

Headlines

LAUREL HIGHLANDS NEWSLETTER



FALL 2018

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:

- ▶ LHVB NEWS
- ▶ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE
- ▶ MARKETING NEWS
- ▶ WEB STATISTICS
- ▶ GROUP TOUR NEWS
- ▶ PUBLIC RELATIONS NEWS
- ▶ NEW LHVB PARTNERS

▶ LHVB NEWS

2019 County Tourism Grant Chats Scheduled!

Join the LHVB to learn what you need to know about your county's 2019 Tourism Grant Program. We encourage anyone interested in applying for a tourism grant to attend this **free** meeting. Reservations are required and can be made by contacting Rachel at rroebrig@laurelhighlands.org or 724-238-5661, ext. 101. Deadline to RSVP is Sept. 24. Please indicate your county when calling.

- **Westmoreland County** - Monday, Oct. 1, 9-11 a.m. at Christ Our Shepherd Center, formerly Bishop Connare Center, in the Westmoreland Room. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m.
- **Fayette County** - Monday, Oct. 1, 2-3 p.m. at Penn-State Fayette's Eberly Corporate Training Center in Room 116. Registration will begin at 1:30 p.m.
- **Somerset County** - Tuesday, Oct. 2, 3-4 p.m. at Somerset Country Club. Registration will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Light refreshments will be available at each session. Grant applications will be available online www.laurelhighlands.org/grants. Completed applications will be due Nov. 16, 2018.

Journey of Self, a Wellness Tour in the Laurel Highlands, September 23

The LHVB is pleased to offer its first public tour! Get away and explore the world of wellness in the Laurel Highlands. Get in touch with the real you on our Journey of Self, Sept. 23. This all-day tour includes yoga, group meditation, nature hikes, a visit to a world-class healing and wellness center and renowned wellness workshops provided by professionals at great locations throughout the Laurel Highlands. Plus, enjoy healthy, rejuvenating meals at two top restaurants and a few surprises along the way.

For more information or to register, please visit laurelhighlands.org/plan/scenic-tours or call 724-238-5661, ext. 101.

Marketing Summit | November 2, 2018

Register today for LHVB's 8th annual Marketing Summit to be held on Friday, Nov. 2, from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at the Fred Rogers Center on the Saint Vincent College campus. This year we welcome speakers from Olson Zaltman, Level.Agency, Reimagine Main Street, Gatesman Agency and Saint Vincent College on topics such as Instagram's algorithm, marketing artificial intelligence and representing women of color in media.

The cost to attend is \$50 for LHVB Partners or \$75 for non-LHVB Partners, and includes breakfast and lunch. After Summit, please join us at for the new after-party and networking event at Four Seasons Brewing Company. Registration and more information about the event is available online at: laurelhighlands.org/summit.

Space is limited, so register today! Help spread the word on Twitter and Instagram by using #LHsummit.



▶ MEETINGS & EVENTS

- October 4 | LHVB's Annual Dinner
- November 2 | Marketing Summit
- November 12 | Veteran's Day, office closed
- November 22-23 | Thanksgiving holidays, office closed

2018 LHVB Annual Dinner



LAUREL HIGHLANDS VISITORS BUREAU
120 E. Main Street, Ligonier, PA 15658
800.333.5661 | laurelhighlands.org





▶ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Ann Nemanic, Executive Director

On our recent vacation, which was the last hooray before my daughter Hannah headed off to her first year of college, I was once again reminded of the importance of travel. At 18, Hannah already has a travel "bucket list." My husband and I decided we would help her check off something, so we headed west to Arizona. Our weeklong trip included a tour of Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West, several days in Scottsdale, a train ride to and from the Grand Canyon and Sedona's incredible sunsets.

Travel is about the memories. Laughs and snapshot memories along every mile are now part of my personal memory scrapbook. At the end of our trip, we agreed that hiking to the vortexes in Sedona is a "forever moment" for us. It was something not on our radar, totally free and truly out of our comfort zone. The trails were challenging. We helped each other, literally giving each other a hand up and down the rocky terrain. We looked out for each other, making sure everyone had plenty of water and drank it at intervals along our trek. Travel brings people together and that is why our industry is such a blessing.

