

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Catskill Mountain Railroad Among Ulster County's Top Tourist Attractors Railroad Looks Forward to Competing in Upcoming RFP for Tourist Rail Operations**

**Kingston, NY --March 14, 2016** --The Catskill Mountain Railroad (CMRR) posted total ridership of 39,359 for 2015. Revenues stayed steady at an estimated \$1 million in 2015, similar to the \$1.036 million reported in 2014, according to a statement released this week by the organization. The CMRR estimates its economic impact on Ulster County was over \$3 million in 2015 similar to 2014 with 75% of that impact centered in Kingston.

“If you look at the county’s major tourist attractions,” said CMRR President, Ernie Hunt, “you see Belleayre Mt. Ski Center, HITS, and the Headless Horseman. With nearly 40,000 visitors between Kingston and Phoenicia, we are now within the top five tourist attractors in the county, and certainly the biggest in the city of Kingston.” Hunt went on to say that CMRR had incredible support from the Kingston area business community and “we couldn’t have achieved these results without their close work with the CMRR. They provided critical goods and services that made these events successful.”

Kingston train operations saw passenger numbers at 27,230, mostly from its special event trains. The largest of these, Polar Express, increased to 21,216 in 2015, up 29% from 16,401 in 2014. Phoenicia ridership rose to 12,129 in 2015, up 35% from 8,981 in 2014, due mainly to the railroad’s return to operations in Phoenicia which had been closed since Hurricane Irene in 2011.

Of the Kingston riders at least 20,724 or 79% came from outside Ulster County (18% NYC and Long Island, 16% Orange County, 11% Dutchess County, 17% other Lower Hudson Counties, 6 percent from other NY State Counties, and 11% from out of state) according to zip code analysis of credit card receipts. The CMRR delivered significant numbers of riders directly to the doors of Kingston area restaurants and shops last year to through the CMRR’s “Railroad Dollars” coupon program. Additionally, the CMRR purchased more than \$300,000 in goods from 21 different Ulster County businesses.

The CMRR boosted its carrying capacity in Kingston to nearly 400 people per train with the addition of two new coaches in 2015. The CMRR believes the addition of a sixth coach will increase its Polar Express operation to 25,000 in 2016.

The CMRR looks forward to competing in the upcoming RFP for tourist rail operations, required by the County Legislature to be issued by March 15, 2016. Most important is that no gap in tourist rail operations occurs in 2016 due to the RFP process. Even a short closure of the railroad could result in a devastating loss of tourists to the Kingston and Ulster County.

If selected as the new operator by the County, the CMRR plans to expand its current operations in 2016, in conjunction with the concepts envisioned by the recent study done by the Ulster County Legislature. On the western end, the CMRR looks forward to working with the County to repair the

washout at MP 23.3, allowing the railroad to return to Boiceville and form a link with the new Ashokan Trail at Route 28a. On the eastern end, the railroad will continue to expand out of Kingston towards the Ashokan Reservoir. The CMRR believes that the expansion towards the Ashokan Reservoir, and adult-themed passenger rides, which require a longer ride and a scenic destination, will transform the CMRR into a major regional tourist attraction focusing on “experiential” tourism.

“Understanding ‘experiential tourism’ is a critical concept for economic development in a tourism economy. Tourists not only travel to see scenic beauty, but also seek entertainment,” says Hunt. “Unlike recreational parks and trails, the railroad can combine the scenic beauty of the Catskills with the entertainment of a theme park. This is why the railroad experienced such huge growth in Kingston in 2014 and 2015, through adding nationally-branded entertainment to its rides.”

Hunt praised once again the compromise called for by the County Legislature last December and looked forward to eliminating all remaining litigation with the City and County. “We look forward to returning to building our operations in Ulster County after three years of successfully proving that a Tourist Railroad was critical to Ulster County’s tourism economy.” More information on the CMRR and all of its activities is available at [www.catskillmtrailroad.com](http://www.catskillmtrailroad.com).



