

The Leader-Herald

Study reveals a market for hotel, motel in Fulton County

JOHNSTOWN — A **Chicago firm** that Fulton County hired to determine if there's a market for a new hotel or motel in the county identified two preferred size options — 90 rooms or 120 rooms.

The Fulton County Board of Supervisors in August awarded a \$19,500 contract to Hunden Strategic Partners. Funding for the agreement came from a marketing project contained in the 2017 county capital budget.

County Planning Director James Mraz said Monday that two Hunden representatives recently gave a presentation to the board's Economic Development and Environment Committee. They were **Rob Hunden, company president and CEO, and Project Manager Mike Montgomery.**

Mraz said the full board will decide what to do with Hunden's findings and any limitations to advance a new hotel.

Size options for a new hotel in the county are 90, with a 200 plus person ballroom; or 120 rooms, with a 300-person ballroom. Both concepts would have event and meeting spaces larger than anything Fulton County currently offers, officials said.

The report said a 120-room hotel could generate \$1.1 million in total taxes within five years of operation.

Hunden advised that a site near or on the Great Sacandaga Lake would be a “*positive*” asset for a hotel market. He said Fulton County has a need for more function space for corporate meetings and other gatherings. He said a branded hotel like Hilton, Marriott or Hyatt would be a preferred option.

Montgomery said there is a lot of opportunity for corporate stays, but the Johnstown Holiday Inn isn’t large enough for large event functional spaces. He said winter months generate demand with snowmobiling and other winter activities, but represent a slower, challenging period.

The report found the largest generators of room nights in the market include the Walleye Challenge, Great Sacandaga Lake and Saratoga Springs in the summer months.

Among the current hotels and motels in the area are: Johnstown Holiday Inn — 100 rooms; Microtel Inn & Suites in Johnstown — 73 rooms; Super 8 in Johnstown — 48 rooms; and Super 8 in Amsterdam — 68 rooms.

“There is currently unaccommodated summer and fall demand in Fulton County, which creates an opportunity for another lodging property that is a step up in quality from the current offerings,” Hunden’s report found.

Next steps in the hotel demand investigation by the county include: identifying sites, obtaining options, preparing and distributing requests for qualifications to developers, review qualifications, prepare and distribute a request for proposal, review and evaluate proposals, negotiate, select developer, extend municipal infrastructure to the site, and actual construction of the hotel.

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