

PIAA announces 4-for-4 Deal with Giant Center

The PA Interscholastic Athletic Association will host its four annual championship events for Basketball, Wrestling, and Cheerleading in the Hershey Harrisburg Region from 2017-2020.

The four-year agreement could generate an estimated \$7 million for the local economy.

Harrisburg, PA (May 25, 2016) – Gregg Cook, Sports Marketing Manager for the Hershey Harrisburg Regional Visitors Bureau (HHRVB) today shared in PIAA's [announcement](#) that the statewide interscholastic athletic association for Pennsylvania will be hosting four of their five annual winter championship events at [GIANT Center](#) for four consecutive years beginning in 2017.

The multi-year agreement could be worth an estimated \$7 million for the region's economy, according to Cook.



The events to take place at the GIANT Center in Hershey include Team Wrestling, Individual Wrestling, Competitive Spirit (Cheerleading), and Basketball. The fifth PIAA championship category of Swimming and Diving was retained by Bucknell University.

"Swimming was the one category we didn't pursue," said Cook. "We don't currently have the facilities to be a competitive destination for swimming or diving. But it's something we will hopefully be able to address in the future as we continue to invest in the region's growth as a sports and events destination."

Cook’s comment alluded to certain goals that were outlined in a Sports & Events Report that was recently conducted by the HHRVB in conjunction with Huddle Up Group LLC and DMOproZ. The study commissioned by the bureau examined how the destination could remain competitive and grow its market share within the sports and event market.


“We have some very exciting news on the next steps for our sports and events efforts,” said Cook, “But you’ll have to wait until our official announcement in July for the details. Let’s just say this PIAA win for our region today was the right news at the right time for what we have in the pipeline.”

Cook, who works closely with Hershey Entertainment and Resorts ([HE&R](#)) on preparing bids to attract sports events, attended the site selection announcement at PIAA headquarters in Mechanicsburg, PA with Vikki Hulquist, assistant general manager for HE&R and Heather Storm, Hershey's director of booking and execution.

"We were very hopeful and we're absolutely thrilled that we were awarded all the championships that we bid on, in conjunction with our friends at the HHRVB," said Hulquist in a Pennlive.com [article](#) on this announcement. "We truly believe that all roads to PIAA titles run through Hershey."

Apparently roads were instrumental in selecting Hershey as the championship destination, according to the Pennlive.com story that reported PIAA Executive Director Dr. Robert Lombardi credited Hershey's location as just one determining factor.

"Geography is one of them, amount of parking, and ease of entry into the facility," said Lombardi in the Pennlive.com article. "It's easily accessible. There are no tabs on reserved seats. There are no other parking charges. The combination of other bids that had different charges for this or that, Hershey sort of maneuvered them better."

[Read](#) the entire Pennlive.com article by Eric Epler from May 25, 2016.

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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 PIAA

PIAA is a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation organized on a membership basis. All of its members are schools. They include almost all of the public and many of the private junior high/middle schools and senior high schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Generally stated, the purpose and function of PIAA is to develop and enforce rules, which are authorized or adopted by the member schools, regulating interscholastic athletic competition. Find out more at www.PIAA.org or call 717-697-0374 and follow @PIAAsports. Headquarters are located at 550 Gettysburg Road, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-0708.

ABOUT GIANT CENTER

Giant Center is a state-of-the-art facility that seats 12,500 and serves as the home of the Hershey Bears Hockey Club. Since opening in October of 2002, the arena has hosted such events as Stars On Ice and Disney On Ice, WWE Wrestling Shows, The Harlem Globetrotters, the PIAA Championships in wrestling and basketball, and more. The venue is located at 550 West Hersheypark Drive, Hershey, PA 17033. Tel: 717-534-3911 or visit www.hersheyentertainment.com.

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.