



To my fellow Happy Travelers,

As 2016 comes to a close, I wanted to take a moment to reflect – with gratitude and immense happiness – on the achievements of this past year.

Our goal was lofty: create a dynamic and inspirational brand platform that captures the diverse strengths of Pennsylvania’s tourism industry and rebuild our toolkit of marketing assets, which was frankly out of date.

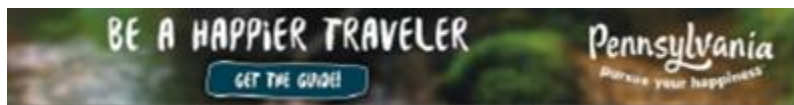
After years of planning and research, many of you lent your expertise and support to help us select a new tagline – **Pennsylvania: Pursue your Happiness**, which is the inspiration for the refreshed look and feel of Pennsylvania tourism's brand.

The new brand is bold, fresh and, well, happy -- designed to achieve our three primary objectives:

- Inspire travelers to visit Pennsylvania.
- Energize stakeholders throughout the entire state.
- Support tourism promotion efforts at every level.
- So, how did we do? Below is a sample of what we’ve accomplished together and where we’re going.

Logo and Tagline: As part of our grand reveal of the new Pursue Your Happiness brand, we created a [video](#) that highlights our multi-faceted approach to communicating Pennsylvania’s core promise to prospective visitors – that they can build their own personal adventure from every corner of our beautiful state. The video, brand declaration, and a “logo toolkit” can be found at www.visitPA.com/happiness.

Happy Traveler: In June, a fresh editorial approach infused the new brand throughout our annual travel guide. The first half of the guide showcased top spots for history, our greater-than-great outdoors, and our vibrant communities. The 100th anniversary of the National Park Service (NPS) and Pennsylvania’s many NPS sites were celebrated with a feature story, while 11 new road trips were created in the new “Happy Days” sections featuring each of PA’s unique tourism regions. In addition to its print distribution, 1.2 million digital copies were shared via e-mail to roadtrippers.com subscribers – a web-based software application and mobile app that helps travelers plan road trips. For the first time, a paid social media and digital display advertising campaign was employed to support distribution.



Happy Thoughts E-Newsletter: In July, we brought the creation and distribution of our [monthly e-newsletter](#) in-house, with Miles Media continuing to manage the advertising services. During the transition we reimagined it as a collection of “Happy Thoughts,” with a larger editorial section and a lifestyle focus. The newsletter now includes three feature stories, including “Happiness Now,” highlighting attractions happening in the current month – and “Happiness on the Horizon,” a section with must-dos in the coming months. Each issue also includes lifestyle tips such as [picking the perfect pumpkin](#) or making a [banana split](#).

visitPA.com: Like the e-newsletter, management of visitPA.com now resides in our office and Miles Media has and will continue to sell advertising. The site continues to see a steady growth in traffic with 5.1+ million site visitors annually – that’s a 24 percent increase from 2015 and 76 percent of those visits were unique. This traffic resulted in more than 9.1 million page views – a 21 percent increase from 2015 – and provided advertisers with 14 million display advertising impressions in total and 275,000 direct click-throughs to our advertisers’ websites. The average click-through rate of visitPA.com advertising campaigns surpasses 2 percent, bringing the average cost-per-click to a low \$1.15, a fantastic return for advertisers on their investment!

Advertising: For the first time in years, the Pennsylvania Tourism Office invested \$1 million across digital platforms to promote the state's assets and showcase the Pursue Your Happiness logo. Maximizing SEM, [online video](#), display banners and social media advertising buys, we targeted potential travelers throughout Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., Baltimore and Ohio – our key drive-in markets – with a campaign that generated 75,791,201 impressions, 719,176 clicks, and a more than 20 percent increase in website traffic between June and September.



Special Events: It was only fitting that a major political convention made its home in historic Philadelphia this summer. We welcomed visitors from around the world to Pennsylvania with a special video at baggage claim at the Philadelphia International Airport and in cabs throughout the city. We used geo-fencing technology to serve mobile advertisements to those onsite at the Wells Fargo Center and did a one-day takeover of Philly.com, the website for the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News. All of the ads encouraged pursuing an “UnConventional Getaway” in the commonwealth. You may have even caught a glimpse of our logo in the background of the Today Show as they broadcasted live from Independence Mall (nothing like a little guerrilla marketing to raise brand awareness of our tagline, which was penned feet away from where the Today Show gang was talking – we could never afford to buy that kind of exposure)!

