



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 6, 2018

FAYETTE HOSTS PUBLIC RELATIONS ALLIANCE

Uniontown, PA – Fayette County welcomed approximately 60 travel journalists and 70 public relations professionals last week, as the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA) hosted their 15th annual Media Marketplace in the Laurel Highlands.

MATPRA is a cohesive unit of regional tourism partners encompassing Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. The alliance works together to serve travel journalists in order to promote the Mid-Atlantic region as a travel destination.

After more than one year of planning with the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau and Nemaquin Woodlands Resort, MATPRA spent three days and two nights exploring the region's many tourism assets, including Ohiopyle State Park; Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater and Kentuck Knob; and the Great Allegheny Passage in Fayette.

Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau Executive Director Ann Nemanic said MATPRA was both a huge undertaking and enormous opportunity for the region.

"We appreciate the collaborative partnership with Joe and Maggie Hardy, the management team and associates at Nemaquin Woodlands Resort and all our supporting tourism partners and fellow destination marketing organizations," Nemanic said.

The writers were able to choose their own adventure during their stay, with offerings ranging from art classes and zip lining, to whitewater rafting and bicycling.

"We know today's visitors want an experience," Nemanic said. "There is no better way for a journalist to write about our region and our tourism assets than by a complete immersion themselves.

LHVB Director of Public Relations and Community Outreach Anna Weltz began attending MATPRA Media Marketplaces in 2016. She said interested organizations must apply to host the event at least one year in advance.



“The (visitors bureau) has been a member and supporter of MATPRA for many years,” Weltz said. “The media guests had to apply to attend and were closely vetted by the MATPRA media committee for quality of work, level of production, outlet or publication outreach and potential additional outreach via personal blogs or social media outlets.”

The Fayette Chamber of Commerce and Fayette County Board of Commissioners played key roles in supporting the event and ensuring its success. All local tourism partners work well together on a regular basis, Weltz added.

“The Laurel Highlands has great name recognition, but bringing in a group of well-traveled, inquisitive, well-connected travel journalists is a wonderful way to reinforce the brand and expose new readers and social media followers to its assets,” Weltz said.

Fayette County commissioners Vincent Vicites and Dave Lohr attended MATPRA’s opening celebration.

“We wanted them to know how much Fayette County appreciates them coming to visit and we wanted to express how important tourism is in our county,” Vicites said.

Lohr said it was an honor to have the group visit Fayette.

“They got a good look at our county and, even with the rain, the beauty dazzled them,” Lohr said. “They will carry what they see back to their home areas and tell others.”

Fayette County Commissioner Angela Zimmerlink said the entire region will benefit from MATPRA’s visit.

“(They can) take back their experiences to share with the Mid-Atlantic area in the hopes of spreading the word about the great tourist opportunities we have in our Laurel Highlands,” Zimmerlink said.

Fayette benefited significantly from the event, Weltz said, because “Tourism, economic development and quality of life go hand-in-hand.”

“I love where I live and am proud of my neighbors, our communities and our tourism partners,” she said.

For more information about the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, visit www.LaurelHighlands.org, call 800-333-5661 or search for Laurel Highlands on Facebook and Twitter.

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

###

This communication is part of the Fayette County PR Initiative, which is funded through the 2016 Fayette County Local Share Account (LSA) in cooperation with the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, The



Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, The Redstone Foundation and other partners. This funding has been designated for the continued promotion and marketing of Fayette County, PA.