

# 2021

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

FY 2020/21





## DEAR PARTNERS,

The entire team at Discover Lehigh Valley® is extremely grateful to our dedicated board, elected officials, and our outstanding partners. I am especially grateful to my amazing team. Throughout the year they never missed a beat and continued to tell the story of Lehigh Valley on a global scale.

Without a doubt, our DLV family is innovative as well as resilient. As we begin to welcome visitors again, we expect next year to bring about new beginnings for the travel and tourism industry, and I am confident that the tourism industry is well-positioned for years to come. Together, we will tell the story of all that is *Made Possible in Lehigh Valley*.

Respectfully,

**ALEX MICHAELS**

**PRESIDENT & CEO**

## OUR MISSION

*Discover Lehigh Valley® and its Board of Directors are united in their mission to strengthen Lehigh Valley's economy through tourism, while enhancing quality of life and regional pride.*



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-21

**MIKE FEHNEL** Board Chair  
Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom

**DARREN BETTERS** Vice Chair  
Lehigh/Northampton Airport Authority

**JODIE STETZ** Treasurer  
Lehigh Valley Restaurant Group [Red Robin]

**KASSIE HILGERT** Immediate Past Chair  
ArtsQuest™

## BOARD MEMBERS

**JAMIE BALLIET**  
State Theatre Center for the Performing Arts

**DON CUNNINGHAM** Voting Ex-Officio  
Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation

**CHARLENE DONCHEZ-MOWERS**  
Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites

**GUNNAR FOX**  
PPL Center

**DAVID FULTON**  
Wind Creek® Bethlehem

**JOAN HANSCOM**  
Valley Preferred Cycling Center

**T. ANTHONY IANNELLI** Voting Ex-Officio  
Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce

**FRANK KANE** Voting Ex-Officio  
County of Lehigh

**KEITH KOEPKE**  
Crayola Experience™

**DENISE MAIATICO**  
Meyer Jabara Hotels

**TINA SMITH** Voting Ex-Officio  
Northampton County Department of Community & Economic Development

**ANDREA C. WEISMILLER**  
Joshi Hotel Group

## EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

**DAN HARTZELL**  
Lehigh County

**LEONARD LIGHTNER**  
City of Allentown

**ALICIA MILLER KARNER**  
City of Bethlehem

**LORI VARGO HEFFNER**  
Northampton County Council

## DISCOVER LEHIGH VALLEY® STAFF [AS OF 6/30/21]

**MARY CORYELL** Sales & Services Coordinator  
mary@DiscoverLehighValley.com

**EDWARD EPPLER** Vice President of Finance & Operations  
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**ALISA LOPANO** Creative Services Manager  
alisa@DiscoverLehighValley.com

**ALEX MICHAELS** President & CEO  
alex@DiscoverLehighValley.com

**BREE NIDDS** Vice President of Sales  
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**ALICIA QUINN** Vice President of Marketing & Strategic Alliances  
alicia@DiscoverLehighValley.com

**MONET TIBERII** Sales & Services Coordinator  
monet@DiscoverLehighValley.com

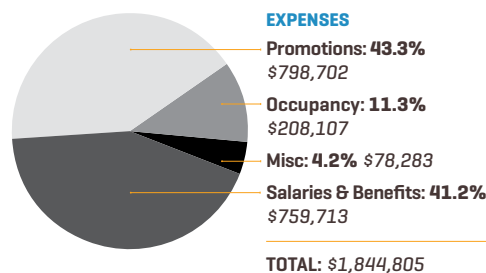
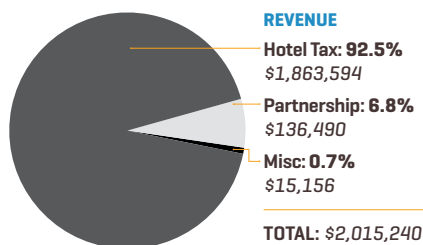
## OUR HEADQUARTERS