Public Relations: Our team pitched and obtained 204 placements earning 1.6 billion impressions with stories in Travel + Leisure, the Associated Press, USA Today, CNN and the Travel Channel, to mention a few. We hosted a successful media mission in New York City

in the Spring with support from several destination marketing organizations. The mission resulted in multiple placements and many more still in the pipeline.

Social Media: Our renewed focus on lifestyle content and a fresh brand voice was amplified on our nine social media channels where we gained 34,100 followers, to topping 350,000 by the end of 2016. Nearly 3,000 #PATravelHappy photos were shared on [Instagram](#) alone, and we racked up more than 300,000 engagements across our channels, inspiring travel with each tweet, post and double-tap.

Research: Pennsylvania's travel and tourism industry ended 2016 with its best year ever in terms of the number of hotel rooms sold (or "room demand"), room revenues, room supply, and the average daily room rate -- all key performance indicators* for the travel and tourism industry. The Pocono Mountains region was one of the key regions contributing to the state's growth in 2016 with its double-digit rate of growth in room demand. The region's strong and targeted marketing campaign made a huge splash as it demonstrated the power of marketing outperforming all other regions of the state.

The greater Philadelphia region also posted strong performance numbers due to its aggressive marketing and two extremely high-profile events: the visit from Pope Francis and the Democratic National Convention, while the Dutch Country Roads and Lehigh Valley regions also contributed significantly to the state's record performance. For an expanded look at Pennsylvania's performance, [click here](#).

**Despite having a record year Pennsylvania's growth continued to lag the U.S. average with many states outperforming the commonwealth.*

International: We leveraged industry relationships with the goal of increasing overseas visitation through a May sales and public relations mission to the United Kingdom and Ireland. Six DMOs joined us on the mission and the contingent conducted 250 meetings in seven days. This is the first time in many years that the State led an international mission. A month later, we attended U.S. Travel's IPW tradeshow along with eight DMOs, 6,000 attendees from 73 countries and 500 travel writers. And, we [expanded our cooperative marketing initiatives](#) with Brand USA, the public-private partnership that markets the United States to international visitors, making it more affordable for our DMO partners to participate.

Partnerships: With the goal of extending our Pursue Your Happiness messaging, we have explored collaborations with state departments of Transportation, Conservation & Natural Resources, Agriculture, the Historical & Museum Commission, Turnpike Commission, and the Liquor Control Board.

Economic and Community Development: Just as DMOs are more aggressively promoting the “[halo effect](#)” generated by tourism advertising in partnership with their local economic development colleagues, the same goes for the Department. We recently launched a new sister brand: Pennsylvania. Work Smart. Live Happy. Our state’s many dedicated and visionary business and community leaders are ambassadors for happiness every day by creating welcoming neighborhoods, developing thriving urban centers, cultivating successful businesses, and providing quality workforce training. Even more, the new tone and visual collateral are connected to Pursue Your Happiness. This synergy offers consistency and further appeal to current and prospective residents, businesses and employees.

Happy 2017!

During the next few months, the Tourism Office will launch a “Happy Thoughts” microsite, a branch of visitPA.com, which will serve as a content house for social media channels with stories and videos from the monthly e-newsletter along with fresh content generated throughout the month.

Speaking of visitPA.com, it will take on a fresh, clean, and happy new look in the coming months. We will bring back the successful Cabin Fever promotion in January, pilot “Happy Chats,” a series of Facebook talks with industry experts, and conduct a media mission to Washington, D.C. to secure face time with travel writers to keep Pennsylvania on the front page. With strategic investments and partner support we will advance our international outreach. Planning for our summer advertising campaign is nearly complete and the 2017 Happy Traveler will hit shelves, mailboxes, and inboxes in March.

We are excited about the progress we’ve made with Pursue Your Happiness this year and laying the foundation (or keystone) for many years to come. We’re so proud of our state’s unrivaled tourism assets, and we cannot wait for travelers to pursue their own happiness in Pennsylvania in 2017.

Here’s to a very Happy New Year!



Carrie Fischer Lepore
Deputy Secretary
Office of Marketing, Tourism, and Film