIL-JUNE FY2026

A photograph of four people (two men and two women) sitting around a wooden picnic table outdoors. They are smiling and appear to be enjoying a meal or drinks. A large, striped patio umbrella is open over them. The background shows green trees and a building. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny.

Cortland County Convention & Visitors Bureau

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FY 2026 Quarter 2

The second quarter brought the shift into our busier travel season, with more events, visitor activity, and seasonal programs underway across the county. Visitor and lodging data showed stronger spring and early summer activity, while our website, social media, and marketing efforts continued to connect people with events, businesses, and trip-planning information.

A few highlights included the first Roots & Rhythm, which sold out all 100 tasting tickets and raised more than \$1,500 for Seven Valleys Health Coalition, and the return of the Cortland County Ice Cream Trail, with 4,500 maps distributed by the end of June. The 2026 Travel Guide is also now available, with distribution underway through travel shows, AAA offices, brochure networks, local partners, events, and direct visitor requests.

Marketing remained busy throughout the quarter. Cortland Curiosities saw strong year-over-year growth, Instagram continued to reach new audiences, and new digital advertising campaigns were put in place to support summer, fall, and winter travel. Regional programs including America250, FLX Outdoor Experience, Brave Women FLX, and the Haunted History Trail also helped extend Cortland County's reach beyond what we can do on our own.

As always, this report is a snapshot of the work happening at the CVB. Behind the scenes, we are updating programs, reviewing website content, developing future campaigns, working with partners, and looking ahead to opportunities for late 2026 and 2027.

Overall, Q2 was busy, productive, and gave us a good look at what is working as we move through the summer travel season.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Enright". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Michelle Enright
Executive Director

Tourism Insights & Trends

Q2 Visitor Profile

April 1 - May 31, 2026 (Rove Marketing)

Q2 visitor data shows strong overnight and repeat visitation as spring and early summer travel picked up. Cortland County continues to draw visitors from key regional drive markets, with most travelers coming from New York and surrounding states.

Visitor Snapshot

- 59% overnight visitors
- 27.1 hours average length of stay (overnight visitors)
- 236 miles average travel distance
- 44.5% repeat visitors

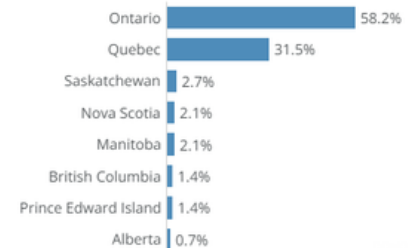
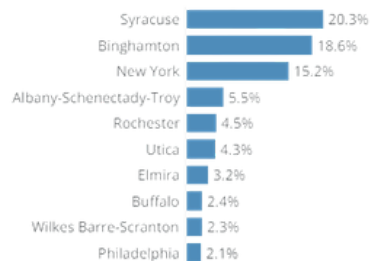
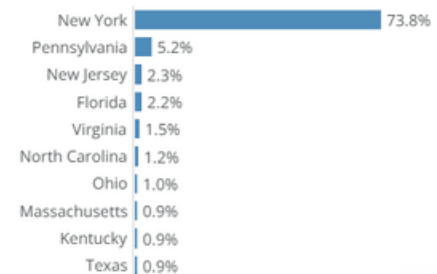
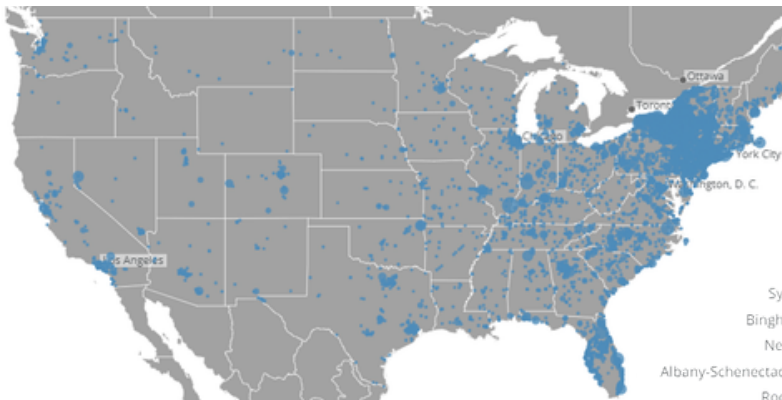
Who is Visiting

Average visitor age: 39.9

Average household income: \$84,400

Origin Markets

- Majority of visitors from New York State (73.5%), followed by Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Florida and Virginia.
- Travel patterns continue to show a regional drive market, with most visitors traveling between 99–200 miles



Top Visitor Attractions/Locations



SUNY Cortland



Greek Peak



The Lumber Yard



Elm Tree Golf Course

*June data not available as of 7/13

Lodging Performance Snapshot

April - June 2026 (CoStar Data)

Spring and early summer brought stronger lodging activity as tournaments, festivals, and seasonal travel picked up across Cortland County. Occupancy followed typical seasonal patterns, while higher room rates and increased revenue show that visitors are still choosing to stay, and spend, in the county.

