

Headlines

LAUREL HIGHLANDS NEWSLETTER

 SUMMER 2018

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LHVB Presents at National Conference

Director of Interactive Marketing Jared Bundy presented to a roomful of DMO and CVB leaders at the Simpleview Summit in Scottsdale, AZ, on May 8. His presentation, "Using the Social Mentions Tool in CRM to Pull Content for Your Members/Partners," was done jointly with Jessica Johnson, Simpleview's CRM Lead Analyst. They covered all of the ways to successfully track social media mentions and report data to partners and stakeholders.



LHVB NEWS

Somerset Students Create Laurel Highlands Mural

Last winter, the LHVB's Director of Public Relations, Anna Weltz joined representatives from the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC), the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) and approximately 60 Somerset Area High School students to brainstorm ideas for an art installment at the South Somerset Turnpike Service Plaza.

During the brainstorming session, Anna shared the Laurel Highlands Inspiration Reel and the 2018 Destination Guide, then the students shared their favorite Laurel Highlands spots and thoughts about the overall concept. A couple months later, a 16-by-5-foot stunning mural now stands proudly above the main entrance of the service plaza for more than one million visitors to see every year.

Coordinated through the PCA's regional partner Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art, students worked with teaching artist Martha Murphy and art teacher Kayla Borosky to design and create the piece, which depicts an assortment of iconic Laurel Highlands landmarks and the region's natural beauty. If your summer travels take you on the Turnpike, please do stop in and admire this incredible work of art.



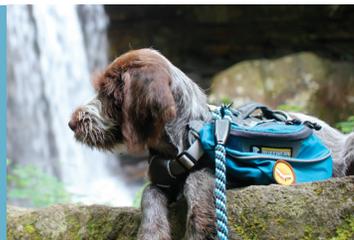
The Incline Unveils "Who's Next: Tourism"

Pittsburgh news organization, The Incline, recently shared its list of 16 people who are showing off the Pittsburgh region. On that list is LHVB's Director of Public Relations, Anna Weltz, who was anonymously nominated for her 19 years of experience working in the Laurel Highlands tourism industry, including her work with the Bureau.



Celebrating Tourism in the Laurel Highlands – Tourism After Hours

On May 3, the LHVB and members of the region's tourism family gathered to celebrate tourism in the Laurel Highlands. As the official kick-off for National Travel and Tourism Week, nearly 40 guests gathered at Greensburg's Bishop Connare Center to enjoy local libations, live music and an array of vintage photos and artifacts highlighting the history of "Travel Then and Now."





▶ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Ann Nemanic, Executive Director

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! As we head into summer, we are midway through a year-long celebration of the Bureau's 60th year as a brand. From our forward-thinking founders to our present-day engaged board of directors and talented team of staff, we embrace our past, but are moving at breakneck speed into our future.

Our summer campaigns are in full swing, enticing visitors through all means of marketing to come for multiple night stays to our region. LaurelHighlands.org, our newly-launched redesigned website, is meeting and exceeding our expectations. The ability to book directly from our website is providing us with interesting statistics. Every opportunity we have to learn about our visitors allows us to keenly market to specific demographics and interests.

Thank you! We're hearing those two words daily in our office. From tour operators, conference planners, travel writers, partners, visitors, nonprofits and community organizations, we are lending a hand in so many ways. The LHVB staff takes every task to the next level because they care! It's amazing to watch the constant flurry of activity, but more importantly the teamwork among all departments to get the job done makes me very proud.

We enter the summer season with optimism, knowing we stand on four strong pillars of why visitors come to the Laurel Highlands: *history and culture, health and wellness, outdoor recreation and classic amusements*. Our seasonal partners are out of hibernation and eager for visitors. Get ready – here they come! Put on a smile, give a warm welcome, let them know you are happy to see them and encourage them to return and experience another season in our beautiful Laurel Highlands. We all have a reason to celebrate – it's summertime in Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands!

▶ LHVB NEWS



"Together We Grow" – Annual Backyard Tour

Each year, the LHVB invites partners from all three counties to board a coach and explore the Laurel Highlands. This day, dubbed the Backyard Tour, showcases what's new in the region and also shines light on more familiar stops all while helping to answer the popular visitor question "What is there to do around here?" This trip highlighted Fayette County and the National Road Heritage Corridor. A heartfelt thanks to all who took the time to host this great group at stops and those who boarded the bus for a day of networking, education and fun. We hope to see you on board in 2019!



