

Discover Lehigh Valley[®]

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year **2021-22**





DEAR PARTNERS,

What an extraordinary year it has been. Despite the ongoing challenges still facing the hospitality industry we entered FY 21/22 with renewed confidence and prudent optimism. We saw collaborations, best practices, and strong leadership continue to be present throughout the year. The Discover Lehigh Valley® team continued to pivot and make changes to our programming to accommodate the ever-changing world of tourism.

Our team at Discover Lehigh Valley® is extremely grateful to our dedicated board, elected officials, and our unwavering partners. I am personally grateful each day to work with my amazingly talented team. Their passion and professionalism give me the utmost confidence that we are destined for continued growth and success.

On behalf of our entire team, thank you again for your steadfast support and commitment to Discover Lehigh Valley® and the hospitality industry.

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 2021-22

DARREN BETTERS Chairman
Lehigh/Northampton Airport Authority

JOAN HANSCOM Vice Chair
Valley Preferred Cycling Center

DAVID FULTON Secretary
Wind Creek® Bethlehem

JODIE STETZ Treasurer
Lehigh Valley Restaurant Group [Red Robin]

MIKE FEHNEL Immediate Past Chair
Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom

DON CUNNINGHAM Voting Ex-Officio
Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation

CHARLENE DONCHEZ-MOWERS
Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites

FRANK V. FACCHIANO Voting Ex-Officio
Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce

GUNNAR FOX
PPL Center

FRANK KANE Voting Ex-Officio
County of Lehigh

KEITH KOEPKE
Crayola Experience™

DENISE MAIATICO
Meyer Jabara Hotels

DEBI RICE
Fun-Nominal Events & Marketing

DAVID F. SCHWEIGER, MBA, CTA
Northampton Community College

MICHAEL SLIVKA
Renaissance Allentown

DENISE SMITH
State Theatre

TINA SMITH Voting Ex-Officio
Northampton County

ANDREA C. WEISMILLER
Joshi Hotel Group

DAN HARTZELL
Lehigh County

JOHN W. KINGSLEY
City of Easton

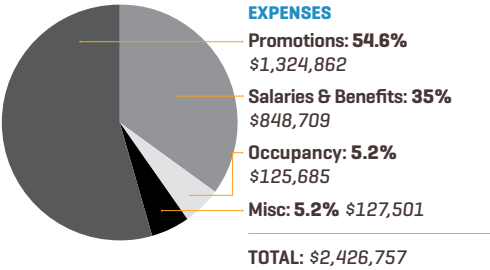
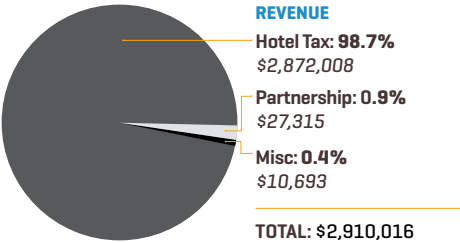
LEONARD LIGHTNER
City of Allentown

ALICIA MILLER KARNER
City of Bethlehem

LORI VARGO HEFFNER
Northampton County Council

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

FINANCIALS



DISCOVER LEHIGH VALLEY® STAFF [AS OF 6/30/22]

