





2015-16 ANNUAL REPORT

TELLING LEHIGH VALLEY STORIES
& GETTING PEOPLE TO VISIT
SINCE 1984







DISCOVER LEHIGH VALLEY.

Working to find relevancy in today's traveling decision making process.

Dear Lehigh Valley Tourism Partner:

Six and a half years ago, we became Discover Lehigh Valley®. A major benefit of the change was that we embraced a call to action as our name, which significantly increased visibility. More people became aware of us and what we do - both here and from a distance. Our aggressive social media strategy has earned us a significant following. Our promotions have moved the needle. During the last fiscal year, another record number of hotel rooms were sold. We've increased the number of sporting and athlethic events hosted here in Lehigh Valley and more visitors found their way to our many attractions and events, restaurants and lodging facilities.

Thanks to our Board of Directors. financially, we are on solid ground, allowing us to make a larger investment in promotion. Additionally, the board just recently approved a new threevear strategic plan to set the course for the near future. The process for developing the plan took most of the fiscal year. The

plan anticipates changes that are occurring in our industry and helps us do a better job of representing the entire twocounty region. We are pleased to have a blueprint for moving forward.

This past year proved that weather, good and bad, has a significant impact on tourism. Do you remember 70 degrees on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day? That mild weather, along with one 30-inch snow storm, led to one of the worst ski seasons of all time. A damp, cold spring didn't help either. Late summer of 2015 was beautiful and led to significant numbers of visitors experiencing our attractions and events.

There has been a great deal of talk about infrastructure. While we rely substantially on a highquality road network to bring our visitors to Lehigh Valley, there are other infrastructures on which Discover Lehigh Valley relies. We spent a significant

amount of time choosing and preparing to bring new agency support on line. You probably have seen the results of our rebranding on billboards and in other media. We will be redesigning our website. These infrastructures help drive our marketing efforts.

We continue to move forward aggressively and make Lehigh Valley the destination of choice in Pennsylvania and the region.

WE ARE TRULY FORTUNATE TO BE INVOLVED IN TOURISM AT THIS TIME. AND IN THIS SPECIAL PLACE.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL STERSHIC

PRESIDENT

DENISE MAIATICO

BOARD CHAIR

THE BOARD

SPONSORS AND FUNDING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Denise Maiatico, Chairperson

Meyer Jabara Hotels of the Lehigh Valley

Kassie Hilgert, Vice Chairperson

ArtsQuest™

George Blum, Secretary

The Grand Eastonian Suites Hotel

Nathan Eckhart. Treasurer

C. F. Martin & Co.

Kurt Landes, Immediate Past Chairman

Lehigh Valley IronPigs

Mike Axiotis

Lehigh Valley Restaurant Group (Red Robin)

Dennis Costello

Historic Hotel Bethlehem

Don Cunningham

Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp.

Laura DiLiello

Lafayette Inn

Tim Herrlinger

Northampton County

Charlene Donchez-Mowers

Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites

Charles Everett

Lehigh / Northampton Airport Authority

Dyanne Holt

Apollo Grille

T. Anthony Jannelli

Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce

Mark Juliano

Sands® Bethlehem

Frank Kane

Lehigh County

Sam Landis

Vynecrest

Victoria Lozano

The Crayola Experience™

Robin Lysek

Air Products & Chemicals, Inc.

Sally McCorrison

AAA Fast Penn

Paul Pierpoint

Northampton Community College

Andrea Weismiller

JHG Hotel Management

Michael Stershic

Discover Lehigh Valley®

E. James Byrnes

Jim Byrnes & Associates

Sara Hailstone

City of Allentown

Jamie Hartranft

City of Easton

Alicia Karner

City of Bethlehem

Ken Kraft

Northampton County

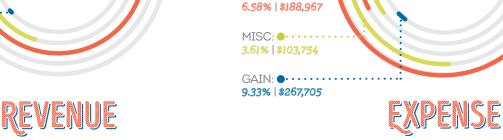
Dan Hartzell

Lehigh County

A THOUSAND THANKS

Big thanks to our valued partners who helped make this year possible and our keystone sponsors: Air Products, Alvin H. Butz, Inc., C.F. Martin & Co., Coordinated Health, City Center, Crayola®, Cross America Partners, Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom, ebc Printing, The Express-Times, Just Born, Lehigh Valley Health Network, The Morning Call, National Penn, PPL Corp., Sands® Bethlehem and St. Luke's University Health Network





