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Grant program opens for Happy Valley farms, ag-related businesses

HVAB, CBICC announce one-time funding to boost agritourism enterprises, provide for visitor-readiness

State College, PA, March 23, 2022 – The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau (HVAB) and the Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County (CBICC) today announced a one-time Happy Valley Adventures grant program to help local farms, farm stands and other agricultural businesses become more visitor ready, and enhance the visitor/customer experience through facility improvements.

The HVAB and CBICC launched Happy Valley Adventures in 2019. The joint initiative supports Centre County's agritourism and ag-related businesses by inviting residents and visitors to enjoy what is grown, crafted and created in Happy Valley. The new grant is an opportunity to provide financial assistance to Adventures destinations and other eligible establishments looking to reimagine or grow their operations.

"I'm excited about working with the agricultural community," said Greg Scott, President and CEO of the Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County. "The grant program is a fantastic opportunity for farms seeking new revenue sources to take that important first step toward developing broader offerings. For those that are already accustomed to welcoming visitors, it's a chance to build upon the existing experience."

HVAB President and CEO Fritz Smith the county's agricultural offerings and events continue to expand and evolve.

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“This trend bodes well for visitors seeking unique, authentic experiences, and the ability to better connect with animals and farm life, as well where the food they eat comes from,” Smith said. “We have some wonderfully creative and visionary agricultural minds in Centre County. We look forward not only to being able to assist these businesses with needed funding, but to see what projects will be put forward.”

To qualify for grant funding, a business must be:

- Located in Centre County
- Agriculturally focused
- Open to the public in some capacity
- Offer an agriculture-related experience, or sell product that is produced, grown or locally raised
- Demonstrate significant interest in the development of agritourism and ag-related products that offer a visitor experience in Centre County

Examples of eligible projects include:

- New construction and/or renovations
- Facility enhancements to improve visitor accessibility, alignment with ADA requirements
- Parking enhancements
- Points of sale machinery/technology to assist the facility to become visitor friendly
- Enhancement or development of retail space
- Marketing campaigns/materials

Scott and Smith believe the program is a win-win-win for Happy Valley agritourism; ag-related establishments; and residents/visitors.

State Sen. Jake Corman assisted the HVAB and CBICC last fall with securing funding through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development’s Marketing to Attract Tourists program.

The application process will open Wednesday, March 15. Interested establishments can apply at www.happyvalleyagventures.com. Applications will be accepted until COB Friday, April 29.

Christie Black is serving as Happy Valley Agventures Grant Program and Marketing Consultant. All questions about the Happy Valley Agventures grant program should be directed to Black at ChristieB@happyvalley.com.

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