

Cattaraugus County

Explore and Enjoy

Recreational Motor Sports Center - Limestone, New York

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Cattaraugus County and the Village of Limestone invite developer and investor interest in a Recreational Motor Sports Center and a Gateway to the New York State Hospitality District in Limestone, New York. The development sites are on or adjacent to U.S. Route 219 in Limestone, the gateway to New York State for northbound travelers coming from

Pennsylvania. The proposed developments will also have direct access to Allegany State Park, New York's largest state park, which entertains over 1.4 million visitors annually. The combined impact of the Park and Route 219 travel yields an impressive market base that will grow with the construction of a proposed new freeway northward to Buffalo and Toronto.



PROJECT ELEMENTS

Preliminary concepts envision the following in the Limestone area:

- A New York State Gateway hospitality complex including a Welcome Center (20,000 SF), accommodations (40-60 rooms), restaurant facilities, a convenience store, specialty retail, gas and automobile services (35,000 SF total).
- An improved all-season entrance to Allegany State Park from Route 219 to establish Limestone as the 'eastern gateway' to the Park.
- A Recreational Sports Vehicle Center providing a sno-cross and moto-cross venue for sports vehicle enthusiasts and offering support services including restrooms, warming huts, food, fuel, equipment rentals, and a long-term storage facility for up to thirty snowmobiles.
- Promoting Limestone as a regional hub for snowmobile re-fueling, refreshment, storage, and lodging.

Cattaraugus County Department of Economic Development, Planning & Tourism

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Sites: The planned developments in Limestone will require approximately 60 to 80 acres in total. The site proposed for the Recreational Sports Vehicle Center is a vacant 55 acre parcel, located west of NYS Route 219, and served by Village water and sewage services. The site has some flood plain constraints. The Welcome Center would be anchored at the southeast corner of the intersection of Main Street with Route 219, a site classified as 'Commercial Use' and occupied by a vacant store. Infill development sites are available on the east side of Route 219.

Transportation: Proposed highway improvements in Cattaraugus County (I-86 and Route 219) are expected to place Allegany State Park and Limestone at the center of a major regional transportation and tourist crossroads that would create location advantages for tourist-related investments. This improved infrastructure would ease interstate travel from the Atlantic seaboard and Canada. The community has proposed paving the Limestone entrance to provide year-round vehicular access and develop better synergy between the Park and Limestone businesses, and to improve trail systems. All planning for trail systems and access roads that enter the Park will be conducted through the State Park Agency.

Limestone: Limestone (population 411) was historically much larger, based on lumber, tanning and oil production. Today those industries are gone leaving Limestone with a strong rural atmosphere. The Village is pro-active in its pursuit of viable enterprises and economic development. A strong entrepreneurial spirit has generated successful, growing local businesses that represent important foundations for the expanded developments now envisioned.

Allegany State Park: The proximity of Limestone to Allegany State Park provides a solid market base. The Park is the region's largest recreational tourist destination, attracting over 1.4 million visitors in 2000. Visitors are typically working class families taking advantage of 'soft adventure' or passive outdoor recreation opportunities. Approximately 25% of visitors stay overnight, while 75% are day visitors. The Park offers 315 campsites, 380 rustic cabins, and six housekeeping cottages. The cottages are booked year-round, rustic cabins are full except for shoulder seasons, and campsites are full in the summer and on spring and fall weekends. Snowmobile use within the Park is increasing. Snowmobile enthusiasts represent a significant user group during the winter months. Proposed snowmobile needs include an expansion of the park trail

system, connections to the regional trail network, restrooms, warming huts, food service, fuel, and rentals. All other trail activities in the Park are for non-motorized trail uses.

Market Potential and Support: Tourism is a growth industry in the region, with even greater potential to contribute to the regional economy. The Limestone Gateway project will capture more of the tourism market at a key southern entrance into New York State. The Sports Vehicle Center will diversify and expand the existing tourism market by offering 'adventure' recreation opportunities that enable the region to attract increased numbers of tourists and to capture greater value from the existing market. Consider the following:

- Cattaraugus County tourism expenditures in 1997 exceeded \$77 million.
- Total regional expenditure by park visitors in 1995 was approximately \$21.6 million.
- The potential annual regional tourism expenditure outside the Park is approximately \$63.5 million.
- Over 98 million U.S. adults took an adventure vacation in the last five years.
- Among 'soft' adventure travelers, attractive market segments are older adults (\$390/trip), people living in the Northeast (\$450/trip), and upper income households (\$441/trip).

The goal of Limestone's proposals is to improve existing tourism resources to welcome people to New York State and complement the Park with a balanced mix of outdoor adventure-oriented recreation and attractive hospitality opportunities. Although there are untapped, lucrative market segments there is currently only a limited inventory of family vacation oriented accommodations outside Allegany State Park. Upscale accommodations such as insulated cabins or cottages, hunting lodges, hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts could enhance and diversify a visitor's experience and encourage both extended stays and return visits to the area.

Community Support: The Gateway Welcome Center and Sports Vehicle Center projects would benefit all communities around the state park by improving information flow, and enjoys the wholehearted support of Cattaraugus County and the Village of Limestone. The potential economic impact in terms of tourism-related jobs and revenues justifies this support, and local governments will be eager partners with developers and investors on all facets of site development and financing.

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