PROMOTIONAL:

47.87% | \$1,374,389

SALARIES & •••

32.60% | \$935,979

OCCUPANCY: •

BENEFITS:



BUILDING IMAGE, DRIVING VISITATION & BOOSTING THE ECONOMY

IT'S OUR PASSION

OUR MISSION

Discover Lehigh Valley wants to make sure the whole planet discovers Lehigh Valley. It's our name and our mission. We've spent three decades building Lehigh Valley into a bustling leisure and business travel destination while boosting the local economy as the official destination marketing organization for Lehigh and Northampton counties.

HOW WE ACHIEVE OUR MISSION

We showcase and strengthen Lehigh Valley's brand through well-rounded and high-impact marketing efforts that include:

ADVERTISING: Niche campaigns broaden our reach.

SOCIAL MEDIA: More-engaged fans and followers than ever - 135,000 and counting.

WEBSITES: Record visitation (887,322) on DiscoverLehighValley.com and LehighValleyInSite.com in 2015-16, up .33% over last fiscal year. Several niche websites also attracted an additional 143,529 visitors, an increase of 12.28%.

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Compelling content = 800 editorial stories placed in 2015-16.

EVENT & ATTRACTION PROMOTION: New reasons to encourage visitation - always a good thing

DEALS & DISCOUNTS: 179,141 pageviews of our different hotel packages and many deals and discounts with area hotels, attractions and restaurants

NICHE MARKET: Lehigh Valley Sports encourages people to make the most of their athlethic visit.

PARTNERSHIPS & SPONSORSHIPS: Using our collective branding and marketing power to build image and visitation

Our formula for marketing success includes a combination of paid, owned and earned media.

EARNED MEDIA: Partner Networks:

media stories, influencer outreach, word-of-mouth



PAID MEDIA: Advertising: paid search engine marketing, print and digital ads, paid ads and promotions on social media

OWNED MEDIA: Digital Properties: websites, blog, social media



LEHIGH VALLEY VISITATION

15.2 MILLION VISITORS VISITED





Tourism Visits | The region hosts more than 4.6 million people overnight and receives 10.6 million day trippers annually.

HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS SOLD | 2015, 1.5 million hotel room nights sold, up 31% when compared to 1.1 million sold in 2011.



RECREATION | Lehigh Valley continues to have the highest percentage of spending on recreation in the state at 26%, with the next closest destination coming in at 21%.





Economic Impact | For every marketing dollar Discover Lehigh Valley® spent in promoting tourism-related activities in Lehigh Valley, it generated more than \$20 in visitor spending.

Lehigh Valley had the largest percentage increase among all regions in Pennsylvania.

\$ 2 BILLION
IN ECONOMIC IMPACT

- **\$5.5 million** every day

23,000 jobs supported

\$433.5 million in tax revenue generated (federal, local and state)

PENNSYLVANIA HOUSEHOLDS

SAVE \$855



in taxes each year thanks to visitor spending

MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

INTEGRATED, EFFECTIVE & APPEALING TO VARIED AUDIENCES

our advertising campaign continued with a consistent look from the previous year. including removing some of the extra graphics to keep the creative simple and attractive. As we transition into the future, we will continue to change this look to incorporate more image-

heavy art that is compelling and persuasive.