Until August 2021  
840 Hamilton St., Suite 200, Allentown, PA 18101

As of September 2021  
1250 Simon Blvd., K102 Easton, PA 18042

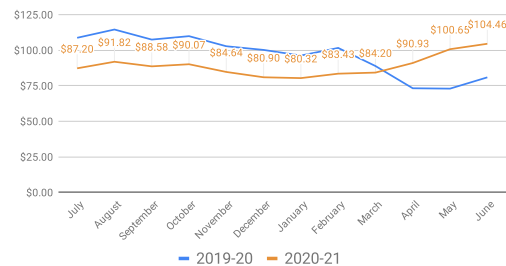
## FINANCIALS



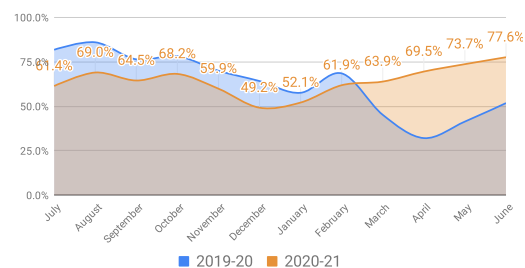
## COUNTY SUPPORT



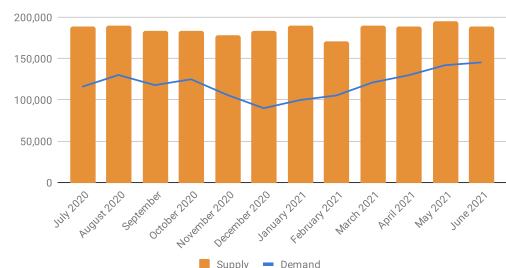
Average Daily Rate in Lehigh Valley



Hotel Occupancy in Lehigh Valley



Supply and Demand for Lehigh Valley



## SMITH TRAVEL RESEARCH

Discover Lehigh Valley® contracts with Smith Travel Research, also referred to as STR, the recognized leader in hospitality benchmarking around the globe. DLV analyzes a monthly report from STR who collects data from hotels in the Lehigh Valley region. The 4th quarter of the fiscal year in Lehigh Valley began to show promise toward a recovery as steady increases were made with each passing month.

**Average Daily Rate (ADR)** is the measure of average rate paid for rooms sold. ADR in Lehigh Valley peaked for the year at **\$104.46** in June, 2021.

**Hotel Occupancy** is the percentage of available rooms sold, and occupancy in Lehigh Valley also peaked at a strong **77.6%** in June, 2021.

**Supply and Demand** Hotel room supply in Lehigh Valley reached a high in May, 2021 [**193,626**], and hotel room demand peaked in June, 2021 [**145,371**]

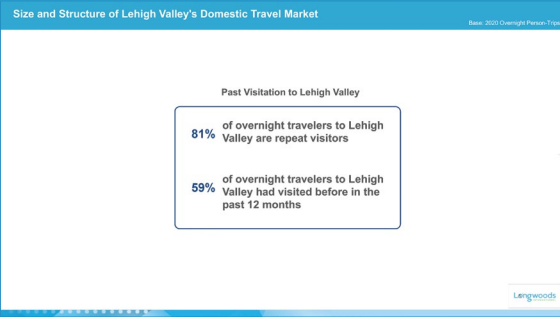
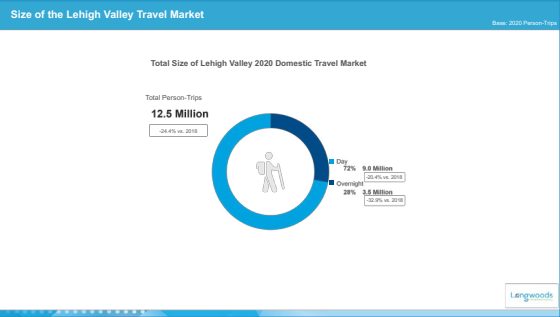
## AT A GLANCE

- » **\$104.46** Average Daily Rate (ADR)
- » **77.6%** Hotel Occupancy in June 2021
- » **145,371** peak hotel room demand in June 2021



**WANT A CLOSER LOOK?**  
CLICK TO ENLARGE CHARTS.





LONGWOODS INTERNATIONAL

According to Longwoods International, Travel USA Visitor Profile, 2020 Lehigh Valley welcomed **12.5 million visitors**. While this is a decrease from 2018, the data indicates that 2020 did see an increase in the number of repeat visitors.

