

## TALKING TOURISM

### December 6, 2009

Each month this space will be devoted to a column written by Debbie Robinson, executive director of the Cambridge/Guernsey County Visitors & Convention Bureau, who will provide information about upcoming events, area attractions, bureau services and projects, and most importantly, communicate the tremendous impact that the travel and tourism industry has on this region.

In 2010, the Cambridge/Guernsey County Visitor & Convention Bureau will celebrate its 30th anniversary. To recognize three decades of serving the Guernsey County tourism industry, the VCB has launched a new look and brand. In the decade that I have been the executive director of the VCB, I have seen many changes; the largest and most notable change is how we communicate with our market segment, visitors, tour operators and our own tourism industry members. We have embarked into new frontiers this year that include electronic communications and marketing tools designed to increase awareness of Guernsey County and its offerings to visitors. At the start of this year the VCB began publishing three electronic newsletters. These quarterly e-newsletters are tailored with messages to meet the needs and interests of our three key audiences – leisure travelers, group tour operators and local tourism industry partners and supporters. In addition, the VCB staff continues to blog about the area and organizational events through <http://cambridgevcb.blogspot.com/>. We are also working to make frequent updates to our website with the posting of new getaway packages, special events and other happenings.

This year was a wonderful year for awards and accolades. The VCB website, VisitGuernseyCounty.com, earned a first place 2009 MIDDY award (Ohio Association of Convention & Visitors Bureau) in the electronic communication division and a second place MIDDY award for our *Think Pink: Vacations with a Purpose* promotion. We also earned two first place RUBY Awards (Recognizing Uncommon Brilliance) for our website and *Think Pink* marketing campaign during the Ohio Conference on Tourism sponsored by the Ohio Travel Association.

Before the Holiday Parade on November 28, Rich Osborne, publisher and editor of *Ohio Magazine* presented Mayor Tom Orr and our Guernsey County Commissioners with an award indicating that our community had been chosen as one of Ohio's Best Hometowns in 2010. The magazine's editors selected Cambridge because this city embodies all of the qualities and characteristics that make Ohio hometowns so special: historic landmarks and architecture, quaint shopping and galleries as well as an amazing sense of community. The VCB submitted our community for the recognition and worked with the publication to host visits and answer questions.

The VCB was awarded approximately \$3,500 through an Ohio co-op marketing program offered through the Ohio Tourism Division for print ads, television commercials, and web marketing in 2009. What do we do with the extra funding? We place it right back into the VCB marketing budget so that we may place more advertisements in 2010 promoting Guernsey County activities and attractions!

The VCB announced the recipients of two tourism awards presented May 14 at the Tourist Information Center during National Tourism Week. The winner of the 2009 Tourism Development of the Year Award was the National Museum of Cambridge Glass. In 2008 the museum developed programs that involved visitors in active learning and participation in activities, as well as local partnerships. The second award, the 2009 Tourism Volunteer of the Year was Cecil Carlson for his tireless work on the Byesville Scenic Railway.

Finally, the VCB continues its work this year along side countless members of the community to ensure the fourth annual Dickens Victorian Village event is a success. The newest edition includes the Sherlock Homes Weekend January 8-10, 2010. Written by local playwright Anne Chlovechok, participants to the Sherlock Holmes Weekend will help solve *The Mystery of Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Taylor Tontine*. Cambridge's very own Colonel Taylor legacy is threatened by an ancient pledge with unforeseen and unavoidable contemporary ramifications.

Participants will get into the spirit by donning Victorian attire and wandering Cambridge's picturesque streets in search of clues to solve the mystery and win the grand prize. The 60 Victorian scenes in Downtown Cambridge will set the tone for a Victorian weekend and will be used as places to find clues to the case. Join us in solving the mystery by registering online at [www.DickensVictorianVillage.com](http://www.DickensVictorianVillage.com).

The VCB staff and board of directors look forward to promoting the Cambridge/Guernsey County area in the coming year and wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Debbie Robinson, Executive Director  
Cambridge/Guernsey County VCB