As we slide from summer into fall and our lush green footprint becomes a painter's palate of vibrant colors, remember how important your business is to creating memories. For many visitors, this is something they never see in their own backyard. Sometimes I take our beautiful four seasons for granted. I've gained a new appreciation for why millions of visitors come to the Laurel Highlands and why all our jobs are so vitally important. Together we will continue to enhance those "forever moments" each year.

P.S. If you see my husband Joe at LHVB's Annual Dinner on Oct. 4, ask him about the chicken salad!



LHVB Welcomes New Board of Directors

The LHVB would like to welcome its newest board members, Karen Post, Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer, The Progress Fund; Theresa Gay Rohall, Executive Director, The Compass Inn Museum and Michael Broderick, Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort.

The Board of Directors' Executive Committee also reorganized this summer

- Chairman of the Board: Eric Mauck, Chief Executive Officer, Seven Springs Mountain Resort
- Vice Chair: Muriel Nuttall, Executive Director, Fayette County Chamber of Commerce
- Secretary: Laura Argenbright, Executive Director, Bottle Works Arts on Third Ave
- Treasurer: Karen Post, Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer, The Progress Fund

We would like to thank our outgoing board members for their dedication and service to the region's tourism industry. Outgoing board members include:

- Outgoing board chairman, Michael Langer, Westmoreland Cultural Trust, 10 years of service
- Outgoing board treasurer, David Kahley, The Progress Fund, seven years of service



▶ MARKETING NEWS

Kristin Ecker, Senior Director of Marketing

Summer by the Numbers

As we wrap up summer marketing and shift gears into fall, let us take a moment to reflect on the fruitfulness of our summer campaigns. Having worked with Red House Communications to develop a marketing plan and a course for action moving forward, the marketing team got busy implementing the most diverse, all-encompassing campaign of all time. LHVB's summer campaigns reached visitors of all sorts, spanning markets both large and small throughout the mid-Atlantic, into the Midwest including Ohio and Michigan, and across our home state of Pennsylvania.

Traditional efforts included TV commercials, billboards and print ads in key publications, all enticing visitors to explore the region further through the newly-redesigned laurelhighlands.org. Digital efforts included standard initiatives such as search engine marketing, display ads, native advertising and extensive social media ads on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube. Each ad for every

initiative was customized with the target audience in mind. But we didn't stop there. The team launched video ads on Hulu, giving users the option to watch a Laurel Highlands video of their choice – adventure or family? For those who indulge in podcasts, we've launched podcast advertising campaigns that targets users using geofilters and by genre. If you listen to internet radio, we're also on Pandora with targeted messaging for each market we hit. Blogs? We've published 25 so far in 2018 with blog traffic increased by 500 percent in July 2018 vs. July 2017. Have you heard of influencers? We're in talks with a few and hope to line them up for winter.

The effort and targeted messaging put out by the LHVB has never been so broad, and the proof is in the pudding. As you read through the digital stats reported by Jared Bundy, you'll notice the hundreds of thousands of potential visitors that the bureau engages per month with reach and volume trending upward

consistently. Web traffic for the season is up nearly 30 percent year-over-year. With the launch of our new website in March came the launch of a new booking engine, which has produced more than 10,000 booking referrals to partner lodging properties. As we look to fall and winter campaigns, you'll see continuations of these efforts and more as we continue to attract visitors to our beautiful region.

Other initiatives we're busy working on...

- 2018 Photo Contest Winners
- 2019 Destination Guide
- Fall 2018 Co-Ops
- LHVB's 60th Anniversary Annual Dinner | Oct. 4, 2018
- Video shoot in October
- 8th Annual Marketing Summit | Nov. 2, 2018



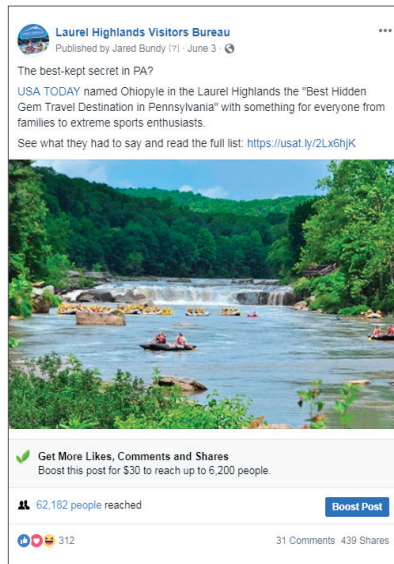
WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA STATS

