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LONG ISLAND
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Tourism on Long Island

How it benefits residents and businesses

The Long Island Jewish World group of newspapers recently spoke with Kristin Jarnagin, president and CEO of the Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau and Sports Commission.

INTERVIEW

LICB, Jarnagin was previously a leader in Arizona's travel and tourism community for more than 15 years and has come to Long Island to help build tourism here.

Tell us a little bit about your background and why you chose to come to Long Island.

I've worked in all aspects of the tourism industry from destination

marketing at the state tourism office, to opening and branding a 500-room luxury resort and most recently serving as the industry lobbyist for statewide tourism, where my role was to educate and advocate on behalf of the tourism industry. I am truly passionate about the benefits that tourism brings to local residents and it's always been a dream to live in New York. I competed in a national search for the Long Island position and was selected from more than 100 applicants. Long Island has a terrific tourism product that has largely gone untapped from a tourism promotion perspective, so there is a lot of opportunity to do great work here. I also chose to come here for

the great quality of life that Long Island residents enjoy. It's a wonderful place to raise my family.

What is the mission of the Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau and Sports Commission?

The mission of the Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau and Sports Commission is to create a positive perception of Long Island in all aspects of economic growth in order to benefit Long Island residents. In other words, LICB is creating a brand that will represent the Island's history and also its future. We want to make Long Island grow into a strategic position with a vision of what we want Long Island to be in the future — a place that people want to visit and a place where they want to live. We want to make the most financial impact here.

How do you plan to accomplish this?

We have a \$3-million budget to make this happen. The convention bureau is focused on what makes Long Island an iconic destination. The bureau aims to attract off-Island people to come and spend their dollars here. We will try to create a feeling of what people will experience when they arrive. We want to make people choose Long Island as a vacation destination. We know that people come for the beaches in the summer, but we are hoping to have them extend the season and take advantage of the Island's superb attractions, spending more of their disposable income. Day-trippers stay at a hotel, they go to various restaurants, all of which generate money for the busi-



Kristin Jarnagin, president and CEO of the Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau and Sports Commission.

ness community and the residents. Beach and spend money there. We want people to explore and positively impact the entire Island.

What are you doing to encourage travelers to use MacArthur Airport?

For the first time, LICB is working with Long Island MacArthur Airport and the Town of Islip to designate key markets that have opportunities for increased traffic into Long Island. We are finalizing research to determine which cities have the highest propensity for trav-

el to Long Island in terms of the distance to Westhampton and to raise awareness in those cities for their residents to travel here.

that generates \$630 million in annual tax revenues that go into the state and Long Island coffers. We want to make Long Island a year-round destination for out-of-town visitors who want to spend time with their family and friends and who will spend their dollars at downtown areas with various shops, go to the vineyards and buy wine, go to all the farm stands and the pumpkin farms and explore historic trails. Also we want to target the business traveler, an educated person who wants to learn about Long Island and so will extend his stay beyond his meetings and spend time exploring our historic museums and our cultural offerings, eat in our fine culinary restaurants and shop in our downtown areas for gifts to bring back home.

In addition, we hope to reach the researchers who come from around the country and abroad to Brookhaven National Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Stony Brook and Hofstra Universities and other institutes to broaden their interests on what Long Island has to offer, thereby increasing the tax revenues in their various communities.

The whole reason to promote tourism is to benefit Long Island's residents. We have a good quality of life here. We have to find an intriguing and compelling way to bring more people here. Our challenge is to connect all of Long Island's attributes in a competitive marketplace.

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ness community and the residents. In the high season, business is compressed on the East End. We want to capitalize on this compression. For example, if there's so much happening in the Hamptons, perhaps we can lure visitors to Jones Beach, the North Shore or Long

Island?

How does tourism benefit Long Island?

Tourism is an economic driver