

DISCOVER  
*Lancaster*



**2022**  
**YEAR IN REVIEW**



# DISCOVER LANCASTER

## MISSION

To inspire people to visit and Discover Lancaster.

## VISION

Lancaster County is a timeless place for all to gather, explore and rejuvenate.

## DISCOVER LANCASTER TEAM MEMBERS

### 2022 EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hope Graby, