

Tourism dollars up in Finger Lakes, Monroe County

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The filming of portions of *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* in downtown Rochester was expected to add to tourism dollars for 2013.

VisitRochester Awards

At its 81st annual meeting Tuesday, VisitRochester presented the following awards:

- Convention achievement award to G. Michael Morris, chief executive officer of RPC Photonics and Apollo Optical Systems.
- Convention connection award to Jeff Calkins, general manager of the Blue Cross Arena at the War Memorial.
- Film achievement award to the city of Rochester Office of Special Events.
- Outstanding community contributor award to members of Oak Hill Country Club.
- Tourism civic award to G. Rollie Adams, president and CEO of The Strong museum.

From golf swings to webslinging, area tourism officials sung our praises Tuesday, touting Rochester's success in attracting guests.

"It's been a great year so far," [VisitRochester](#) President and CEO Don Jeffries told the tourism bureau's annual meeting at the Strathallan hotel on East Avenue. "Spider-Man down Main Street, smashing up police cars. ... The Lilac Festival, the best blooming in years, great attendance. The highest attendance ever for the Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival."

► [Special section: Amazing Spider-Man 2 filming](#)

Tourism is big business in the Finger Lakes. Last year, it generated \$2.8 billion in economic impact across the 14-county vacation region, according to the tourism agency's data. That's up nearly 4 percent from [\\$2.7 billion in 2011](#).

Closer to home, tourism contributed \$961 million to Monroe County's economy in 2012, up slightly from \$958 million the year before, according to VisitRochester figures.

Tourism officials seemed confident that 2013 figures would climb even higher, thanks to the PGA Championship at Oak Hill Country Club and a 10-day film shoot downtown for the film [The Amazing Spider-Man 2](#).

"By the end of 2013, we expect the visitor impact on Monroe County to be more than \$1 billion and employ more than 20,000 area residents in the tourism and hospitality industries," said Jeffries, who joined the bureau in January.

Upcoming promotions hope to capitalize on the growing popularity of Rochester among Canadian visitors, said Greg Marshall, VisitRochester's senior vice president and director of marketing.

While solid numbers are difficult to come by, VisitRochester estimates that 100,000 Canadians visit Monroe County every year. During the week of the PGA, local hotels reported that 15 percent of their

occupants were Canadian, Marshall said.

Canadians are drawn here for Rochester's festivals, special events and shopping, Marshall said. VisitRochester hopes to capitalize on their interest through its annual "A Welcome Surprise" promotional campaign, he said.

The campaign begins on Canadian radio and TV stations later this month and extends through March. In its annual report, VisitRochester says it's seeking grants and partnerships to extend the program year-round.

A separate program in partnership with Delta Air Lines and the "I Love New York" campaign focuses on attracting visitors from New York City. Marshall said VisitRochester is recruiting 200 influential New York City residents to act as ambassadors for Rochester. Fifteen of them will fly here Oct. 11 to learn more about the region.

Jeffries also cited the Toy Industry Hall of Fame coming to Rochester and the growing popularity of the Fringe and Greentopia festivals as reasons to be optimistic about the region's tourism efforts.