Performance Trend			
Occupancy Rate	50.1% ↑	3 Mo Occupancy Rate	41.7% ↓
Average Daily Rate	\$175.96 ↑	3 Mo Average Daily Rate	\$147.82 ↑
Revenue Per Available Room	\$88.11 ↑	3 Mo RevPAR	\$61.57 ↑
YTD Occupancy Rate	39.0% ↓	12 Mo Occupancy Rate	42.2% ↓
YTD Average Daily Rate	\$143.03 ↑	12 Mo Average Daily Rate	\$142.86 ↓
YTD RevPAR	\$55.76 ↑	12 Mo RevPAR	\$60.27 ↓

What We’re Seeing

Events continue to drive overnight stays.

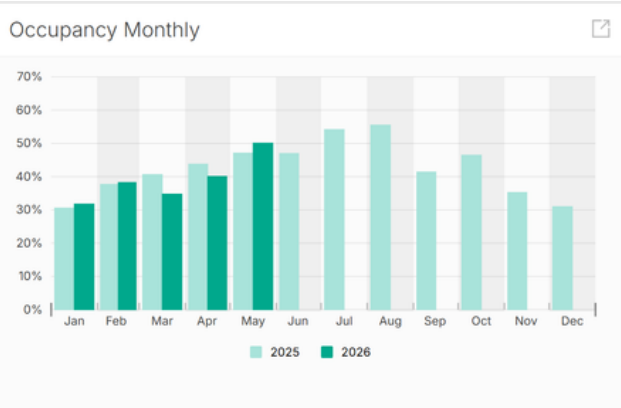
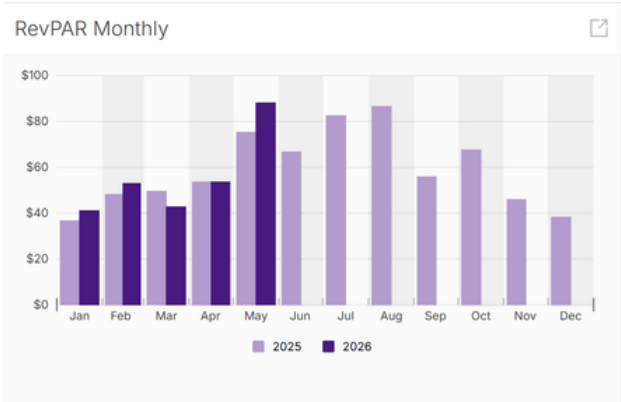
Sports tournaments, festivals, and other events continue to bring visitors into the county and support hotel stays throughout the spring and early summer.

Visitors are spending more during their stay.

Average daily room rate increased to \$175.96, while revenue per available room reached \$88.11, showing stronger lodging revenue compared to the same period last year.

The summer season is off to a solid start.

Second-quarter occupancy reached 50.1% as we moved into the busier summer travel season. With several large events still ahead, we expect those opportunities to continue through the summer and into the fall.



MARKETING & PROMOTION

ExperienceCortland.com

As summer travel planning picked up, visitors turned to the website for event information, travel inspiration, and other trip-planning resources. While overall traffic was slightly lower than the same period last year, engagement remained strong in key areas. Events Calendar views increased 10.6%, and 144 Travel Guide requests were submitted during the quarter.

We are also keeping an eye on how changing search behavior is affecting website traffic, as AI-generated search results increasingly allow users to find information without clicking through to individual websites. Even with that shift, visitors are still actively using ExperienceCortland.com to find events, explore the area, and plan their trips.

