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HappyValleyAgventures.com

CPCVB/CBICC launch countywide agritourism promotion campaign

Initiative will showcase, support Centre County's agricultural offerings

STATE COLLEGE, PA, Oct. 2, 2019 – Joined by agricultural stakeholders from throughout Centre County, the **Central Pennsylvania Convention & Visitors Bureau (CPCVB)** and the **Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County (CBICC)** launched a countywide agritourism promotional initiative – *Happy Valley Agventures* – designed to showcase and promote the area's tremendous agricultural assets, and enhance tourism development.

"We launched this initiative as a way to marry two of Centre County's largest industries – agriculture and tourism – in order to help them both grow," said Fritz Smith, CPCVB President and CEO. "We saw an opportunity to embrace agritourism in a more thorough and robust way than other destinations have done, and to distinguish ourselves as a destination of choice for those wanting authentic ag-related experiences."

CBICC President and CEO Vern Squier said the Chamber's commitment to agritourism, productive relationship with the CPCVB, and creative vision from local talent, is enabling both groups to promote the county's vibrant and strong agritourism opportunities to local and external audiences in an impactful and memorable way.

An engaging new website – happyvalleyagventures.com – will contain information about offerings and events from the county's varied agricultural stakeholders, offering easy access to a wealth of information about what to see and do. To be included on the website, an entity must be agriculturally focused, open to the public, provide an ag-related experience, and be served by vendors, producers and/or distributors sourced within central Pennsylvania.

A social media component and strategic marketing plan – kicking off with a fall-themed “*Autumn Happens Here*” promotional campaign – will raise awareness about agricultural offerings ranging from traditional farming/growing methods to innovative operations and products.

“We are proud to have commissioned local marketing agencies to do the work,” Smith stressed.

Bellefonte-based 321Blink led the brand strategy and creative effort, working with local firms Hello Social Co., 3Twenty9 Design, Seven Mountains Media and the *Centre Daily Times*.

“Agriculture is at the very heart and soul (or soil) of this place,” added Kim Tait, Owner of Tait Farm Foods, who was among the stakeholders who spoke at the launch announcement. “We want to invite folks to experience everything we have to offer.”

Jim Ladlee, Assistant Director of Energy, Business & Community Vitality Programs, Penn State Extension, said the initiative fits with Penn State’s mission as a Land Grant University.

“Land Grant Universities are unique in the world and take great pride in helping food, agriculture and natural resource-based businesses remain competitive in an ever changing landscape,” he said. “Agritourism is key to the diversification of local agriculture and enhancing the connection of all people to their food system.”

Smith and Squier said *Happy Valley Agventures* also seeks to raise awareness about the economic benefits of agriculture and agritourism to the county.

According to the most recently available data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Centre County Farm Employment accounted for roughly 1,262 jobs, with food manufacturing accounting for some 183 jobs, and total of all production at 1,602 jobs.

“Through agritourism, there is an opportunity for farmers and related vendors to make an even greater economic impact, while also providing a source of supplemental income for farmers trying to preserve their livelihood,” Smith said.

Fostering agricultural entrepreneurship is another goal of the effort.

“Agritourism is important because it shines a bright light on the innovation and entrepreneurial spirit of our local producers,” added Kevin Lloyd, Big Spring Spirits Co-Owner and Production Manager, who also spoke at the event.

“Through our efforts to promote those who engage in all forms of agritourism, we can accomplish our collective mission in highlighting Centre County as a great place to live, learn, work, play, visit and invest,” Squier concluded.

To learn more about what is happening this fall, visit www.happyvalleyagventures.com. Agricultural entities interested in participating in the initiative should contact Nicole Smith at Nicole@cbicc.org.

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