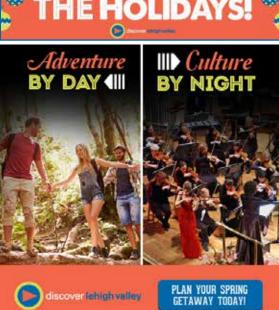




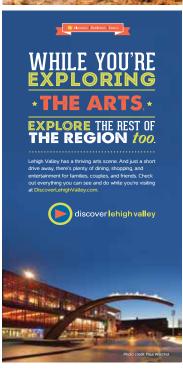
ENTER NOW



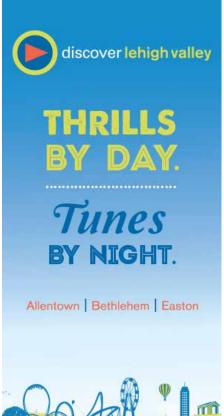














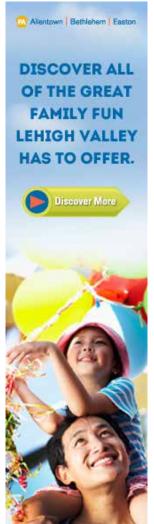


101 Things to do in Lengh Valley

SPRING TURNS COUCH PROPLE











MEETING VENUES THAT ARE A DESTINATION ALL ON THEIR OWN.

eetings mean business. And location makes meeting, a whole lot easier. Lehigh Valley's close proximity to New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., makes it accessible for attendees from all over to get here. But, at the end of the day, the property has to sell itself, and the variety of unique meeting spaces the region has to offer makes Lehigh Valley an attractive destination for meeting and event planners and organizers.











SOME OF OUR HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Discover Lehigh Valley® partnered with Sands® Bethlehem in July and November 2015 to visit associations based in Harrisburg with pre-scheduled group lunch meetings and appointments.
- Discover Lehigh Valley®, in partnership
 with Sands® Bethlehem, hosted a twohour hospitality event in November 2015 at
 Whitehouse Station for a half-dozen New
 Jersey meeting planners to discover the many
 benefits of hosting their next meeting in Lehigh
 Valley.
- Discover Lehigh Valley® hosted 7 meeting planners in December for the Cirque du Soleil Show at PPL Center. First visit to PPL Center for 6 of the planners.
- In FY 2014-15, Discover Lehigh Valley® initiated action to separate Lehigh Valley from the Philadelphia region on Cvent.com, becoming its own region. This allowed for us to have better qualified leads of sizes and budgets that we were able to accommodate. It also gave us our own branding that Lehigh Valley hosts meetings. Here's a snapshot of the postive outcome of that effort to brand Lehigh Valley meetings on their own:
 - •••• 18 RFPs received, an increase of 125%
 - •••• 4,295 potential room nights, +139%
 - •••• \$1.4 million in Economic Impact, up 76%



2015-16 Leads Status / #		# of Delegates	# of Room Nights	Economic Impact
Open	10	3,065	4,196	\$695,295
Turned Definite	13	1,105	1,255	\$341,320
Lost	23	4,658	4,430	\$808,325

DISCOVER LOW-COST VENUES THAT ADD UP TO a Priceless MEETING EXPERIENCE.



more. Lehigh Valley is home to an assortment of

at 1-800-MEET-HERE for assistance in planning















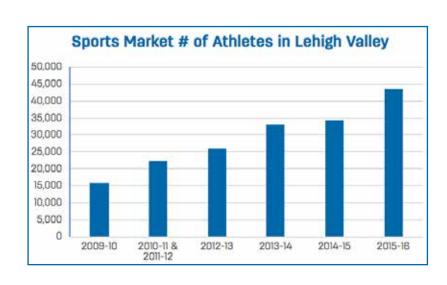






HUTTING IT OUT OF THE PARK IS ALWAYS DUR GUAL.

THE SPORTS MARKET IN LEHIGH
VALLEY CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF
THE FASTEST-GROWING SEGMENTS
OF ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR THE
REGION. DISCOVER LEHIGH VALLEY®
SPORTS WORKS HARD TO ACTIVELY
PROMOTE LEHIGH VALLEY TO EVENT
ORGANIZERS AS THE PERFECT PLACE
TO HOLO A SPORTING EVENT OR
TOURNAMENT. THE HARD WORK
HAS BEEN PAYING OFF AS DISCOVER
LEHIGH VALLEY SPORTS WELCOMED
MORE THAN 3,200 TEAMS AND
MORE THAN 43,500 ATHLETES,
HOSTING MORE THAN 40 EVENTS.





