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## **FAYETTE COUNTY PR INITIATIVE MARKS FIVE YEARS, CELEBRATES FACES AND PLACES DESIGNATION**

**Uniontown, PA** – Back in 2017, when Fayette County made the news, it was most often for something less than flattering. So, the Fayette County Public Relations (PR) Initiative was born to combat the stream of negativity and let members of the community know about the many good things that happen within the county.

The PR Initiative, a branch of the Fayette Chamber of Commerce, celebrates its fifth anniversary this month.

In honor of the milestone, the PR Initiative has earned the Faces and Places designation for November.

“The PR Initiative was initially funded through a Local Share Account grant with the (Fayette County) Redevelopment Authority,” Fayette Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Muriel Nuttall said. “The project was created because of the continued negative publicity that was reported, primarily by the regional news stations. It was a situation where we basically concluded that the news was always negative because no one was talking about all the positive things that were happening in a way that would make it stand out to the media. We started with just writers and grew the project quickly to include social media, and now, television.”

Nuttall said the project may have started small but has continued to thrive in its mission of highlighting the positive aspects of Fayette County. Public Relations Specialist Kristi Kassimer Harper and Journalists Kaylie Moore and Jamie Rankin seek out stories that reflect the positive events occurring in the county. Each month, the initiative also features its Faces and Places designee, a place or individual deserving of special recognition. “We started slowly and in a way that intentionally built a foundation of trust in the community and with local government,” Nuttall continued. “Once we felt as though we were accepted and respected, we continued to grow.”

A key element was the development of a new logo, which was unveiled in April 2018 to depict the county’s strong ties to agriculture, history, business, tourism and more. The logo was created after extensive countywide research. The final image was developed in conjunction with Reach Marketing and Design of Uniontown.

“It was important when we started working with the PR Initiative that we created a unified brand,” Nuttall noted. The Fayette Chamber worked closely with the county commissioners to select an appropriate image. Nuttall said they initially approached a large firm, but their concepts for the logo did

not mesh. “That’s when we decided to work with someone who understood what we wanted and who understood the County well – the firm chosen was Reach Marketing & Design,” Nuttall said.

She said Reach Marketing proved better able to understand their vision, “It was really just listening to what they wanted and putting my love of the county into making it as representative as possible,” Wendy Gaither of Reach Marketing said.

Nuttall noted each element of the logo has meaning, such as the rising sun, which signifies the county’s continued economic development potential.

Public Relations Media Specialist Rick Fike joined the team in 2022 as the initiative began its expansion into television. “I joined the PR Initiative in January 2022 and immediately began the process of installing TV screens in the Fayette County Courthouse to provide valuable information and resources to all who are able to see the TVs,” Fike said. “Another function of the video side of the PR Initiative is the managing and creating content for Fayette County TV and the Fayette County YouTube channel. Fayette TV airs locally produced content highlighting all of the great things happening in the county of Fayette. We are on Breezeline Channel 77, and (were) added to the HD lineup at QCOL TV on Channel 77 this past fall.”

The PR Initiative has garnered support from the Fayette County commissioners, with Commissioner Chairman Dave Lohr noting he has been involved in the project from the start. “I believe Fayette County is a great place to live, work and play but, for far too long, we weren’t doing a good job of telling our story. Yes, tourism has been a big industry here for a long time, so obviously some people knew this was a worthwhile place to visit, but right within Southwestern Pennsylvania, our success stories weren’t being told,” Lohr said. “I proposed developing the PR Initiative to change that, to get the word out that this is not only a great place to visit, but a great place to work, to live, to put down roots and grow a family. I’ve been told that I’m the best cheerleader Fayette County has, but I’ve passed that torch to our PR Initiative. We’re getting the word out about Fayette County – that it’s not just a beautiful place to visit, but that we have talented people and world-class companies making unique products that are sold around the world. With the PR Initiative working to get our good news out, to show the positive things that are going on in Fayette County, everyone wins, because when the county thrives, the people within the county thrive as well.”

Commissioner Vince Vicites said the project has been quite beneficial in publicizing the positive aspects of living in the county. “After five years of informing the community and the outside area of all the positive things going on in Fayette County through our PR Initiative, I believe it’s begun to transform our county into being viewed in a much more positive light,” Vicites said. “During the past five years, we have seen many of our citizens take notice of this change and feel good about and want to be part of the progress of a better Fayette County. Many citizens are volunteering for boards and committees and asking how they can help in this effort.”

Commissioner Scott Dunn also acknowledged the initiative’s accomplishments thus far. “Congratulations to the PR Initiative on five years. I’m always grateful to read all the positive things going on in the county,” he said. “The addition of Rick’s videography really compliments the writing skills, in house, of Kaylie, Kristi and Jamie. We are a big county. I like that one part of the county gets to see what’s happening in other areas. Highlighting the entire county for positive impact touches the economy in many ways, including tourism, education and training, and business attraction. Keep up the good work!”

Nuttall said she expects to see the PR Initiative continue its upward trajectory in the next several years. “The goal of the PR Initiative moving forward is to continue to grow and develop. Fayette County is a very active and vital community that is quickly changing. The anticipated growth over the next few years will bring about the need for a continuous feed of solid project updates,” she said. “Adding television now county-wide will make a big difference in the way the news is shared and delivered. Also important is the addition of the closed-circuit television system at the courthouse where we can work to share information specific to the needs of those visiting there. That portion of the project will also continue to develop.”

To keep up with the PR Initiative, follow the Fayette County social media channels on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube by searching “@FayetteCoPA”. To read current and archived news releases, visit [www.fayettecountypa.net](http://www.fayettecountypa.net).

For more information about Fayette County, visit [www.fayettecountypa.org](http://www.fayettecountypa.org).

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