▶ MARKETING NEWS

Kristin Ecker, Senior Director of Marketing

Summer Marketing

For many of us, summer is the busiest season of the year, and marketing efforts on behalf of the region are no exception. The marketing staff is working on year two of an integrated marketing plan, implementing fresh new initiatives just in time for summer! Utilizing data and strategies developed by Red House Communications in 2017, the LHVB will continue to message potential visitors focusing on target markets in a 200-mile drive radius from the region. These efforts target various age groups from millennials to baby boomers, families, groups and individuals across various different media outlets. These campaigns market unique experiences and customized messaging to users with a wide range of interests using the very mediums that apply to their behavioral habits. This has resulted in an 18% increase in users on LaurelHighlands.org, with notable upticks in traffic from our targeted geographic areas: Ohio 40%, Virginia 93%, Michigan 62% and Washington, D.C. up 22%.

Additionally, with the launch of the newly-redesigned LaurelHighlands.org in late March, the site now includes a booking engine, complete with date ranges, room rates and availability, allowing visitors to click and complete the booking transaction on the host's website. Not only does this feature offer convenience to visitors looking for travel information on our area, but it provides the Laurel Highlands marketing team with great insights on who our visitors are and what they are looking for. This data will help support, shape and refine marketing efforts as we move our campaigns forward.

Summer Fun Coupon Books

The 2018 Summer Fun Coupon Books are now available with more than 60 amazing coupon offers for the region's visitors! 25,000 Coupon Books have been printed and are now available throughout all LHVB racks in 86 locations throughout the region to better target visitors already here. All coupons are also featured on LaurelHighlands.org for download to online visitors. To request coupon books for distribution at your property, please contact Rachel Roehrig at 724-238-5661, ext. 101, or at rroehrig@laurelhighlands.org.



Are You Maximizing Your Presence on the New Website?

The new LaurelHighlands.org has more ways than ever to showcase your listing and get people to click through to your website, social media and events. Here are some tips for getting the most out of the new website:

1. *Add your events.* Our website now has the ability for users to save events from the website directly to their phone calendars and Outlook. Just like Facebook, adding an event to a calendar greatly increases the chance they will attend the event. Just log in to the partner extranet at laurel.extranet.simpleviewcrm.com to add your events!
2. *Update your listing and photos.* Showcase your business with fresh photos. The new site automatically displays a slideshow on Listings pages, so the more photos you add, the more dynamic your listing becomes. You can even add a video! This can also be done via the partner extranet.
3. *Advertise with DTN.* With more web traffic than ever before, our revamped website is the best place to reach travelers interested in your business. Check out new mobile banner ads, spotlight ads and featured listings by emailing advertising@dtncads.com.

If you have any trouble logging into the partner extranet or are a new user, please contact Louise at lbates@laurelhighlands.org or 724.238.5661, ext. 110.



WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA STATS

Jared Bundy, Director of Interactive Marketing

Social Media Audience (as of April 20, 2018)

Likes on Facebook
60,000+

Followers on Twitter
12,000+

Followers on Instagram
4,000+

Video Views on YouTube
231,000+

Pinterest Followers
700+

Top Keywords



- Laurel Highlands
- Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail
- Laurel Highlands PA
- Ohiopyle State Park
- Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau
- Ohiopyle
- Chestnut Ridge PA
- Latrobe Country Club
- Linn Run
- Wine Tours in PA
- Idlewild & Soakzone

Top Spring Pages

(Feb. -April, 2018)



	pageviews
Fishing	22,751
Homepage	20,699
Frank Lloyd Wright	12,511
Ohiopyle	10,929
Cabins and Campgrounds	7,045
Rafting	6,666
Romantic Packages	6,001
Fishing Information	5,810
Events	5,285
Things To Do	5,281

Notable Web Stats (Feb.-April, 2018)

Compared to Feb.-April, 2017

22% increase
Pageviews

39% increase
Users

86% increase
Social Media Traffic

127% increase
Direct Traffic

180% increase
Blog Traffic

Top Instagram Post:



Our most-liked Instagram post of spring was this shot of a snowy hike through Ohiopyle and Cucumber Falls.

Instagram Hashtag:

Have your photos featured on social media by tagging us and using #LaurelHighlands.

New for 2018: All photos using our hashtag can now be used across our website and other social media platforms via Stackla. Encourage your social media manager and guests to use the hashtag to get their photos featured!

