



CASE STUDY

Brave Women FLX: Where History Meets Modern Leadership

Cayuga County is a founding partner in a regional movement launched in 2019, Brave Women FLX, was intentionally built through partnerships with women-owned and women-led businesses. From strategy to storytelling, every element of the campaign reflects its core mission: to honor the region's historic women trailblazers while uplifting today's women entrepreneurs.

The campaign was developed with:

Wandercuse
led by local influencer
Dani Benjamin,
manages social media

Kirsten Ulve
artist of the vivid &
engaging portraits

Paperkite
WMBE-certified
marketing agency

Three Needs
Creative
graphic design &
copywriting

Travel Alliance
Partnerships
WMBE-certified
PR Agency.

This collective effort ensured that the program not only showcased stories of bravery but was built by the very leaders it aims to support.

Cayuga County anchors the program with 4 of the 10 regional trailblazers, Frances Seward, Harriet Tubman, Emily Howland and Martha Coffin Wright, each tied to a historical location.

Signature Elements of the Campaign:

Trailblazer Stories: Visitors learn about bold women trailblazers like Harriet Tubman, Jikonsaseh and others who shaped the Finger Lakes and the nation.

“Which Brave Woman Are You?” Quiz: Over 1,200 visits and 224 completed entries in 2025 helped drive discovery and personalized itineraries.

Custom Business Itineraries: We build and share travel routes that guide visitors to women-owned businesses that embody the spirit of their matched trailblazer.

Brave Brews Festival (Annual Sponsor): Celebrating women in craft beverage, Brave Brews shines a spotlight on women and LGBTQ+ makers of beer, cider, mead, and spirits; offering community, collaboration, and creativity.



Real Women, Real Stories: A Platform for Visibility



We don't just promote women-owned businesses, we elevate their stories. Cayuga County organized multiple professional photo sessions specifically for women entrepreneurs, capturing authentic, high-quality images used in blogs, press outreach, and digital content. These visuals create a powerful sense of identity and pride for business owners and draw visitors seeking purpose-driven travel.

Regional Growth + National Recognition

What started in Cayuga County now spans seven counties across the Finger Lakes: Ontario, Monroe, Seneca, Onondaga, Chemung, and Cortland have joined the effort, each bringing their own trailblazer stories and strong women-owned businesses to the table.

- **Cultural Heritage Tourism:** International travelers are increasingly drawn to meaningful, story-rich experiences. The Brave Women FLX campaign positions the Finger Lakes as a destination where history, empowerment, and local culture intersect thereby boosting global interest in the region.
- **Earned Media Highlights:** Personalized outreach secured 18 published articles including a feature in Matador Network and mention in Lonely Planet and USA Today leading to and an impressive 11.7 million total impressions.
- **Website Engagement:** The campaign features both a regional microsite on the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council and Cayuga County's dedicated landing page, offering refreshed visuals, storytelling, and seamless navigation. During the core campaign window, the regional site drew over 16,000 visits.



Why It Matters

- **Local Ownership:** Created by Cayuga County, for the region, with women leading at every level.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Built in collaboration with a women-owned creative agency and contracting with women-owned businesses at every level.
- **Scalable Storytelling:** Grows year over year while preserving integrity and flexibility.
- **Business Empowerment:** Connects women-owned businesses to broader audiences through intentional storytelling and high-impact promotion.

