2015 ANNUAL REPORT
DOWNTOWN TROY
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2015 was a great year for the Downtown Troy Business Improvement District.

We really hit our stride, and thankfully had a fantastic events season. Despite 2015 being the BID’s fourth full year of funding and operations, many people still don’t know what exactly the Troy BID is. Yes, we are a Troy not-for-profit. Yes, we run a lot of the festivals and events that helped put Troy front and center for many people in the Capital Region. But we do so much more than that.

Troy is a small city, and we manage the downtown central business district. Our borders are from Hoosick Street to Ferry Street and from Sixth Avenue to the river. We are on the streets every day picking up garbage, hanging flowers, offering a helping hand to our neighbors and businesses, and spreading the good word about downtown Troy. Believe it or not, despite what we all already know about this amazing little city, there are hundreds of thousands of people in the Capital Region who we haven’t reached.

Our success in aiding downtown Troy throughout its resurgence and revitalization has been great. But we have more work to do. I urge you to attend our committee meetings and to get involved. The BID is made up of its members, almost 1700 of them. Together, we can do anything.

Thank you to all of the people who have served the BID during my tenure. Without our voluntary board of directors, or the volunteers of our committees, or the many people who are fighting for Troy in ways big and small day after day, none of what is in this report would have been possible. I am proud to have worked with you all side by side.

To the future!

Erin Pihlaja
Executive Director, 2014-’16
2014-2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The BID cultivates and advocates the economic growth of Downtown Troy by creating an inviting, dynamic, and sustainable community that celebrates the city’s history while building towards its future. The BID is dedicated to improving the quality of life within the District to further enhance and make our community a vibrant, attractive destination for visitors, businesses, residents, property owners, the daily workforce, and students.

The BID board of directors is made up of property owners and business owners downtown, along with several city officials, and representatives from the County, RPL Sage and the Chamber of Commerce.

Sam Judge: Judge Development Corp., President
Vic Christopher: The Lucas Confectionery, Vice President
Tom Clement: Clement Art Gallery, Secretary
Erin Hueter: Pioneer Bank, Treasurer

Kathe Kennedy: Indigo Organic Salon
Greg Cholakis (de facto seat): Resident
Dan Frantem, Muddaddy Flats Quesadillary
Cary Dresher: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Lauren Groff: Groff NetWorks, LLC
Debra Lockrow: ArtCentric
Deanna Cohen (de facto seat): The Sage Colleges
Sarah Jermano: First Columbia
Bob Doherty (de facto): Troy City Council
Monica Kurzejiski (de facto seat): City of Troy
Robin McDonough: The Counties of Ireland
Chris Meyer (de facto seat): Rensselaer County
Jeff Pfeil: Pfeil Hardware
Mayor Patrick Madden (de facto seat): City of Troy
Kate Ollier (de facto seat): RCCC
Mike Stamas, GreyCastle Security
Jody Brooks, River King Development

Current BID staff:
Erin Pihlaja: Executive Director
Katie Hammon: Assistant Director
Jennifer Bartels: Member Services
Mike Collins: Community Outreach
Pascal Heitker: Beautification
John Fenner: Beautification

2015 HIGHLIGHTS

The BID had a total income of $560,507.54

$95,762.82 of this income was raised by the 5 percent BID assessment.

Eighty-seven percent of these monies were spent in 2015 on beautification of the downtown district, marketing for downtown Troy (independent of special events) and printing and copying of BID member materials including maps and business listings, brochures and more at no charge to our BID members.

$464,744.72 was raised in the form of sponsorships, contributions, and event sales.
WELCOME
to Downtown Troy

SHOP
DINE
EXPLORE

FEATURED EVENTS

TROY NIGHT OUT
ROCKIN ON THE RIVER
RIVER FEST
TROY FOG OUT
CHOWDERFEST

MARKETING

All of our events have their own marketing budgets so it is important to note that this marketing fund goes to promoting Downtown Troy in general and is focused on our downtown Troy businesses.

For 2015, the BID spent a total of $20,562.97 to market our downtown corridor which was $957.96 more than we spent in 2014. We found strength in the approach we adopted in 2014, when we were able to decrease our budget but increase our outreach thanks to expanding our social media following and our introduction of promotional videos shot in house. In 2015, we placed ads in a slew of regional magazines, publications, and radio. The BID also spent $13,737.73 in 2015 in printing and copying. We are responsible for printing maps for downtown visitors and businesses, BID event programs and signage, event and signage for member events that the BID supports, downtown print communications (postcards, handouts, flyers), event posters, downtown brochures, and much more. All of these materials are provided to our members free of charge.