Quarter Highlights

- 52,657 total views (↓ 3.9%)
- 18,917 active users (↓ 14.6%); 18,816 new users
- 6,480 Events Calendar views (↑ 10.6%)
- 144 Travel Guide requests

Most Visited Pages

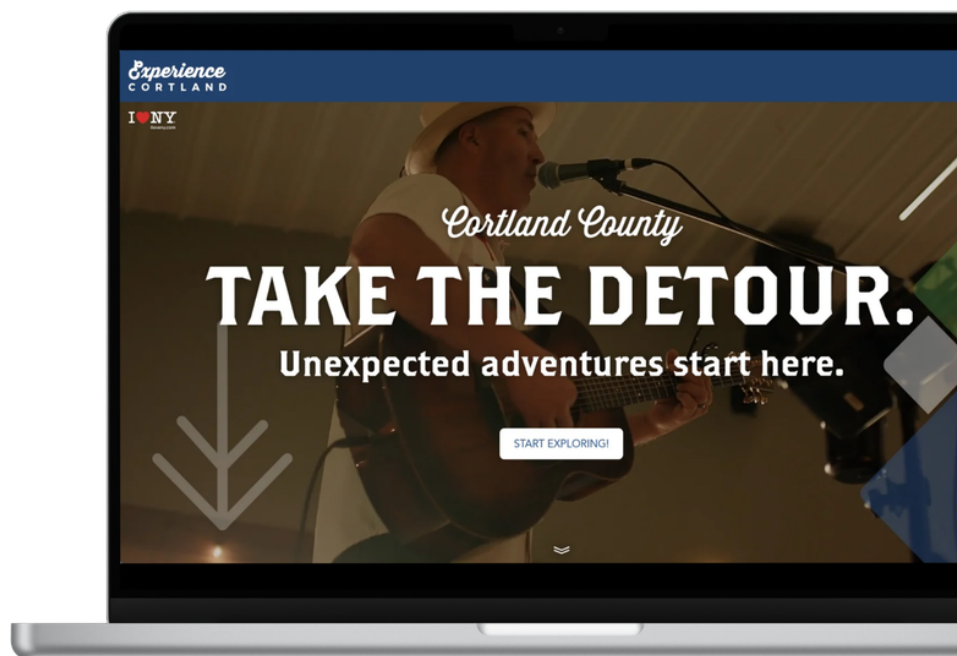
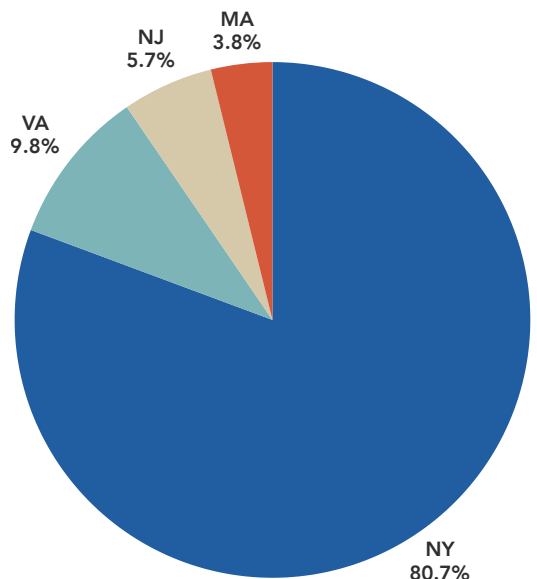
- Events Calendar
- Things To Do
- Restaurants
- Cortland Dairy Parade

Top Performing Partner Listings

- Cortland Dairy Parade
- St. Anthony's Festival
- Homer Fireman Field Days
- The Lumber Yard
- Rt. 90 Garage Sale

Top Referral Sources

- Google/Bing (Organic)
- SUNY Cortland
- Facebook



MARKETING & PROMOTION

Social Media (Experience Cortland)

Social media remains one of the CVB's strongest tools for keeping Cortland County visible, sharing timely reasons to visit, and driving people to trip-planning content on ExperienceCortland.com. This quarter, Facebook continued to reach a strong local and regional audience, particularly women ages 35–54 in Cortland County, Ithaca, and Syracuse, while Instagram remained especially effective at introducing the destination to new audiences.

Facebook views and interactions were lower compared to the same period last year, however, that comparison was influenced by a single Bob's BBQ post in April 2025 that generated unusually high engagement. Even with that difference, link clicks increased 68.1%, showing that more users are moving beyond the social post and taking the next step to explore content on the website.

Instagram saw strong growth, with reach up 38.9%, interactions doubling, and link clicks increasing more than 350%. A large portion of monthly views also came from non-followers, showing Instagram's role in reaching people who are not already familiar with Experience Cortland.

Facebook Performance

- 449.1K views (↓ 12.2%)*
- 55.5K users reached
- 4.7K interactions (↓ 23.1%)*
- 3.7K link clicks (↑ 68.1%)

* Year-over-year performance was influenced by an unusually high-performing post in April 2025.