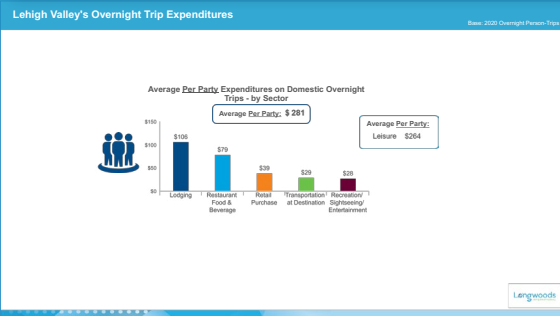
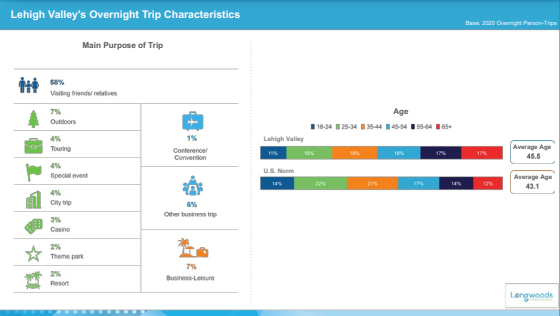
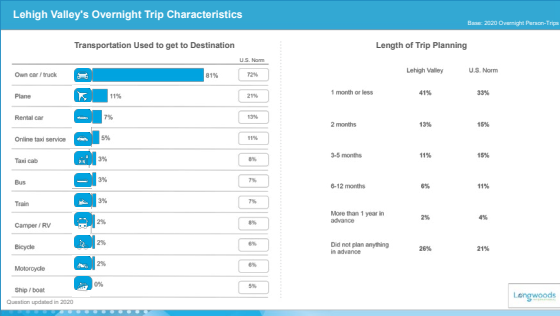
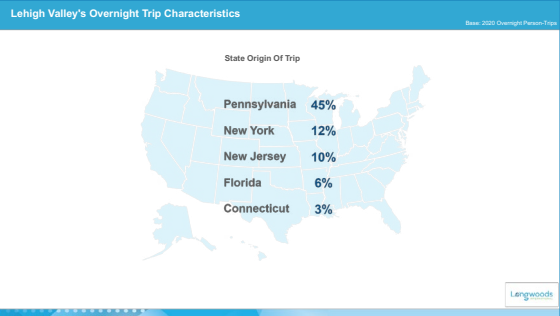
Travelers continued to visit Lehigh Valley from Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. Lehigh Valley saw an **increase of 20% of visitors from the commonwealth** in 2020 from 2018. **81% traveled by car** and **41% of travelers planned their trip within 1 month or less of the actual visit**.

Lehigh Valley has a diverse set of attractions, accommodations, and events to welcome people of all ages. The outdoors proved to be of high importance as we moved through 2020 and beyond visiting friends and relatives, the main purpose of travel in 2020 was to experience the outdoors. **Experiencing the outdoors ranked #2 on the list of both overnight visitors and daytrippers**.

According to the 2020 Longwoods International Report, overnight visitors spend 170% more money in Lehigh Valley than daytrippers, and the **average per party spend was \$281** primarily on lodging, food and beverage, and retail purchases.

Safety and security certainly became a priority, and our partners stepped up. **69% of visitors were very satisfied with their overall trip experience** and safety and security received the highest marks. Since 2018, there is a **10% increase in guests finding value for their money when spending it in Lehigh Valley**.

 **WANT A CLOSER LOOK?**  
CLICK TO ENLARGE CHARTS.





**MARKETING & ADVERTISING**

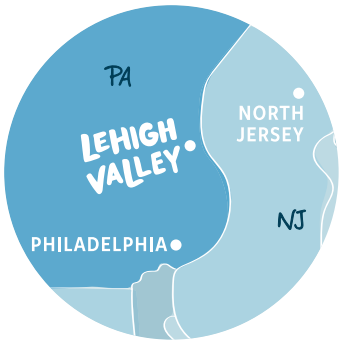
While Discover Lehigh Valley® can’t take credit for all of these visitors as a result of our marketing efforts, the team’s metrics and engagements certainly align to a significant piece of it. We know the year was pegged with challenges from a holiday shutdown period, labor shortages and inventory and supply restrictions, but the marketing efforts for Discover Lehigh Valley® showed no signs of slowing.

