



STOWE AREA ASSOCIATION FY 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

MAY 2024 - APRIL 2025



WHO WE ARE

Established in 1937, Stowe Area Association (SAA) is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit member-based marketing and sales organization. Our primary purpose is to promote the Stowe, Vermont region as a vibrant, world-class destination, enhancing the experience for visitors and quality of life for residents while supporting the community's economic well-being.

STRATEGIC VISION

To balance Stowe's visitor economy with the community, SAA developed a three-year strategic plan focused on purpose-driven growth and sustainability. This plan emphasizes three key pillars:

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

Striving to balance the needs of visitors, the environment, and the local community.

SUSTAINABILITY

Ensuring the long-term success of SAA and its staff through sustainable practices.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

Attracting new members and enhancing existing members' engagement by providing valuable programs, services, and benefits.

“SAA has done an incredible job in marketing the town as a year round destination.”

-Alex Stevens, Shaw's General Store

FY 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

GO STOWE BRAND STRATEGY

After launching our new Go Stowe brand strategy in FY24, our team spent FY25 implementing the new brand across all of our channels and campaigns, to ensure alignment with our Destination Stewardship pillar:

- Authentically representing Stowe's unique character.
- Tailoring messaging to attract values-aligned visitors who will appreciate and respect our community.
- Focusing on sustainable tourism to build lasting guest relationships.

The new brand is now featured prominently across Go Stowe marketing materials, including our new accessible website with enhanced trip-planning tools, photography, and videos.



**AWE ISN'T
OPTIONAL**



COME VISIT



**LEAVE YOUR
HURRY AT
HOME**



COME PLAY



**LET YOUR
CURIOS
LEAD**



COME EXPLORE

UPDATED MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

The evaluation of member benefits and associated dues are a critical component of SAA's current three-year strategic plan. To effectively guide this comprehensive process, a dedicated Membership Benefits Task Force made up of current SAA members across all membership types was established.

The task force worked collaboratively with SAA leadership to complete a thorough analysis of membership structure, member needs, and best practices. Based on this work, SAA rolled out a new tiered dues model for FY26 Membership Renewal. This was strategically planned to coincide with the launch our new brand strategy.

The new tiered benefits structure is designed to:

- **Increase Transparency Between Cost and Value:** The tiered model will clearly delineate the specific benefits associated with each membership level, ensuring members can easily understand the value they receive for their annual dues investment.
- **Increase Membership Retention and Recruitment:** By offering a range of clearly defined value propositions, we strive to improve satisfaction for current members and a more compelling offer for prospective members, thereby boosting overall retention and recruitment rates.
- **Ensure the Long-Term Financial Sustainability of SAA:** The optimization of SAA's dues structure is fundamental to establishing a more predictable and sustainable revenue stream, which is vital for SAA to continue serving the community and achieving long-term strategic goals.