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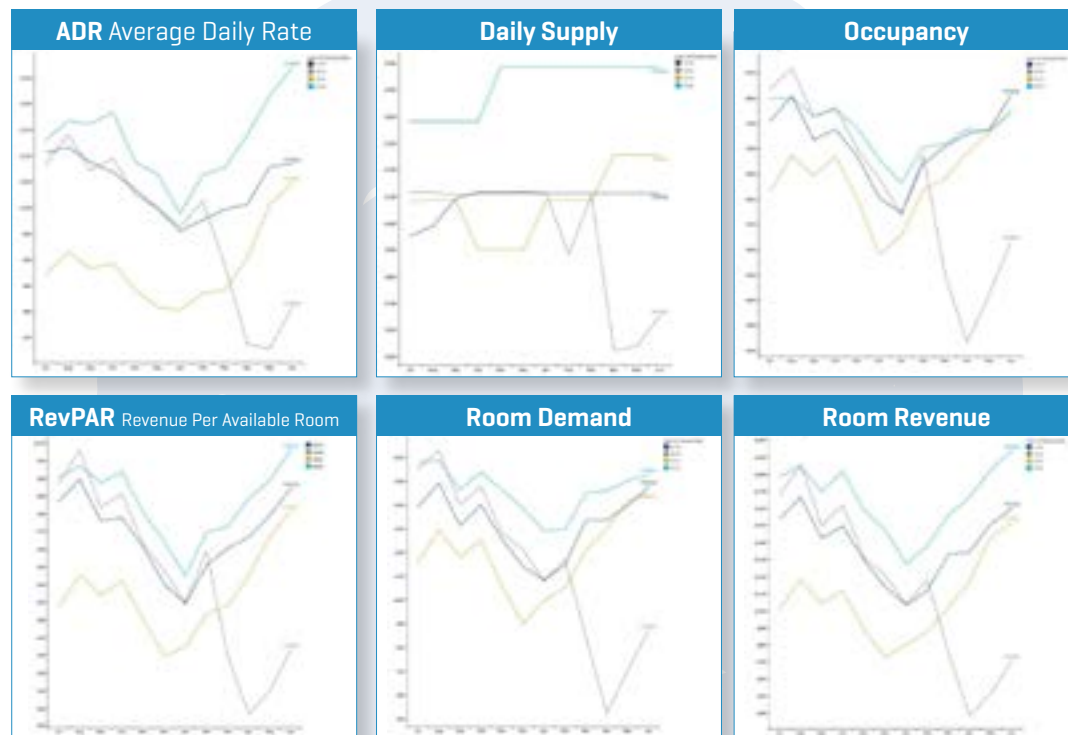
OUR HEADQUARTERS



Discover Lehigh Valley®
1250 Simon Blvd., K102
Easton, PA 18042

COUNTY SUPPORT





Source: Tourism Economics, Symphony



WANT A CLOSER LOOK?
CLICK TO ENLARGE CHARTS.

RESEARCH AND DATA

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. September 2021–June 2022 saw the highest Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) in the last four fiscal years. A significant change to the region is the daily hotel room supply. Progress on expansion projects and the opening of new hotels increased supply by 330 rooms from fiscal year 2020–21, and 473 rooms from fiscal year 2019–20. The increase in Average Daily Rate and increase in Room Demand correlates with a strong finish to the fiscal year in June 2022, with revenue reaching \$19 million for the month—the strongest revenue month of the fiscal year.

Average Daily Rate (ADR) is the measure of average rate paid for rooms sold. ADR in Lehigh Valley peaked for the year at \$127 in June, 2022.

Hotel Occupancy is the percentage of available rooms sold, and occupancy in Lehigh Valley also peaked at a strong 80% in July and August, 2021.

Supply and Demand Hotel room supply in Lehigh Valley reached a high in November, 2021 (6,586 available rooms daily), and hotel room demand peaked in August, 2021 (158,550).

AT A GLANCE

- » **\$113.26** Average Daily Rate (ADR) for fiscal year
- » **73.8%** Hotel Occupancy for fiscal year
- » **1,754,339** hotel room demand for fiscal year



RESEARCH AND DATA, CONTINUED

According to Longwoods International, Travel USA Visitor Profile, in 2021 Lehigh Valley welcomed 16.1 million overnight visitors; up 28.6% from 2020. 81% of visitors to Lehigh Valley are repeat visitors, and 57% of travelers have visited the region within the last 12 months.

Overnight travelers visited Lehigh Valley from Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Florida, and Maryland with the highest origin being Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at 30%. 80% of overnight visitors traveled by car and 40% 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 to overnight visitors and 51% traveled to Lehigh Valley to visit friends and relatives; 9% higher than the U.S. norm. 65% of overnight travelers were very satisfied with their overall trip experience, with safety and security receiving the most positive remarks about the destination. Overnight visitors to Lehigh Valley in 2021 spent \$565 million, up 47.4% from 2020. Total visitor spending of overnight and day visitors reached \$1.1 billion.

AT A GLANCE

- » **16.1M** Overnight visitors [up 28.6% from 2020]
- » **\$565M** Overnight visitor spending
- » **\$1.1B** Total visitor spending [overnight and day trips]

LOOKING AHEAD

Discover Lehigh Valley has partnered with Symphony by Tourism Economics to provide comprehensive coverage of travel trends in our region. Symphony forecasts travel trends that are directly linked to the economic and demographic outlook for Lehigh and Northampton County. Through lodging data, air passenger visitation, visitor behavior and traveler sentiment, DLV will be equipped to provide intelligence to our partners and community that in turn advocate for our tourism economy.