Of all the learnings from this past year, the importance of collaboration and teamwork really stands out. Relationships with **Fig Lehigh Valley** and various bloggers, including **Paul Kita**, a lifelong resident of Lehigh Valley, as well as journalist and cookbook author helped DLV build a library of relevant content.

The marketing team continually produced and distributed content to fulfill the organization’s mission by promoting positive news about Lehigh Valley, supporting local businesses, boosting civic pride, and driving visitation.

Targeted local billboards with **Adams Outdoor** kicked off the fiscal year to remind passersby of all things “**Made Possible in Lehigh Valley**,” like the importance of travel, shopping local, and enjoying the great outdoors of our backyards. Social media channels were used as a source to anchor happenings and inspirational trip ideas for the Mid-Atlantic market.

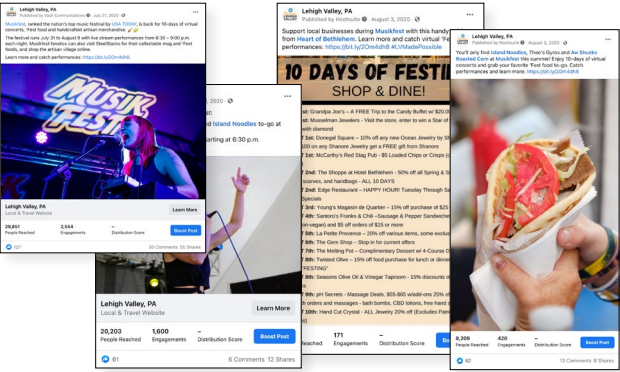
**TARGET MARKETS**  
LEHIGH VALLEY  
PHILADELPHIA  
NORTH JERSEY



**MUSIKFEST A TARGETED 5-DAY FACEBOOK PROMO**

While the team was very conservative with paid efforts early on, a \$50 targeted 5-day Musikfest Promotion on Facebook resulted in 246,244 earned impressions for the virtual hybrid annual event.


- » **\$50** budget
- » **246,244** Earned Impressions



**MEDIA KIT**

DLV offered all of YOU the opportunity to heighten your visibility within Discover’s platforms and channels with the revamped 2021 Media Kit. The kit is filled with advertising opportunities with DLV and on DiscoverLehighValley.com. Options included social media posts, sponsored content in newsletters, blog features, and native display advertising.



  
**WANT A CLOSER LOOK?**  
CLICK TO OPEN MEDIA KIT



**16 WEEK CAMPAIGN SPRING 2021**

The spring season launched a 16-week campaign to help drive day and overnight visitation — & DLV’s largest effort since COVID-19 began. Campaign messaging touted visiting and meeting safely in Lehigh Valley to experience the region’s great attractions, like its iconic historic sites, top-notch cycling venues, award-winning wineries, adventure parks and trails—all things paired with ease of access, low-key vibe, and welcoming hospitality. Attributes that make Lehigh Valley stand out from other Mid-Atlantic destinations.

The campaign reached readers of **Philadelphia Magazine** and **Lehigh Valley Style** users digitally across websites through Google search & display ads as well as travel-booking websites like **VisitPA.com**. And beyond the screen, the campaign remained visible inspiring drivers and road-trippers through outdoor billboards.





## PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public Relations took no backseat this year as DLV's relationship with Vault Communications scored 796 wins for Lehigh Valley year-round. Targeting editorial calendars with specific pitches, Lehigh Valley landed in national and regional headlines totaling an advertising value of \$1.2 million, while reaching 1.3 billion readers.