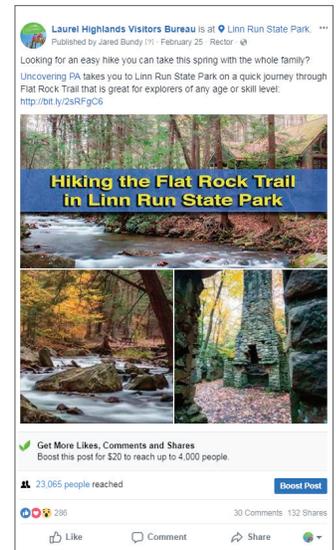


Podcast: Subscribe to Laurel Highlands Happenings, our monthly podcast hosted by LHVb's own Louise Bates that showcases partners, events and our region with a different theme each episode. Subscribe on iTunes, GooglePlay, Stitcher or wherever you listen to podcasts.

Top Facebook Posts:



This post about Fred Rogers Fast Facts reached 20,000 people with 4,277 video views, 86 shares and 431 reactions/comments.



This post from Uncovering PA about Flat Rock Trail was a hit, organically reaching 23,000 people and shared 133 times, driving more than 1,500 clicks and 667 reactions/comments.



▶ PUBLIC RELATIONS UPDATE

Anna Weltz, Director of Public Relations

Recent Press Visits

- Hallur Mar, Icelandic journalist for Morgunblaðið, Iceland's oldest daily newspaper
- Rich Warren, Long Weekends Magazine
- Keryn Means, Walking On Travels
- Anne Schuhle, Buffalo Magazine

Top Media Opportunities

AP **Bethesda** **MAIN LINE TODAY**
MAGAZINE

THE  **SUN** **VIVA TYSONS**
MAGAZINE

Laurel Highlands in the Spotlight

Jan. 1-March 31, 2018

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

304  Stories

 **364.24** million
Total Reach

More than
\$488,000
Publicity Value

Want to Get Your Business in Front of 130 Travel Media and PR Professionals?

Just a few more months until the Laurel Highlands welcomes the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance annual Media Marketplace! The three-day event will bring approximately 130 travel journalists and tourism marketing representatives to tour and explore our region Sept. 25-27. An event of this scale and impact needs your support! Sponsorship opportunities will be available June 15, providing LHVB partners with opportunities to support this once-in-a-lifetime event and connect with this highly-influential audience. For more info, please contact Anna at aweltz@laurelhighlands.org.



▶ GROUP TOUR NEWS

Stacey Magda, Director of Sales

Meet the Planners in Harrisburg Spring Luncheon

On April 19, the LHVB in partnership with regional businesses hosted a luncheon to connect and share meeting and retreat options with association planners from the Harrisburg area. Entering the third year of hosting these events, we are seeing opportunities for new business to come to the region. Stay tuned to learn more about how you can be involved in upcoming events!

Quote from Planner:

Once again, the Laurel Highlands did it right! How nice it was to be able to meet and actually carry on a conversation with you and your reps! The food was terrific and the company even better. I am hopeful I will be able to bring a client your way in 2019, I am working on one.

–R. Keith McNally,
Independent Meeting Planner

Group Sales on the Road:

Investing in our Future: Homeschoolers are Huge in Group Travel

HEAV: Home Educators Association of Virginia | Richmond, VA | 12,000 homeschool families | June 6-10

CHAP: Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania | Lancaster, PA | 5,000 homeschool families | June 2



Tour and Travel Shows: A Commitment to our State Association

PBA Annual Meeting: Pennsylvania Bus Association | Williamsburg, VA | June 18-21 | 20+ Tour Operators

FAM Tours and More!

Destination Greater Pittsburgh will host a FAM tour on July 30-Aug. 1, 2018. The first two days will highlight Pittsburgh and offer the opportunity to explore the regions and counties beyond on day three. On August 1, the Laurel Highlands will welcome tour operators focusing on student tour opportunities with stops at Fort Ligonier, Compass Inn Museum, Flight 93 National Memorial, Oakhurst Grille and Event Center and West Overton Village and Museum.

Growing Group business at Group Leader Shows

Share your information with the area's busiest group leaders at two shows in fall 2018! Participation for each show is \$150. Please contact Stacey Magda for contracts and more information.

Great Day! Group Leader Show | Independence, OH | Sept. 20-21, 2018 | 300 group leaders

AAA Group Leader Show | Seven Springs Mountain Resort | Sept. 4-5, 2018 | 175 group leaders



WELCOME, NEW LHVB MARKETING PARTNERS!

Louise Bates, Sales Development Manager



Leeper's Meat, LLC

Beth Leeper
260 Harr Road
Acme, PA 15610
(724) 454-0873
Facebook: Leeper Meats LLC

Situated in the midst of the Laurel Highlands, this family farm embraces the ideal that knowing exactly where your food comes from is priceless. Leeper's Farm raises their beef on grass, corn and grain that has been grown on the farm using sustainable practices. Stop by Leeper's in Acme, where you can buy farm-raised, minimally-processed meat, as well as fresh eggs, milk, pure maple and hickory syrups and more.



