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Second annual Happy Valley Hospitality awards to recognize industry excellence

State College, PA, July 27, 2023 – The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau (HVAB) will begin accepting nominations for the second annual Happy Valley Hospitality Awards on Thursday, Aug. 3, coinciding with Hospitality Appreciation Night at the State College Spikes.

The awards recognize excellence in the local food and beverage, and lodging industries, both back of house and front of house employees.

“All hospitality positions – from back-of-house support to customer facing and supervisory roles – are valuable to ensuring that visitors and residents have positive dining, entertainment and lodging experiences,” said HVAB President and CEO Fritz Smith. “The Adventure Bureau launched the hospitality awards because we want those working in the industry to know that whatever their role, they are valued and appreciated.”

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Smith said a special Spirit of Hospitality Award will honor a hospitality employee that exemplifies the traits that the late Pete Walker, former longtime Penn's Cave & Wildlife Park manager, brought to his role: leading by example with an incomparable work ethic; a commitment to serving others; and leaving a positive impact on those around him.

We Are Inn Owner and Chef Pat Romano was the recipient of the inaugural Spirit of Hospitality award in 2022.

A fifth award, the new Community Favorite, sponsored by media partner Barash Media, will give local residents a chance to nominate their favorite server or bartender.

"We thought it would be a great idea to engage the local community in the nomination process," said Fritz Smith, HVAB President and CEO. "People have their favorite dining hotspots and watering holes, and the service they receive is a big reason why. We want to know who residents think are our standout hospitality employees."

Information about the Community Favorite award will be available at Hospitality Appreciation Night at the State College Spikes on Thursday, Aug. 3.

The nomination period closes Friday, Sept. 29.

An independent review committee will choose this year's honorees from those nominated. The HVAB staff and board will select the Spirit of Hospitality recipient.

"We encourage our hospitality businesses to nominate deserving team members," Smith said. "This is a chance to lift up the local industry in a big way."

Winners will be recognized, all nominees acknowledged, and the industry saluted at the HVAB's Hospitality Awards & Celebration on Tuesday, Nov. 14 at Titan Hollow in Bellefonte.

For questions about the nomination process, email Lesley Kistner, HVAB Public Relations Director, at LesleyK@happyvalley.com.

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Links to the award nomination forms are below:

[Food and Beverage FOH](#)

[Food and Beverage BOH](#)

[Lodging FOH](#)

[Lodging BOH](#)

[Community Favorite](#)