



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Lesley Kistner

[LesleyK@happyvalley.com](mailto:LesleyK@happyvalley.com)

814 769-9490

## **HVAB, Commissioners award 2024-25 Tourism Grants**

STATE COLLEGE, PA, June 6, 2024 – The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau (HVAB) and Centre County Commissioners today announced the recipients of 2024-25 Tourism Grants at a news conference at Grange Park.

A record 77 tourism marketing and tourism enhancement projects from 106 submitted applications received funding totaling another record \$960,200. Successful recipients included 13 first-time applicants. The overall funding ask was nearly \$3 million.

“The ability to robustly invest in our tourism assets through the annual Tourism Grant program, conducted in partnership with the commissioners, is possible due to the growth in visitation and correlated performance of our lodging industry,” said HVAB President and CEO Fritz Smith. “Happy Valley is ever more attractive to first-time and repeat visitors, and our community quality of life is enhanced as a result.”

Centre County Commissioner Chair Mark Higgins said the Tourism Grant program has been providing support to local organizations for years.

“The benefit to residents has also been great,” he added. “It is exciting to see such a robust pool of recipients who all have so much to offer to the people of Centre County and those who want to visit.”

Smith said the “celebrate tourism” theme of this year’s grant announcement was a nod to those recipients and all businesses that are driving and supporting Centre County tourism, as well as recognition of noteworthy event and festival milestones.

-more-

The annual Centre County Grange Encampment and Fair is one of those festivals, celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Centre Hall Mayor LeDon Young spoke at the event, and provided a sneak peek at the trailer for the 150<sup>th</sup> Grange Fair documentary that will premiere at this year's fair.

Bellefonte Victorian Christmas Committee Chair Phil Breidenbaugh also spoke, noting that the annual holiday event, now in its 43rd year, witnessed a 25 percent increase in visitation in 2023 over the prior year.

Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum Executive Director Anna Rupprecht detailed how a tourism enhancement grant will fund ADA accessibility and other improvements at the historic Boal Barn Playhouse.

Centre County Commissioner Amber Concepcion applauded these efforts.

"Tourism is a major economic driver in Centre County," she said. "So much of the work of creating events and attractions is done by volunteers and nonprofit organizations. We are so grateful for everything they do to make Centre County such a great place to work and live."

Commissioner Steve Dershem said it is not lost on any of the Commissioners or The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau just how hard the volunteers and nonprofits of Centre County work to make the county flourish.

"There are many deserving applicants," he said. "And we are grateful to play part in supporting their efforts."

Since 2003-04, the Tourism Grant program has awarded nearly \$8.3 million to projects, events and initiatives that grow and enhance Happy Valley's tourism product.

**Complete list of 2024-25 Tourism Grant recipients:**

- Philipsburg Historical Foundation Board - \$7,500 (American250PA Liberty Bell project)
- Happy Valley Comics & Collectibles Convention - \$12,000 (Marketing the third annual event)
- Centre County Grange Encampment and Fair - \$10,000 (Grange Fair documentary marketing)
- Bellefonte Victorian Christmas - \$10,000 (Marketing the 2024 event)
- Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum (tourism enhancement) - \$20,000 (Improvements to the Boal Barn Playhouse)
- Howard Volunteer Fire Company (Howard Punkin Chunkin) - \$4,000 (Marketing the 2024 festival)
- Palmer Museum of Art - \$23,000 (Marketing the new museum and special exhibitions)
  - Centre County Grange Encampment and Fair - \$25,000 (Marketing the 2024 Grange Fair)

-more-

- Centre County Historical Society - \$21,000 (America250PA Liberty Bell project)
- Central PA Tasting Trail - \$18,000 (Marketing of Trail events and passport sales)
- People's Choice Festival - \$15,000 (Marketing the 2024 festival)
- The Dead Canary Brewing Company (tourism enhancement) - \$25,000 (Outdoor beer garden and collaborative community space)
- Tussey Mountain - \$10,000 (Marketing Wingfest)
- Bellefonte Art Museum for Centre County (tourism enhancement) - \$8,000 (New website)
- Roland Curtin Foundation for the Preservation of Eagle Furnace - \$12,000 (Marketing events at Curtin Village)
- Tempest Productions - \$10,000 (Marketing the 2025 Central PA Theatre & Dance Fest)
- United Baseball Inc. (tourism enhancement). - \$5,000 (seating accommodations at the Potter Township Athletic Complex)
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council - \$1,000 (Marketing the Public Lands Ride event)
- Philipsburg Revitalization Corporation - \$10,000 (Marketing PRC events)
- The State Theatre - \$35,000 (Marketing events)
- The Makery of Central Pennsylvania (tourism enhancement) - \$3,000 (Window boxes on Fraser Street Shops)
- Wildlife for Everyone Endowment Foundation - \$4,500 (Marketing the Great Outdoor Picnic)
- The Art Alliance of Central Pennsylvania - \$4,500 (Marketing to expand the arts in Happy Valley, PA)
- Downtown Bellefonte Inc. - \$15,000 (Marketing DBI events)
- Wildlife Leadership Academy - \$2,500 (Marketing events and training)
- Downtown State College Improvement District - \$9,000 (Marketing Sips & Sounds Downtown)
- Philipsburg VFW Post 3450 (tourism enhancement) - \$5,000 (Placement of Honor our Veterans Mural)
- The Arboretum at Penn State - \$10,000 (Marketing fall and winter events)
- Central PA 4th Fest - \$45,000 (Marketing the 2024 celebration)
- Happy Valley Improv - \$18,000 (Marketing the Fourth Annual Happy Valley Improv XL festival in May 2025)
- Clearwater Conservancy - \$4,000 (Promote Centered Outdoors)
- Gorinto Co. LLC - \$10,000 (Marketing the 2025 Rhoneymeade Fest)
- Centre Film Festival - \$30,000 (Marketing the 2024 festival)
- Bellefonte Art Museum for Centre County - \$15,000 (Marketing the exhibition schedule and Underground Railroad permanent exhibit)
- Haines Township (Dutch Fall Festival) - \$4,000 (Marketing the 2024 festival)