Peace, Love & SUP

Connie Baker
3205 State Route 982
Latrobe, PA 15650
(724) 972-5652
willowhousecottage.com/-peace-love-sup-yoga

Peace, Love & SUP offers a fun way to enjoy yoga, strengthen core muscles, improve balance and upgrade your confidence doing Stand Up Paddleboarding. Peace, Love & SUP currently offers classes at the Ligonier's YMCA pool with a future summer location at Youngwood Park and Pool.



Mountain Pies

Julia Joseph
4633 National Pike
Markleysburg, PA 15459
(724) 329-7437
mountainpies.org

The mouth-watering aroma of freshly made hand-tossed pizzas, strombolis, subs and salads will greet you when you enter Mountain Pies in Markleysburg. Be sure to save room for dessert! You won't want to miss out on freshly baked cookies, muffins, brownies and apple dumplings.



Pike Run Club & Lodge

Greg Paratore
204 Pike Run Road
Jones Mills, PA 15646
(724) 593-2444
pikeruncc.org

Founded in 1903, Pike Run Club & Lodge is situated close to Donegal and all the nearby attractions. Surrounded by 400 wooded acres and 200,000 pristine acres of protected state game lands, this is certainly a retreat from a busy schedule! Pike Run Club & Lodge offers a traditional country club setting with a full range of recreational facilities and accommodation for members and their guests.



Mountain Yoga Shala LLC

Jenny Dayton and Mandy Kusher-Greenfield
2944 National Pike
Chalk Hill, PA 15421
(724) 550-3661
mountainyogashala.com

Did you know "shala" is Sanskrit for "home?" The yoga studio of Mountain Yoga Shala resides in the mountains of the Laurel Highlands at Chalk Hill. Established since 2017, Mountain Yoga Shala offers yoga classes to suit all levels, kids' yoga, meditation, prenatal and postnatal yoga and workshops are all listed on the schedule. Don't hesitate, unwind and embrace with a class at Mountain Yoga Shala.



Turning Point Energy, LLC

Lance Queer
371 Bethel Church Road
Ligonier, PA 15658
(724) 493-6764
turningpointenergy.org

Turning Point Energy, located in Ligonier offers an alternative approach to healing – energy healing, whether it's an injury, migraines, insomnia or many more conditions, Lance will offer intervention to ease and dissolve the problem.



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



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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Langer, Chairman
Westmoreland Cultural Trust

Liz Diesel
Glades Pike Winery

Eric Mauck, Vice Chairman
Seven Springs Mountain Resort

Tom Guiher
Living Treasures Wild Animal Park

Dave Kahley, Treasurer
The Progress Fund

Alicia Henry
Westmoreland County
Commissioners' Appointee

Muriel Nuttall, Secretary
Fayette County
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Lladel Lichty
Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial

Ron Aldom
Somerset County
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Liz McCarty
Laurel Highlands River Tours
& Outdoor Center

Laura Argenbright
Mountain Playhouse

Bryan Perry
Allegheny Trail Alliance

Ken Bisbee
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Clinton Piper
Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater

Diane Centeno
Nemacolin Woodlands Resort

Michael Simons
SpringHill Suites Latrobe-Pittsburgh

Stephen Clark
National Park Service

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Executive Director
Ann Nemanic
724-238-5661 x103
anemanic@laurelhighlands.org

Director of Sales
Stacey Magda
724-238-5661 x111
smagda@laurelhighlands.org

Senior Director of Finance &
Grant Administration
Georgia Robinsky
724-238-5661 x115
grobinsky@laurelhighlands.org

Sales Development Manager
Louise Bates
724-238-5661 x110
lbates@laurelhighlands.org

Senior Director of Marketing
Kristin Ecker
724-238-5661 x104
kecker@laurelhighlands.org

Administrative & Grant Assistant
Rachel Roehrig
724-238-5661 x101
rroehrig@laurelhighlands.org

Director of Interactive Marketing
Jared Bundy
724-238-5661 x106
jbundy@laurelhighlands.org

Marketing Communications Coordinator
Allyson Null
724-238-5661 x116
anull@laurelhighlands.org

Director of Public Relations &
Community Outreach
Anna Weltz
724-238-5661 x108
aweltz@laurelhighlands.org

Brochure Distribution Coordinator
Jim Hamerski
724-238-5277
warehouse@laurelhighlands.org

Marketing Assistant
Kayleigh Dumas
72-238-5661 x102
kdumas@laurelhighlands.org