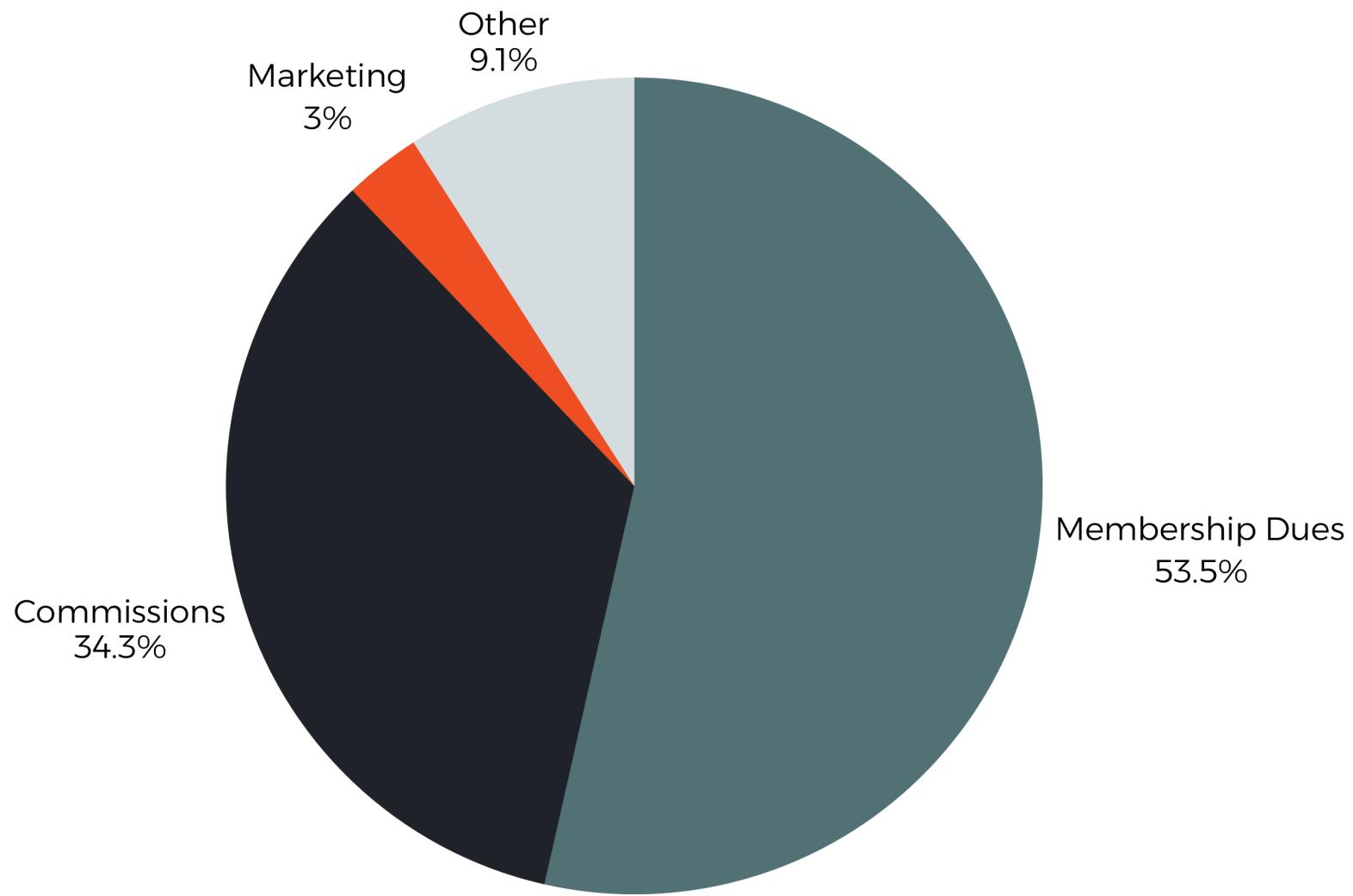
THE STOWE TRAVEL PLANNER

In conjunction with the new brand strategy, SAA consolidated the Stowe Travel Planner from two publications into a single publication annually. In addition to better supporting SAA members and employees by expediting the process to once a year, the guide now better supports our efforts to market Stowe as a four-season destination and provides information for year-round travel to Stowe. An added benefit was that we were also able to print and distribute 10K more copies (35k total) due to the cost savings associated with only doing one print round.