Our social media following has more than doubled since 2014. Our web traffic has increased too. In 2015 we had 272,039 unique visits. 63.9 percent of those were new visitors, 36.1 percent were returning. Our visitors averaged 3.4 pages per view. On May 13, the BID will launch a new website design which will allow users to access the site on their cell phones, something that the old template was unable to do. We anticipate a phenomenal increase to all of these numbers for the rest of 2016 and into the future.
MARKETING

We launched our Troy Billboard Project where we bought advertising on high-traffic digital billboards to promote our signature events and our new Shop.Dine.Explore campaign. This campaign was very successful and featured all-Troy models, stylists, locations, clothing and more.

Email newsletters
Every month, the BID sends a digital newsletter to 7,000 email addresses. Each newsletter highlights BID activities, new businesses, available commercial property, BID sponsors and member events.

Holiday Windows
For the past five years the BID has coordinated the annual window decorating contest in the weeks leading up to the Victorian Stroll. The theme in 2015 was “Sweet Treats” and many downtown businesses lit up their windows to welcome visitors during the holiday season.

Holiday Marketing Campaign
The BID continued a seasonal campaign that started with Small Business Saturday and ran through the end of December to encourage shoppers to explore our diverse downtown district. This year we hoisted an enjoy troy flag and fired off a ceremonial cannon on the river to announce that downtown was open for business. We once again hand-printed enjoy troy shopping bags for a Small Business Saturday giveaway—downtown Troy was the Capital Region place to be for the entire season.

Retail maps
In 2015 we updated our maps and business listings so that we could print fresh materials for our BID members to give to visitors. We finalized the update this spring and will be printing 11x17” bound maps which will be out in May of 2016.

Walking brochure
With the help of one of our Troy downtown businesses, Troy Cloth and Paper, the BID has secured funding and began the design process of a high-quality destination piece for downtown Troy that will be distributed throughout the region and into neighboring states. This brochure will be consistent with the branding of downtown Troy as a place to Shop.Dine.Explore, and will help to expand downtown Troy’s outreach in the Capital Region and far beyond.

BEAUTIFICATION

In 2015 our beautification expenses were $48,869.55, which is 49 percent of our tax assessment and $12,950 more than 2014. We increased the amount of hanging flowers baskets and planters that we take care of in downtown, rebuilt and updated all of our A-frame directional sidewalk signs and maintained all of our other services but we introduced a beautification project—Downtown Banner Project—that brought in over $20,000 between the tail end of 2014 and in 2015, which greatly helped to help offset this department’s costs. We have already begun to inventory the downtown district’s existing trees and tree wells, and have found them to be filled with dead, decaying trees or in some cases no trees at all. We have set aside $5,000 of BID monies towards the goal of planting and care of 200 tree wells within the downtown. We hope to launch the marketing and fundraising efforts for this program by spring of 2017.

Our other programs include:

Sidewalk/Park Cleaning
The BID employs up to three beautification employees over the course of the year to keep the sidewalks free of debris and to help maintain our downtown parks. We are on the streets almost every day reporting code and safety issues, and assisting property owners with street light issues, public safety issues, code violations and more.

Hanging Flower Baskets
The BID installs and maintains 150 hanging flower baskets in downtown Troy and waters an additional 50 planters and beds.

A-frame sidewalk signs
These signs help promote our businesses and direct visitors throughout our walkable downtown district.

Kissing Balls
The BID installs 150 evergreen kissing balls on light posts to brighten the streets during the holiday season.
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION

Murder, Mayhem and Mysteries Tours
In 2015 this committee successfully launched downtown historic walking tours with two of our beloved Troy non-profits, the Rensselaer County Historic Society and the Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway. These tours were an instant hit and succeeded in bringing dozens of people, most of whom did not live in Troy, to the streets of downtown to engage with our current attractions and architecture, and our city’s colorful history. Many visitors then left the tour and visited our retailer and restaurants. This event will bolster Troy Night Out in May and October of 2016.

Member Meet and Greets
We’ve expanded these popular networking events to include guest speakers and informational resources to benefit our 50-plus attendees. These events help our members and parties interested in downtown Troy stay informed while showcasing our downtown venues. Expect to see these come back in June of 2016 with new programming and tools for guests to implement in their businesses.

