

## Raising All Boats: Exploring the Economic Interdependence of Hospitality, Transportation, Construction, and Communication



by  
Nancy Greenwald

Connecticut is a vibrant, beautiful state with a rich array of natural beauty, cultural resources, restaurants, and retail venues. These resources enrich our lives every day and strengthen our economy by drawing nearly three million visitors to Connecticut's major attractions in the summer months alone.

Tourism accounts for \$14 billion of revenue in Connecticut annually. That's not to mention the value of business travel in the state.

Preserving and developing our natural and cultural resources requires effective collaboration among many sectors of our economy. The creation of aesthetically compelling, functionally efficient, and environmentally sensitive buildings requires the expertise of our design and

construction industry. A recent example is the five year \$33 million renovation of one of Connecticut's cultural jewels, the Wadsworth Athenaeum, completed in 2015.

Designed by a Connecticut based architectural firm and constructed by

Our marketing and communication industries are a vital part of the process. The impressive new website launched by the Connecticut Department of Tourism, <http://www.ctvisit.com> is designed to help get out the word about Connecticut's natural and cultural treasures.

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a regional contracting firm, the award winning project\* was described by the New York Times as a "masterpiece of renovation."

Hospitality and tourism also require smoothly running transportation to attract visitors. "Travelers and economic growth are clearly best served by cooperative and collaborative relationships between those who formulate and implement public policies pertaining to highways and to travel and tourism." \*\*

Creative thinking involving the hospitality industry in multi-disciplinary brainstorming is needed. Innovative tourism can focus on preserving core values while creating opportunities for new adventures, new structures, and new jobs. Environmental tourism, history tourism, and boutique hotels offering tailored experiences are three such innovations. Changes in tourism practices can generate major benefits by motivating change towards greater sustainability

within the tourism supply chain and other sectors.

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*Nancy Greenwald is the executive director of the Construction Institute at the University of Hartford. The mission of the Institute is to promote cross-industry collaboration and promote multi-disciplinary problem solving. Learn more about the Institute at [construction.org](http://construction.org).*

\* Consigli Construction Co., Inc., a member of the Construction Institute, received a Preservation Award from the Hartford Preservation Alliance on May 17, 2012, for its work on the restoration and renovation of the Wadsworth Athenaeum.

\*\*Aubrey C. King, Relationships Between Transportation and Tourism: Interaction Between State Departments Of Transportation And State Tourism Offices, Prepared for National Cooperative Highway Research Program Transportation Research Board of The National Academies, November, 2007.