REVENUE

TOTAL FY25 REVENUE = \$1,042,568.29

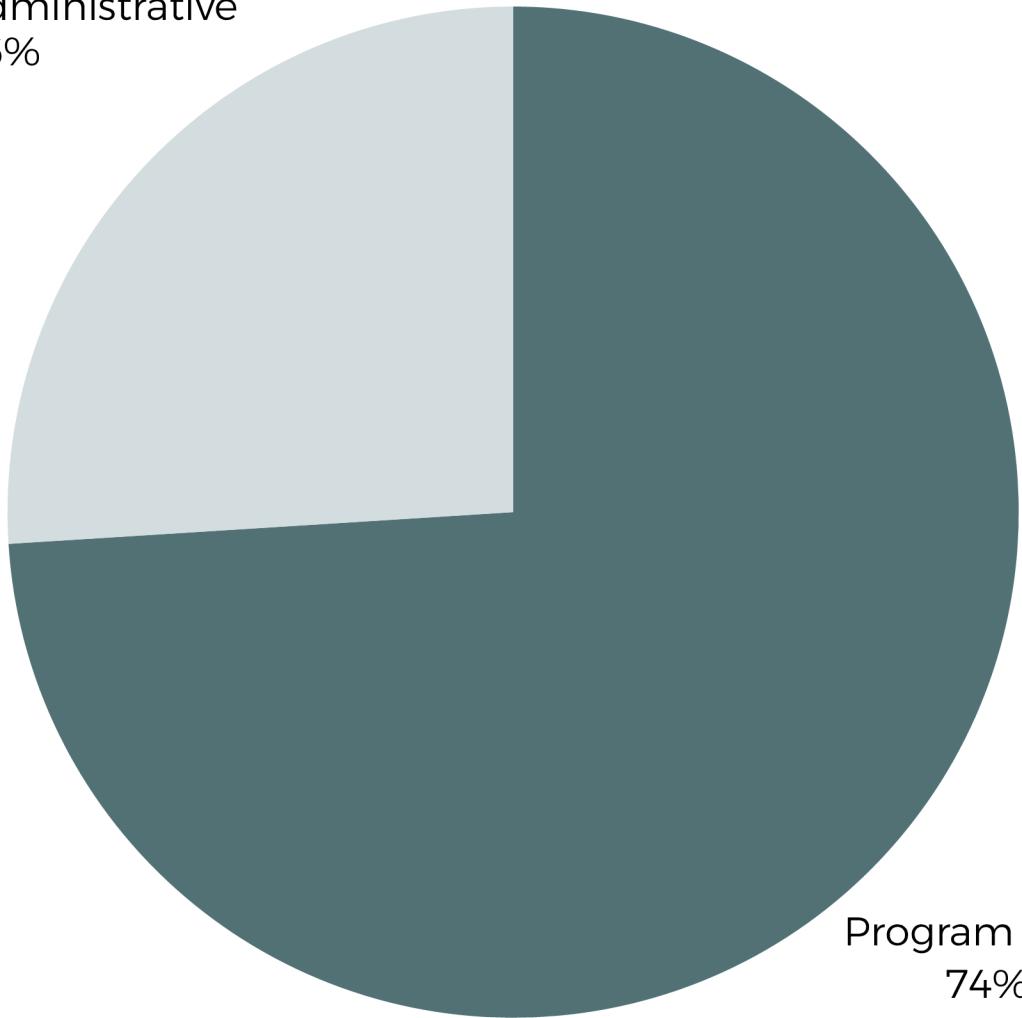




EXPENSES

TOTAL FY25 EXPENSES = \$1,034,374.34

General & Administrative
26%



*Program Costs include marketing, membership, sales and reservations expenses.



SALES PERFORMANCE

In Fiscal Year 2025 economic concerns around inflation caused a shift in consumer travel and spending. While the quantity of reservations SAA booked across our three sales channels remained consistent to FY24, visitors opted for lower priced lodging, and shorter stays.

Total revenue from SAA Channels for FY25 was 3.1 million, a 12% pull back from the record high seen the year prior, which had also benefitted from the solar eclipse.

**GROUP SALES
REVENUE
INCREASED
38%**

- Group Revenue for FY25 **increased 38% from FY24 to \$217K**
- January 2025 was the single highest generating month in SAA's history, **generating over \$935K in revenue.**



DESTINATION MARKETING FEE PROGRAM

2025 was the second year of SAA's Destination Marketing Fee ('DMF') Program, a new funding model designed to leverage overnight visitation to fund tourism initiatives, and reduce membership dues for lodging partners.

In FY25 properties paid normal membership dues up-front and were issued credits for the DMF they collected, covering up to 95% of their membership dues.