WANT A CLOSER LOOK?
[CLICK TO ENLARGE CHARTS.](#)



MARKETING

MARKETING, ADVERTISING, & PR

This past year was time to drive visitation back to Lehigh Valley in a significant way and in the most competitive travel market we've ever seen. As people eased back into travel, we knew that our efforts would be most successful if we focused largely on local and regional markets, as well as on intrepid travelers. We wanted to show people that they could get a much-needed escape—and all the rewards that come with it—without going too far away. Our campaigns focused on what people were looking for in destinations: ease and plenty of outdoor space, iconic attractions, and standout festival offerings.

Content efforts brought new concepts to engage audiences, while updating and keeping current our highly rated and indexed content. Relationships continued to be forged with local writers to assist in adding trusted voices to our Insider's Guide.



VISITPA CAMPAIGNS

This past year brought new opportunities for marketing Lehigh Valley. Together with the **PA Tourism Office [VisitPA.com]**, **\$320,000 was spent advertising** the region to the New York DMA, Philadelphia DMA, Washington, D.C. DMA, and Baltimore DMA. This was the largest advertising spend during a fiscal year in Discover Lehigh Valley's history.

The co-operative spend allowed for use of many tactics, otherwise not available based on budget limitations for these top markets. Tactics included **cable television and video streaming networks like Roku and Apple-TV, programmatic video & pre-roll on YouTube, high trafficked digital bulletins, and programmatic digital ads**. A combined 50,000,000 impressions were served through this collaboration.

Creative elements transitioned with the seasons, while pairing with **VisitPA.com's "The Uncommon is Calling"**.

» **50,000,000** Impressions

TARGET MARKETS

NEW YORK CITY
PHILADELPHIA
WASHINGTON, D.C.
BALTIMORE

LOCAL ADVERTISING

DLV repurposed campaigns to speak to Lehigh Valley locals, to enhance regional pride and show off quality of life.

Local billboards with **Adams Outdoor** aligned to the VisitPA.com co-operative through both digital and static bulletins. **Lehigh Valley Style** magazine touted relatable campaign content through digital newsletters and glossy print ads.



DLV partnered with **Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites** to anchor the kick off of the Christmas City holiday season by hosting **NBC 10 Philadelphia** for a peek into the magic and spirit of Bethlehem.



INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

The marketing team continued supporting Historic Moravian Bethlehem's progress towards **World Heritage Site status** as the trans-national nomination was signed, along with the Moravian communities of Denmark, Germany, and Northern Ireland [the first of this kind spanning multi-countries]. DLV reached international connections through a paid partnership with **BrandUSA** and **VisitTheUSA.com** [15 sites & 8 languages], as well as collaborative efforts through **VisitPA.com** and **IPW**, the nation's leading international travel trade show.



PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public Relations took no backseat this year as DLV's relationship with Vault Communications scored 710 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 \$676,300, while reaching 41.6 million readers.

2021-22 EARNED MEDIA

- » **710** placements
- » **41.6M** Impressions
- » **\$676.3K** Publicity value

EDITORIAL HEADLINES

- "Top 10 Wine Regions to Visit When Travel Resumes in 2021" *WineTraveler*
- "10 Reasons Why Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania is the Summer Destination You're Looking For" *MSN*
- "20 Haunted Places Around the Country That Are Perfect for a Halloween Road Trip" *Real Simple*
- "9 Perfect Weekend Getaways for When You Need to Escape Philly" *Thrillist*
- "6 Festive Holiday Destinations Within an Easy Drive of DC" *Washingtonian*
- "8 Towns with Crazy Christmas Cheer" *AAA Living*
- "18 Road Trip Destinations Within One Day's Drive for 50% or More of Americans" *MSN*
- "Arts and culture events in Philly to check out this weekend" *Metro Philadelphia*
- "12 Perfect Weekend Getaways for Escaping Philly This Summer" *Thrillist*
- "Pride festival to take place outdoors this weekend in Lehigh Valley" *Philadelphia Voice*
- "Get A Taste of Lehigh Valley, PA" *Edible DC*
- "Sleigh' the Holidays in 'Christmas City' Without Leaving Pennsylvania" *WCAU-TV (NBC Philadelphia)*