## EARNED MEDIA

- » **796** media placements
- » **1.2** million advertising value
- » **1.3** billion readers

## EDITORIAL HEADLINES

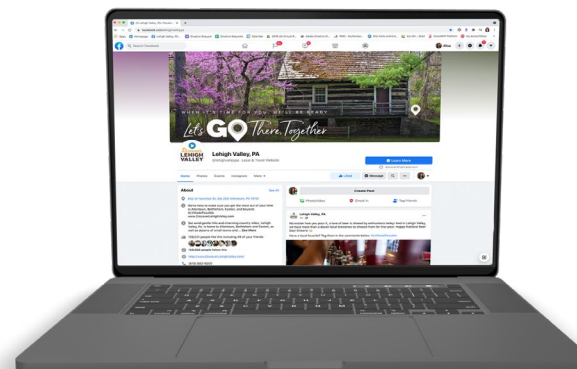
- "Top 10 Wine Regions to Visit When Travel Resumes in 2021" Winetraveler*
- "12 pick-your-own farms near Philly worth a day trip" The Philadelphia Inquirer*
- "Lebanon getting its own pop-up drive-in, as outdoor theaters emerge all over Pennsylvania" York Daily Record*
- "37th and most unique Musikfest yet wraps up" New Jersey Herald*
- "Christmas City' Is A Real Place. And Yes, It's Kind Of Like Living In A Hallmark Movie." Los Angeles Times*
- "Head Out Of Philadelphia For These Scenic Road Trips" Thrillist*
- "From Peeps To A Potato, The 6 Most Interesting New Year's Eve Drops" Forbes*
- "23 U.S. Cities That Go All Out For The Holidays" Conde Nast Traveler*
- "European-style Christmas Markets You Can Visit In Winter" Conde Nast Traveler*
- "Classic Destinations For An Old-fashioned Christmas" MSN Lifestyle*
- "Sparkle And Shine: America's 7 Best Christmas Cities" Epoch Times*
- "26 Charming Christmas Towns That Will Add Some Cheer To Your Holiday" Prevention*
- "These Creative Winter Travel Ideas Are Fun, Easy, And Socially Distant" Travel+Leisure*
- "7 Affordable Weekend Getaways for Parents" Parents Magazine*

## RESULTS

The team's marketing tactics to engage visitors across social channels, very targeted paid media efforts, and sponsorships contributed to an increase in website traffic to DiscoverLehighValley.com.

Nearly 600,000 users engaged with Discover Lehigh Valley® from July 1, 2020 through the fiscal year, ending June 30, 2021. While not a record year, as expected, those users searched content resulting in 1.5 million pageviews, with an average of two minutes spent per session.

- » **265,000** Total Fans on Social Media
- » **50%** User Session Increase
- » **600,000** users engaged with DiscoverLehighValley.com
- » **1.5 MILLION** pageviews
- » **2 MIN** average time per session



## SALES & SERVICES

Discover Lehigh Valley's sales and services team worked to stay engaged with their customers and continued educating them on the many meeting spaces, venues, and advantages to hosting events in Lehigh Valley when we were able to do so. Keeping in mind that the meeting planner journey consists of awareness, consideration, decision, and re-engagement.

The team remained active and vigilant to share information about state and local guidelines while continuing to engage with current and prospective clients. The team engaged with clients through virtual itineraries, guiding planners through Lehigh Valley on how to get here, meeting hotels and venues, and attractions.



## PEEPS® MEET DIORAMA CONTEST

Through partnership with Just Born and the Crayola Experience™ Easton, the sales team hosted the inaugural PEEPS® Meet Diorama Contest, aimed at keeping meeting planners, sports event organizers and partners engaged, while many were at home.



## CERTIFIED TOURISM AMBASSADOR (CTA)

The Lehigh Valley Certified Tourism Ambassador program had a very successful first fiscal year. There are currently **70 Lehigh Valley CTA's** and that number continues to grow. Our CTA's can be found in hotels, attractions, restaurants, and many more places in Lehigh Valley.