Jared Bundy, Director of Digital Marketing

Social Media Audience (as of July 19, 2018)

- Facebook Fans **61,000+**
- Twitter Followers **11,900+**
- Instagram Followers **4,400+**
- YouTube Video Views **234,000+**
- Pinterest Monthly Viewers **25,000+**

Top Facebook Posts:



This post about a USA Today article naming Ohiopyle the best hidden gem in PA reached 62,000 people, getting 2,000 likes, 442 shares, 224 comments and 5,339 clicks.

Notable Web Stats (May-July, 2018) Compared to May-July, 2017

- Users **29%** increase
- Blog Traffic **370%** increase
- New Users **25%** increase
- Mobile Traffic **42%** increase
- Pageviews **11%** increase
- Direct Traffic **76%** increase

Top Keywords



- Laurel Highlands
- Ohiopyle
- Ohiopyle State Park
- Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail
- Seven Springs Events
- Things to Do in Western PA
- Laurel Highlands PA
- Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau
- Ohiopyle Events 2018
- Ohiopyle PA
- Laurel Highlands Events
- 4th of July Events Near Me 2018

This blog post about 4th of July fireworks and festivities reached 16,926 people, getting 225 reactions, 72 shares and 840 clicks.



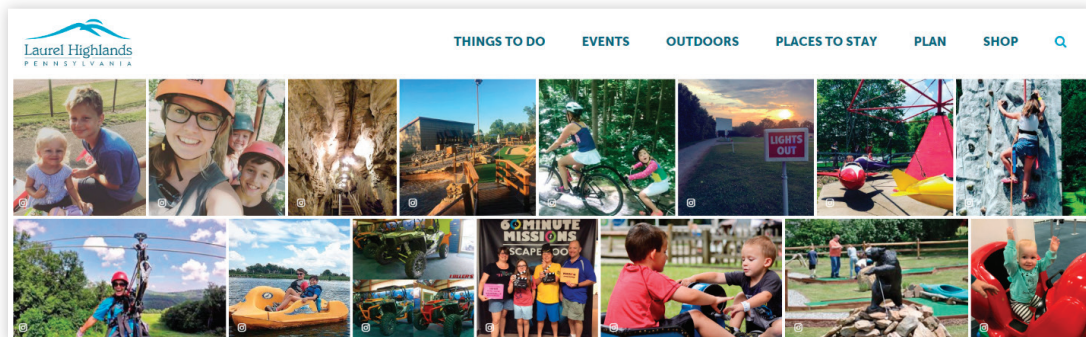
Top Instagram Post: A double rainbow passing over Falls City Pub was our top Instagram post of summer with 330 likes.



Top Summer Pages



- | Page | May-July, 2018 pageviews |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Ohiopyle Rafting | 56,127 |
| Family Fun | 30,610 |
| Ohiopyle | 23,946 |
| Homepage | 23,857 |
| Things To Do | 18,230 |
| Events | 16,189 |
| Idlewild | 12,416 |
| Cabins & Campgrounds | 11,581 |
| Places To Stay | 9,669 |
| Frank Lloyd Wright | 8,262 |



Use #LaurelHighlands When You Post: Laurelhighlands.org can now feature visitors' and your business's photos from Instagram across the website. These photos can link directly to your listing, giving you even more ways to showcase your business and make the most of your partnership. Be sure to use #laurelhighlands and add your location when you post to Instagram so we can see your photos and feature them on the website!



▶ WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA STATS

Jared Bundy, Director of Digital Marketing

Switzerfilm: Switzerfilm's five-person film crew completed a three-day shoot in Ohio, covering every aspect of the town, from whitewater rafting and the GAP to grabbing an ice cream in town. Drone footage, 360-degree cameras, photos and videos from the shoot will be used for future ad campaigns and website content and social media posts.



Podcast: Subscribe to Laurel Highlands Happenings, our monthly podcast, hosted by LHV's own Louise Bates, that showcases partners, events and our region with a different theme each episode. Subscribe on iTunes, GooglePlay, Stitcher or wherever you listen to podcasts. Our latest summer episodes cover summer family fun, food and wine in our region.