-more-

-4-

- Moshannon Valley EMS (Philipsburg Heritage Days) - \$14,000 (Marketing the 2024 festival)
- Center for the Performing Arts at Penn State -- \$15,000 (Marketing 50 years of performances at Eisenhower Auditorium)
- Happy Valley Women's Cycling - \$17,000 (Marketing Seasons of Rothrock and Grit Gravel Grinder)
- Penns Valley Pedals and Pints - \$5,000 (Marketing events)
- Pennsylvania Chamber Orchestra - \$5,000 (Marketing the 2024-25 season)
- CentreBike - \$5,000 (Renew and market Ride with GPS)
- Penn State University/WPSU - \$6,000 – (Marketing the Local Groove Music Festival)
- Nittany Mountain Biking Association (tourism enhancement) - \$20,000 (Complete the “start hub” area of the bike park at Harvest Fields Community Trails)
- Way Fruit Farm - \$6,000 (Marketing the 2024 Art in the Orchard event)
- Lemont Village Association (tourism enhancement) - \$4,000 (Replace the emergency decking of the Thompson Granary)
- Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts -- \$75,000 (Marketing the Arts Fest and First Night State College)
- Rotary Club of State College Downtown - \$1,000 (Marketing the Ninth Annual Ice Cream Festival)
- Apple Hill Antiques - \$3,000 (Development of a Centre County Antiques Trail)
- Centre County Library and Historical Museum (tourism enhancement) - \$35,000 (Renovate the Miles-Humes-Potter House)
- Discovery Space of Central Pennsylvania - \$20,000 (Strategic marketing initiatives, including expanded event marketing)
- Centre LGBT+ - \$10,000 (Marketing the 2025 State College PRIDE)
- 3 Dots Downtown - \$21,000 (Marketing the Secret Planet Music Series)
- Bellefonte Sunrise Rotary - \$1,000 (Marketing the 2024 Talleyrand Fall Festival)
- Bryce Jordan Center - \$25,000 (Incentives for concert promoters)
- The Makery of Central Pennsylvania - \$3,000 (Marketing)
- Rowland Theatre (tourism enhancement) - \$4,700 (Installation of followspot lighting)
- Millheim Borough - \$15,000 (Marketing events, including Route 45 Getaways and SummerFest)
- Bellefonte Historical and Cultural Association - \$12,000 (Marketing various events)
- Pennsylvania Chamber Orchestra (tourism enhancement) - \$5,000 (New website)

-more-

-5-

- Center for the Performing Arts at Penn State (tourism enhancement) - \$15,000 (Digital signage)
- Center Volunteers in Medicine - \$20,000 (Marketing events, including the 2024 Nittany Valley Half Marathon)
- Penn State Centre Stage - \$25,000 (Marketing the 2024-25 season)
- Boalsburg Village Conservancy - \$3,500 (Marketing Boalsburg Hometown Christmas)
- Boalsburg Heritage Museum (tourism enhancement)- \$1,000 (Education signage on the grounds of the museum)
- The Crooked House (tourism enhancement) - \$8,000 (Continued support for the multi-phase public art project)
- Clearwater Conservancy (tourism enhancement)- \$15,000 (Clearwater Community Conservation Center)
- Advent Historical Society - \$3,000 (Marketing Historical Society events)
- Penns Woods Music Festival - \$4,000 (Marketing the festival)
- Mountaintop Area Swimming Pool Association (tourism enhancement) - \$40,000 (Swimming pool upgrades, enhancing the ability to serve visitors to the nearby campground and bed & breakfast)
- Nittany Knights - \$1,000 (Marketing the 2025 Spring Festival)
- Nittany Valley Symphony - \$6,000 (Marketing the 2024-25 concert season)
- Strawberry Fields - \$2,500 (Marketing the Scraps & Skeins Fiber Arts Showcase)
- Centre County Sports Hall of Fame - \$4,000 (To relocate key exhibits)
- America's Wrestling Cup - \$10,000 (Marketing the October event)
- United Baseball Inc. (marketing grant) - \$8,000 (Marketing the upcoming tournament, date TBD)
- Special Olympics Pennsylvania - \$5,000 (Marketing the April 2025 Beaver Stadium Run)

###