William E. Sternitzke

**CMRR Ridership - 2015 Events**

<b>Sorted Geographically</b>	<b>Easter Train</b>	<b>Non-UC</b>	<b>Chuggington</b>	<b>Non-UC</b>	<b>Great Pumpkin Express</b>	<b>Non-UC</b>	<b>Polar Express</b>	<b>Non-UC</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Non-UC</b>
Kingston	81	12.88%	509	14.18%	39	5.00%	481	2.27%	1,110	4.23%
UC Not Kingston	149	23.69%	471	13.12%	93	11.92%	1,988	9.37%	2,701	10.30%
NYC	60	9.54%	150	4.18%	52	7.05%	1,826	8.61%	2,088	7.96%
Long Island	17	2.70%	32	0.89%	0	1.50%	2,656	12.52%	2,705	10.32%
Rockland, Sullivan	24	3.82%	130	3.62%	14	6.11%	1,679	7.91%	1,847	7.05%
Orange	102	16.22%	362	10.08%	111	17.01%	3,639	17.15%	4,214	16.07%
Putnam, Westchester	19	3.02%	149	4.15%	33	7.00%	2,374	11.19%	2,575	9.82%
Dutchess	34	5.41%	298	8.30%	83	14.00%	2,451	11.55%	2,866	10.93%
ARCG (Alb, Ren, Col, Gr)	39	6.20%	401	11.17%	43	18.84%	487	2.30%	970	3.70%
WWSS (War, Wsh, Sara,	10	1.59%	170	4.74%	15	7.99%	26	0.12%	221	0.84%
Other NY State	0	0.00%	107	2.98%	0	5.03%	345	1.63%	452	1.72%
New Jersey	2	0.32%	191	5.32%	7	8.98%	1,452	6.84%	1,652	6.30%
Other US	21	3.34%	138	3.84%	19	6.48%	947	4.46%	1,125	4.29%
International	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	6	0.00%	3	0.01%	9	0.03%
Walkons	35	5.56%	481	13.40%	199	25.51%	223	1.05%	938	3.58%
Comps	28	4.45%	1	0.03%	66	8.46%	604	2.85%	699	2.67%
Other	8	1.27%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	35	0.16%	43	0.16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>3,590</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>21,216</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>26,215</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Non Ulster County	328	52.15%	2,128	59.28%	383	49.10%	17,885	84.30%	20,724	79.05%
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**Sorted By Age**

Adults	279	44.36%	2,788	77.66%	469	60.13%	11,992	56.52%	15,528	59.23%
Seniors	42	6.68%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%	42	0.16%
Children	200	31.80%		0.00%	0	0.00%	7,333	34.56%	7,533	28.74%
Toddlers	37	5.88%	495	13.79%	83	10.64%	1,029	4.85%	1,644	6.27%
Walk-ons	35	5.56%		0.00%	162	20.77%	223	1.05%	420	1.60%
Paid Riders	593	94.28%	3,283	91.45%	714	91.54%	20,577	96.99%	25,167	96.00%
Comps	28	4.45%	307	8.55%	66	8.46%	604	2.85%	1,005	3.83%
Other	8	1.27%					35	0.16%	43	0.16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>3,590</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>21,216</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>26,215</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**CMRR Passenger Count**

<b>2015</b>	<u>Phoenicia</u>				<u>Kingston</u>			Total <u>All</u>	
	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>		
January			0			0	0		
February			0			0	0		
March			0			0	0		
April			0		629		629		
May	438	29	467		95	0	95		
June	448		448		3,625	0	3,625		
July	1,299		1,299		276	0	276		
August	2,503		2,503		259		259		
September	1,054	46	1,100		350		350		
October	5,793		5,793		780		780		
November	202	50	252		6,390		6,390		
December	<u>90</u>	<u>177</u>	<u>267</u>		<u>14,826</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>14,826</u>		
	11,827	302	12,129	135.05%	27,230	0	27,230	87.03%	39,359

**CMRR Passenger Count**

<b>2014</b>	<u>Phoenicia</u>				<u>Kingston</u>			Total <u>All</u>	
	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>		
January			0			0	0		
February			0			0	0		
March			0			0	0		
April			0		311		311		
May	467		467		214	55	269		
June	560		560		262	25	287		
July	1,175		1,175		414	21	435		
August	1,803		1,803		340		340		
September	895		895		11,153		11,153		
October	3,974		3,974		1,680		1,680		
November		7	7		5,499		5,499		
December		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>		<u>11,138</u>	<u>177</u>	<u>11,315</u>		
	8,874	107	8,981	87.64%	31,011	278	31,289	683.91%	40,270

