

Headlines

LAUREL HIGHLANDS NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2020

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:

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



▶ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Ann Nemanic, Executive Director

Dear Tourism Partners,

"A goal without a plan is just a wish." – Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

I recently read this quote and felt it was so appropriate to share in this edition of *Headlines*. In 2019, the LHVB underwent the planning and adoption of a three-year strategic plan for the organization. We now move into the execution phase of that plan with no hesitation.

Visibility, accessibility, and growth were all key components that we will be able to accomplish by May 2020. Not wishful thinking, but goals attained.

With the unanimous action from our Board of Directors, the LHVB purchased a building on The Diamond in Ligonier. The space, formerly occupied by Conte Design Lifestyle Gallery, will become the new home for our team. The two-story structure will double as our working space and allow visibility in a true store-front setting, provide accessibility for visitors in a well-designed visitor/retail space, and will enable future growth of staff. In addition, we are able to bring our brochure distribution operation under one roof.

I believe Eric Mauck, Chairman of our Board and CEO of Seven Springs Mountain Resort, says it so well, "This consolidation will allow the visitors bureau to provide a much higher level of engagement to help our visitors learn and experience more of the wonderful tourism assets that we have in Fayette, Somerset, and Westmoreland counties. The new facility also will provide the opportunity to provide a higher level of marketing for our tourism partners and to reach new visitors."

Keep watching your inbox, we plan to host several open houses and welcome you into our new space – appropriately, during National Tourism Week, May 3-9.

Yours truly,

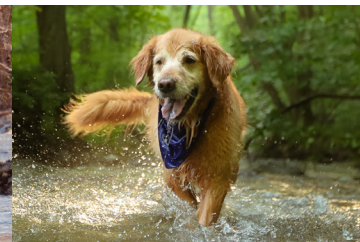
Ann Nemanic
Executive Director
Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau



LAUREL HIGHLANDS VISITORS BUREAU

113 E. Main Street, Ligonier, PA 15658

724.238.5661 laurelhighlands.org



▶ LHVB NEWS

Explore Your Backyard on the Annual LHVB Backyard Tour

On April 16, LHVB partners will embark on the annual LHVB Backyard Tour! This year, we will visit sites throughout Westmoreland County, and we invite you and your team to join us for a day of networking, education, and fun! This event is perfect for frontline staff members and anyone who loves the Laurel Highlands. Contact Stacey at smagda@laurelhighlands.org for registration details.



Journey of Self: A Wellness Tour in the Laurel Highlands

On May 17, our team will bring to life our third public tour through the region. This is the second departure for our wellness concept after 2019's sold-out success. It was an honor to welcome new and returning friends to a variety of wellness-oriented stops. Many thanks to those who helped create this outstanding experience, including Holistic Healing Center at Nemaquin Woodlands Resort, OM Body Yoga, Nino's Restaurant, Laurel Hill State Park, and SanaView Farms with special programming offered by Tami Gingrow of Body in Balance Healing Center.



Tourism Grant Reporting Deadlines Approaching

If your organization or business was the recipient of a 2019 tourism grant, don't forget your final reports are due by March 31, 2020. Please visit laurelhighlands.org/grants to access your county's final reporting form and requirements.



Explore the Neighborhood on This New Tour!

Don't miss our upcoming It's A Beautiful Day: A Tour of Fred Rogers' Neighborhood scheduled on September 12. Tickets are on sale now! Contact Stacey for more information at smagda@laurelhighlands.org.



▶ MARKETING NEWS

Kristin Ecker, Senior Director of Marketing and Project Management

Spring Campaigns Set to Launch

Spring is just around the corner, and the Laurel Highlands marketing efforts are ready to launch in March once the weather turns. To ensure a seamless transition from winter campaigns, the marketing team will be continuing to implement targeted digital campaigns that include search, display, video, social, native and internet radio placements. As always, the team will continue its own web, blog, and social initiatives. In addition, advertisements can be seen and heard on traditional outlets in Pittsburgh such as WTAE and Comcast cable TV stations, including HGTV, Freeform, and Food Network, and radio underwriting on NPR stations, WYEP and WESA.