For Rent Event
This successful annual event pairs prospective commercial tenants with desirable retail spaces in downtown Troy. In 2016 we are adding an historic walking tour to further engage prospective tenants with landlords, and we have opened the listings and promotions to residential units within the district as well.

 Ribbon cuttings and member events
The BID helped to open, rebrand or expand over 57 businesses within the downtown district in 2015, on top of over 40 new businesses in 2014. From brand new operations to stores re-branding, the BID helped to focus, market and publicize our members’ efforts. Spreading the word that we had a new BID neighbor was instrumental to many of our fledgling businesses to help them get up and running.

Discover Troy event
In planning since late 2014, the Business Development and Retention committee launched this new event in early 2015 to showcase how downtown Troy is a recruiting and retention tool for Troy businesses. In 2016 we merged the Discover Troy event with our Annual Meeting to provide both existing and potential BID members with a comprehensive feel for downtown Troy and to inform on how the BID can help facilitate interaction between business and community within the district.

DOWNTOWN TROY BID SPECIAL EVENTS

We added some spectacular events to our portfolio in 2015, which allowed us to diversify the major programming in downtown Troy while bringing in over 100,000 people a year to the streets and parks of our Collar City. A big initiative for the BID was also to expand the reach of our four signature events throughout the downtown district. We increased signage and event maps in both print outreach and district listings, created programs like our Collar City Kilt Fest City Pass, and hired shuttles to transport event guests all throughout our district. The feedback on these initiatives was overwhelmingly positive, with many restaurants and retailers reporting increases in their own business during events.

It is important to note that we no longer report our beverage sponsorship in our event totals, so these numbers report approximately $5,000 to $9,000 less of income than previous years. We felt that this method better showed which BID events were loss leaders, and which could sustain themselves. Beverage sponsorship is currently reported in general events sponsorship income and overall annual revenue.

NBS: No beverage sponsorship reported
BSR: Beverage sponsorship reported

Annual Dinner
Attendance: 225
Income: $34,997.13 (LY $29,537.24)
Expense: $18,571.69 (LY $12,149.13)
Net income: $16,425.44 (LY $17,388.11)

The 2015 BID annual dinner hosted the 2nd Annual Sammy Awards, a chance to recognize the great work of our members, volunteers, and district friends.

Collar City Kilt Fest March 2015
Attendance: 330 registered runners and 1000 guests
Income: $8,810
Expense: $8,538.32
Net income: $271.68

This event is a partnership between Go To Guide Productions and the Troy BID. In 2015 the Troy BID ran most of the operations in house with support from our partner and successfully brought hundreds of people to the wintry streets of downtown Troy. This event gives a nice boost to our retailers and restaurants thanks to the rental of shuttles, and the Collar City Kilt Fest City Pass, and marks the beginning of Troy’s event season.
**Special Events**

**River Street Festival June 2015**

- **Attendance:** 10,000
- **Income:** $20,016.06 NBS (LY $19,086.78 with $5,250 BSR)
- **Expense:** $7,704.33 (LY $7,385.28)
- **Net income:** $12,266.73 NBS (LY $9,165.64 BSR)

2015 gave River Fest a facelift including a dynamic new logo, and new marketing. 2015 was also a return to a focus on handmade goods and cuisine, and an emphasis on Troy downtown businesses and venues. We had reports from our Troy businesses that this was their single biggest sales day. The Troy River Fest was programmed heavily by many of the vendors who make up our Troy Makers Market, giving us great excitement for the expansion of Market Saturdays in Troy.

**Fitness in the Park summer 2015**

- **Attendance:** 1,000 for the season
- **Income:** $0
- **Expense:** $600
- **Net income:** -$600

Launched in 2014, this event brought hundreds of health-conscious visitors to Troy’s waterfront on Sundays during the summer. Billed as a “lifestyle event” designed to attract residents to Troy, this free program was received with nothing but positivity from our Troy community and the larger Capital Region as well. In 2016, Fitness in the Park, found an annual presenting event sponsor in CDPHP and in addition to yoga programming from HeartSpace Yoga, the event will see other wellness programs from the Troy YMCA.

