

Headlines

LAUREL HIGHLANDS NEWSLETTER



FALL 2019

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:

- ▶ LHVB NEWS
- ▶ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE
- ▶ MARKETING NEWS
- ▶ GROUP TOUR NEWS
- ▶ PUBLIC RELATIONS NEWS
- ▶ NEW LHVB PARTNERS

2020 County Tourism Grant Chats Scheduled!

Join the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau and learn what you need to know about your county's 2020 Tourism Grant Program. We encourage anyone interested in applying for a tourism grant to attend this FREE meeting.

Reservations are required and can be made by contacting Rachel at rrroehrig@laurelhighlands.org or 724-238-5661, ext. 101. **Deadline to RSVP is September 24.** Please indicate your county when calling.

- 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, October 1 – Westmoreland County Tourism Grant Chat, Christ our Shepherd Center, Greensburg
- 2 p.m., Tuesday, October 1 – Fayette County Tourism Grant Chat, Penn-State Fayette, Room 116, Eberly Corporate Training Center
- 2 p.m., Wednesday, October 2 – Somerset County Tourism Grant Chat, Somerset Country Club

Grant forms will be available online October 1, at laurelhighlands.org/grants. Applications are due November 12.

▶ LHVB NEWS

Fallingwater Honored with UNESCO World Heritage Designation

It's official! The World Heritage Committee has inscribed Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece, Fallingwater, and seven other works by Wright, to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List.

Inaugurated in 1973, UNESCO's site list includes famed locations such as Yellowstone National Park, India's Taj Mahal, the Galapagos Islands of Ecuador, Victoria Falls in southern Africa, Machu Picchu in Peru, and the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route in Bethlehem, West Bank.

"Congratulations to the entire team at Fallingwater, past and present," said Ann Nemanic, Executive Director, Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau. "The UNESCO World Heritage inscription for the collection of eight Frank Lloyd Wright buildings affirms that the architectural and creative mind of Wright is something to be eternally recognized. Since 1964, when Fallingwater first opened to the public, Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands has been a destination for those seeking to tour his remarkable work. Since that time, three Wright designed homes have become a part of the magnificent landscape of our region. We anticipate continued growth in visitation and certainly extend a warm welcome to those UNESCO travelers who now have one more remarkable property to check off their World Heritage list."

Save the Date: LHVB Annual Dinner | October 8, 2019

Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau
ANNUAL DINNER
TUESDAY 8TH OCTOBER

Laurel Mountain Ski Lodge:
374 Summit Ski Road
Boswell, PA 15531

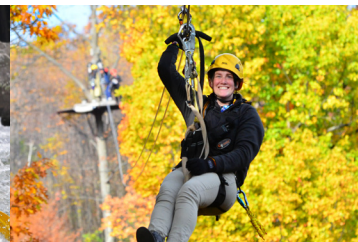
Dress Casual and enjoy the fires burning inside and out. Signature Cocktails, Regional Beers, Silent Auction, Scholarship Recognitions, Hors d'oeuvres, Salad/Dinner/Dessert Stations, Awards Ceremony

\$75 PER PERSON » 5:30-8:30PM » RSVP BY 10.1.19

The flyer features a detailed illustration of several pumpkins and autumn leaves at the bottom.



LAUREL HIGHLANDS VISITORS BUREAU
120 E. Main Street, Ligonier, PA 15658
724.238.5661 | laurelhighlands.org





► EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Ann Nemanic, Executive Director

Empty nester: chapter 2. As my only child heads back for her sophomore year of college, I once again find myself reflecting on the changes and cycles in life. Trying to cram as much into a short eight-week summer break that included a full-time summer job for Hannah was challenging. I ask myself "Did we do enough together? Did we make some good, fun memories as a family unit? Is this our last summer before career internships become a must?"

I understand completely about those last-minute reservations that are so prevalent in our industry. Those spur of the moment, impulse travel decisions aren't unique to the Laurel Highlands. This "trend" continually pops up in my feeds. But honestly, it is the new normal. For our partners, I understand the frustration that can bring. Forecasting, staffing, and purchasing supplies all revolve on knowing when visitors are coming. Yes, they ARE coming; just the window of booking is so much shorter. We adjust as best we can and add that element of patience to our vocabulary.

