

Lehigh Valley's Quality of Life Showcased to 1M Visitors at Musikfest

By Paul Muschick

BETHLEHEM- The nation's largest free, ungated music festival drew more than 1 million people to the Lehigh Valley, introducing visitors from 48 states and at least nine other countries to the region's quality of life.

Musikfest 2024 in Bethlehem included 422 musicians on 16 stages spread across more than 50 acres within the Historic Moravian District and the SouthSide Arts District, over 11 days.

Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp. (LVEDC) participated in Musikfest, promoting the region's new branding and highlighting some of the attractions that make the Lehigh Valley such a special place.

LVEDC's booth at SteelStacks featured a selfie station with a map where guests could point to their favorite Lehigh Valley destinations. LVEDC also distributed swag featuring a new logo launched last year in partnership with Discover Lehigh Valley®.



LVEDC gave away "Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania" T-shirts; cooling towels; temporary tattoos; stickers; and "Made in Lehigh Valley" charms designed to attach to Musikfest mugs, backpacks, or keychains. Tickets to two of the headliner shows, Big Time Rush and Ludacris, were given away during free drawings.

Tourism and economic development go hand-in-hand. All those visitors are exposed to the Lehigh Valley's high quality of life and livability, which bolsters the region's economic development efforts. Companies want to locate in vibrant communities where there are ample and various cultural and entertainment options for their employees. Employees who find their communities to be engaging and interesting are more likely to put down roots and stay.

This was the 41st year of Musikfest. It drew 1,020,000 attendees from 48 states, including Alaska and Hawaii, along with Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. People came from Canada, Italy, Mexico, England, South Africa, Columbia, Taiwan, Spain, and Australia, according to ArtsQuest, the nonprofit that organizes Musikfest.

Fifteen of the stages at Musikfest are free. They offer a wide variety of genres, including polka, classic rock, Indie, pop, Latin, country, rap, blues, classical, soul, and children's/family.

The 11 ticketed headliner shows at the Wind Creek Steel Stage sold a record 54,786 tickets. Four of those shows were sellouts, setting another record.

The total festival attendance was down from 2023's record of 1.33 million, amid several days of rain from the remnants of Hurricane Debby.

"Musikfest 2024 was unlike the last few years, weatherwise," said Kassie Hilgert, President and CEO of ArtsQuest. "When the weather is great, it's easy to put on a successful festival. This year brought challenges, and every single member of our Musikfest team of staff and volunteers, along with our law enforcement community and city officials, came together to support one another in every way possible. It's that teamwork that helped to make this year's festival a big success, especially with the records that we set. This festival brings people from across the country and worldwide to Bethlehem, now a UNESCO World Heritage site. We're excited for them to visit our city and attend not only Musikfest, but also visit the local businesses that thrive here."



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