**CMRR Passenger Count**

<b>2013</b>	<u>Phoenicia</u>				<u>Kingston</u>			Total <u>All</u>	
	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>		
January			0		0		0	0	
February			0				0	0	
March			0				0	0	
April		22	22			22	22	44	
May	370	120	490		166		166	656	
June	625		625		453	20	473	1,098	
July	1,140	103	1,243		438	0	438	1,681	
August	1,941	121	2,062		554	66	620	2,682	
September	1,025	0	1,025		0		0	1,025	
October	4,351	364	4,715		860	25	885	5,600	
November			0		200		200	200	
December	<u>0</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>66</u>		<u>1,660</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>1,771</u>	<u>1,837</u>	
	9,452	796	10,248	121.09%	4,331	244	4,575	149.27%	14,823

**CMRR Passenger Count**

<b>2012</b>	<u>Phoenicia</u>			<u>Kingston</u>			<u>Total All</u>
	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>	
January			0	0		0	0
February			0			0	0
March			0			0	0
April			0			0	0
May	264		264			0	264
June	508		508	55		55	563
July	957	56	1,013	342	20	362	1,375
August	1,210	52	1,262	485		485	1,747
September	1,090		1,090	37		37	1,127
October	4,161	56	4,217	692	68	760	4,977
November			0			0	0
December		<u>109</u>	<u>109</u>	<u>1,233</u>	<u>133</u>	<u>1,366</u>	<u>1,475</u>
	8,190	273	8,463	2,844	221	3,065	11,528

**CMRR Passenger Count**

<b>2011</b>	<u>Phoenicia</u>			<u>Kingston</u>			<u>Total All</u>
	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>	
January			0	138		138	138
February			0			0	0
March			0			0	0
April			0			0	0
May	423	37	460		37	37	497
June	619	95	714			0	714
July	1,360	123	1,483	386		386	1,869
August	902	96	998	290		290	1,288
September	212	148	360	39		39	399
October	2,669		2,669	485		485	3,154
November			0			0	0
December		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,243</u>		<u>1,243</u>	<u>1,243</u>
	6,185	499	6,684	2,581	37	2,618	9,302

**CMRR Passenger Count**

<b>2010</b>	<u>Phoenicia</u>			<u>Kingston</u>			<u>Total All</u>
	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>	
January			0			0	0
February			0			0	0
March			0			0	0
April	0		0			0	0
May	356	232	588			0	588
June	434	42	476			0	476
July	1,139	266	1,405	309		309	1,714
August	1,710		1,710	341		341	2,051
September	1,186	39	1,225	93		93	1,318
October	4,481		4,481	263		263	4,744
November			0			0	0
December		<u>326</u>	<u>326</u>	<u>1,038</u>		<u>1,038</u>	<u>1,364</u>
	9,306	905	10,211	2,044	0	2,044	12,255

**CMRR Passenger Count**

<b>2009</b>	<u>Phoenicia</u>			<u>Kingston</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>All</u>
January			0			0	0
February			0			0	0
March			0			0	0
April	0		0			0	0
May	379	52	431			0	431
June	375	189	564			0	564
July	993	53	1,046	194	70	264	1,310
August	1,291	22	1,313	150	73	223	1,536
September	839	39	878	107		107	985
October	2,218	20	2,238	0		0	2,238
November	55		55			0	55
December		<u>242</u>	<u>242</u>	<u>870</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>952</u>	<u>1,194</u>
	6,150	617	6,767	1,321	225	1,546	8,313

<b>2008</b>	<u>Phoenicia</u>			<u>Kingston</u>			<u>Total</u>
	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Charters</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>All</u>
January			0			0	0
February			0			0	0
March			0			0	0
April	0		0			0	0
May	261	0	261			0	261
June	594	0	594			0	594
July	1,344	0	1,344	0	0	0	1,344
August	1,477	0	1,477	0	0	0	1,477
September	466	0	466	0		0	466
October	2,602	0	2,602	0		0	2,602
November	0	91	91			0	91
December		<u>320</u>	<u>320</u>	<u>884</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>884</u>	<u>1,204</u>
	6,744	411	7,155	884	0	884	8,039