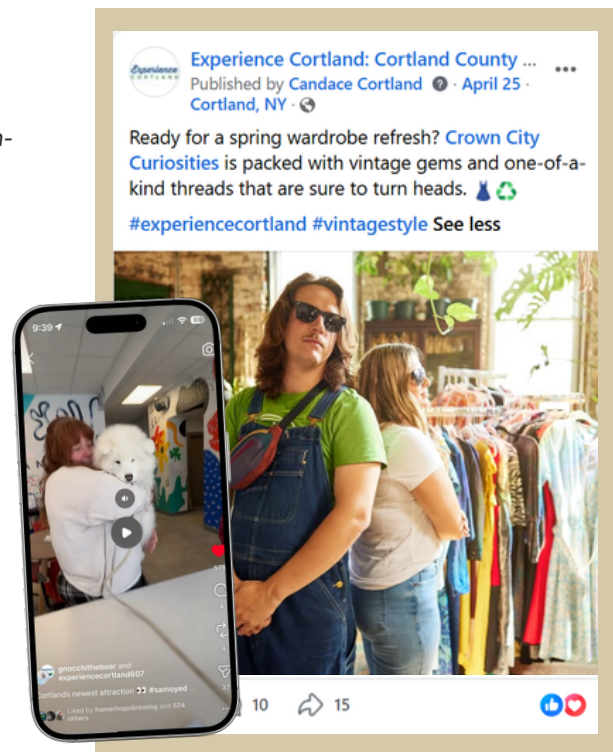
Instagram Highlights

- 23.1K users reached (↑ 38.9%)
- 3.7K interactions (↑ 100%)
- 617 link clicks (↑ 358.8%)

Instagram is the best social platform for reaching new audiences outside the county.

- April: 36.4K views, 65% from non-followers
- May: 26.6K views, 58% from non-followers
- June: 28K views, 49% from non-followers

Top Performing Posts



Facebook: Crown City Curiosities
9.7K Views, 6.3K Viewers, 69 Interactions
Instagram: Gnocchi the Bear (Collaboration)
8.0K Views, 6.4K Reach, 579 Interactions

MARKETING & PROMOTION

Cortland Curiosities

Cortland Curiosities continues to be one of the CVB's signature campaigns, showcasing the county's history, folklore, and hidden gems while introducing visitors to experiences they won't find anywhere else.

This quarter saw strong year-over-year growth across both social media and the Curiosities website. Facebook Reels continued to be the strongest driver of engagement, while website traffic and active users increased as more people explored the stories behind the places they discovered on social media. Visitors also spent an average of 1m49s on the website - more than double the industry average - showing they're taking the time to engage with the content.

We're currently reviewing every trail within the program to make sure information is current and working with web designer on enhancements, including ways to better integrate our reel series into the visitor experience. These updates will be in place before a paid social campaign this fall to drive traffic to the trail during the October/November travel season.

Performance Highlights

Facebook

- 236.2K organic views (↑ 150.9%); 233.3K reel views
- 81.1K viewers
- 6.2K interactions (↑ 113.8%)
- 3.1K visits (↑ 29%)
- 548 follows (↑ 63.1K%)
- Strongest audience: Women, ages 35–55
- Top markets: Cortland County, Syracuse, and Ithaca

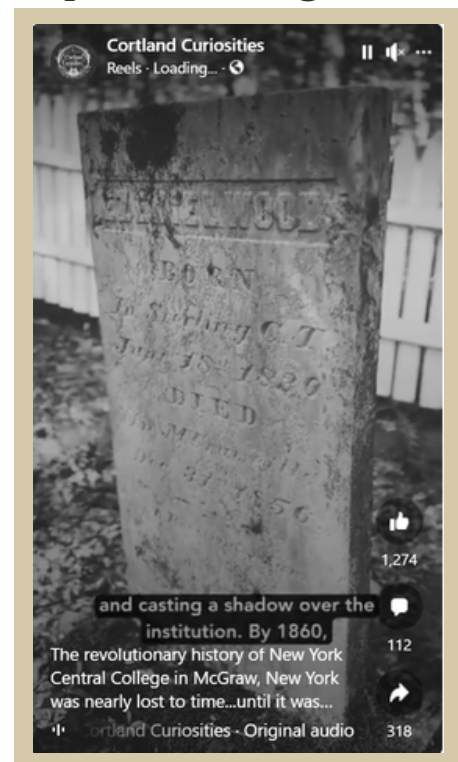
Instagram

- 10.9K views (↑ 100%)
- 5K reach (↓ 16.8%)
- 694 content interactions (↑ 100%)
- Strongest audience: Women, ages 25–45