8 LODGINGS found on Jul 19th - Jul 20th

START A NEW SEARCH: 07/19/2018 07/20/2018

FILTER BY: Average Rate/Night

Location: Greensburg, Hidden Valley, Hooversville, Hopwood, Jennerstown, Johnstown, Jones Mills

Campbell House Bed & Breakfast
Lodging Type: All Lodging, Bed & Breakfasts and Country Inns
305 E. Main St. Ligonier, PA
Average Rate/Night: **\$90.00***
BOOK NOW

Ramada Ligonier
Lodging Type: All Lodging, Hotels & Motels
216 West Loyalhanna Street Ligonier, PA
Average Rate/Night: **\$119.00***
BOOK NOW

JackRabbit: Our JackRabbit booking engine averaged 100 referrals per day through summer 2018 with a total of 7,839 referrals.



▶ GROUP TOUR NEWS

Stacey Magda, Director of Tourism Development

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK – TOUR OPERATOR FAMS



Destination Greater Pittsburgh FAM | August 1

The LHV welcomed the Travel Lady Tours and Great Escapes for site visits in the region as they plan group tours for 2019 and 2020. Our visit focused on student-friendly travel and included stops at Fort Ligonier, Compass Inn Museum, Flight 93 National Memorial, Oakhurst Grille and Event Center and West Overton Village and Museum. Thank you to these sites for welcoming the operators and providing outstanding educational programming for groups to consider.

BJC Travel | Harvard, Illinois | August 1-3

With a focus on family travel and frequent individual travelers, Beverly Carlson was excited to spend time researching and developing tours for her groups. Her visit included stops

at DiSalvo's Station Restaurant, Fallingwater, Ohio, State Park, Falls Market Restaurant and General Store, Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort, Kentuck Knob, Christian W. Klay Winery, Stone House Restaurant, Summit Inn Resort, Eat'n Park Restaurant, Polymath Park, Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, Carol and Dave's Roadhouse, Green Gables, Mountain Playhouse, Quecreek Mine Rescue Site and the Flight 93 National Memorial.

The Travel Lady Tours | Lawrenceburg, Tennessee | August 1-2

Focusing on senior and adult travel, Krystal and Steve Carter have been trying to make time to visit for the past two years. Their visit included stops at DiSalvo's Station Restaurant, Fallingwater, Ohio, State Park, Falls Market and General Store, Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort, Kentuck Knob, Christian W. Klay Winery, Stone House Restaurant and Summit Inn Resort.

Meet the Planners in Harrisburg Fall Luncheon

On Nov. 1, the LHV and regional businesses will host a luncheon to connect and share meeting and retreat options with association planners from the Harrisburg area. Stay tuned to learn more about how you can be involved in upcoming events!

Welcoming Groups to the Laurel Highlands

- August 16 | America's 9/11 Memorial Ride | Flight 93 National Memorial and Somerset area
- August 17 | Upper Lacock Township War Memorial Association | Flight 93 National Memorial, Flight 93 Memorial Chapel, Coal Miners Café and Quecreek Mine Rescue Site
- August 19-20 and 23 | Vagabond Tours | Summit Inn Resort and the National Road Corridor
- August 23 | Indovina Associates Architects | Ohio, State Park and Kentuck Knob
- August 23 | Quality Bike Products Saddle Drive | Seven Springs Mountain Resort
- October 11-13 | National Land Conservation Trust: Rally 2018 | Conservation Land Tours
- October 23-26 | English Setter Association of America | Seven Springs Mountain Resort

GROUP SALES ON THE ROAD:

Tour and Travel Shows: A Commitment to the Group Travel Market

- Mid Atlantic Receptive Services | National Harbor, MD | 36 tour operators
- AAA East Central Group Leader Show | Seven Springs Mountain Resort | #Group Leaders
- Great Day! Group Leader Show | Independence, OH | #Group Leaders



► PUBLIC RELATIONS UPDATE

Anna Weltz, Director of Public Relations



MATPRA Media Marketplace Arrives Sept. 25!

Months of planning, thousands of emails and hundreds of phone calls and the time has come! We are thrilled to host the 15th Annual MATPRA Media Marketplace and excited to share our magnificent mountainous region with 130 travel media and travel public relations professionals. After more than a year of planning, we think this year's Marketplace will go down as one of the best for many years to come.