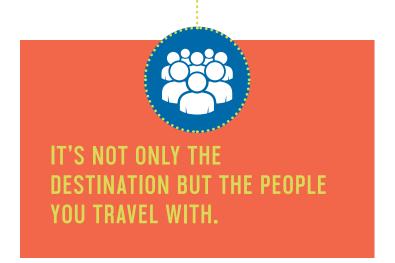


SOME OF THE EVENTS DISCOVER LEHIGH VALLEY® SPORTS HELPED ATTRACT TO THE REGION INCLUDE:

- Ultimate Frisbee Philly Invitational
- Hockey Fights MS Tournaments
- Lehigh Valley United Lou Ramos Classic Boys' & Girls' Soccer Tournaments
- PA High School Ultimate Frisbee Championship
- U.S.A. Track & Field Cross Country Club Championships
- East Coast Volleyball President's Day Classic
- A.A.U. (Amateur Athletic Union) / M.A.W.A. (Middle Atlantic Wrestling Association) Wrestling Regional Tournament
- Nittany Lion International Cross Country Cycling
- Area Auto Racing News (AARN) Indoor Racing
- U.S. Lacrosse Women's National Tournament
- U.S.A. Cycling Elite & Jr. Nationals
- Lehigh LaxFest I & II Lacrosse Tournaments
- Laxpalooza I & II Lacrosse Tournaments
- Project 120 Girls' Lacrosse Tournament

















e continue to work diligently with those partners who are group tour-friendly, and the harder we work, the luckier we seem to be in attracting tours to Lehigh Valley.

SOME OF OUR HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Discover Lehigh Valley® attended 6 group tour shows, which included the American Bus Association,
 Bus Association of New York State, Inc., Greater New Jersey Motorcoach Association, Maryland Motorcoach Association,
 Pennsylvania Bus Association and Virginia Motorcoach Association.
- Based on prior success, Discover Lehigh Valley® was instrumental in helping "Tony Orlando's Great American Christmas" return to the Sands® Event Center in 2016. The popular singer returned with **8** EXCITING SHOWS throughout the holiday season.











DISCOVERLEHIGHVALLEY.COM & LEHIGHVALLEYINSITE.COM

IMAGE-BUILDING & VISITATION-DRIVING POWERHOUSES



DRIVING CLICKS AND ATTENDANCE TO PARTNERS

DiscoverLehighValley.com and LehighValleyInSite.com sent **thousands of clicks** to partner websites in FY 2015-16.

25+ partners have gained additional advertising exposure on DiscoverLehighValley.com since advertising was made possible on the site.

The websites are among the **top referrers** for many area attractions, including Dutch Springs, Historic Hotel Bethlehem and Soccerfest.

CONVERTING RESIDENTS INTO AMBASSADORS

50% of website traffic comes from Lehigh Valley. Since Lehigh Valley caters to a growing corporate market, those users include both residents and those who work in and around the region.

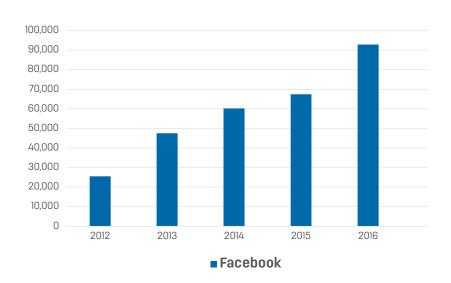
On our websites, they discover new restaurants, museums, festivals, exhibitions and attractions. And since we know corporations host outside stakeholders and regional employees, these residents also book hotel rooms.

What's more, people who live in and near Lehigh Valley invite friends and family to visit, and act as their personal tour guides. When they use our websites, they become informed and invested ambassadors and extend Discover Lehigh Valley's digital reach even further.