We must always remember our visitors have choices. We have the full menu of exactly what they need and want for autumn in the region. Spectacular fall foliage, festivals, farm markets, events, cozy cabins and vacation rentals, stargazing, and the launch of our new Laurel Highlands Pour Tour. A simple smile or a kind word goes a long way when someone is waiting on the phone to chat or in a long line for curly fries at a festival.

When time is limited, our job is to fill it with memories - good memories. Those moments trigger return visits, Instagram photos, social media posts, and the infamous word-of-mouth advertising we all covet. As the daylight hours dwindle, let us turn over our fall leaves to a season robust with a warm Laurel Highlands welcome!



► MARKETING NEWS

Kristin Ecker, Senior Director of Marketing and Project Management

Summer Wrap-Up!

As we say goodbye to summer and welcome fall, let us share with you some of the highlights of the LHVB's marketing efforts and campaigns aimed at driving visitors into our region. Year three of the marketing plan put in place by Red House Communications in 2017 comes with an expansion of our media mix in target markets.

The LHVB's continual initiatives ran throughout the summer, including TV commercials on Comcast cable stations, billboards, select print placements, plus an expansive digital footprint. Our digital initiatives spanned social media, native advertising, banner ads and retargeting, video pre-roll, search engine marketing, podcasts, internet radio and streaming ads on Hulu. These placements successfully drove traffic to the LHVB website, where guests find the ultimate stockpile of travel information for the Laurel Highlands, including booking rates and availability, a robust events calendar, coupons, and a wealth of information on things to experience.

In addition to our traditional campaigns, the LHVB ran a targeted campaign in downtown Washington, D.C., throughout June and July with the theme of #BestWeekendEver. This targeted campaign was focused on residents in the D.C. metro area and used outdoor recreation opportunities as the focal point to entice a Laurel Highlands escape. The #BestWeekendEver campaign included metro rail bus wraps, poster panels on rail car interiors, five billboards from Breezewood to Somerset on I-76, print features in publications such as USA Today Travel Edition and Northern Virginia Magazine and six radio stations in and around the D.C. area. This campaign targeted millions of people in the mid-Atlantic, and resulted in an average of 100% increase in web traffic from Maryland, Virginia, and the D.C. market.

Look for a continuation of the #BestWeekendEver campaign messaging as we launch fall and winter initiatives!



Explore the New Laurel Highlands Pour Tour

From moonshine, rye whiskey, and IPAs to cider, mead, and fruit wines, get a taste for southwestern Pennsylvania on the new Laurel Highlands Pour Tour!

Developed by the LHVB in partnership with the region's craft beverage leaders, the new trail showcases the region's rich heritage, agricultural diversity and entrepreneurial spirit. The Laurel Highlands Pour Tour is an inclusive effort to collectively promote the region's craft beverage industry including wineries, breweries, distilleries, meaderies, and cideries.

"The lore and legacy of distilled spirits and craft beverages run deep in the Laurel Highlands," said Ann Nemanic, Executive Director of the LHVB. "Today's industry has blossomed from those deep-seated roots, providing visitors with authentic experiences and tastes they won't find in any other region. Our Laurel Highlands Pour Tour weaves together history, exceptional landscape, and entrepreneurship into a trail of flavorful destinations."

Pour Tour passports can be ordered online, by calling 724.238.5661, or picked up at the LHVB's administrative offices, visitor information centers, 84 brochure racks, and participating locations.

As an incentivized visitation program, participants will receive a passport to start a journey along the trail. After visiting a participating site and purchasing a beverage, the visitor will receive a sticker to place in their passport. Prizes will be awarded by a tiered system, each requiring a certain amount of stickers. Participants who complete the entire trail will also be entered into a chance to win a grand prize beverage-themed Laurel Highlands getaway valued at \$1,000.

Once complete, passports can be verified by visiting or mailing to LHVB offices in Ligonier. Passports will be returned to participants.

For more information on the Laurel Highlands Pour Tour, visit lhpourtour.com. Participants are encouraged to use #LHPourTour on their social media posts while exploring the Laurel Highlands Pour Tour.

