



Important Announcements and Changes for 2017

To our valued members,

2016 was a year of tremendous growth for the Finger Lakes Beer Trail. We crossed the threshold of over 100 breweries along the Trail; our Facebook page has seen more activity than ever before, reaching over 60,000 people every week; and our website has seen a record number of hits this year with nearly 70% of total users coming to our website for the first time. However, with growth and expansion there also comes change.

Like any other organization, the Finger Lakes Beer Trail has limited resources and must periodically evaluate its priorities and structure to ensure that they are serving the needs of their stakeholders effectively. Therefore, we announce the following changes:

First, we announce that co-founder **Adam Smith** has decided to leave his position with the Finger Lakes Beer Trail to pursue other interests. Adam's responsibilities were primarily in the oversight of the website, content management, technology solutions, and graphic design. We have retained an independent consultant to take over Adam's website and technology-related duties effective January 1, 2017. However, in doing so, we have decided to streamline a number of time consuming activities which are described in more detail below.

Second, in an effort to maximize how we use the very limited staff resources we have available, effective January 1, 2017, we will **no longer be manually inputting calendar of events** items on the Finger Lakes Beer Trail's website. Going forward, we will be using a special Facebook plugin that automatically pulls in and displays member events directly on the FLBT website. In order to do this, we will be scouring each member's Facebook events page on a monthly basis and sharing their events to the Beer Trail's **Facebook events calendar**, which will then be pulled into the FLBT website. Therefore, in order to continue receiving FLBT promotion of your events, we encourage you to utilize the "Create Event" function on your Facebook page and share them to the Finger Lakes Beer Trail's Facebook page, which can be found at [Facebook.com/FLBeerTrail](https://www.facebook.com/FLBeerTrail).

Third, in an effort to better align our programs and promotional opportunities with the changing needs of our stakeholders, we have implemented a **new Membership Structure for 2017** which we believe will better serve the evolving needs of both our brewery and non-brewing members. Specifically, we have moved over to a **Tier-Based Membership Structure** which allows businesses to pick and choose the level of support that works best for them. Detailed Membership information can be found at [Fingerlakesbeertrail.com/become-a-member](https://www.fingerlakesbeertrail.com/become-a-member).

Additionally, as part of the changes to our membership structure, we have decided to **move away from the internal member (i.e. premium) pages** on the Finger Lakes Beer Trail website and focus more on directing website traffic directly to our member's websites and/or Facebook pages. Therefore, when a customer clicks on the icon for a particular location on the online map, instead of being routed to an internal page which then provides an external link to that location's own website, now when the customer clicks on a location's icon, they will be given the opportunity to launch a new page which takes them directly to that location's website for more information.

Finally, in an effort to keep up with the growing financial expense of producing an annual print map of 120,000 copies with distribution throughout 10 northeastern states, we have **eliminated the "free" listing option on the print map.** This only applies to the print map, we will continue to list all breweries at no-cost on the website. For 2017, the cost to just be listed on the print map (with no advertising, membership, etc.) will be \$175 for the first location and \$125 for each additional location, if applicable. Please note, **this does not affect Full Members (now called Tier 2 Members)** who will continue to get a free listing on the print map along with a single-size map ad, and display ad on the FLBT website as part of their membership.

In closing, we would like to ensure our valued stakeholders that these changes do not weaken our programmatic offerings, but serve to strengthen them by streamlining processes and re-aligning efforts which in turn will allow us more time to focus on building new opportunities for growth and visibility for the benefit of our members.

The continued support and friendship of our member breweries means the world to me and I am personally committed to doing all that I can to ensure the continued promotion, economic growth, and financial stability of our region's outstanding craft brewing industry. If you have any questions, please contact me via email at Theresa@fingerlakesbeertrail.com.

Cheers,

Theresa C. Hollister
President and Founding Partner