SOCIAL MEDIA

DIRECT-TO-TRAVELER CONVERSATIONS

How WE RANK across Pennsylvania 1. Philadelphia 872.000+ 2. Pocono Mountains 277.000+ 142,000+ 3. Lancaster 4. Lehigh Valley 135.000+ 5. Pittsburgh 78.000+ 6. Bucks County 76,000+ 7. Valley Forge 74,000+ 8. Laurel Highlands 62,000+



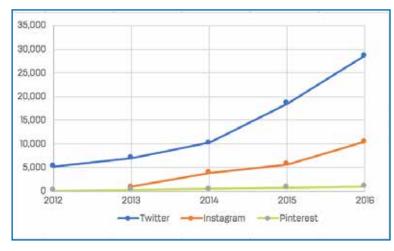
135,000 FANS and FOLLOWERS (and always growing)

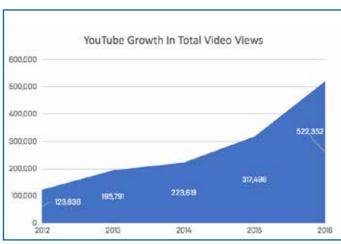












PARTNERSHIPS DELIVER IN TRADE FOR US, FOR OUR PARTNERS, FOR THE LEHIGH VALLEY REGION.

A LOOK AT OUR
SPECIAL
PARTNERS WHO
HAVE HELPED
US REACH MORE
VISITORS WITHOUT
IMPACTING OUR
BOTTOM DOLLAR.

Discover Lehigh Valley® relies on support from partners with contest giveaways, tradeshow prizes, hosting media complimentary, special event participation and free advertising on their websites / magazines / newsletters to encourage visitors to come earlier or stay longer.

This results in a stronger Lehigh Valley message to visitors with a share of voice and confidence in working together.

Aardvark Sports Shop Abundant Style America On Wheels Artfully Elegant ArtsQuest™ assemblv88

Balanced Body Therapeutic Massage Bear Creek Mountain Resort

Best Western Lehigh Valley

Bethlehem House

Contemporary Art Gallery Blue Mountain Resort BounceU Lehigh Valley Boutique at the Rink Buca di Beppo Cigars International Clothes Mentor

Clothes Mentor
County Seat Spirits

Crayola Experience™

The Crossings Premium Outlets

The Dining Dog & Friends
Donegal Square Celtic Imports
Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom

Dutch Springs

Easton Main Street Initiative Fegley's Allentown Brew Works Fegley's Bethlehem Brew Works

Friendly's

Genesis Bicycle

Glasbern

Hamilton District Main Street Program

The Heritage Guild

Historic Hotel Bethlehem

Holiday Inn Express & Suites

Allentown / Dorneyville

Holiday Inn Express & Suites

Bethlehem

Hunterdon Hills Playhouse

Hyatt Place Bethlehem

Josh Early Candies

L.L. Bean

Lehigh University

Lehigh Valley Grand Prix

Lehigh Valley IronPigs

Lehigh Valley Laser Tag

Lehigh Valley Mall

Lehigh Valley Zoo

Liberty Bell Museum

McCarthy's Red Stag Pub & Whiskey Bar

The Melting Pot The Mill

Moravian Book Shop

Paxos Restaurants

Peeps & Co. / Just Born, Inc.

Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival

Phoebe Floral

Pocono Raceway

Pocono Whitewater

The Promenade Shops

Renaissance® Allentown Hotel

Sands® Bethlehem

Sands Bethlehem Event Center

The Shoppe at Hotel Bethlehem

South Mountain Cycle & Café

State Theatre Center for the Arts

Staybridge Suites

Allentown Bethlehem Airport

The Steel Beam

Tolino Vinevards

Touchstone Theatre

TownePlace Suites

by Marriott Bethlehem / Easton

MAKING HEADLINES!

Discover Lehigh Valley® helped generate **800 editorial stories (ad value of \$1 million)** about Lehigh Valley in fiscal year 2015-16, and we started 2016-17 with some major press. How did we do it? **Content** that highlights the wonderful Lehigh Valley stories we have to tell; a respected and often-imitated **Visiting Journalists Program**; and **media relations** where relationships with press are built, whether it's print media or electronic media.