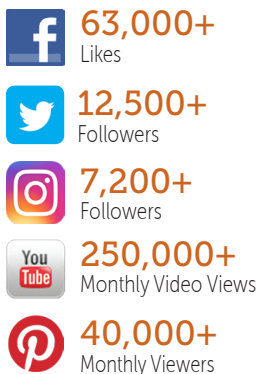




MARKETING NEWS

Jared Bundy, Director of Digital Marketing

Social Media Audience (as of July 22, 2019)



Top Organic Keywords

Laurel Highlands, Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, Ohiopyle State Park, Ohiopyle, Steelers Training Camp, Ohio Pyle, Laurel Highlands Trail, Ohiopyle PA, Pittsburgh Steelers Training Camp, Laurel Highlands Trail Map, Laurel Highlands Photo Contest, Steelers Training Camp 2019, Frank Lloyd Wright

Top Summer Pages

(April 22-July 22, 2019)	pageviews
Ohiopyle	27,673
Homepage	18,675
Events	13,658
Arts & Culture	11,882
Family Fun	11,383
Things to Do	8,616
Steelers Training Camp	6,694
Destination Guide	6,162
Outdoors	6,061
Cabins & Campgrounds	6,037

Notable Web Stats

(April 22-July 22, 2019)
Compared to April 22-July 22, 2018



28 Can't-Miss Festivals in the Laurel Highlands in 2019

Tuesday, April 30, 2019 1:00 PM by Allyson Null

The Laurel Highlands is home to a variety of unique events and festivals. Here is a sampling, categorized especially for you. Be sure to use #laurelhighlands while posting your festival fun photos on Instagram and you may be featured on our website or social media!

Fall Festivals

Laurel Highlands fall festivals are as vibrant as the region's remarkable foliage. The jam-packed season of awesome festivals offers live entertainment, delicious comfort food, hayrides, corn mazes and more!



4th of July Celebrations in the Laurel Highlands

Friday, June 29, 2018 1:00 PM by Allyson Null

Put on your red, white and blue gear, get outdoors and celebrate the 4th of July in the Laurel Highlands with your friends and family! Our resorts, restaurants, campgrounds and more are hosting events right in your backyard with tasty food, live entertainment and, of course, fireworks.

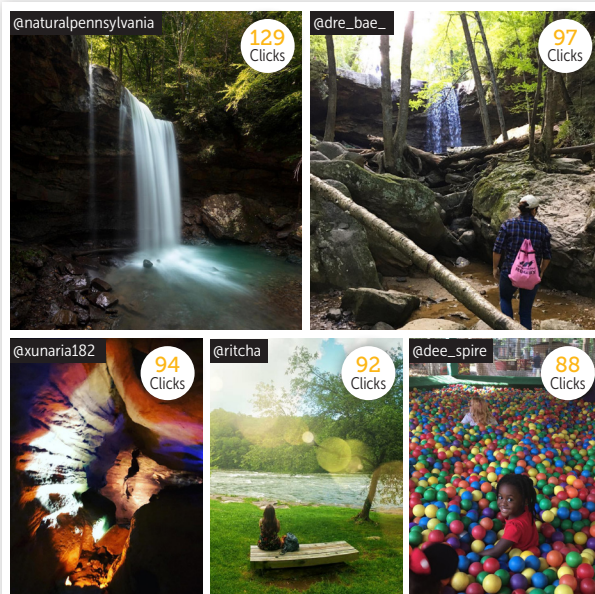
Independence Day Celebration at Seven Springs Mountain Resort



Top Blogs: Guides and Tours were the top performing blog posts during these three months. The "28 Can't Miss Festivals of 2019" blog had the most pageviews, followed by "4th of July Celebrations in the Laurel Highlands," "A Guide to Visiting Fallingwater," and our "Steelers Training Camp Guide."



Podcast: Subscribe to Laurel Highlands Happenings, our monthly podcast hosted by LHVB's own Louise Bates that showcases partners, events, and our region with a different theme each episode. Subscribe on iTunes, Stitcher, or wherever you listen to podcasts.



Top Performing Content: Use #LaurelHighlands when you post

Top Facebook Posts:

Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau
May 12 · 🌐

Mäntylä, Finnish for "under the pines," is the newest Frank Lloyd Wright home to open in the Laurel Highlands.

Located at Frank Lloyd Wright Overnights at Polymath Park, the home offers dramatic angles, built-in bookshelves, walls of glass and a terrace with forest views.

Learn more in this TribLive Westmoreland article: https://triblive.com/.../polymath-park-opens-second-frank-l...

This post announcing the opening of Mäntylä at Polymath Park reached 13,000 people, generating 1,300 clicks.

Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau
July 21 · 🌐

Laurel Highlands' Westmoreland County now has its own board game! Available only at Walmart, the game features attractions like Idlewild & SoakZone, Keystone State Park, The Palace Theatre and more!

Check it out: https://triblive.com/.../fort-ligonier-idlewild-rizzos-star-...

TRIBLIVE.COM
Fort Ligonier, Idlewild, Rizzo's star in Westmoreland County board game

This link to the new Westmoreland County-Opoly Game reached 12,000 people and was shared 31 times!

Top Instagram Post:



This stunning overlook of Ohiopyle was liked 718 times!



MARKETING NEWS

Jared Bundy, Director of Digital Marketing

Get Your Tickets: Marketing Summit 2019

Join LHV partners to learn the latest trends in digital marketing from industry professionals and leaders in digital marketing. The 9th Annual Marketing Summit will be held Friday, Nov. 8, from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at the Fred Rogers Center at Saint Vincent College.

Speakers include an Emmy award-winning journalist, influencers, and marketing professionals from RedShift, 1st Team Advertising, Soup's Marketing, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and MeaningfulLife, LLC.

Tickets: laurelhighlands.org/summit



New Pages: Filming Locations and Speakers Bureau

Fresh off the success of our weddings and meetings pages, we've developed two more resources for new markets.

Our film page hopes to showcase the Laurel Highlands as an ideal place for location scouts and directors to use when they shoot their next film or show. It highlights a number of locations and local experts: laurelhighlands.org/about-us/film

The speakers bureau page makes it easy to request a Laurel Highlands staff member to speak at your next event or conference. Simply fill out the form and request one of our experts: laurelhighlands.org/about-us/speakers-bureau

Use Our Experts



Once you've chosen to film in the Laurel Highlands, the experts and amenities for film crews in our region are a fantastic added bonus. The soundstage at Douglas Education Center is one of the area's largest with a green screen, infinity wall, rooms for make-up, wardrobe and props, editing suites and a sound mixing studio, and was recently used by the *WWE* for their Firefly Fun House production.

Plus, Douglas Education Center boasts both the Tom Savini Special Make-Up Effects Program and George A. Romero Filmmaking Program, with graduates working on major productions like *Avengers: Endgame*, *The Nun*, *The Predator* and much more. To utilize these talented students or rent the soundstage, please contact *Janelle Imbrescia* or *Alexandra Freeman*.

Close to Pittsburgh



PUBLIC RELATIONS NEWS

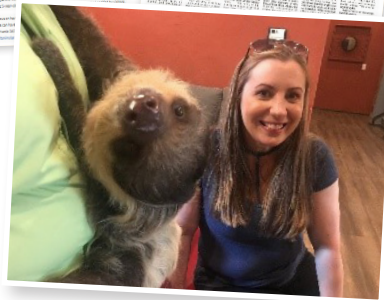
Anna Weltz, Director of Public Relations and Community Outreach

Recent and Upcoming Press Visits

- Lindsay Sutton, Trinity Media Group, United Kingdom, *Daily Mail*
- Jeremy Jones, Discover the Burgh
- Karyn Locke, Sand and Snow
- Amy Brecount-White, *Bethesda* and *Arlington* magazines
- Jim Cheney, Uncovering PA
- Bob Batz, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*
- Amanda Emmerling, Toddling Traveler

Top Media Opportunities

- "Satisfy your food, beverage or cultural craving on a Mid-Atlantic trail," *Washington Post*, print and online; Subsequent pick-up in nine publications throughout the country
 - Fred Rogers Trail: Latrobe, Idlewild & SoakZone, Valley Dairy Restaurant
- "Beyond Your Backyard: Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands," PBS, online, and distributed to PBS stations
- "Pennsylvania plans day of kind acts to honor Mister Rogers," Associated Press, distributed to 435 outlets; includes content from Laurel Highlands stops on Fred Rogers Trail
- "Six Western Pennsylvania Road Trips," *Ohio Magazine*
- "Whiskey Makes Comeback at West Overton Village," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*



Frederick, MD Media Exchange

In mid-July, the LHV and Seven Springs Mountain Resort co-hosted a group of bloggers from Frederick, Maryland. Known by their local DMO, the Fans of Frederick enjoyed a fun-filled weekend exploring a sampling of what the Laurel Highlands has to offer. Experiences included adventure and relaxation at Seven Springs, exploring downtown Ligonier and Fort Ligonier, hiking at Laurel Summit State Park, dinner at the new Oak Lodge Café, and touring Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater.

