



WELCOME, NEW LHVb MARKETING PARTNERS! //

Louise Bates, Director of Partnership Development



Ransome's Pub & Grill
Ransom Towsley
1867 Route 30 West
Ligonier, PA 15658
(724) 441-4179
Facebook: Ransome's Pub and Grill

Formerly known as Hansley's, this pub is under new ownership and with a new name. Conveniently located in Ligonier along Route 30 West, Ransome's offers patrons old English charm with wood paneling, button back armchairs by the fireplace and the feel of a quaint British pub. Scotch eggs, the Highlander burger and Guinness sausage sandwich complete the British theme alongside popular dishes like wings, pasta and steak. In the warmer months, visitors can enjoy the outdoor patio.



Rivertowne Brewing
5578 Old William Penn Highway
Export, PA 15632
(724) 519-2145
myrivertowne.com

Established in 2007, Rivertowne has been brewing a great assortment of beer ever since. Each of their five locations in Allegheny and Westmoreland counties offers an extensive selection of craft beer, seasonal brews, great food and many events. Rivertowne also uses state-of-the-art processing and sustainable packaging.



Wholehearter Yoga
Rosslyn Kemerer
939 Horner Church Road
Stoystown, PA 15563
(724) 575-2235
wholehearteryoga.com

Have you been thinking about joining a yoga class but finding time in your busy schedule is challenging? Wholehearter Yoga's founder Rosslyn understands the pressures of work and life and offers a solution: the opportunity to schedule private sessions at your home, or alternatively online or via Skype sessions. She also offers outdoor sessions, yoga hikes, meditation, energy balancing and more. She calls it "yoga without walls" and it's her specialty. Schedule some "me time" with Wholehearter Yoga today!



YWCA Westmoreland County
Cindy Leonard
424 North Main Street
Greensburg, PA 15601
(724) 834-9390
ywcawestmoreland.org

Located at the Huff Mansion in Academy Hill Historic District of Greensburg, the YWCA of Westmoreland County was founded in 1959 to eliminate racism, empower women and promote peace, equality and justice for all. At the Westmoreland County, you will find an abundance of programs and activities: health and wellness, technology, pre-school, back-to-work programs, field hockey for girls, international women's group, literacy program, a thrift shop and more. Their annual events include Sportswomen of the Year awards, a fashion show and a used book sale at the Westmoreland Mall.



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 //

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Clinton Piper
Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater

Theresa Gay Rohall
Compass Inn Museum

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LHVb NEWS //

Celebrating 60 Years of Tourism! *Continued from front cover*



Chris Sherbine and Michael Mohr from Seven Springs Mountain Resort enjoying the evening

The Westmoreland Cultural Trust staff celebrating Teresa Baughman, Tourism Trailblazer of the Year



LHVb staff welcomes partners in style



Laura Argenbright, Bottle Works, and Debbie Brehun, Ligonier Echo

Headlines

LAUREL HIGHLANDS NEWSLETTER

❄️ 2018-2019

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:

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



Robbie Steindl and Jesse Belding (Photo credit: Tribune-Review)

Congratulations to Our Tourism Scholarship Winners!

Thanks to the incredibly generous donations to the 2017 annual dinner's silent auction, the LHVb was able to present two \$1,500 scholarships to two very deserving students majoring in hospitality and tourism. Congratulations to Jesse Belding and Robbie Steindl!

LHVb NEWS //

Celebrating 60 Years of Tourism!

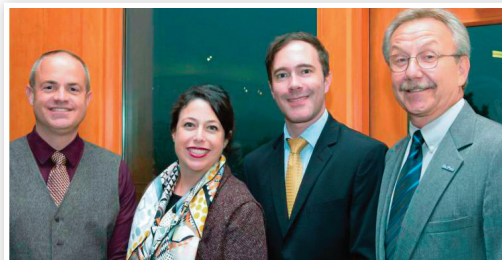
Thank you to everyone who attended the LHVb's 60th anniversary dinner, Oct. 4, at the Fred M. Rogers Center. We hope you had a great time catching up with old friends, meeting new people and celebrating the vibrant tourism community of the Laurel Highlands.

Congratulations to the 2018 Laurel Highlands Champions of Tourism!

- Tourism Trailblazers of the Year and the LHVb's remaining founding member organizations – Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Fay-Penn Economic Development Council, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, Laurel Mountain Ski Resort, Idlewild and SoakZone, Ligonier Valley Chamber of Commerce and The Historic Summit Inn.
- Tourism Employee of the Year – Teresa Baughman, Director of Operations and Programming, The Palace Theatre
- Tourism Pathfinder of the Year – The Krysak Family, Bittersweet Café and Bittersweet Antiques.

