



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Lesley Kistner

Public Affairs Director

LesleyK@happyvalley.com

814 769-9490

HVAB CARES Act grant gives boost to safety messaging County funding supports responsible travel campaign

STATE COLLEGE, PA, Jan. 8, 2021 – A CARES Act grant awarded to **The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau (HVAB)** by Centre County Commissioners helped the county’s tourism promotion agency create a comprehensive marketing campaign emphasizing community safety and responsible travel.

“Local economic recovery hinges on a rebound in visitation,” said HVAB President and CEO Fritz Smith, noting that Centre County has lost more than \$131 million in visitor spending in 2021, among other impacts. “At the same time, the continued need to stop the spread of COVID-19 and keep the community safe is paramount. We envisioned a campaign that presented safety in an upbeat way that both reinforced protocols and expectations while properly showcasing Happy Valley’s unique tourism assets.”

Smith said with the HVAB’s own revenue stream severely constrained as a result of the pandemic, the CARES Act grant made the campaign possible.

“Other areas of the state are actively marketing their locations,” he said. “The competition among safe, affordable drive market destinations – those expected to rebound first – is fierce. It is important to keep Happy Valley top of mind to potential visitors for when they feel comfortable traveling and it is appropriate to do so. We believe the campaign achieved the proper balance between reinforcing safety and marketing the region.”

The HVAB worked with CoolPixx Media, HVAB members and community volunteers to create a memorable video that matched important safety messaging to locations throughout the county.

-more-

In one scene of several scenes, radio personality Jason Browne informs viewers that social distancing is no problem in Happy Valley, as he rides the trails at Harvest Fields and meets friends at historic Rowland Theatre.

In another, Brian Black, Director of Hospitality Industry Relations for Penn State University, and his family stress that Happy Valley is “wild about safety,” as Penn’s Cave & Wildlife Park’s famous Nittany lion makes a perfectly timed on-camera appearance.

The video closes with the HVAB and community leaders emphasizing that it takes visitor safety and community health seriously, before asking viewers to visit responsibly in the future.

Working with Pennsylvania Tourism Office partner Miles Media, the video has been promoted on “over-the-top” steaming media, paid social media, and digital and print ads. Promotions have also included [Youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com), HVAB social media channels and website placement.

The safety campaign also includes a library of more than 30 blog articles written by local writers that showcase local businesses and their COVID safety protocols.

“We wanted to recognize the tremendous effort by our establishments to keep employees and patrons safe,” Smith said.

The blog articles are being promoted on the HVAB’s social media platforms, introducing a broad audience of local resident and potential visitors to those businesses.

“The Centre County Commissioners would like to congratulate the board and staff of the Happy Valley Adventure Bureau on their hard work,” said Commissioner Mark Higgins. “We know the tourism industry in Centre County is experiencing difficult times during the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope the video produced with CARES ACT funding is helpful.”

Higgins said the video shows the commitment of the Centre County tourism industry to safety and responsible travel.

“We thank all who participated in the filming,” he said in reference to the many community members who took time to appear in the video.

Smith said he appreciates the commissioners’ focus on safety and recognition of the importance of visitation to the economy, and to the recovery of hotels, restaurants, shops and attractions that have suffered greatly over the past year.

“Happy Valley has the assets, the open spaces and the recreational opportunities to be an ideal destination for safe, enjoyable experiences,” he said. “We are confident that responsible visitation can occur, and we thank the county for providing CARES Act funding to help ensure that it does.”

###