**Troy Makers Market Saturdays, year round 2015**

- **Attendance:** 5,000 each week
- **Income:** $21,735.50 (LY $3675)
- **Expense:** $11,213.83 (LY $186.64)
- **Net income:** $10,521.67 (LY $3488.36)

This artisan market started to fill a gap in programming on River Street during the Saturday Troy Waterfront Farmers Market. Lower River Street merchants felt they were cut off from foot traffic by the market footprint without receiving the benefit of vendors near their businesses. The Troy Makers Market filled that void and reiterated the standard of high-quality goods in downtown while simultaneously complemented the producer focus of the farmers market. The Troy Makers Market acts as an incubator for potential brick and mortar retailers and when the Troy Waterfront Farmers Market moves to Riverfront Park from the streets of downtown Troy in 2016, the Troy Makers Market will continue to program the streets to continue the magical combination of unique downtown Troy businesses, historic architecture and an open market.

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**Chowderfest October 2015**

- **Attendance:** 25,000
- **Income:** $34,449.60 NBS (LY $31,019 with $2,625 BSR)
- **Expense:** $24,157.72 (LY $18,111.52)
- **Net income:** $10,291.88 NBS (LY $12,907.48 BSR)

2015 Chowderfest truly reflected the distribution of visitors and revenues back to downtown businesses from a centralized festival site. Not only was a portion of each chowder sample paid back to each serving restaurant, but we hired shuttles to literally drive guests to the doors of our participants. 2015 showed the most downtown Troy restaurant participation in Chowderfest we have seen in the last four years.

**Troy Night Out 2015**

- **Attendance:** 25,000 over 11 monthly events
- **Income:** $3,431.24 (LY $290)
- **Expense:** $4,441.55 (LY $8,340.36)
- **Revenue:** -$1,010.31 (LY -$8,050.36)

In 2015, Troy Night Out exceeded revenues from 2013 and 2014. This event was revamped in 2014 to include themed events to help focus marketing strategies for businesses and the district. Grass roots marketing and more venue participation, Troy Night Out has seen its reach expand and its expenses decrease. A new vendor fee strategy has also increased the interest of outside vendors and sponsors to the event. Troy Night Out just got a newly-designed event poster, and will be heavily programmed throughout 2016 to keep reminding people that downtown Troy is a great place to Shop.Dine.Explore.
Rockin’ on the River June through August 2015

Attendance: 48,000 over the 12 week series

Income: $182,116.63 NBS (LY $144,765.49 with $33,275.00 BSR)
Expense: $157,627.69 (LY $128,283.83)
Net income: $24,488.94 NBS (LY $16,481.66 with BSR)

We had stellar weather in 2015, with no rain outs and record attendance. The growth of this festival has required a permanent move to Troy’s Riverfront Park and 2016 will see security fencing, contracted and certified security for ID checks, volunteer-led bag checking and a strict no cooler policy. This festival has been bolstered heavily to stabilize it for more growth, and is truly positioned to be the premier outdoor concert series in the Capital District. The schedule has also been tightened from 12 shows to 8, with more money spent securing nationally performing acts for the year.

Troy Pig Out July 2015

Attendance: 30,000

Income: $51,600.51 NBS (LY $64,019.75 with $8,250 BSR)
Expense: $35,122.88 (LY $58,250.90)
Net income: $16,477.63 NBS (LY $5,768.85 BSR)

Troy Pig Out 2015 was the first year that the event was held on only one day versus two when costs of city services for the two-day event grew too high for the event to be sustainable. Programming like a pie eating contest, an agricultural area, and more children’s programming were created to focus the brand identity of this event to reflect the mood of a state fair. Feedback was positive and programming for 2016’s Pig Out will include a horseshoe competition hosted by the National Horseshoe Pitching Association in honor of Troy’s bicentennial and our history at Burden Iron Works (Troy produced the world’s first mass-produced horseshoe), a mechanical bull, a pie and hot dog eating contest, a health and wellness center and more. The ever popular People’s Choice rib eating competition and the Troy Pig Out BBQ competition will still be a big part of the event.
2016 Annual Sponsors

JUDGE Development Corp.

LDC Troy

Rensselaer Honda Simply Better

Fidelis Care

Pioneer Bank

CDTA

Columbia Development Companies

Dunigan & Cauhlin

United Group

Capital Region Landfills, Inc.

County Waste & Recycling

Spot 518

CDHPH A plan for life.

AFSCO Fence & Deck

Pattison, Sampson Ginsberg & Griffin

TROY. NY