We are looking forward to another 60 years of partnership, collaboration and fun in the Laurel Highlands!

See More Photos from the Annual Dinner on page 5



Jeff Croushore, Idlewild and SoakZone; Carrie Fischer Lepore and Michael Chapaloney, PA Department of Community and Economic Development; Bob Shark, Fay-Penn Economic Development Council (Photo credit: Tribune-Review)



Joseph Bellack, Latrobe Art Center, and Briana Tomack, Greater Latrobe-Laurel Valley Chamber of Commerce, toast to a fantastic evening.



Westmoreland County Commissioners Ted Kopas and Gina Cerilli present Ann Nemanic with a proclamation in honor of the bureau's 60th anniversary.



Brooke Neal, Lladel Lichty and Sarah Vannatta from the Friends of Flight 93



LAUREL HIGHLANDS VISITORS BUREAU
120 E. Main Street, Ligonier, PA 15658
800.333.5661 | laurelhighlands.org





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Ann Nemanic, Executive Director

How do our incredible four seasons fit within your business model? For some, the first pop of green in early spring signifies a time to gear up for trail season. For others, the color change in a sugar maple hints fall festival season is in the air. And, as we search our winter wardrobe for that missing glove, winter with her glorious blanket of snow is at our doorstep. How lucky we are in the Laurel Highlands to welcome visitors for four magnificent seasons!

This is also a time of reflection for me and our team at the Bureau. 2018 has been a remarkable year of accomplishments. Every division has met and exceeded goals and expectations. A new website, targeted demographic marketing, UGC content integration, substantial blog production, podcasts for our radio programs, engaging group tour itineraries shared monthly and our public relations has exploded with 916 stories, 1.2 billion digital impressions, 11.9 print circulation, all with \$1.9 million in publicity value. Quite a year and 2019 looks to expand our efforts. Our brand is solid, due the talent in place to advance our initiatives.

The efforts of the LHVB have allowed for a significant upward trend in overall lodging occupancy and revenue. A first in a number of years. In spite of a damp summer, year-to-date occupancy numbers reflect an increase of 7.1% and revenue of 8.6%. Our marketing is working because we are pinpointing markets and messaging not seasonally, but daily. We are reaching the right audience through the correct platform with engaging imagery and a spot-on message.

I encourage you to embrace this new season. Winter sports and snow allow us to reach yet another audience. We are a year-round destination, blessed with beauty and activities for all. Yes, snow is a four-letter word, but it in our industry, that's a good thing!



MARKETING NEWS

Kristin Ecker, Senior Director of Marketing and Project Management

Fall Campaign Wrap Up

Fall 2018 followed year two of the Red House improved plan of action, with dozens of diverse Laurel Highlands digital marketing messages hitting segmented audiences in top markets including Ohio, New York, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C. and Maryland. This included expanding the media mix and introducing new outlets into the media plan in the upcoming year. Some new outlets include video ads on Hulu, podcast advertising, Spotify, targeted cable TV placements and more.

Fall campaigns presented diversified ads targeted at baby boomers, millennials, and Gen-Xers with specific themes per generation, ranging from high adventure to low impact premium escapes. These campaigns targeted dozens of interests per season, from festivals and fall drives to haunted houses and reenactments. Nearly 200,000 visitors were looking for information on laurelhighlands.org this fall with more than 4,300 visitors looking to book lodging on the site. Festivals and events ranked top in information sought after during fall in the Laurel Highlands.

As we approach winter and a new fiscal year, the Laurel Highlands marketing efforts will continue to follow the course of action presented in the plan, with an enhanced media investment and expanded reach within our target markets. Initiatives will raise brand awareness and strive to increase length of stay and overnight stays. We're looking forward to another successful winter marketing season in the Laurel Highlands!

Photo Contest

The 2018 Laurel Highlands Photo Contest received more than 600 entries, submitted in three categories. Judges from the LHVB staff selected the top images in four categories: people, plants and animals (nature) and places (attractions and landscapes). View the winning images online at laurelhighlands.org/photocontest, as well as in the 2019 Destination Guide, set to release in early January.

PEOPLE	PLACES	PLANTS AND ANIMALS
1 st Rusty Glessner, Chiopyle State Park	1 st Carolyn Anderson, Keystone State Park	1 st Courtney Burnsworth, Chiopyle
2 nd Amber Hebenthal, Laurel Hill State Park	2 nd Brandon Hirt, Quemahoning Reservoir	2 nd Linda Seanor, Laurel Hill State Park
3 rd Suzanne Enos, Somerset Historical Center	3 rd Diana Sanner, Laurel Hill State Park	3 rd Paul Valerio, Seven Springs Mountain Resort

Welcome, Jessica Petrovich!

