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## ***HappyValleyTalent.com*** unveiled to business community, student athletes *CBICC, HVAB initiative seeks to foster connections allowed by NIL rules*

STATE COLLEGE, PA – Thursday, Aug. 2, 2021 – The Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County and The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau today unveiled **HappyValleyTalent.com**, a new initiative to connect businesses with students/athletes in the new era of Name, Image and Likeness (NIL). The National Collegiate Athletic Association’s rule update allowing students/athletes to personally profit from their name, image and likeness became a reality in Pennsylvania this summer through Act 26 of 2021.

The Zoom announcement provided both an opportunity to explain NIL to the business community and to unveil the online talent connection online platform, which is also supported by the Bellefonte Intervalley Area Chamber of Commerce; Downtown Bellefonte Inc.; Moshannon Valley Economic Development Partnership; Philipsburg Revitalization Corporation; East Penns Valley Community and Business Association; Downtown State College Improvement District; the Patton Township Business Association; and the Blair County Chamber of Commerce.

CBICC President and CEO Vern Squier said Happy Valley Talent opens up new, innovative marketing opportunities for businesses through engagement with students and students/athletes, while giving those students and athletes never-before-available avenues to market themselves as permitted by NIL rules.

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“This initiative is one that can be a true win-win-win for the business community, students and our local economy,” Squier said. “It is meaningful to our community’s success now and in the future.”

As a platform that facilitates connections between businesses, students/athletes, alumni and other individuals desiring to market themselves, the business and students/athletes private portion of the website allows for easy creation of profiles, searching, sorting, communicating, posting of availability, and posting of confirmed events. The public portion of the platform allows fans to view events and receive notifications when an event featuring a student athlete or alumni athlete is posted.

While the site contains general information about compliance, students are responsible for making sure engagements are in line with the compliance protocols of their respective universities.

Happy Valley Adventure Bureau President and CEO Fritz Smith said he is confident that Penn State’s far-reaching alumni and fan base will enjoy the platform, however, he stressed that Happy Valley Talent is not connected or affiliated with, or specifically endorsed by, Penn State University or any other university.

“Happy Valley Talent is a business community-driven effort to encourage engagement between businesses – both local and out of area – with students and student athletes, as allowed under Pennsylvania’s NIL law,” Smith said.

Downtown Bellefonte Inc. Main Street Manager Jennilyn Schuster said the initiative is a “big opportunity” to get regional and local exposure with relevant names in the market.

“Bellefonte businesses are embracing the college-athlete marketplace early,” Schuster said. “We hope to play a role in helping to shape it, and are excited about this partnership. “

Squier and Smith view Happy Valley Talent as a long-term tool that has tremendous potential to grow moving forward.

“Today’s announcement was a start to ensuring that our local businesses and students/athletes understand how to navigate the NIL era in a mutually beneficial way,” Smith said. “We only expect participation and enthusiasm to grow as the issue is more largely understood and opportunities emerge.”

Millheim Borough Council President and East Penns Valley Community and Business Association member Robert Zeigler also views HappyValleyTalent.com as way for university students-athletes to learn more about what the rest of the county has to offer as they potentially engage with businesses throughout Centre County.

“Small businesses are the backbone of Happy Valley communities, and this partnership gives students and athletes the opportunity to invest personally in those who are in communities that are invested in them,” Zeigler said. “It is promising for the county in so many ways.”

With the platform officially launched, the CBICC and the HVAB are developing a comprehensive marketing campaign focused on encouraging businesses to register on the platform, garner interest from student athletes, and inform the public fans to visit the site’s calendar to check for upcoming appearances by their favorite student-athletes and athletic alumni stars. ###