

# 2020 Annual Report



Mercer County CVB has a responsibility to increase tourism and be an economic driver for our state's economy. 2020 was one of the most challenging years in our existence. Our industry was forced to shift their focus, cut costs and look for creative ways to sustain tourism dollars in our communities and regions.

As an accredited member of the WVACVB, we work hard to have good relationships with all the tourism entities in the state and most importantly, the WV Tourism Office. We foster a strong support of tourism through partnerships and cooperation with our partners in the industry. These partnerships have been essential in navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, communicating vital information to our local businesses and working together to sustain safe visitation measures and practices.

This report recaps the efforts during one of the most challenging periods for our industry. We believe Mercer County is poised to be a popular destination for travelers in 2021 seeking our beautiful scenery, outdoor recreation and amazing hospitality.

*Jamie Null*

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When life hands you  
*lemons*  
use the opportunity  
to add some  
*zest*  
to your life.



Mercer County CVB collaborated with other area CVBs on a regional guide—drawing attention to a larger crowd. The project is part of the WV Tourism Office co-op advertising program. In response to the economic challenges, the office extended their match from 50/50 to 80/20.

## Response

The unique circumstances and challenges of 2020 put the CVB in a difficult position, to say the least. Our number one responsibility is to attract visitors. Because of the pandemic, we needed to shift gears and fill a different role in our communities. We created multiple “shop local” campaigns and a real-time restaurant/dining guide for carry-out/deliveries.

We realized that we need to be a platform for our community during times of hardship, so we launched an industry newsletter to keep partners up-to-date, and created a COVID-19 resource webpage for our community.



*We supported  
our partners.*



## Resilience

After recent growth in visitation to Mercer County, the pandemic slowed travel in the first half of the year. However, as the pandemic continued, we began to see travelers identifying the region as a safe place to visit because of our amazing outdoors and smaller population. The ATV trails continued to see visitation during the summer and fall months.

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**CVB staff attended virtual conferences, meetings and education sessions during the pandemic.**

## 2020 Major Achievements

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## Direct Spending

According to the West Virginia Tourism Office and a 2018 study by Dean Runyan Associates: "West Virginia Travel Impacts Research," previous year, released in Oct. 2019

Direct spending by tourists	<b>\$111.3 million</b> an increase of 4.6 percentage, from 106.4
Local and State Taxes	<b>\$9 million</b>
Households in our county	<b>24,882</b>
Tourism Jobs	<b>1,200</b>
Earnings from those jobs	<b>\$27.3 million</b>
Because of tourist spend in our region, each household pays	<b>\$357 less taxes</b>

## Recovery

We will continue to drive traffic to our community page and engage our local partners in a shop local initiative. We will also combine eco-tourism into our campaigns in response to the heavy outdoor traffic. Our scenic destinations are a unique differentiator.