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Helping Happy Valley Live to encourage shopping local for the holidays *Facebook broadcast to showcase small businesses, products for sale*

STATE COLLEGE, PA, Dec. 1, 2020 - Community stakeholders that are part of the **Helping Happy Valley** initiative today announced a live Facebook broadcast designed to showcase the county's small businesses and the products they have for sale – just in time for the holidays.

Helping Happy Valley LIVE will air from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5 on the Facebook page of The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau. The program will then be rebroadcast on the Facebook pages of the Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County; Downtown Bellefonte Inc.; Bellefonte Intervalley Area Chamber of Commerce; State College Downtown Improvement District; and the Philipsburg Revitalization Corporation.

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“Supporting the county’s local businesses has never been more important than it is right now,” said Fritz Smith, HVAB President and CEO. “The pandemic is threatening the livelihood of many of our small businesses and restaurants. Through product showcases, tours, demonstrations and more, the broadcast seeks to inspire gift giving from Happy Valley’s unique shops, restaurants and farm stores at a time when patronage is most needed.”

Businesses were recruited to participate in the broadcast. The response was so overwhelming that the originally planned five-hour broadcast was expanded to six hours. The HVAB and Helping Happy Valley stakeholders are developing a promotional plan to ensure that the event reaches as broad of an audience as possible, specifically reaching Penn State alumni and those who hold Happy Valley near and dear to their heart. Viewers will be able to shops for gifts cards and other showcased products in real time from businesses during the broadcast.

Hello Social Co., a social media marketing agency based in Bellefonte, is working with partners to execute the online event. The agency's team will back-end produce Helping Happy Valley Live to ensure that the program runs smoothly, and provide real-time opportunities for viewers to shop live and engage with the businesses involved.

“The Helping Happy Valley effort is bringing out the very best in people from near and far that want to support Centre County’s merchants and communities that have been affected by COVID-19,” said Vern Squier, CBICC President and CEO. “The CBICC and all other partners involved in bringing this effort about are proud to be investing in this initiative.”

Smith and Squier said Helping Happy Valley Live is just the start of efforts to support the business community, and is the outcome of a community stakeholder brainstorm session when Helping Happy Valley was first announced.

Harris Township Manager Amy Farkas, who developed the concept for Helping Happy Valley earlier this fall and reached out to community groups with her thoughts, applauded the collective effort to put the concept into action.

“Helping Happy Valley was born out of a desire to bring together stakeholders to help the small businesses that make up the fabric of our community,” Farkas said. “These businesses are owned by our friends and neighbors. Initiatives like the Helping Happy Valley Live event are the first steps to support them.”

In addition to the live product showcase, the Helping Happy Valley website (www.helpinghappyvalley.com) contains a digital holiday shopping catalogue – The Wish Book for Happy Valley, which features local shops and products. The Wish Book will also be promoted to both local and out-of-area audiences. A listing of businesses offering gift certificates that can be purchased now and redeemed later is also available on the website.

“The next few months will be particularly challenging,” Smith said. “Helping Happy Valley stakeholders are continuing to develop initiatives of both a non-visitation and visitation nature to do what it can to ensure that our business community and hospitality industry weather the economic crisis resulting from the pandemic.”

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