

Tourism: Keystone to a Prosperous Tomorrow

By State Rep. Ann Flood

PEN ARGYL - Pennsylvania is contending with ongoing outmigration and falling population as residents leave the Commonwealth in search of new opportunities for their families. With our total population loss ranking as the fourth highest in the nation, the loss of residents, their talent and their resources has been detrimental to our state economy, finances and culture. Between 2019-20, the Commonwealth experienced a \$1.2 billion economic loss due to outmigration alone.

An unrecognized and underused keystone in the fight to stem this mass exodus is tourism. People want to live in exciting vacation destinations and Pennsylvania has an opportunity to leverage its abundant natural resources and unique regional events to highlight the Commonwealth as a premier destination for growing families and sustainable careers.

Tourism is already an integral, yet often overlooked, economic driver for Pennsylvania, which creates far-reaching benefits to households, businesses and communities. With over 180 million visitors and direct visitor spending of \$38 billion in 2021, tourism generated a total economic impact of \$66.3 billion for Pennsylvania, sustaining more than 450,000 jobs and providing \$4.2 billion in state and local revenue.

The Lehigh Valley is an excellent example of the natural wonders, attractions and hospitality that Pennsylvania has to offer. With its robust tourism infrastructure, the Lehigh Valley sees over 16 million visitors annually, providing thousands of local job opportunities, ranging from first-time jobs to family-sustaining careers, and entrepreneurial prospects. With over \$2.1 billion in visitor spending per year, the Lehigh Valley is booming with future potential.

The Lehigh Valley is home to the nation's largest free music festival, Musikfest, which draws both world-renowned and emerging musicians each year, while supporting local food vendors and artists over the 10-day event. The southside venue, built and supported by the local nonprofit ArtsQuest at the historic site of the Bethlehem SteelStacks, is home to various community events throughout the year, including Oktoberfest and Christkindlmarkt, creating additional economic and social opportunities for both residents and visitors.

These cultural and social amenities make the Lehigh Valley an enticing place to visit and live, and provide an encouraging environment to start businesses and grow families, further supporting the community, region and state.

To stay competitive with other states, it is critical that Pennsylvania invests its attention and capital toward outreach efforts, such as destination image branding as seen in the iconic campaigns of "Virginia is for Lovers," "What Happens in Vegas" and "Pure Michigan." Encouraging state-sponsored campaigns to highlight the opportunities available for visitors, businesses and talent would be an invaluable public investment toward drawing both short-term visitors and long-term residents alike to Pennsylvania.

Our Commonwealth has so much to offer visitors and residents. Supporting the tourism industry is paramount to providing every Pennsylvanian hope for a prosperous tomorrow.



THE NAZARETH AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESENTS:

Nazareth Fall Festival 2023

OCTOBER 21, 2023 | 2:00 PM-6:00 PM

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REAL FACTS.

64%
OF TEENS

ARE UNAWARE THAT
FENTANYL IS BEING USED
TO CREATE FAKE PILLS

460 FROM 2015-2021
REPORTED ACCIDENTAL
OVERDOSE DEATHS
IN NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PA

PENNSYLVANIA HAS ONE OF THE
HIGHEST RATES OF OPIOID
OVERDOSE IN THE NATION.

76,975 FROM 2018-2022
DOSES OF NARCAN
GIVEN BY EMS

4 OUT OF **10**
PILLS
BOUGHT ON THE STREET
CONTAIN LETHAL DOSES
OF FENTANYL

Local NARCAN Trainings

NARCAN is a nasal spray that can be given to a person to reverse a fentanyl overdose. Take a course and learn how to respond to an overdose and get free NARCAN.



Treatments and Resources

Visit FAKEISREAL.ORG or call 610-829-HELP for information about treatment facilities and other supportive resources.

Find a Complete List of Treatment

Facilities & Resources at FakelsReal.org



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