Two Lodging Members joined the DMF Program, for a total of 9 participating properties. **Total DMF collections for FY25 was \$134,772, up 105% from FY24***.

After dues credits, the DMF Program generated an additional \$14,043 in FY25. Funds are used to increase the marketing power of SAA to further elevate Stowe as a premier four season destination.

*The DMF Program started in 2024, with most properties collecting for 8 months.

"We joined the Stowe Area Association for their marketing power but also to support other businesses in Stowe and beyond. The Mixers are a great way to meet with business owners and managers throughout the area. SAA keeps me up to date on what is going on in the area through emails, meetings, and mixers."

-Thadeus Davis, Savor Vermont Tours



GUEST SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

Stowe's Front Door welcomed 19,718 guests in FY25 down 2% from FY24. This slight decline is negligible when considering the increased foot traffic in FY24 from the April 8, 2024 Total Solar Eclipse. At the Visitor Information Center we assist guests online, via phone, and in person with lodging, dining, shopping, and activity recommendations.

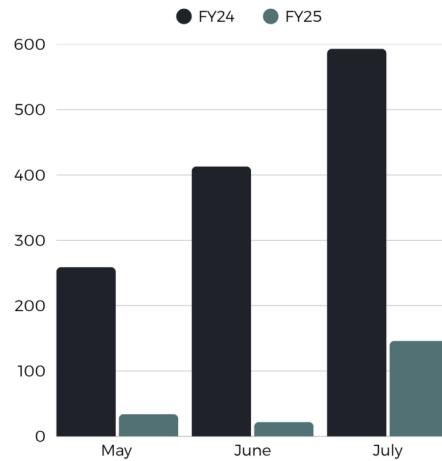
- New England and other northern states [Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Pennsylvania] continue to drive the majority of domestic visitation. Following closely behind are the southeastern states [Florida, Texas, North and South Carolina, Louisiana, Georgia and the Washington, D.C. area].
- Stowe remains a beloved destination for international travelers with guests visiting from over **70 countries**. Top countries include the United Kingdom, Canada, India, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, New Zealand, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Germany, and Russia
- October saw the highest visitation with **6,577 guests**. Our highest single-day visitation was **581 guests**.
- **November 2024 Visitation was up 36%YoY**, highlighting SAA's efforts to increase shoulder season visitation to Stowe.



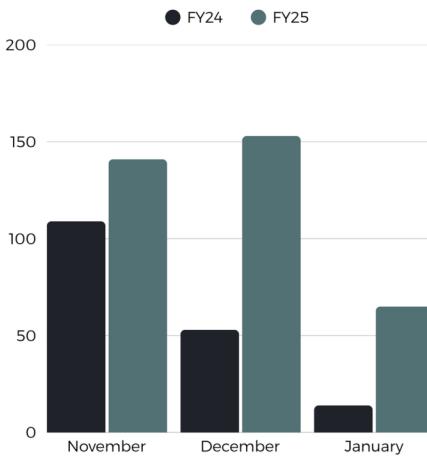
MEMBER REFERRALS

FY25 saw the implementation of data-driven, guest-centric changes to the guest experience within the Visitor Information Center, reversing an 86%YoY decline in Q1. **Member referrals rebounded strongly ending up 103.97%YoY in Q3 and up 662.79% YoY in Q4 of FY25.**