An event of this prominence and importance could not have happened without the support of many LHVB partners, especially Maggie Magerko-Hardy, owner of Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort. From the bottom of our hearts to you and your team, thank you all for everything you do for the Laurel Highlands tourism industry!

Laurel Highlands in the Spotlight

April 1-June 30, 2018

A summary of press and media projects initiated or coordinated by the LHVB. Circulation, digital impressions and publicity value figures provided by Cision media monitoring service.

141 Stories

267 million Total Reach

More than \$392,000 Publicity Value

Recent and Upcoming Press Visits

- Anne Schuhle, Buffalo Magazine
- Shawnie Kelley Foy, Wander Lust Tours
- Lillie Marshall, Around the World L
- Jim Cheney, UncoveringPA
- Jeremy Jones, Discovering the Burgh
- Karyn Locke, Sand and Snow
- Anietra Hamper, Planetware

Top Media Opportunities

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

THE INCLINE Elevating News in Pittsburgh



The Columbus Dispatch

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



Won't You Be Our Neighbor?

In late June, the LHVB in our neighbors at VisitPA and Visit Pittsburgh collaborated to create the Fred Rogers Trail, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the iconic children's television show, "Mister Rogers Neighborhood." The trail features 15 locations in four counties, including numerous stops in his hometown of Latrobe and Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood ride at Idlewild and Soak Zone. Since its release, the media exposure has been tremendous. Plus, many our partners along the trail have seen an increase in visitation and heard plenty of people sharing stories about what Fred Rogers meant to them. If you'd like to explore the Fred Rogers Trail in the Laurel Highlands, visit laurelhighlands.org/rogerstrail.





▶ WELCOME, NEW LHVB MARKETING PARTNERS! //

Louise Bates, Director of Partnership Development



The Dapper Doughnut

Kristen Hull
1669 New Stanton Ruffsedale Road
Hunker, PA 15639
(724) 635-0024
thedapperdoughnut.com/new-stanton

Mmmm! If you love doughnuts, you must swing by The Dapper Doughnut in New Stanton. Custom-designed, decorated and offering 24 unique toppings, these cake-style doughnuts are delicious and proving very popular at weddings. Watch out cookie table!



The Green Shelf Boutique

Heidi Eberly
3782 State Route 31
Suite 100
Donegal, PA 15628
(724) 593-5900
thegreenshelfboutique.com

The delightful Green Shelf Boutique opened in 2017 with a lovely selection of women's clothing. The clothing range is updated frequently and also includes accessories and jewelry. Their motto is, "There are no limits to fashion!"



Friends of Summersounds

Gene James
135 North Maple Avenue
Greensburg, PA 15601
(724) 837-1851
summersounds.com

Earlier this year, Summersounds launched their own non-profit organization, becoming "Friends of Summersounds Inc." Summersounds hosts outstanding summer concerts at St. Clair Park in Greensburg, every Friday evening from June through to early September. And the best bit, the concerts are free!



Mitch's Fuel & Food

Pamela Hartman
479 Latrobe Avenue
Confluence, PA 15424
(814) 395-3177

Named after Pamela's late husband, Mitch's Fuel & Food is a one-stop-shop in Confluence! Pump gas then pop inside for the rustic country store for snacks, beverages and convenience items. There's also a café offering a full menu for breakfast, lunch or dinner, dine-in or take-out, seven days a week.



Greater Connellsville Area Community Center

Dolores Tissue
201 East Fairview Avenue
Connellsville, PA 15425
(724) 626-0300
thegreaterconnellsvilleareacommunitycenterinc.com

The Greater Connellsville Area Community Center has served the Connellsville community since 1971. The multi-purpose center features meetings rooms, the 600-seat Edwin S. Porter Theatre and a gymnasium available to rent for meetings, concerts, theatrical performances and more!



Mountain Lair

Carla Brandon
307 Stahl Road
Somerset, PA 15501
(412) 453 6653

Wonderfully located in the heart of the Laurel Highlands, this vacation rental sleeps up to 10. Guests can enjoy a beautiful yard complete with a stream and a fire pit. Seven Springs, Hidden Valley and more attractions just a short drive away. Perfect getaway from it all!



▶ WELCOME, NEW LHVB MARKETING PARTNERS!