Laurel Highlands in the Spotlight

April 1-June 30, 2019

A summary of press and media projects initiated or coordinated by the LHV. Circulation, digital impressions, and publicity value figures provided by Cision media monitoring service.



531
STORIES



More than
\$1.7 million
in added value



Nearly
770 million
in digital reach



More than
4.6 million
in print circulation



GROUP TOUR NEWS

Stacey Magda, Director of Tourism Development

Group Travel is Bright in the Laurel Highlands!

Our summer momentum continues into the fall! Successes include a second public tour, high-level interest in multi-day and day tours to the region, return on follow-ups from summer travel shows, a two-page feature in Group Tour Magazine's June edition, and a successful return to Travel Alliance Partners TAP Dance, where we were featured in their Dream Destinations publication. Our region is buzzing with opportunity and group travel experiences and we are ready to continue sharing our beautiful backyard. Stay tuned for announcements on 2020 opportunities, including group co-op marketing opportunities, Heartland Travel Showcase details, FAM planning, education sessions, and more!

Tour and Travel Shows: Group Leader Shows

AAA East Central Travel Show | Pittsburgh, PA | August 20-21, 2019

Great Day! Tours Travel Show | Independence, OH | September 19-20, 2019

Spotlight Mid-Atlantic with MARS | Gaithersburg, MD | October 31 - November 2, 2019



SAVE THE DATES: End of Year Opportunities You Won't Want to Miss

Contact Stacey at smagda@laurelhighlands.org for more information.

Meet the Planners: Fall Harrisburg Luncheon | November 14 | Harvest Grille and Wine Bar, 2625 Brindle Drive, Harrisburg, PA

This opportunity includes an afternoon of networking with meeting planners. Cost is \$50 per partner and includes informational table, networking opportunity, and lunch. Participating partners are encouraged to bring a giveaway item for raffle.

Growing Groups: A Group Travel Education Session | November 21 | Aaron's Building, 139 N. Pittsburgh Street, Connellsville, PA

Let's dig into group travel. Together we will discuss and discover the best way to tap into more group bookings by developing your group travel product, how to reach more groups, to learn best practices, and more.

Session to feature: discussion panel, unique breakout sessions, and lunch!

Laurel Highlands Scenic Tours Continue to Please!

Over the past six months, our tourism marketing efforts have expanded into specialized projects that highlight unique travel experiences in the Laurel Highlands. Among these efforts are our Laurel Highlands Scenic Tours. There is a first-time for everything and in this case, two public tours invite the public to board a motorcoach and take the scenic route to explore a custom-designed day in the Laurel Highlands featuring wellness and agricultural highlights. As previously shared, our May 19 Wellness Tour was a huge success. To round out the year, we welcomed another sold-out crowd on August 24 for Rustic Retreat: Farm-to-Table Tour that made stops at Scenic View at Laurel Hill State Park, Moo Echo Dairy, Somerset Historical Center, Brantview Farms Maple, and Faranda Farms. We look forward to expanding these opportunities in 2020 with fresh concepts!

Destination: Greater Pittsburgh FAM Connects Operators with the Laurel Highlands!

The LHVB hosted five tour operators from Pennsylvania, Ontario, and Indiana, July 31-August 1. Our visit featured two days of touring exploring 12 sites on a busy familiarization tour. A sincere thanks to all partnering sites for your outstanding hospitality and dedication to the group travel market. Please stay tuned for domestic and international FAM opportunities in 2020!



2019 GROUP TRAVEL IN REVIEW: SECOND QUARTER TRACKING



2,038

hotel rooms booked



\$252,712
in hotel revenue
booked



949

bus groups



12,203

senior and
adult visitors



23,117

student
visitors



Kim Robson
139 N. Pittsburgh St.
Connellsville, PA 15425
(724) 628-8968
aaronbuilding.com

A large crowd of people is gathered at night, many holding up glowing lanterns, participating in a festival. The scene is illuminated by the warm light of the lanterns against a dark sky.

