



News Release

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New tourism marketing grant and co-op advertising program among major announcements at Annual Partnership Meeting for Hershey Harrisburg Regional Visitors Bureau

HARRISBURG, PA (Oct. 1, 2015) – The Hershey Harrisburg Regional Visitors Bureau (HHRVB) today announced new programs for their local tourism partners that are intended to encourage more destination branded advertising in local markets and encourage more collaborative marketing efforts among local tourism stakeholders.

Mary Smith, President and CEO of the HHRVB, presented the details of the “[Cooperative Outdoor Advertising Program](#)” and “[Marketing Assistance Program](#)” during the bureau’s Annual Tourism Partnership Breakfast held at the Hershey Country Club.

Smith also announced a new comprehensive research project that will help the bureau clearly define strategies and opportunities to secure more large-scale events and generate new business for the region’s hotels and event venues during shoulder seasons.

According to Smith, 17 of the region’s top 25 events associated with HHRVB in 2015 were considered the best examples of large-scale or “citywide” events which are loosely defined as any event requiring more than 2-3 hotels. The bureau released a report earlier this year detailing the [Top 25 Events](#) held in Dauphin County in 2015 that are associated with the HHRVB either as a new business client or related to an annual conference, exhibit, trade show, or sporting event initially recruited and currently retained by HHRVB’s sales department.

“When you look at the statistics on our organization’s current top 25 event clients, the numbers clearly demonstrate that this region is well-positioned to attract and host large citywide events,” said Smith. “We feel we’ve only scratched the surface with this lucrative market segment.”

Citywide events accounted for 90 percent of the total attendance figures and the total economic impact from the bureau’s Top 25 events according to Smith. The bureau wants this research to identifying more single large events similar to those that the bureau already knows have a significant impact on the region’s economy such as the annual Great American Outdoor Show or the one-time Mennonite World Conference. Those two examples alone attracted a total of 183,000 visitors and generated an estimated \$85 million for the region’s economy in 2015.

HHRVB also distributed the organization’s Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 which highlighted many of the bureau accomplishments which are outlined in the report’s opening letter included below. To request a copy of the HHRVB FY14-15 Annual Report email Info@HersheyHarrisburg.org or call 717-231-7788 during regular business hours.

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Annual Report FY2014-2015

Opening letter presented by HHRVB Leadership

Todd Kohr, HHRVB Board Chair

Mary Smith, HHRVB President/CEO

Report issued on October 1, 2015

We are pleased to report a positive year for the Hershey Harrisburg Regional Visitors Bureau

OUR STORY is one of leading the way for our region's tourism stakeholders and valued Partners.

OUR ACTIVITIES supported our organizational goals by enhancing existing programs, addressing changing markets, expanding our reach, responding to Partners' needs, and engaging strategic partnerships to build for the future.

OUR RESULTS included Sales exceeding goals in leads generated and room-nights booked, Marketing successfully launching a new brand for the region and running successful seasonal campaigns, Public Relations increasing earned media placements by six percent and exceeding circulation and readership goals, Partnership expanding the number of networking and professional development opportunities and exceeding revenue goals.

The significant accomplishments listed below and those highlighted throughout this Annual Report all share a common storyline of serving our overarching mission to lead economic growth for the region through destination marketing and tourism development.

Tell Stories – We introduced a new campaign “Great Stories Start Here” which was reinforced throughout our marketing and communications.

Curate Content – We launched an ongoing series of experiential short videos and enhanced our consumer web site content with more focus on experiences.

Design for Mobile – We re-designed our web site, blog and emails to be fully responsive across all user formats as mobile leads among travel planners and Google's new algorithm elevates optimized mobile sites in search results.

Invest in Research – We mined our completed Brand Assessment and Strategic Planning research to further our business development plan and garnered local support for future feasibility studies related to regional tourism development opportunities.

Lead with Video & Images – We debuted a new 3-minute upbeat destination marketing video to be used by all departments to promote our region and we continued growing our inventory of regional video and imagery.

Focus on Real Experiences & Local Culture – We radically changed our Travel Guide design to emphasize compelling imagery of the genuine experiences in our region and we engaged local experts for their Top 5 personal recommendations within different categories.

Blow Out the Bubble – We adjusted our geographic target markets to focus on the more distant and lucrative markets of Philadelphia, New Jersey, Washington DC, and Boston.

Embrace Strategic Partnerships – We partnered with the PA Tourism Office and Brand USA to launch our first-ever international consumer marketing campaign and developed a direct marketing campaign with Hershey's® Chocolate World® for two of their Shanghai store locations.

Acknowledge Our Service Culture – We expanded our Partnership programs including the development of a Partnership Committee and we continued our popular *Sales On the Road* program for active Partners.

Take a Chance or Two – We ventured into the Boston market with only Earned Media efforts and tried a Tweet-Up pilot program focused on our Wine & Craft Beer Country with Travel Squire Magazine.

In closing, we are grateful for the leadership of this Board of Directors and we are thankful for the loyal Partners who have continued to support our team of dedicated professionals throughout the years. Together we will continue to write the next chapters of this region's exciting tourism story.

Warm regards,

Todd Kohr
Board Chair

Mary Smith
President/CEO

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Mary Smith, President & CEO of the Hershey Harrisburg Regional Visitors Bureau is available for media interviews regarding the contents of this news release. Please try to make interview requests at least 12-hours in advance. The bureau will make every effort to accommodate all interview requests. Contact Rick@HersheyHarrisburg.org or cell 717.884.3328.

ABOUT THE HERSHEY HARRISBURG REGIONAL VISITORS BUREAU

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The HHRVB is the official non-profit partnership-based Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) leading economic growth for Pennsylvania's Hershey & Harrisburg Region through destination marketing and tourism development. The organization, accredited by Destination Marketing Association International ([DMAI](#)) since 2010, is committed to actively marketing the tourism assets in Dauphin & Perry County to business and leisure travelers both domestic & international. The bureau also leads regional sales efforts to attract meeting & event organizers, sporting event producers, and group tour leaders. For more information go to VisitHersheyHarrisburg.org or call 877-727-8573. Media can use #HHRVB and #HHRVB4Media when tagging stories and social media posts related to the region.