Louise Bates, Director of Partnership Development



Red Lantern Bed & Breakfast

Regina Hayman
301 High Street
Meyersdale, PA 15552
(814) 442-6881
redlanterbandb.com

Having tirelessly worked on renovating the property, Regina and her husband Matthew opened the Red Lantern Bed & Breakfast in 2017. Ideally located for those enjoying the GAP Trail, the property offers three rooms, breakfast and a beautiful view of the Laurel Highlands.



W Group Holdings, LLC

Victoria Roup
413 North Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15209
(724) 940-9119
groupholdings.com

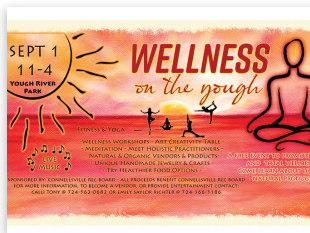
If you are seeking luxury vacation rentals, check out W Group Holdings. They have several rentals located in the Laurel Highlands and Seven Springs Mountain Resort. Properties range in sizes, suitable for small families to large gatherings.



Stanton Daily Grind

Megan Orient
814 U.S. 119 North
Suite 100
New Stanton, PA 15672
(724) 635-3952
stantonmilling.com/dailygrind

Recently opened in May, Stanton Daily Grind is located next door to Hepler's Hardware & Marketplace in New Stanton. Open Monday through Saturday, the coffee shop offers a full hot and cold beverage menu and baked goods and seamlessly reflects Stanton's grinding mill heritage with images adorning the walls and décor from the mill.



Wellness on the Yough event, September 1, 2018

Emily Saylor
259 North 6th Street
Connellsville, PA 15425
(724) 366-5186
facebook.com/wellnessontheyough

Connellsville celebrated their second year of Wellness on the Yough on Sept. 1. The event offered a full day of yoga, meditation, mindfulness, massage, herbs, healthy lifestyle and much more.



Vinoski Winery

Julie Pryor
333 Castle Drive
Rostraver, PA 15012
(724) 872-3333
vinoskiwinery.com

What a venue! A gorgeous wood paneled tasting room greets as you sample different wines, while the patio with cheery red umbrellas beckons for you to take a seat and sip from your wine glass and savor the view. Don't miss an opportunity to visit this new winery in the Laurel Highlands!



Westmoreland County Chapter-Keystone Elk Country Alliance Banquet, Feb. 16, 2019

Mark and Vanessa Bates
Ramada Inn Greensburg
100 Ramada Inn Drive
Greensburg, PA 15601
(724) 694-1309
experienceelkcountry.com

Interested in learning more about Elk? Join the Westmoreland County Chapter for their Keystone Elk Country Alliance Banquet on Feb. 16, 2019, hosted by Ramada Greensburg. It will be a fabulous fun evening to fundraise for the Elk Country Visitor Center, located in the heart of the Pennsylvania Wilds.



Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau
120 East Main Street | Ligonier, PA 15658



Headlines is published quarterly. Please contact LHVB's Director of Public Relations, Anna Weltz, with questions or comments at aweltz@laurelhighlands.org.
120 East Main Street, Ligonier, PA 15658 | RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

BOARD OF DIRECTORS //

- | | |
|---|--|
| Eric Mauck, Chairman
Seven Springs Mountain Resort | Michael Broderick
Nemacolin Woodlands Resort |
| Muriel Nuttall, Vice Chair
Fayette County
Commissioners' Appointee | Alicia Henry
Westmoreland County
Commissioners' Appointee |
| Karen Post, Treasurer
The Progress Fund | Lladel Lichty
Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial |
| Laura Argenbright, Secretary
Bottle Works on Third Ave. | Liz McCarty
Laurel Highlands River Tours
& Outdoor Center |
| Ron Aldom
Somerset County
Commissioners' Appointee | Bryan Perry
Allegheny Trail Alliance |
| Ken Bisbee
Ohiopyle State Park | Clinton Piper
Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater |
| Stephen Clark
National Park Service | Theresa Gay Rohall
Compass Inn Museum |
| Liz Diesel
Glades Pike Winery | Michael Simons
SpringHill Suites Latrobe-Pittsburgh |
| Tom Guiher
Living Treasures Wild Animal Park | |

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