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CONTACT:

Lesley Kistner

Public Affairs Director

LesleyK@happyvalley.com

814 769-9490

HVAB, commissioners award second round of 2020 tourism grants Local events, projects to benefit from funding

STATE COLLEGE, PA, Feb. 11, 2021 – The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau (HVAB) and Centre County Commissioners today announced the second round of 2020 Tourism Grant funding that will benefit local events being planned for 2021, and projects that will enhance tourism assets.

The HVAB received 61 requests from 56 organizations totaling more than \$1.4 million in 2020. Due to the impact of COVID-19 on lodging tax receipts, the HVAB, Commissioners and the Tourism Grant Committee made the decision to award grants in two phases.

The first allocation in June 2020 totaled \$387,300. Under the second round – mostly applicants seeking funding for 2021 events – \$79,000 was awarded to six recipients.

“2020 was an incredibly challenging year, and those challenges have continued into 2021,” said HVAB President and CEO Fritz Smith. “The Tourism Grant Committee faced a difficult task in light of historic funding requests. Much like the first round, this second round of grant awards is the result of thoughtful discussion that went into determining how funds would best be allocated given that we are still navigating through a pandemic. We are hopeful that recovery is on the horizon, and event organizers are proceeding cautiously that summer events can happen.”

The following projects received funding from the second 2020 Tourism Grant allocation:

Provisions Magazine/Maggie Anderson, \$10,000 to help revitalize, manage and promote Happy Valley Restaurant Week, formerly Culinary Week.

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Columbus Chapel & Boal Mansion Museum, \$5,000 for the first phase of a three-phase project to enhance the museum property. The first phase involves dismantling the historic greenhouse at Rockview Prison and assembling it on the grounds of the mansion. The greenhouse will feature a year-round tropical rainforest and butterfly vivarium.

Wildlife for Everyone Foundation, \$9,000 to hold an event that will raise funds for the ADA-complaint Soaring Eagle Wetlands project in Julian, PA. The wetlands and nearby accessible Galen & Nancy Dreibelbis bird viewing area make outdoor recreation and enjoyment available to all.

Philipsburg Revitalization Corp., \$5,000 for its popular Antique Appraisal Day and Wine Walk. Both events are held in downtown Philipsburg and have the potential to draw people from the surrounding region.

Tempest Productions, \$20,000 for the Theatre and Dance Fest in downtown State College, tentatively scheduled for June.

Lucky Dog Management, \$30,000 to organize and promote Happy Valley Music Fest.

“The Board of Commissioners is in awe of the monumental dedication that our tourism industry has demonstrated over the past year to combat the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Centre County Commissioner Chairman Michael Pipe. “This second round of grants to local organizations will help to prepare the Centre County tourism industry for a strong rebirth as we exit the pandemic in the near future.”

The application process for the 2021 Tourism Grant program will open soon, with an application deadline of April 30. Smith said the HVAB and commissioners are committed to providing financial assistance to as many worthwhile, eligible projects as possible in the face of another challenging funding environment. In order to help our community recover, priority consideration will be given to proposals that generate significant visitation from outside of the region and overnight rooms booked.

“We are pleased that despite the hardships presented by COVID-19, the grant program has and will continue to provide some level of funding assistance to events and projects that make Happy Valley inviting to visitors, and that create a highly desirable quality of life for local residents,” he said.

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