"Family Travel to Lehigh Valley" - December 2015





"How To Enjoy a Family Ski Resort Without Skiing" - April 2016



"9 Great Team Building Ideas" - March 2016



"National Geographic Joining Effort to Boost Lehigh Valley Geotourism" - March 2016





READING EAGLE

"Tourism Officials Expect Good Season, As Long As Weather & Economy Cooperate" - June 2016

A LOOK AHEAD NEW FACES NEW PERSPECTIVES NEW IDEAS ... "TRANSITION 2016-17"

With new faces in place, new relationships, it's evident new perspectives and new ideas would result.

Discover Lehigh Valley® is focusing on an enhanced brand to be more effective in destination management of Lehigh Valley. But a brand is more than a logo, it's a concept, it's color, it's stories. 2016-17 will bring us through a year of transition as we work to find relevancy with today's leisure and business traveler.

THE OBJECTIVES

- Drive overall brand awareness
- Generate out-of-market traffic; drive visits to local destinations
- Strengthen local partnerships with key stakeholders
- Increase engagement with Discover Lehigh Valley's digital brand, including a new website coming spring 2017
- Generate additional marketing funds to fuel growth of the program

THE STRATEGY

- Portray Lehigh Valley as a convenient destination for a fun, uplifting experience that appeals to a wide range of personas
- Generate and distribute content that tells an overarching brand story, and enable and inspire visitors to supply the rest and share it
- Engage and rally local partners to support and benefit from marketing efforts



PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

General

- >> Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI)
- >> Pennsylvania Association of Travel & Tourism (PATT)
- >> Pennsylvania Tourism Partnership (PTP)
- >> Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association (PRLA)
- >> Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA)
- → SKAL
- >> U.S. Travel Association (USTA)

Sports

- >> Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)
- >> National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC)
- >> National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)
- >> Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society (PRPS)
- >>> Pennsylvania Sports
- >> United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA)

Meetings

- >> American Society of Association Executives (ASAE)
- >> Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI)
- ➡ Middle Pennsylvania Meeting Professionals International (MPMPI)
- >> New Jersey Meeting Professionals International (NJMPI)
- >>> Pennsylvania Society of Association Executives (PASAE)
- >> Philadelphia Area Meeting Professionals International (MPIPHL)
- >> Religious Conference Management Association (RCMA)

Group Tours

- → American Bus Association (ABA)
- >>> Bus Association of New York State (BANY)
- >> Maryland Motorcoach Association (MMA)
- >> National Tour Association (NTA)
- >> New England Bus Association (NEBA)
- >> Greater New Jersey Motorcoach Association (GNJMA)
- >> Ontario Motorcoach Association (OMCA)
- >>> Pennsylvania Bus Association (PBA)
- >> Virginia Motorcoach Association (VMA)

CONNECT WITH US

- Michael Stershic President
- Kim Lilly Executive Vice President
- Edward Eppler Vice President of Finance & Operations
- Alicia Quinn Strategic Brand Manager
- Michael Kuzy Director of Sports Travel Marketing
- Suzanne K. Stianche National Sales Manager
- Kaitie Burger Social Media & Communications Manager
- Dan Ginter Partner Relations Manager
- Jason Stershic Web Geek
- Jamie Zackey Sales & Marketing Representative
- Aliza Levin Sales & Marketing Representative
- Alan Levin Distribution Manager
- Deborah Snyder Receptionist

• Discover Lehigh Valley

840 Hamilton St., Suite 200, Allentown | 610-882-9200

- Lehigh Valley Visitors Center Allentown
 - at America On Wheels 5 N. Front St., Allentown | 610-432-4200
- Bethlehem Visitors Center
 - at SteelStacks™ 711 E. First St., Bethlehem | 610-297-7200
- Historic Bethlehem Visitors Center
 - 505 Main St., Bethlehem | 610-691-6055
- Lehigh Valley Visitors Center Easton
 - at Sigal Museum 342 Northampton St., Easton | 610-253-1222
- I-78 Keystone Welcome Center Lehigh Valley
 - at the Delaware River Bridge Toll Plaza 1400 Cedarville Rd., Easton | 610-250-1866
- Nazareth Area Visitors Center
 - at Nazareth Area Chamber of Commerce 201 N. Main St., Nazareth | 610-759-9188