Cortland Curiosities Website Traffic

- 1.7K views (↑ 50.72%)
- 675 active users (↑ 135.1%)
- 313 engaged sessions (↑ 35.5%)
- 2.47 views per active user (↓ 35.9%)
- Average engagement time: 1m49s (↓ 41.3%; 52 seconds is industry average)
- Top audience markets: New York, Iowa, Oregon, and North Carolina

Top Performing Post



46.1K Views, 88.7% Non-Followers
1.4K Interactions
318 Shares; 100 Saves

MARKETING & PROMOTION

Cortland County Ice Cream Trail

The Cortland County Ice Cream Trail returned for its third summer and continues to grow as one of Experience Cortland's most popular seasonal programs. Since Memorial Day, 4,500 trail maps have been distributed, putting the program on track to reach 5,000 maps, the most distributed since the trail launched in 2024. If demand continues, an additional 500 maps may be printed later this year.

The trail gives visitors and residents a fun reason to explore the county, discover local ice cream stops, and move between communities. Promotion this summer has included digital advertising, social media, and a partnership with Centro, which will feature the Ice Cream Trail on six buses throughout July.

Campaign Highlights (as of 6/30)

- 19.8K accounts reached across targeted regional markets (Binghamton, Syracuse and Ithaca)
- 4.16% link click-through rate, well above typical traffic campaign benchmarks
- 264 landing page views

A second round of paid social advertising is planned following the grand opening of Trinity Valley Creamery, giving us another opportunity to promote the full trail.

Participating vendors include D's Dairy Treat, Doug's Fish Fry, Footie's Freez, Frosted Bakery, Little Treat Shoppe, Mountainside Cones & More, Trinity Valley Creamery & Market, Poole's Drive-In, Rocky Road Express, Shipwreck Amusement, So Good Ice Cream, Super Cream Dairy Bar, The Frosty Caboose, Truxton Outpost.



Way2Go On the Move Sessions

This year, Experience Cortland partnered with the Cortland County Planning Department and Way2Go Cortland to connect the Ice Cream Trail with public transportation. Through On the Move Sessions, participants learn how to use local bus routes in a group setting while traveling to participating ice cream stops.

The program offers a fun way to build confidence using public transportation while making the Ice Cream Trail more accessible to people who may not otherwise be able to explore it on their own.



MARKETING & PROMOTION

Brave Women FLX

Brave Women FLX connects Cortland County to a larger Finger Lakes initiative celebrating women-owned businesses, women-led experiences, and the stories of women who helped shape the region. Through shared marketing, public relations, digital advertising, and content, the partnership gives local businesses and attractions exposure to a much broader audience.

As mentioned in last quarter's report, the third annual She Shines was developed as part of the Brave Women FLX program. This connection helped give the event broader exposure across the Finger Lakes and attract first-time visitors from outside Cortland County. Regional promotion also helped highlight Cortland County's women-owned businesses and historical sites throughout the campaign.

By working together as a region, we can take part in larger marketing efforts, extend Cortland County's reach, and share the cost and resources needed to make those efforts possible.

Program Highlights (Region)

- 20.9K Brave Women FLX website views
(↑ 13%)
- 1.17 million digital advertising impressions
- 24.4K website clicks
- 1.1K new email subscribers
- 17 earned media placements highlighting the program
- 964,000+ earned media impressions across regional and national outlets

Cortland County Participants

- Experience Cortland (She Shines)
- Women-owned businesses throughout Cortland County
- Museums and women's history historical sites, including Cortland County Historical Society and CNY Living History Museum.

Note: While Brave Women FLX is promoted throughout the year, the majority of the program's marketing investment is focused on the winter campaign. Final results from the 2025–2026 campaign were not available until Q2.



PUBLIC RELATIONS & PAID MEDIA

Media Mentions & Placements

The CVB uses media coverage to expand awareness of Cortland County beyond our own channels. Through ongoing outreach and collaboration with local, regional, and national media, we work to place our county in stories that highlight the area's experiences, seasonal travel appeal, and destination assets.

This quarter, media coverage helped keep Cortland County visible across a mix of national, regional, and local outlets. Placements highlighted everything from events and affordability to local businesses, history, outdoor recreation and seasonal programs.