Additionally you'll see the Laurel Highlands messaging targeting residents in the Washington, D.C. metro area with rail and bus ads, NPR radio spots on WUSA, and billboards on the I-70 and I-76 corridors leading to the region. In accordance with the bureau's integrated marketing plan, the messaging continues to be diverse with targeted messaging for all generations and interests. These ads are driving traffic to unique content on laurelhighlands.org, and ultimately to your property sites. Visitors to our site this winter (Nov.-Feb.) topped 192,000 visitors with more than 450,000 pageviews. In addition, the bureau's booking engine produced more than 3,200 referral clicks to lodging partner booking engines, and that means direct business for our partners.

As we look forward to our warmer months ahead, we're already reminding folks that now's the time to book your summer getaway. Messaging reaffirms our position in the Laurel Highlands as the perfect place for a unique getaway close to home with countless attractions and activities for all interests – all year long!

Pour Tour Brings Big Business

The Laurel Highlands Pour Tour launched last September, and in that short time, the data indicates that the tour has proven itself as an overwhelming success for the region's craft beverage industry. Nearly 30,000 passport books have been printed and distributed, and the APP option boasts more than 700 monthly users. Our numbers show that more than 22,000 stickers and APP check-ins have been garnered, each in conjunction with a verified purchase. These numbers now put the tour's estimated impact into the six-figure realm with no signs of slowing down.

While the tour itself directly impacts our craft beverage establishments, the indirect benefit trickles down to the nearby business establishments as visitors travel to these locations. It is our hope to grow this program and show the benefit to our entire region. We have big ideas for the 2021 program and we are excited to see how this program continues to drive visitation throughout the entire region.





MARKETING NEWS

Jared Bundy, Director of Digital Marketing

Social Media Audience (as of Jan. 22, 2020)

- 64,000+** Likes
- 13,000+** Followers
- 10,500+** Followers
- 300,000+** Monthly Video Views
- 20,000+** Monthly Viewers

Top Organic Keywords

Laurel Highlands, Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, Ohiopyle State Park, Laurel Highlands PA, Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Laurel Highlands Pour Tour, Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail, Ohiopyle, Frank Lloyd Wright, Laurel Highlands Trail, Laurel Hill State Park, Forbes State Forest, Laurel Highlands Events Calendar

Top Pages

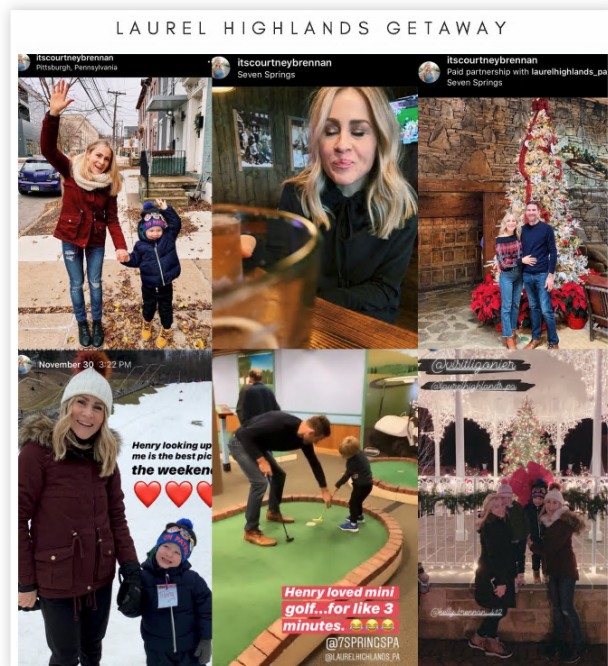
Page	pageviews (Oct. 18, 2019-Jan. 22, 2020)
Pour Tour	25,556
Ski Resorts	17,707
Homepage	11,423
Winter Festivals	10,668
Frank Lloyd Wright	9,259
Events	8,292
Destination Guide	6,768
PA Arts & Crafts Christmas Festival	5,911
Ohiopyle	4,579
Things to Do	4,453

Notable Web Stats

(Oct. 18, 2019-Jan. 22, 2020)
Compared to Oct. 18, 2018-Jan. 22, 2019

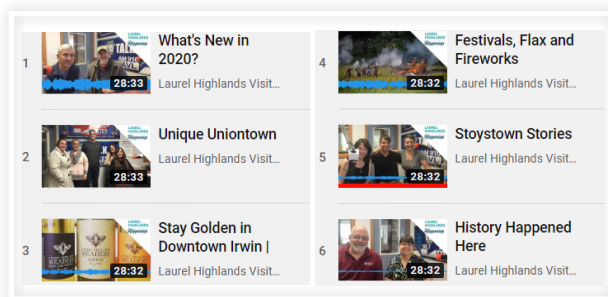
- 10%**
- 7%**
- 66%**
- 33%**
- 135%**

Top Blogs: Our trails and informational guides continue to be the top performing blogs. Our Fred Rogers Trail, Haunted House Guide, and Guide to the Pour Tour blogs were viewed the most.