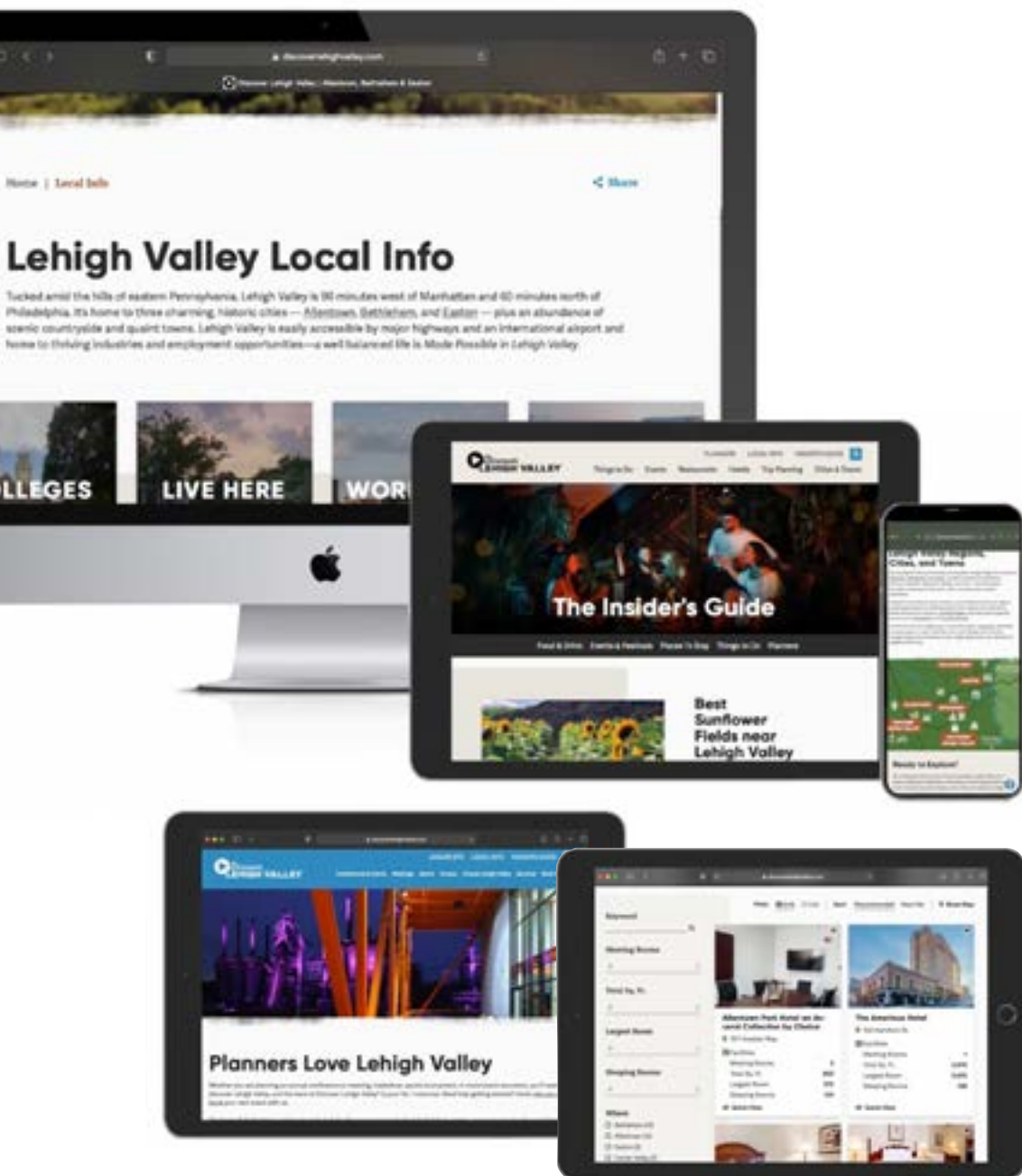
RESULTS

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 1 million users engaged with Discover Lehigh Valley® from July 1, 2021 through the fiscal year, ending June 30, 2022. Those users searched content resulting in 2.5 million pageviews.

- » **255,000** Total Fans on Social Media
- » **1 MILLION** Users annually
- » **1.4 MILLION** sessions
- » **2.5 MILLION** pageviews
- » **669,891** Website visitors arrived via organic search because they were looking for things to do in the region. 61% of traffic is organic.





WEBSITE REDESIGN

In May 2022, Discover Lehigh Valley® unveiled its redesigned website, DiscoverLehighValley.com. The upgrades elevate the site, which currently receives well over 1 million visitors annually. The sleek, mobile-responsive, visually-focused website is the official hub for both visitors and locals alike, looking to experience the region's cities, towns, and countryside.