Kris Schemm
Fayette County Fairgrounds
132 Pechin Road
Dunbar, PA 15431
(412) 414-0492
fayettecountyskylights.com



**All
Saints**
brewing company

Jeff Guidos
1602 US Route 119
Greensburg, PA 15601
(724) 289-1202
allsaintscraftbrewing.com



Heather Bianchi
120 North Rachel Drive
New Stanton, PA 15672
(724) 755-4260
hamptoninn3.hilton.com/en/hotels

A photograph of the exterior of the CR - Red Creek Distillery. The building features large, multi-paned windows with dark frames. A sign on the left window reads "CR - RED CREEK DISTILLERY" and "EST. 2012". A vertical sign on the right side of the building reads "CR - RED CREEK DISTILLERY". The building is constructed of light-colored brick or stone.

Meredith Baldock & Dave Baustert
104 S. Water Street
West Newton, PA 15089
(724) 633-2043
crookedcreekdistillery.com

Jennifer Graham
1867 Route 30 West
Ligonier, PA 15658
(724) 441-4179
hansleyspub.com

**DOWNTOWN
GREENSBURG
PROJECT**

Jessica Hickey
Greensburg, PA 15601
(724) 787-1566
downtowngreensburgpa.us

Charles Smithburger
105 Blaine Street
Ohiopyle, PA 15470
(724) 329-5301

Tom Lear
117 Tollgate Road
Somerset, PA 15501
(814) 701-2829



Johnson's
LOG HOME
&
TIMBER FRAME
Shows

Eric Johnson
(518) 618-1195
loghomeshows.com

Johnson's Log Home & Timber Frame Show returns to Seven Springs Mountain Resort, November 15-17. Explore more about log homes, enjoy demonstrations, attend seminars, and learn more about building your very own log home!



A photograph showing the interior of a restaurant. On the left, there is a long wooden counter or booth with a red leather-upholstered seat. The wall behind the counter is covered in wood paneling. On the right, there is a long booth with red leather-upholstered seating and a wooden backrest featuring a diamond-shaped decorative pattern. The floor is made of dark wood. In the background, a doorway leads to another area, and large windows with multiple panes are visible on the right side.

1180 North Center Avenue
Somerset, PA 15501
(814) 445-5311
kingsfamily.com

EXPLORE
The Laurel Highlands

RV LEADERS
& CAMPING OUTLET

555 Edna Road
Adamsburg, PA 15611
(Route 30W Adamsburg Exit)

Phone (724)523-0405

A large, two-story log cabin with a stone chimney and multiple windows, surrounded by trees and a lawn.

756 Kuhntown Road
Somerset, PA 15501
lostbearcabin.com

A large, rustic wooden building with a steep, gabled roof and a wide porch, likely a lodge or cabin. The building is constructed of dark wood and features a prominent chimney on the right side. The porch is elevated and has a railing. The building is surrounded by trees and a paved area in the foreground.

165 Fern Mountain Road
Somerset, PA 15501
(305) 394-2295

A photograph of a vibrant, modern playground. The structure is primarily red and yellow, featuring multiple slides, climbing frames, and platforms. It is situated on a dark rubber safety mat in a grassy area with trees and houses in the background.

720 Graham Street
North Belle Vernon, PA 15012
(724) 929-6930
nbypark.com

113 Grant Avenue
Vandergrift, PA 15690
(724) 568-2961
sweetlanechocolate.com

1020-1 Towne Square Drive
Greensburg, PA 15601
(724) 221-6527
paintingwithatwist.com/Greensburg

175 Ankney Hill Road
Acme, PA 15610
(724) 424-2437
tattieboogleciderworks.com

440 Pleasant Valley Road
Connellsville, PA 15425
(724) 628-6360
pleasantvalley.golf

207 3rd Street
Irwin, PA 15642
(724) 515-2392
thelineboutique.com

The Line Boutique offers a fabulous selection of contemporary, stylish clothes, accessories, and beauty products for the modern woman. Discover their unique boutique in downtown Irwin!



Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau
120 East Main Street | Ligonier, PA 15658

Headlines

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Seven Springs Mountain Resort

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Bryan Perry
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Clinton Piper
Frank Lloyd Wright's
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Nemacolin Woodlands Resort

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Headlines is published quarterly. Please contact LHVB's Director of Public Relations, Anna Weltz, with questions or comments at aweltz@laurelhighlands.org.

120 East Main Street, Ligonier, PA 15658 | RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED