



MEDIA CONTACTS

Kaylie Moore

Journalist

724-317-6924, kmoore@fayettecountypa.info

Kristi Rooker Kassimer

Public Relations, Digital Media Specialist

412-691-0262, kkassimer@fayettecountypa.info

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FAYETTE COUNTY VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER NOW OPEN

Uniontown, PA – Following a successful 2017 trial season, the Fayette County Visitor Information Center celebrated its official grand opening Friday, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house.

Located at 3738 National Pike in Farmington, the center was created through a cooperative effort by The County of Fayette, Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, Fayette Chamber of Commerce and Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort.

Joe Hardy, Founder of Nemaocolin Woodlands Resort and 84 Lumber, and Founder & CEO of Hardy World, LLC, kicked off the ceremony. "This will be a real focal point for the entire area," Hardy said.

"I think we have so many treasures in this county and it's about time we fess up and all be ambassadors," he continued. "We have a good team to make the whole United States focus on this place."

Fayette Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Muriel Nuttall said the planning process began in late 2016, at the same time as the change in hotel tax collection from 3 percent to 5 percent.

The former Joe Dogg's hotdog stand was transformed to create the visitors' center, which promotes both the county and region. It is staffed by Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau employees to assure one-on-one conversation and provide each visitor with a unique, personal experience.

"The center is beautifully designed to welcome visitors to Fayette County and to the Laurel Highlands," Nuttall said.

The Fayette County Visitor Information Center had 1,800 visitors from 34 states during its May 25 - Oct. 28 soft opening last year. Additionally, almost 50 international visitors from such places as Taiwan, Belgium, China and South Africa stopped by.

Of the inquiries recorded, information on local dining and hiking venues were requested nearly 900 and 800 times, respectively.



Frank Lloyd Wright’s architectural marvels and campgrounds were also highly requested. Additionally, visitors sought information on bike trails, other forms of lodging, rafting and ziplining.

Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau Director Ann Nemanic said the center is a “welcoming, beautiful space,” blending modern technology with personal touches, including artist colony sculptures selected by Nemaocolin’s Maggie Hardy, which showcase regional agriculture and other amenities.

“Just things like those sculptures provide enhancements to the visitors’ center that no one else would think of,” Nemanic said.

The visitors’ center will be open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday to Sunday through the end of May. Beginning Memorial Day weekend, the center will be open for the same hours, seven days a week.

Business hours will return to weekends only beginning in September until the center closes for the season at the end of October.

Nuttall said the center’s goal is to heighten and lengthen visitors’ experiences in the area in ways that make them feel both welcomed and wanted.

“We are blessed with a beautiful area, abundant in history and nature,” Nuttall said. “A stop at the visitors’ center gives us a chance to bring the variety of amenities to our guests that will help to assure a good visit and, hopefully, a quick return to the area.”

Fayette County Commissioner Dave Lohr thanked all involved for bringing the project to fruition.

“Our tourism industry keeps growing and the more information available will bring more people and businesses,” Lohr said. “Working together, the county is going to become the great place that it can be.”

Fayette County Commissioner Vincent Vicites said the visitors’ center is a great example of teamwork.

“Laurel Highlands tourism does a great job of getting people to come to this region, but once they are in Fayette County, we want them to visit more tourist attractions and spend more money here during their stay,” Vicites said. “(I look) forward to officially opening the center with maximum public outreach to let people know about tourism-related events and venues to maximize our tourism promotion in the future.

“Fayette County tourism is one of our top industries and we have to continue to improve it for the growth of our county.”

Commissioner Angela Zimmerlink said she has been a proponent of having a centralized visitors’ center in Fayette County for many years.



“While the county has taken over an already existing visitors’ center, it will help Fayette County but it does not go far enough to market and promote our county and its many amenities,” Zimmerlink said.

With tourism a leading industry in Fayette County, the visitors’ center is expected to have a significant economic impact throughout.

Nuttall said she’s most looking forward to showcasing all the county and region have to offer while collecting data to grow the tourism industry in the future.

“We need to grow our industry with the added bonus of sharing the beauty of this area with new visitors,” she said.

For more information, visit www.laurelhighlands.org, www.fayettechamber.com or www.nemacolin.com.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.info.

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