- » **A FRESH-FACED MINIMALIST LOOK:**
Deliberate use of white space and a dedication to crisp typography.
- » **VISUALS THAT ARE A VIBE:**
Compelling and beautiful photography and energetic video integrated across key pages and a “Quick View” option for listings for an even faster preview of attractions and accommodations.
- » **EXPLORE OUR NEW INSIDER'S GUIDE**
Inspired blog posts with seasonal info, insider tips, & unique stories.
- » **NEW INTERACTIVE MAP**
A visual & interactive overview of the region's cities & towns, aiming to better showcase the scope of the multifaceted region.
- » **TRIP IDEAS**
A dedicated section to plan a Lehigh Valley trip based on interests including “Day Trips” or “Family Vacation”.
- » **PLANNERS SITE**
The new planners section is filled with valuable resources. Users can utilize our advanced search function to find spaces based on attendees size, number of rooms needed, and location.

“We are thrilled to debut our newly redesigned website which will best serve the high expectations of travelers in the post-pandemic digital age. Travelers across the country are planning getaways and extended stays based on the content they absorb online – our new website will provide users with an immersive experience of what exactly they can expect and fuel their wanderlust.”

—Alicia Quinn, VP of Marketing & Strategic Alliances



SALES, SPORTS, & SERVICES

SALES & SERVICES

Discover Lehigh Valley's sales and services team re-engaged with meeting planners and sports event organizers at industry events and conferences. The team placed an added emphasis on Lehigh Valley partner engagement through hosted luncheons and panel discussions.

- » **32** meetings and conventions opportunities for the region
- » exceeding **2,000** booked hotel room nights for the future

CONFERENCES ATTENDED

- Professional Convention Management Association, EduCon
- Pennsylvania Society of Association Executives Connections Conference
- TEAMs Sports Conference
- Connect DC
- Professional Convention Management Association Philadelphia Chapter
- Meeting Professionals International Middle Pennsylvania Chapter Meeting
- Professional Convention Management Association, Convening Leaders
- Destinations International Sales & Convention Services Summit
- Sports Event & Travel Association, Annual Symposium
- IMEX Frankfurt, International Tradeshow
- Meeting Professionals International New Jersey Chapter Meeting

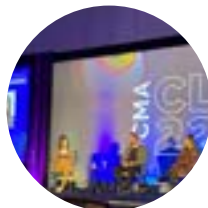


DISCOVER LEHIGH VALLEY SALES PARTNER UPDATES LUNCHEONS

- Historic Hotel Bethlehem: August 4, 2021
- State Theater of Easton: February 2, 2022

HOSTED GROUPS & PLANNERS

- Pennsylvania Bus Association Annual Meeting: October 24-26, 2021
- Greater New Jersey Motorcoach and Maryland Motorcoach Association Meeting: March 14, 2022
- U.S. Senior Open: June 23-26, 2022



CERTIFIED TOURISM AMBASSADOR (CTA)

The Lehigh Valley Certified Tourism Ambassador program renewed and maintained 69 Lehigh Valley CTA's across hotels, attractions, and restaurants in Lehigh Valley.