Notable Placements

Travel Pulse, [Top Events in the United States This April](#)

Unique Visitors Per Month: 217,362

MSN, [12 small towns where retirees can live like millionaires on \\$40,000 a year](#)

Unique Visitors Per Month: 85,694,671

UDisc, [25 Best Disc Golf Courses at Ski Areas](#)

Audience: 2M+ players worldwide using platform/app, along with 17,000+ courses listed

UDisc, [Why Disc Golf Courses Work For Top Ski Resorts](#)

Audience: 2M+ players worldwide using platform/app, along with 17,000+ courses listed

Life in the Finger Lakes (Printed), CoffeeMania

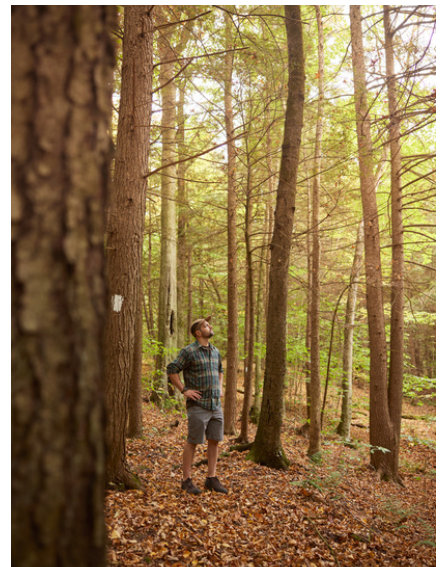
Readership: 42,000; Circulation: 21,000+

Life in the Finger Lakes (Digital), [Nathan Lewis Miller: From Cortland to NY Courts and Beyond](#)

Readership: 42,000

ILNY, [Experience Cortland to Host First Annual Roots & Rhythm](#)

Go Finger Lakes, [Taylor Valley State Forest \(1 of 3 new featured destinations in 2026\)](#)



PUBLIC RELATIONS & PAID MEDIA

Digital Advertising

New digital advertising efforts were put in place this quarter to support summer, fall, and winter travel. Both campaigns are designed to reach potential visitors in key drive markets and connect them with seasonal reasons to plan a trip to Cortland County.

Times Union/Hearst Media

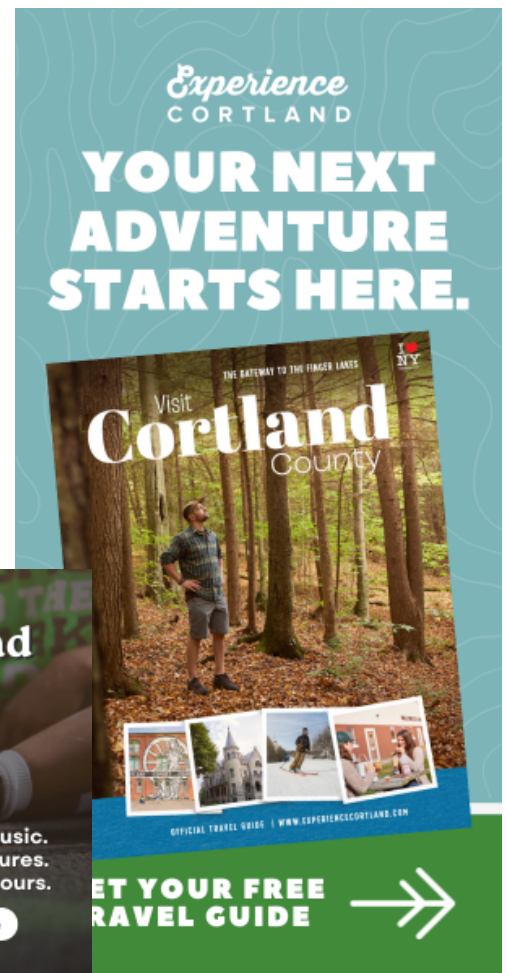
A new digital campaign was finalized with Times Union/Hearst Media to reach outdoor and travel-minded audiences in the Capital Region and surrounding drive markets. The campaign includes six placements in the Travel & Tourism Newsletter, running during the summer and winter travel-planning seasons. The newsletter reaches 200,000+ adults who have opted in to receive regional travel content.

The largest portion of the campaign is focused on winter travel. From November through January, Experience Cortland will run Hearst AnyScreen streaming television ads targeting outdoor enthusiasts and audiences interested in skiing. Summer newsletter placements will provide additional exposure during the current travel season.

Advance Media

A summer and fall sponsored content campaign was developed to reach audiences in Greater Syracuse and Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley. Beginning in July, one article per month will highlight Cortland County experiences and seasonal travel opportunities across syracuse.com, NYUp.com, and LehighValleyLive.com, supported by digital advertising that drives readers back to ExperienceCortland.com. Content and audience targeting will shift based on the topic being promoted, allowing us to reach people with relevant travel interests.

Note: Campaign began at the end of Q2, performance data is not yet available and will be included in a future report.