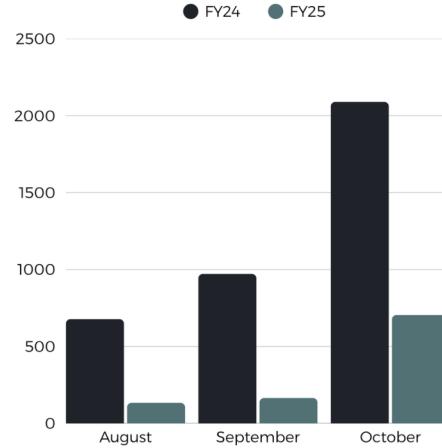
Q1 REFERRALS



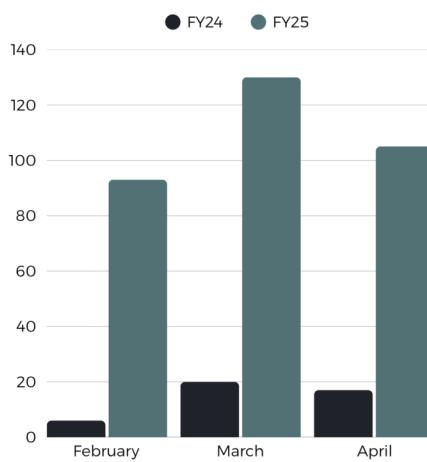
Q3 REFERRALS



Q2 REFERRALS



Q4 REFERRALS





MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

GOSTOWE.COM

In fiscal year 2025, we revitalized all of our web content and partnered with an agency to build an entirely new, accessible and user-friendly website. All of that work was completed in FY25 and the new website launched at the beginning of FY26.

In FY25, our destination website, gostowe.com, continued to show impressive results:

- **2.5 million pageviews**
- **656,000 new users**

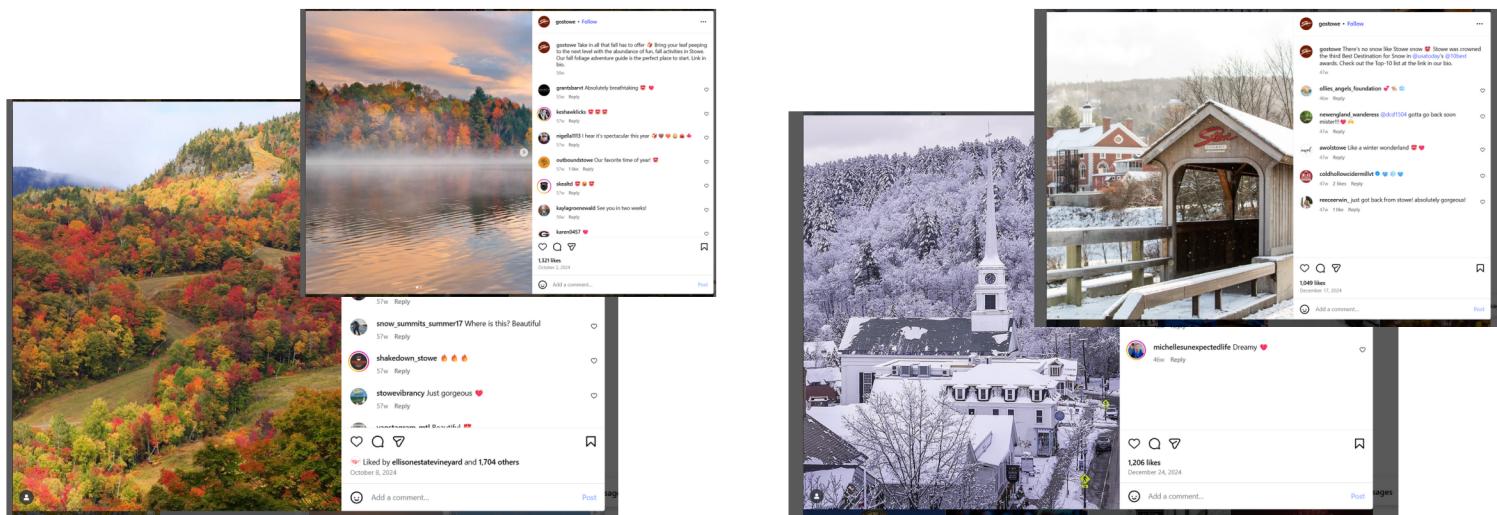
The screenshot shows a web browser window for the website gostowe.com. The page features a large, scenic image of snow-covered mountains and a winding road. At the bottom, there is a dark green call-to-action button with the text "LET YOUR CURIOUS LEAD" in white. Below the button, there is a navigation bar with links for "EVENTS CALENDAR", "WINTER SHUTTLE", "COVERED BRIDGES", "RECREATION PATH", and "STOWE TRAVEL PLANNER". There is also a "MESSAGE US" button with an arrow icon.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Go Stowe Social Media channels continue to reach record levels of engagement.

