

LOWELL COMMUNITY FESTIVAL AND EVENT PLANNERS RESOURCE GROUP



Mosaic Lowell

November 5, 2025 Meeting, 6-7:30 pm, LTC

Attendees

Jessica O'Hearn (Mosaic Lowell), Chris Hayes (DIY), Peter Crewe (CASE Office), Michael Roundy (LKSR), Brad Burgess (Living Theatre NYC), Chris Romero, brian Bradbury (Revolutionary Valley), Laura Tavares (Mosaic Lowell), Sophia Boucher (CASE Office), Bernie Zelitch (By Annie Powell), Skippy (Lowell Author, Bookstore Owner) Gwen Junghanss (Pollard Library)

Guest Speaker: Brian Bradbury, Director of *Revolutionary Valley*

Revolutionary Valley Overview

- **About the Organization:**

Formerly the *Merrimack Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau*, now rebranded as *Revolutionary Valley*. It is one of 16 Regional Tourism Councils (RTCs) in Massachusetts, focused on marketing and promoting the region to bring visitors and spending to local communities.

- **Coverage Area:** 21 cities and towns
- **Website:** <https://merrimackvalley.org/>

- **Ambassador Program:**

- Recruiting two ambassadors from each city/town to help keep the organization informed and ensure community representation.
- Ambassadors assist with event updates, one 4-hour visitor center shift per month, and two volunteer days per year at regional events.
- Designed to ensure comprehensive coverage of all communities in the region.

- **Membership Model:**

- Membership-based, but all businesses and events are represented on the website regardless of ability to pay.
- Focus on inclusion and equal representation.

Volunteer Platform (Galaxy Digital)

- **Platform Link:** [Volunteer Dashboard](#)
- **How It Works:**
 - Organized by **Programs**, with individual **Opportunities** nested under each program.
 - Volunteers can browse programs or opportunities directly via the navigation bar.
 - Suitable for both one-time and ongoing volunteer needs (e.g., festivals, community clean-ups, recurring roles).
 - Organizers can contact Revolutionary Valley staff to list their events and volunteer needs.
 - Enables organizers to manage volunteer schedules through the platform.
 - Includes a “Festivals and Events” program category.

Marketing and Regional Partnerships

- **New Branding & Website:**
 - Upcoming launch will include itineraries, enhanced navigation, and storytelling features for visitors planning trips in the region.
- **Collaborations and Networks:**
 - Works closely with NMCOG, Middlesex 3 Coalition, and other regional partners to promote events and new businesses.
 - Monthly networking events held across the region.
 - Partnerships also extend to destination marketing via MOTT (Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism) and Destination New England.
- **Marketing Opportunities:**
 - *Revolutionary Valley* provides co-op advertising options for all, regardless of membership status.
 - Mondays feature “member-to-member” emails.
 - Festivals such as *Lowell Folk Festival* have benefited from \$35K+ in direct advertising through these efforts.
 - MOTT requires RTCs to focus advertising efforts 50+ miles outside the region.
- **Local Tools:**
 - *Mosaic Lowell Map*: Free tool available to help visitors navigate Lowell events.
 - *Merrimack Valley Eats*: Highlights restaurants and local dining spots.

Corporate Sponsorship Portal (In Development)

- Revolutionary Valley aims to create a **corporate sponsorship portal** to connect event organizers with potential business sponsors across the region.
- UMass Lowell has expressed commitment to:
 - Increasing financial and logistical involvement in community events.
 - Offering campus spaces for local events.
 - Partnering with Revolutionary Valley to align investment strategies and impact measurement.

Advice for Festival and Event Organizers

- **Plan Ahead:**
 - Secure event dates early and update online listings as soon as possible — ideally **10 months in advance** — to maximize sponsorship and marketing opportunities.
 - Include consistent phrasing on websites (e.g., “Our festival is always the last weekend in July”) to build public familiarity and reliability.
- **Resource Sharing:**
 - CASE can direct organizers to Revolutionary Valley and Mosaic for marketing and logistical support.
 - Rev Valley can provide affordable marketing packages, print resources, and other small business tools.
- **Common Barriers:**
 - Uncertainty about staffing and funding for future years often prevents early planning.
 - Encouragement to begin outreach and marketing regardless — resources exist to help fill gaps.

Discussion: Future of the Resource Group (2026 and Beyond)

Chris’s Reflections:

- Guest speakers like Brian are valuable — they provide practical learning and connection opportunities.
- The group could:
 - Host seasonal sessions on *how to start an event* for new organizers.
 - Feature regional perspectives and cross-sector collaborations.
 - Explore intersections between *sports* and *arts & culture* to broaden impact.

Additional Ideas:

- Investigate potential “sister city” connections within the Revolutionary Valley region.
- Continue mapping under-the-radar events to strengthen the regional ecosystem.
- Use economic impact studies (e.g., *Golden Gloves Report*) to make the case for investment in community events.