Social Media Influencers: Kelly and Courtney Brennan completed a winter visit in the Laurel Highlands with stops at Seven Springs, Light Up Ligonier, and Overly's Country Christmas, reaching 174,706 people on Instagram and 49,000 on Facebook within two days.

Use #LaurelHighlands when you post: Remember to use #laurelhighlands when you post to Instagram so we can add your photos to LaurelHighlands.org. All photos will include a call-to-action to help drive traffic to your listing.



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 Facebook Posts:

Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau
Published by Jared Bundy (7) · November 28, 2019

Now that you're full of turkey, it's time to get in the spirit at Light Up Ligonier tomorrow!

Watch the town transform into a Christmas wonderland, meet Santa, take a sleigh-ride through town and more at this event straight from a Hallmark movie.

Learn more: https://triblive.com/.../christmas-in-ligonier-transport-yo...

CHRISTMAS IN LIGONIER transports you to a magical winter wonderland

This post discussing Light Up Ligonier organically reached 22,200 people, was clicked 800 times, and shared 87 times.

Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau
Published by Jared Bundy (7) · December 27, 2019 at 3:58 PM

Photo Contest Winners:

Linda Seanor
2nd Place, Places, Johnson Church in Confluence

Sharing our Photo Contest winners continues to be an excellent way to reach our audience. Linda Seanor's photo got the most response, organically reaching 22,000 people with 1,300 clicks and 93 shares.

Top Instagram Post:

This incredible aerial view of Ohiopyle received 700 likes.

