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EXPLORE YORK HOSTS 19TH ANNUAL TOURISM INDUSTRY EVENT

A virtual celebration of the tourism industry in York County

YORK, PA – Explore York hosted its 19th Annual Tourism Industry Event on January 13, 2022, from 9 – 11 a.m. This annual tradition brings together partners and friends from across the county for a morning of learning and celebrating tourism in York County. The event was held virtually again this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There was a lot to celebrate this year despite not gathering in person. While we don't yet know the exact economic impact the pandemic had on the tourism industry, the numbers from before COVID-19 hit continued to spell good news for our industry. For the third year in a row, visitor spending in York County surged to an all-time high of just over \$1 billion in 2019. Traveler spending increased by more than \$22 million from 2018 to 2019, marking the tenth straight year that York County's tourism industry enjoyed growth. While we do not expect those same numbers from 2020, we are confident we will rise up to achieve those milestones again.

In addition, Explore York President Laura Gurreri announced this year's recipient of the Tourism Makers Spirit Award. Named to pay homage to our county brand, the Tourism Makers Spirit Award honors the spirit of those who worked to make York County what it is, a destination where visitors can make memories. This year the award was given to Elizabeth Johnides and the team at The Markets at Hanover.

Joining the Explore York team was marketing industry expert Sarah Benoit. Sarah has worked in the web design, SEO, and social media fields since 2003 and has been teaching classes on related subjects since 2006. As president of Creative Original, she has built a wide variety of small business websites over the years. As co-founder and lead Instructor for the JB Media Institute, Sarah leverages her years of experience as a digital marketing strategist to create timely, relevant, and engaging training content. Sarah treated attendees to an informative discussion about the importance of customer service and partnership as components of effective marketing.

Explore York's Mission is to maximize tourism expenditures and their economic impact in York County, PA, through comprehensive tourism sales and marketing programs. Explore York's Vision is for a York County where tourism is recognized for the value of its economic impact and its role in raising York County's profile as a sought-after destination. For more information on Explore York, call 1-888-858-9675 or visit www.yorkpa.org.



*have it made here*SM