Experience
CORTLAND

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ADVENTURE
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Cortland
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VISITOR EXPERIENCE & DISTRIBUTION

Travel Guide

The 2026 Cortland County Travel Guide is now available and distribution is underway. The guide is one of our main trip-planning tools, helping introduce potential visitors to Cortland County and giving them ideas for where to stay, what to do, and how to make the most of their visit.

20,000 guides will be printed and distributed -

- 9,000 sent to our NY distributor for placement in brochure networks and high-traffic visitor locations.
- 3,000 sent to PA distributor for distribution throughout North Central and Central Pennsylvania.
- Mailed to AAA offices in NY, NJ, Ohio, PA, VA, KY and New England.
- Mailed directly from the Visitors Center in response to requests through ExperienceCortland.com and the Haunted History Trail.
- Digital version on ExperienceCortland.com

Visitor Distribution + Local Materials

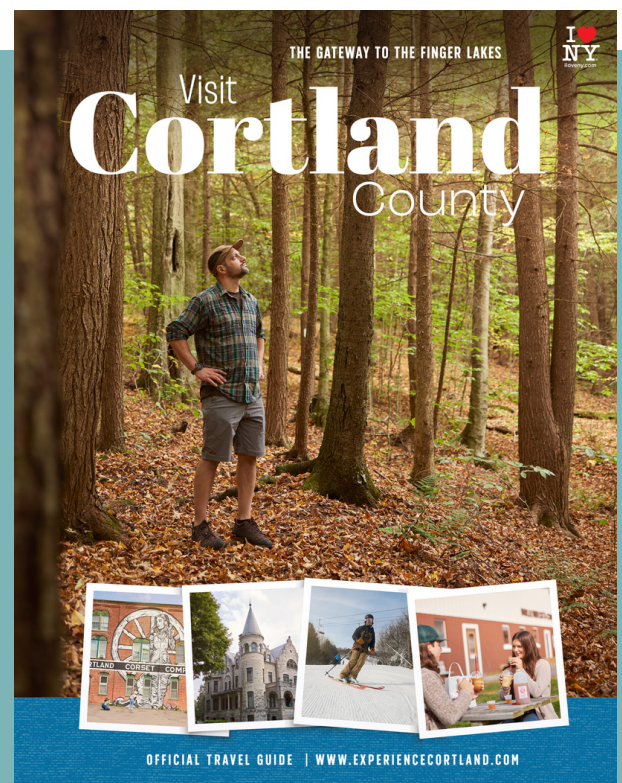
Experience Cortland also works with local partners, events, and organizations to get Travel Guides and other visitor materials directly into the hands of people coming to Cortland County -

- 100 giveaway bags for the CNY Maple Festival
- 500 Travel Guides and 1,400 Red Dragon Central postcards for SUNY Cortland Open Houses
- 200 Travel Guides and Ice Cream Trail maps for the 2026 National Milking Shorthorn Convention
- 50 welcome bags for the Chrome Angels Riding Club Convention

Distribution (as of 6/30)

- Washington, D.C. Travel & Adventure Show
- Pittsburgh Travel Showcase
- New York City Travel & Adventure Show
- AAA Northeast Travel Marketplace (Boston)
- Chicago Travel Adventure Show
- Lehigh Valley Vacation Expo
- Upstate Sports Summer Expo + Montreal Outdoor Adventure Show
- Montreal Outdoor Adventure Show
- Dream Destinations Spring Travel Show (Massachusetts)
- Ottawa Outdoor + Adventure Show
- Port Byron Old Erie Canal Heritage Park; New York State Thruway (6-month display)

**Six more travel shows scheduled for 2026*



VISITOR EXPERIENCE & DISTRIBUTION

Travel Shows + Visitor Outreach

Travel shows and in-person outreach give Experience Cortland the opportunity to connect directly with potential visitors, answer questions, and put Travel Guides and other trip-planning materials into their hands.

In-person outreach gives us a chance to see firsthand what catches people's attention. This quarter, the Ice Cream Trail, Cortland Curiosities, and golf were strong conversation starters and gave us great insight into the experiences potential visitors are most interested in.

Syracuse Crunch

Tabled at a Syracuse Crunch game to promote spring and summer travel to Cortland County. Travel Guides were distributed, with especially strong interest in the Cortland Curiosities Trail and Ice Cream Trail.

SUNY Cortland Open House

Connected with prospective students and their families to share visitor information, local recommendations, and ideas for exploring Cortland County once students are on campus full time.

Dream Destinations Travel Show (Springfield, Mass.)