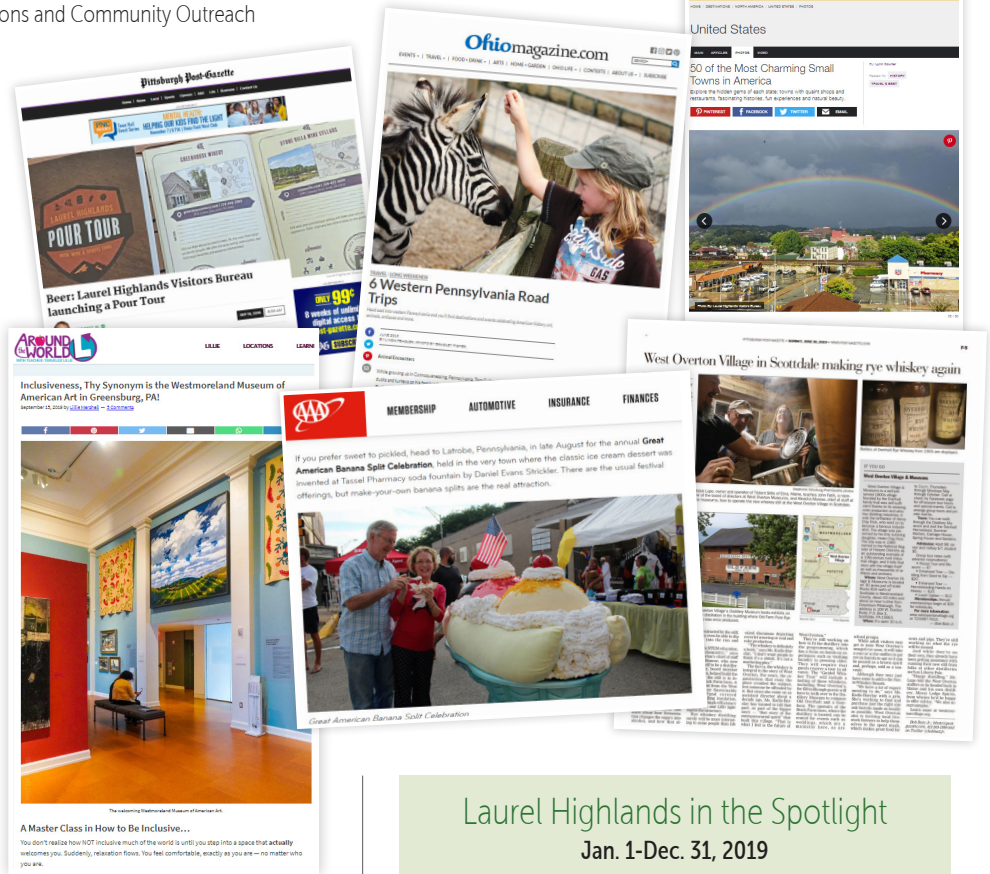


PUBLIC RELATIONS NEWS

Anna Weltz, Director of Public Relations and Community Outreach

Top Media Opportunities for 2019

- "Satisfy your food, beverage, or cultural craving on a Mid-Atlantic trail," *Washington Post*, print and online
- "Beyond Your Backyard: Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands," WQED, online and distributed to all PBS stations
- "Whiskey Makes Comeback at West Overton Village," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*
- "Six Western Pennsylvania Road Trips," *Ohio Magazine*
- "Pour Tour on Tap," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*
- "It's a Beautiful Day in Mister Rogers Neighborhood," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*
- "50 Rides, One Nation," *HOG* (Harley Owners Group) *Magazine* members only website
- "Exotic, underrated travel destination list includes this Pa. region – no kidding," *Harrisburg Patriot-News*



International Media Mission, Jan. 23, 2020, New York City

Anna kicked off the New Year by attending International Media Marketplace (IMM), a first for the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau. IMM provides an opportunity for some of the world's biggest travel brands, as well as international and national tourist boards to meet and network with more than 500 travel journalists. Anna's appointment calendar was full, providing her the chance make new connections, reconnect with established contacts, share stories, organize press trips, and foster new relationships - all in one day!



Coming Soon - Media Mission to Washington, D.C.

In partnership with the team from VisitPA, Anna will be headed to Washington, D.C. in early April to meet with travel media. It's been a couple of years since a media mission was held in D.C., so Anna will be meeting new media contacts and getting reacquainted with some familiar friends. If you have incredible news that may be of interest to the media, please contact Anna at aweltz@laurelhighlands.org.

Laurel Highlands in the Spotlight

Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2019

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.



1,740
STORIES



Digital Impressions:
2.0 billion



Print Impressions:
12.7 million



Publicity Value
\$4.2 million



PRESS VISITS



26 visits hosted
including three group tours
for a total of
45 media guests



GROUP TOUR NEWS

Stacey Magda, Director of Tourism Development

Spreading the Word in a New Decade!

The winter season is a busy time for team LHVB as we hit the road to showcase our beautiful backyard at leisure shows, sales missions, travel showcases, and fulfilling the need for fresh travel ideas to tens of thousands of travelers. Take a look at where we have been in the first few months of the new decade.

2020 Consumer Shows

- AAA Pittsburgh Travel Showcase – Pittsburgh, PA - January 24-26
- NY Times Travel Showcase – New York City, NY - January 24-26
- AAA Great Vacations Expo - Columbus, OH - February 7-9
- Toronto Outdoor Adventure Show – Toronto, ON - February 21-23
- Pittsburgh Home & Garden Show – DL Lawrence Center - Pittsburgh, PA – March 6-15
- Washington, DC Travel & Adventure Show – Washington, D.C. - March 7-8

Tour and Travel Shows

American Bus Association Marketplace | Omaha, Neb. | January 11-14, 2020

ABA is the biggest show of the year, giving us a unique opportunity to connect with tour operators and planners from across the U.S. and Canada. This year we were able to meet at 34 appointments and have wonderful discussions for upcoming plans for group travel into the region. Stay tuned on follow-ups and site visit requests!



Heartland Travel Showcase | Lansing, Mich. | February 27 - March 1, 2020

Partnering in tourism is one of most beneficial investments we can make in time and money. Each year the LHVB develops many unique outreach opportunities to partner together to share our message. When it comes to the tour and travel industry, our presence at the Heartland Travel Showcase is second to none. This year, 11 regional attraction, hotel, and group service providers traveled together to Lansing, Mich., to set up shop at the Heartland Travel Showcase. Along the way we maximized our travels by conducting sales appointments to various operators in Ohio and Michigan. Our impact is exceptional at this event and the return proves it to be a worthy endeavor. Won't you consider joining the team in 2021?