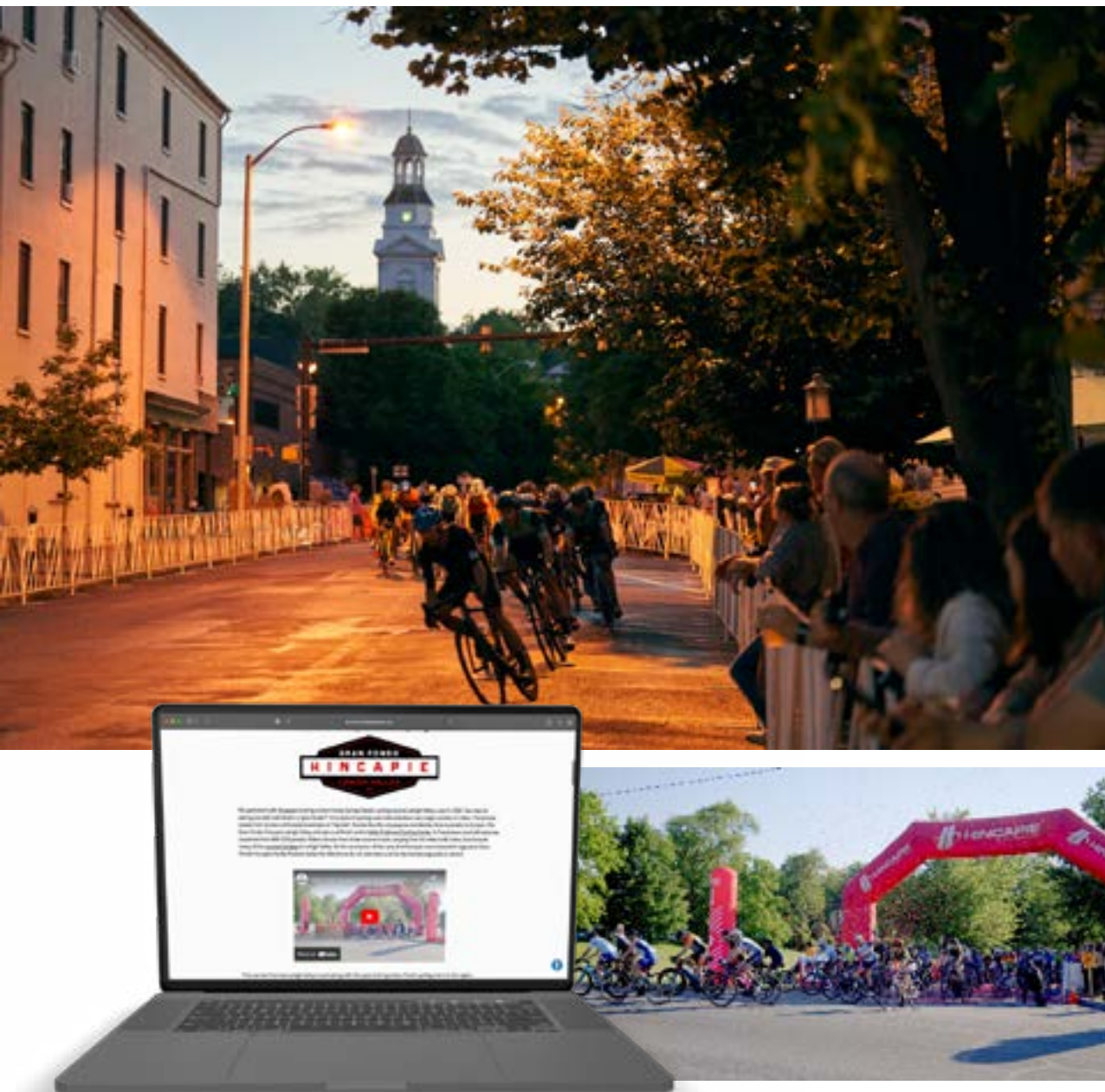
Discover Lehigh Valley will be adapting the program to offer the certification at no cost to participants and completely online.

"Our goal is to eliminate as many barriers as possible to becoming an ambassador for our region. Through a complimentary, online, self-guided program our hope is that we can captivate the businesses and residents of Lehigh Valley; re-enforcing our regional pride and a positive visitor experience through our redesigned Lehigh Valley Ambassador Program" —Bree Nidds, VP, Sales & Operations

The new program will launch in FY 22/23.

OTHER UPDATES

- Alex Michaels and Bree Nidds completed the Destinations International's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Masterclass.
- Podcast Participation - Break The Ice Media, Destination Recovery, and DMO Network Podcasts through Relic Media.
- Participated as Guest Judge at Pennsylvania DECA Association Competition, March 4, 2022.
- Celebrated Global Meetings Industry Day, April 7, 2022.
- National Travel & Tourism Week Celebration and Panel, May 5, 2022.
- Bree Nidds awarded 30under30 through Destinations International.



A TRUE CYCLING DESTINATION

Discover Lehigh Valley hosted two National Track Championship Cycling events through USA Cycling and hosted for its inaugural year the 2021 and 2022 Easton Twilight Criterium. The region also hosted the inaugural Hincapie Gran Fondo, long-distance road cycling event. Events are often the first experience a visitor has with the destination and these cycling events in many disciplines showcase our ability to successfully host cycling events in multiple disciplines; track, cyclocross, road, mountain, and criterium racing. Approximately 2,000 cyclists discovered the facilities and amenities that support their interests in our destination.

USA Cycling Track National Championships Elite/Junior Para
July 15-20, 2021

Easton Twilight Criterium September 4, 2021

USA Cycling Track National Championships Masters
September 15, 2021

Easton Twilight Criterium May 28, 2022

Hincapie Gran Fondo June 4, 2022

- » **2,000** Cyclists in the past year
- » **28** sporting event opportunities generated for the region
- » Exceeding **17,000** booked hotel room nights for the future



WANT MORE INFO? **GET IN TOUCH!**

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

CONTACT ALICIA QUINN

alicia@discoverlehighvalley.com