

Railroad Best Tourist Attraction for 2023

The Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce recently named the Catskill Mountain Railroad as the Best Ulster County Tourist Attraction for 2023. The CMRR is to be honored at a Business Recognition Awards Dinner at Diamond Mills in Saugerties NY on October 26th.

As one of Ulster County's premier attractions, people and families that come from all over the Northeast to ride the many event trains like the Easter Bunny Express, Catskill Summer Flyer with Ice Cream Sundays, Fall Foliage and Pumpkin trains, and the ever popular Polar Express.

Working hard over the years to expand its operation by building and buying more passenger cars, the CMRR carried 46,745 customers on its fleet of full sized railroad equipment last year. As well as increasing its own revenue, a significant economic impact was realized in Kingston and Ulster County of approximately \$4.7 million from tourist dollars spent at numerous other local businesses.

The railroad also hired 74 people last year with job descriptions ranging from track repair, train crew, ticketing and gift shop, and employment opportunities for many local high school students as cast members for the Polar Express.

In an effort to expand on its continued success, the railroad has recently formulated a plan to extend its tracks another 2 miles to a location know as Basin Road, where it will link to Ulster County's Ashokan Rail Trail. People will be able to take the train from Kingston up to the rail trail, hike or bike along the beautiful vistas of the Ashokan Reservoir, and ride back to Kingston on a later train. The CMRR's Basin Road Plan will create a regional tourist destination and unique way to experience the original Ulster and Delaware railroad corridor by train and by trail.

As the CMRR moves ahead, its vision for the future is to expand its operation by upgrading its equipment, increasing its passenger capacity, providing more special events, and adding to the length of the train ride. Ultimately, someday it hopes for the possibility to reinstall the tracks that were removed so the train can access

the vistas of the Ashokan Reservoir. As well as working in conjunction with the rail trail, it would provide access to educating the public about the New York City Watershed and create a perfect location for sunset Dinner Train operations.

Now in its 40th anniversary year the Catskill Mountain Railroad would like to say thank you to the Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce for recognizing all of it's hard work in becoming the Best Tourist Attraction for 2023.