2019 GROUP TRAVEL IN REVIEW

6,111 hotel rooms booked

\$757,764 in hotel revenue booked

896 multi-day tours

900 day trips

1,796 bus groups

57,100 senior and adult visitors

30,885 student visitors



2020 Heartland Travel Showcase Partners

Big Mac Museum Restaurant, Compass Inn Museum, Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, Frank Lloyd Wright's Kentuck Knob, Frank Lloyd Wright at Polymath Park, Hampton Inn Greensburg, Love Receptive Services, Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort, West Overton Village and Museum, Westmoreland Heritage, and SpringHill Suites by Marriott Pittsburgh Latrobe.



WELCOME, NEW LHVB MARKETING PARTNERS!

Louise Bates, Director of Partnership Development



Allegory Gallery

William Jones | Andrew Thornton
220A W. Main Street
Ligonier, PA 15658
724 610 3770
allegorygallery.com

Allegory is awesome! Located on West Main Street in Ligonier, the gallery is a blend of art, a bead store, and jewelry boutique. They stock an extensive selection of beads for all your jewelry creations, and offer jewelry making classes and host a monthly book club. Plus, you can also book a party or group gathering to create a piece of jewelry – a fun activity for your birthday or shower!



FineLine Weddings & Pictures

Fred Findley
145 Ward Lane
Greensburg, PA 15601
724 309 9096
finelineweddings.com

Established in 2007, FineLine Weddings offers professional wedding photography, videography, DJ, and photo booth services for engaged couples throughout southwest and central Pennsylvania. FineLine Weddings is a full-time business of talented professionals that pride themselves on tremendous customer service and amazing results. FineLine also offers a private 26-acre property for engagement photos, as well as high school senior portrait sessions.



Awesome Seven Springs Mt Villas Condo

Keith Casagrande
1 Mt Villas Drive
Champion, PA 15622
386-788-8023
airbnb.com/h/
awesomesevenspringsmtvillascondo

This two-bedroom condo sports a terrific first-class view of the slopes and Seven Springs! Relax on the balcony with a glass of wine and enjoy the views. The condo is equipped with a full kitchen, living room, and dining room, plus easy access to all of the resort's amenities. What are you waiting for? Book your getaway today!



Helen's Hide Inn

Marci Ainsley
1441 County Line Road
Champion, PA 15622
724-455-4466
helenshideinn.com

Conveniently located right in the heart of the Laurel Highlands, Helen's Hide Inn is a five-bedroom, five-bathroom vacation rental, the perfect to call home while exploring the region! A full kitchen, dining area, and a common room with cable TV, games, puzzles, and free WiFi complete the amenities. The house is also close to hiking and biking trails and many other attractions in the Laurel Highlands.



Bee Kind Winery

Robert Hagy
221 West Main Street
Ligonier, PA 15668
724-762-8210
beekindwinery.com

We welcome Bee Kind Winery to Ligonier! You can find their tasting room located on the first floor of Thistletdown at Seger House. Bee Kind Winery specialize in dry, semi-sweet, sweet, and honey wines, and offer tastings at the Ligonier location Thursday through Saturday. They are also participants of the Laurel Highlands Pour Tour.



Laurel Springs Lodge

Leah Walker
239 Glenview Road
Somerset, PA 15501
airbnb.com/rooms/33012477?s=51

If you're looking to get away from it all at a peaceful location, then Laurel Springs Lodge is the vacation rental for you! The house offers accommodation for six people, featuring two bedrooms and two-and-a-half bathrooms. The master bedroom leads to a private deck with a hot tub. Amenities also include a fully-equipped kitchen, wood burner, DirecTV with NFL ticket, and two private ponds. The property is located close to Hidden Valley Resort, Seven Springs Mountain Resort, and many other attractions.



▶ WELCOME, NEW LHVB MARKETING PARTNERS! //

Louise Bates, Director of Partnership Development



Long's Catering Inc.
Kristen Weltz
2456 State Route 119
Greensburg, PA 15601
724-834-0610
longscatering.net

Established in 1985, this family-owned and operated business knows a thing or two about catering for your special event! There's no such thing as an event too big or too small, from weddings, corporate meetings, family reunions, graduation parties, breakfast, or brunch. Long's Catering have also partnered with many of Laurel Highlands' wedding and special event venues.