Key Highlights for FY25

- **October 2024: 18,600 engagements** on Instagram with a **48% engagement rate**.
- **December 2024: 20,800 engagements** on Instagram with a **53% engagement rate**.



PAID MEDIA

Our FY25 paid media strategy introduced two new channels. We introduced Google Performance Max campaigns into our paid marketing mix, allowing us to optimize across channels and audiences more efficiently. Campaign goals focused on driving website traffic, engagement, and lodging bookings. We have already seen strong results achieving a high volume of clicks at a notably low cost.

With the support of a federal grant, SAA expanded its paid media strategy to reach a more diverse set of markets. We launched a campaign that ran in 21 markets, encompassing our traditional drive markets across Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey while also expanding into Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and Nashville. Additional outreach extended to Ohio and North Carolina, as well as key fly markets such as Chicago, Denver, and Atlanta. This broader geographic approach allowed us to introduce Stowe to new audiences while strengthening awareness and visitation in our core regions.

STRATEGIC PLAN YEAR 2 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SAA's work highlights our dedication to enhancing Stowe as a vibrant, inclusive destination while supporting our community and members.



MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

- SAA Launched a new Tiered Benefits Structure, designed with member feedback to streamline membership options. This structure highlights specific benefits associated with each membership level, ensuring members can easily understand the value they receive for their annual dues investment.
- The DMF Program grew 28% providing dues relief for lodging members and offering increased member benefits for DMF Members.
- Piloted a new pay-to-play options to allow members to tailor the options and meet specific marketing goals regardless of membership tier.

"We continue to support SAA because SAA promotes all of Stowe, not one particular industry. By driving business to Stowe the entire business community benefits."
-Merry Vigneau, The Round Hearth Café & Marketplace



DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

- **Go Stowe Brand Strategy**

- We spent FY25 implementing the new brand across all of our channels and campaigns, to ensure alignment with our Destination Stewardship pillar focusing on authentically representing Stowe's unique character and tailoring messaging to attract values-aligned visitors who will appreciate and respect our community.

- **Strategic Planning**

- SAA served an active role in the development of Vermont's first-ever Destination Management Plan as one of 8 key tourism partners on the Vermont Department of Tourism's strategic planning committee.

- **Partnerships**

- We continued to develop partnerships with mission-aligned organizations, including Vermont Professionals of Color Network, Vermont Department of Aging and Independent Living, Vermont Futures Project, and Green Mountain Adaptive Sports.

- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**

- We renewed our commitment to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment including recommitting to our declaration of inclusion.



LOOKING FORWARD

FY26 STRATEGIC GOALS

- Showcase Stowe as elevated, accessible, inclusive, four-season destination.
- Attract diverse, culturally curious, and off-peak travelers.
- Enhance visitor experience via digital tools and storytelling.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

- **New Website:** Accessible, SEO-optimized, booking-ready
- **Seasonal Campaigns:** Tailored for Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
- **Off-Peak Travel:** Promoting midweek and shoulder seasons
- **Content & Storytelling:** Blogs, emails, and the Stowe Travel Planner
- **Photo/Video:** Creating inclusive, multi-season assets
- **Digital Ads:** Google Performance Max, PPC, programmatic (TravelDesk)
- **Influencers:** 3-4 diverse partners

“Trapp Family Lodge is a proud member of Stowe Area Association. We appreciate the collaboration amongst area businesses to help promote the destination and all the amazing things that our amazing resort town has to offer. The collaborative efforts help support our local businesses and the overall Stowe economy.”

-Bob Schwartz, Trapp Family Lodge

“SAA has been an integral part of the history and generational success of Stowe Mountain Resort. The relationship between SAA and SMR is a shining example of how a successful partnership can help drive visitation to the overall Stowe destination.”

- Luke Sasdorff, Stowe Mountain Resort