Distributed over 200 Travel Guides, Cortland Curiosity and golf brochures. Golf generated strong interest, with our "Best Little Golf Town in the USA" signage. Show highlights:

- 3,600 attendees from NY, CT, MA, RI, and VT
- \$300K+ reported media value through print, digital, television, and email promotion
- Experience Cortland plans to return for the Fall/Winter show on October 18

Travel Guide Grab & Go (BRU64)

To help get materials into the hands of local partners and the community, we held a Travel Guide Grab & Go. Attendees could pick up the new Travel Guide, Ice Cream Trail maps, America250 coloring books, and Experience Cortland giveaways to share with visitors and customers.



TOURISM DEVELOPMENT & EVENTS

Experience Cortland Events

Experience Cortland develop and support events that give people another reason to spend time in Cortland County, explore local businesses, and experience what the area has to offer.

Roots & Rhythm | May 8 | Country Music Park

The first Roots & Rhythm brought together local food, craft beverages, live music, and community support for a sold-out evening at the Cortland Country Music Park. All 100 tasting tickets sold, and additional guests came out for the live music, many of them also shopping with participating vendors.

The event was designed to highlight Cortland's agricultural producers and small businesses while creating a new experience for residents and visitors. Based on the response from vendors, sponsors, and attendees, we look forward to building on the event and bringing it back next year!

Marketing Performance

Two paid social campaigns were used to build awareness and drive ticket sales -

- 60.4K combined accounts reached
- 117.7K combined impressions
- Click through rate ranged from 3.69% to 4.66%

Participating vendors include Bronhom Farms, Cherry Knoll Farm, Cobblestone Valley Farm, Coop Scoop Homestead, Corl's Cooking, Cortland Beer Company, Dragonfyre Distillery, Ensign Maple, Freetown Food Forest, Food & Ferments, Hollenbeck's Cider Mill, Nex-Gen Farms, Nipotina Herb Farm, Sinfully Sweet Café and Trinity Valley Dairy.

Event Highlights

- 100 tasting tickets sold – sold out
- \$1,900 in sponsorship support
- \$2,000 in ticket sales
- \$1,500+ raised for Seven Valleys Health Coalition, including sponsorship support, a portion of ticket sales, and raffle proceeds
- Additional guests attended for the live music and shopped with participating vendors



REGIONAL & STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

2026 Programming Updates

Regional and statewide partnerships allows Experience Cortland to expand its reach and keeps Cortland County part of larger tourism conversations. These efforts help connect local assets to broader initiatives, extend marketing beyond what we can do on our own, and create added visibility for the county's businesses, events, and experiences.

America250

Efforts moved into distribution and promotion this quarter. A total of **900 Finger Lakes America250 coloring books** were distributed, with the 1890 House Museum representing Cortland County among locations featured from the 14-county Finger Lakes region. Copies provided to the 1890 House Museum, Cortland County Historical Society, local libraries and schools, and distributed at the Cortland County Independence Day Celebration. The completed 1890 House poster will be printed as postcards for use and sale at events. We'll keep adding events and information to the America250 landing page as programming carries into 2027 as part of the extended commemorative period.

FLX Outdoor Experience

Campaign wrapped up at the end of Q2. The campaign performed very well, with an overall 3.9% click-through rate, well above industry benchmarks. YouTube advertising also performed at approximately 3x the industry benchmark.

The photography, video, and other creative developed through the program will be used in future marketing. Printed materials are available to promote participating outdoor experiences.

NYS Haunted History Trail

The 2026 guide is now available in print and online, with copies provided to the 1890 House Museum for distribution to visitors. The partnership generated around 1,000 requests for the Cortland County Travel Guide through the Haunted History Trail website.



**Pay-to-play initiatives through the Finger Lakes Region or CNY. Full data received at end of program/year.*

GRANTS

Tourism Marketing Grants

The Tourism Marketing Grant Committee met to review applications and put together funding recommendations for 11 organizations. Once those recommendations were approved by the Legislature, we met with awardees to walk through the process, answer questions, and distribute contracts.

Organizations can begin vouchering for eligible expenses as soon as their notarized contract has been returned.

AWARD INFORMATION

Organization	2026 Award	2026 Voucher (as of 6/30)
1890 House Museum	\$11,000	\$2,450
Brockway Truck Association	\$13,000	\$0
Cortland County Historical Society	\$16,500	\$5,000.96
Center for the Arts	\$85,000	\$16,347
CNY Maple Festival	\$3,000	\$0
Cortland Arts Connect	\$8,000	\$0
Cortland Main Street Music Series	\$2,000	\$0
Cortland Repertory Theatre	\$55,000	\$13,961.14
Holiday in Homer	\$3,500	\$0
Homeville Museum	\$3,000	\$0
Lime Hollow Nature Center	\$30,000	\$7,820.72