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Evan Smith

Promoting Jamestown and Newport is a 'dream job' for Jamestownner

By Holly Benton

Few people are fortunate enough to find happiness in their everyday work.

Islander Evan Smith is one of those few.

Smith, president and CEO of the Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau, said he truly loves his job.

"I think I may have the best

job in America," he said. "I love what I do, I love representing and being an ambassador for this great place. I get up every day and I love coming to work."

Smith works to promote the nine towns of Newport and Bristol counties as a preferred place for travel. As the leader of his destination marketing team, Smith coaches his team in marketing Newport and Bristol counties to both leisure and business travelers.

It hasn't always been easy in the difficulties of this economy.

Smith said that the sum of the seven individual sectors of tourism — lodging, attractions, shopping, dining, recreation, transportation and special events — indicates whether tourism as a whole is up or down.

"The national and international travel industry has gone through a 15-month period where partners in travel are suffering," he said. "The lodging segment in 2009 dropped by about 11%, but many attractions saw an increase because we had more day visitation and less overnight. Right now, shopping is suffering the most. It's a non-essential part of the travel experience."

Smith described his marketing strategy as a "hub and spoke program" that places Newport at the center, and markets the other eight towns of Bristol and Newport counties based on how they relate to Newport.

Each town has its own unique qualities and attractions, he said, and Jamestown is no exception.

"Jamestown values its quality of life," he said. "It's a beautiful and special place. That's why I chose to live there. I'm very passionate about Jamestown, my wife and I have raised our children there."

Smith outlined the many reasons that Jamestown is so unique.

"Its scenic beauty and how it relates to recreational opportunities makes it special," he said. "But also, it's this quaint, seaside New England town. My friends come to see us and say, 'You live in paradise; this is just the most beautiful place.'"

Jamestown's choices in its development have ensured its sustainability, Smith said.

"Jamestown wants to first be itself for its residents and I think, like many special places, welcomes visitors and embraces

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