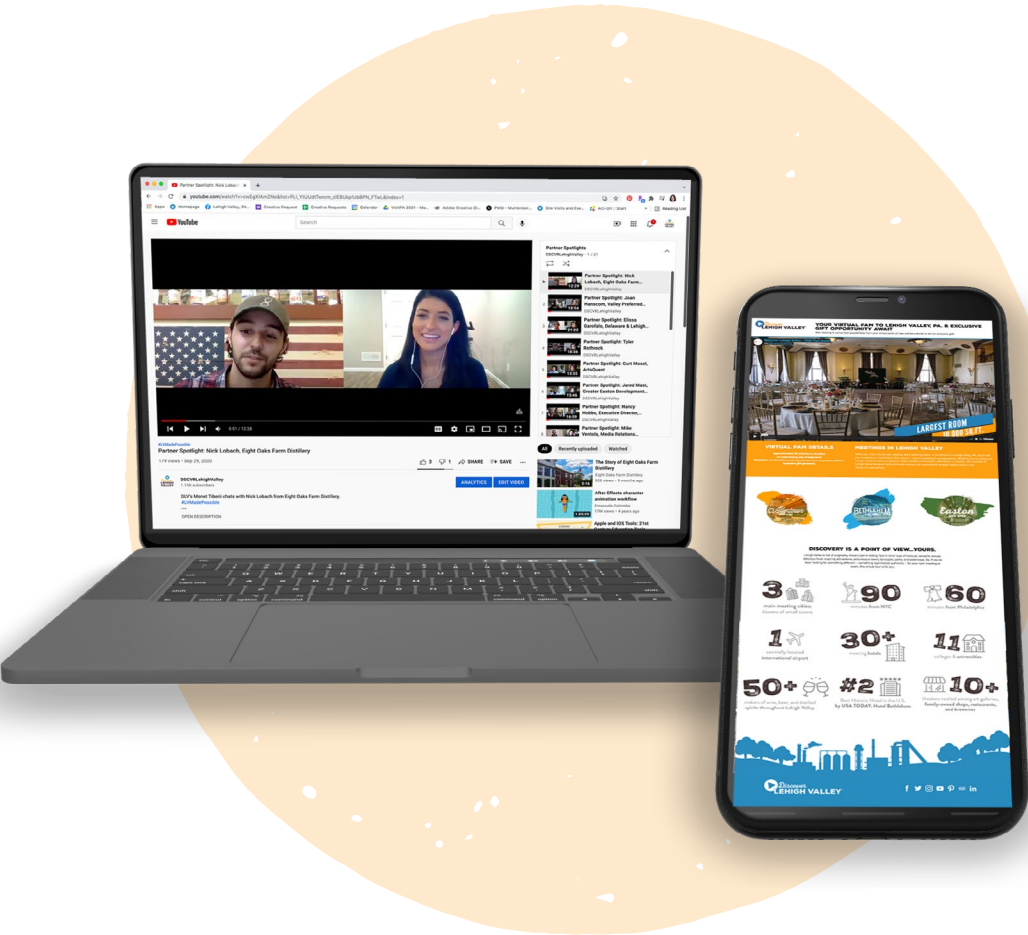
» **70** CTA's added in FY 2020-21

*"Having been a CTA back in 2008, I am STILL impressed with the level of knowledge that CTA and its training brings. I'll be a CTA for life."*

—Matthew Baysinger, Director of Sales, Four Points by Sheraton

*"At Northampton Community College, our department - the Center for Global Education & International Services is the very first contact point for international students and guests from around the world looking to come study at NCC. Completing the CTA for Lehigh Valley has been a wonderful learning experience. It is vital to our guests and potential students to feel welcome and know what Lehigh Valley has to offer, because after all, that is where Northampton Community College is located. When our guests, potential students and current students have a positive experience, they are likely to return and also share their experience with others."*

—Katie Reitenauer, Secretary, The Center for Global Education & International Services: Northampton Community College



MEETINGS RECOVERY CAMPAIGN

The team launched a Meetings Recovery Campaign in Spring 2021 targeting over 7,000 unique meeting planners in **Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey**. 3,633 actions were taken from the campaign.

In order to continue momentum of educating clients, the team created and hosted a **virtual familairation tour** that included a 30-minute program and 56 meeting planner attendees and 142,500 impressions on Facebook and LinkedIn.

- » **56** Meeting planner attendees
- » **142,500** Impressions on Facebook + LinkedIn
- » **3,633** Actions

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT VIDEOS

The team turned to video technology in order to stay engaged with partners and keep a pulse on happenings in Lehigh Valley. DLV promoted these videos on various social channels such as LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter.

- » **20+** Partner Spotlight Videos created







# WANT MORE INFO? GET IN TOUCH!

Get more detailed research, connect with the DLV team, and more.

**CONTACT ALICIA QUINN**

[alicia@discoverlehighvalley.com](mailto:alicia@discoverlehighvalley.com)