



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Mark Your Calendar for "Maple Weekend"

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Maple Weekend unknown

Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

The numbers are as sweet as syrup. Last year, New York State maple producers broke a 74-year record by producing more than 806,000 gallons of maple syrup—that is 50 percent more than just five years ago. In fact, New York is currently the second largest maple syrup producer in the nation, second only to Vermont.

There is no better time to celebrate the growth of New York's maple industry than during the month of March, which includes an important annual event—"Maple Weekend." This month marks the 24th anniversary of "Maple Weekend," a celebration of all things maple that will take place over the course of two weekends. This year, more than 180 different maple farms and other locations are expected to take part in activities ranging from pancake breakfasts to seeing firsthand how maple syrup is made.

"Maple Weekend" events are set to take place on March 23-24 and March 30-31. In total, the annual celebration is expected to attract more than 400,000 people. For more information, on "Maple Weekend", including a list of participating locations, visit the New York State Maple Association website at www.nysmaple.com.

In recent years, we have seen how maple is not only just part of different foods we enjoy, but also a major part of our state economy. In fact, it is estimated that last year, the maple industry generated \$141 million for New York State.

The upcoming “Maple Weekend” events are the perfect way for people not only to sample some sweet treats, but also to support those responsible for putting it on our tables. This month, I hope you will make time to participate in this sweet tradition.