Sage Wellness Center
Dana Bauer
362 Sandhill Road, suite #8
Greensburg, PA 15601
724-879-4251
mysagewellness.com

Sage Wellness Center opened in the summer of 2019 and offers classes and workshops including yoga, massage, reiki, chakra balancing, acupuncture, cupping as well as other therapies. Sage Wellness also offers visitors the opportunity to try salt therapy in the Himalayan Salt Room. It is all in all a great place for recovery and revitalization of the mind, body, and spirit of all ages.



The Mill Run Inn
Jessica Kruse
100 Stewarton Road
Mill Run, PA 15464
724-329-4973
millruninn.com

The Mill Run Inn, formerly the Country Seasons Inn, is now under new ownership with a new name! This is a delightful getaway offering guests five bedrooms, each with a private bathroom. Amenities include a fully-equipped kitchen, common/dining area, and free WiFi. The hotel is less than four miles from UNESCO World Heritage Site Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, and nearby Frank Lloyd Wright's Kentuck Knob, Ohiopyle State Park, and Seven Springs Mountain Resort.



South Pennsylvania Avenue Antiques
Marie Baur
402 South Pennsylvania Avenue
Greensburg, PA 15601
724-961-2416
spennaveantiques.com

Greensburg has a new antiques shop! South Pennsylvania Avenue Antiques opened its doors in late 2019, offering visitors an absolute treat! Each room throughout the shop is beautiful and thoughtfully displayed with treasures, trinkets, antiques, and wares. As they say at the shop, their ever-changing inventory gives you the old, the odd, and the interesting. Pop in to the shop soon, you won't be disappointed!



Norwin Historical Society
Carl Huszar
219C Main Street
Irwin, PA 15642
724-309-1161
norwinhistoricalsociety.org

Founded in 1994, Norwin Historical Society has been dedicated to preserving local history and promoting the history and heritage of the Norwin community since its conception. Their mission is to educate residents and visitors about the people, places, and events of Irwin, North Irwin, and North Huntingdon Township. Norwin Historical Society will be hosting its 25th Historical House Tour in December and debuting its new event, Antiques on Main, in September.



Yinzer Valley Farms
Geno Gilbert | Michael Smetak
681 Mulberry Hill Road
Mount Pleasant, PA 15666
724-493-5646
Facebook: Yinzer Valley Farms

Once known as Timber Ridge Golf Course, this property has had a radical change! Now a working organic farm and wedding venue since 2018, this venue is now under new ownership and a new name – Yinzer Valley Farms! The former golf club bar and restaurant has been transformed into a gorgeous special events venue perfect for indoor or outdoor weddings, parties, events, and more. Schedule your event today!



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



Headlines

Headlines is published quarterly. Please contact LHVB's Director of Public Relations, Anna Weltz, with questions or comments at aweltz@laurelhighlands.org.
113 East Main Street, Ligonier, PA 15658 | RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eric Mauck, Chairman
Seven Springs Mountain Resort

Liz Diesel
Glades Pike Winery

Muriel Nuttall, Vice Chair
Fayette County
Commissioners' Appointee

Tom Guiher
Living Treasures Wild
Animal Park

Karen Post, Treasurer
The Progress Fund

Alicia Henry
Westmoreland County
Commissioners' Appointee

Michael Simons, Secretary
SpringHill Suites
Latrobe-Pittsburgh

Lladel Lichty
Community Foundation
for the Alleghenies

Ron Aldom
Somerset County
Commissioners' Appointee

Bryan Perry
Allegheny Trail Alliance

Ken Bisbee
Ohiopyle State Park

Clinton Piper
Frank Lloyd Wright's
Fallingwater

Stephen Clark
National Park Service

Theresa Gay Rohall
Compass Inn Museum

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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

Westmoreland Heritage
Coordinator
Jessica Petrovich
724-836-1800 x300
jpetrovich@laurelhighlands.org

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

Director of Partnership
Development
Louise Bates
724-238-5661 x 110
lbates@laurelhighlands.org

LHVB VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER STAFF

Farmington
Cesar Alviar
Susan Morris
Kim Greenbaum

Ohiopyle Train Station
Patty Hohen

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

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

New Stanton
Linda Kubas
Diane Heshizer

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

Marketing Assistant
Kayleigh Dumas
724-238-5661 x 102
kdumas@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