In her new role as Westmoreland Heritage Coordinator, Jessica will work in partnership with Westmoreland Historical Society and the LHVB to develop, implement and manage a comprehensive plan to attract residents of and visitors to Westmoreland County's numerous historical sites, cultural assets, programs and events. Born and raised in Latrobe, she spent two years as a middle school English teacher in Roaring Spring, Pa., before returning to her hometown with her husband. Jessica graduated Summa Cum Laude from Saint Vincent College with a Bachelor's degree in English and minors in German and Secondary Education. In her free time, she enjoys reading, seeking out new coffee shops, and watching true crime documentaries.



MARKETING NEWS

Jared Bundy, Director of Digital Marketing

Social Media Audience

(as of October 19, 2018)

- Facebook Fans **62,500+**
- Twitter Followers **12,200+**
- Instagram Followers **4,900+**
- YouTube Video Views **400,000+**
- Pinterest Monthly Viewers **25,000+**

Top Keywords

Laurel Highlands, Chiopyle, Chiopyle State Park, Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, Ligonier Days, Ligonier Days 2018, Flight 93 Memorial, Fort Ligonier Days 2018, Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Things to Do in Western PA, Fort Ligonier, Pittsburgh Renaissance Festival 2018

Top Fall Pages

(August-October 2018)

	pageviews
Family Fun	27,677
Homepage	17,280
Chiopyle	14,419
Events	13,916
Steelers Training Camp	9,696
Fall Festivals	9,515
Idlewild and Soakzone	8,227
Halloween	7,775
Haunted Attractions	7,592
Things to Do	7,392

Notable Web Stats

(August-October, 2018)
Compared to August-October, 2017

- 160%** Paid Search
- 370%** Blog Traffic increase
- 250%** Family Fun Pages increase
- 28%** Mobile Traffic increase
- 20%** Email Traffic

Laurel Highlands Uncovered and Blog Videos

You may have been seeing more video content than ever from the Laurel Highlands as we roll out two new initiatives this fall. Laurel Highlands Uncovered takes you behind the scenes at Laurel Highlands businesses to show you how to make signature drinks, do Halloween makeup and more from our local experts! Also, blogs are now being turned into video content as a visual way to sum up each post and reach people on YouTube and Facebook in a new way.



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. Our latest fall episodes cover fall fun and fellowship, reflection and renewal and live music and livestock.

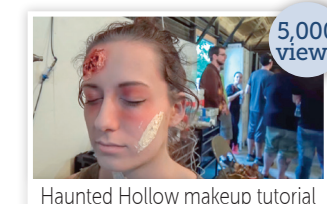
Switzerfilm:

Switzerfilm's five-person film crew completed a four-day shoot throughout all three counties visiting dozens of locations from pumpkin patches to breweries. Drone footage, 360° cameras, photos and videos from the shoot will be used for future fall ad campaigns and website and social media content.

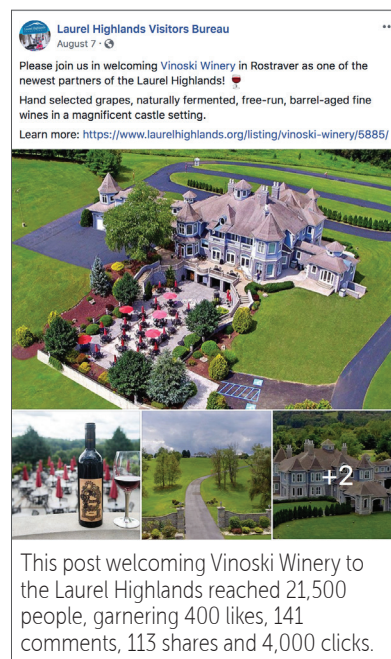
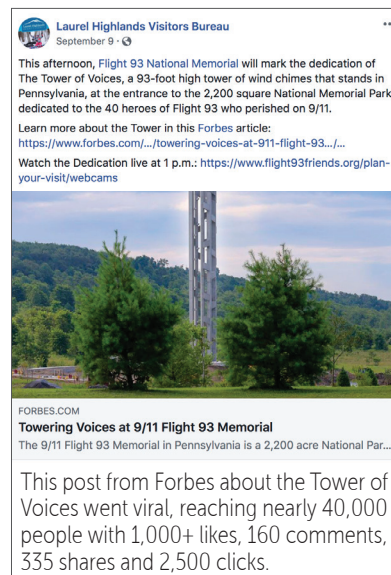
Use #LaurelHighlands When You Post:



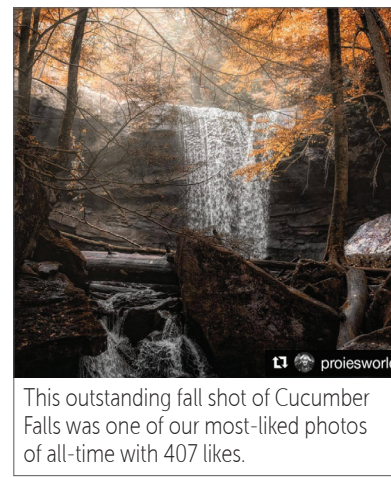
Laurelhighlands.org can now feature visitor and business photos from Instagram across the website. These photos can link directly to your listing, giving you even more ways to showcase your business and make the most of your partnership. Be sure to use #laurelhighlands and add your location when you post to Instagram so we can see your photos and feature them on the website!



Top Facebook Posts:



Top Instagram Post:



PUBLIC RELATIONS NEWS

Anna Weltz, Director of Public Relations and Community Outreach

And That's a Wrap!

After more than a year in the works, it's hard to believe, but the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA) Media Marketplace has come and gone! For three days and two nights, approximately 130 travel journalists and destination marketing organization members from the Mid-Atlantic region explored a sampling of the Laurel Highlands and Nemaconlin Woodlands Resort. Despite some rain, the groups enjoyed their familiarization tours that took them to Fred Rogers' hometown of Latrobe, into the heart of Ligonier, the Flight 93 National Memorial, all of the Frank Lloyd Wright sites, the Westmoreland Museum of American Art, rafting on the Yough and biking on the GAP between Chiopyle and Confluence.

The Laurel Highlands region is filled to the brim with story ideas. Our goal in hosting this event was to welcome and reacquire these special guests with a sampling of the region, create new relationships and expand existing and open the door for many, many return visits to experience all the region has to offer.

Thank you to all of our participating and supporting partners. We couldn't have done it without you!

Laurel Highlands in the Spotlight July 1-Sept. 30, 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.

- 395** Stories
- 604 million** Total Reach
- More than \$775,000** Publicity Value



GROUP TOUR NEWS

Stacey Magda, Director of Tourism Development

Welcoming Groups to the Laurel Highlands

In September, October and November 2018, the LHVB distributed more than 550 welcome bags to conference, small meeting, niche and motorcoach groups visiting the Laurel Highlands.

Bats on Bikes | Ramada Ligonier | September 29-October 4, 2018 | 60 guests

Cycle Forward/Kawarthas Northumberland | Chiopyle State Park/Great Allegheny Passage | October 3, 2018 | 4 guests

National Land Trust Rally | Field Trip: Jennerstown, Flight 93, Laurel Hill State Park/Scenic View | October 10, 2018 | 25 guests

National Land Trust Rally | Field Trip: Great Allegheny Passage, Lucky Dog Café, Chiopyle State Park | October 11, 2018 | 38 guests

Kaleo Tours | SpringHill Suites | October 13 - 14, 2018 | 26 guests

Land Cruise | SpringHill Suites | October 14 - October 17, 2018 | 55 guests

Kaleo Tours | SpringHill Suites | October 15 - 16, 2018 | 41 guests

English Setter Association of American | Seven Springs Mountain Resort | October 23-26, 2018 | 200 guests

PA Academy of Family Physicians | Nemaconlin Woodlands Resort | November 2-4, 2018 | 50 guests



2018 THIRD QUARTER GROUP TRAVEL IN REVIEW

- 1,528** hotel rooms booked
- \$189,472** in hotel revenue
- 82** multi-day tours & **41** day trips
- 123** bus groups
- 7,077** senior and adult visitors
- 2,297** student visitors



Meet the Planners

On Nov. 1, the LHVB hosted the Meet the Planners Luncheon at the Millworks in Harrisburg. Several partners teamed up to showcase the Laurel Highlands to the bustling association event market in Harrisburg. Together, we welcomed seven planners to engage and learn more about meeting and retreat opportunities in the region.

Coming up in 2019: The Group Sales Circuit

Don't miss out on regional efforts to promote group travel in the Laurel Highlands. Connect with Stacey to discuss how you can be involved in cooperative show outreach, group sales missions, FAM tours, specialized itineraries and more!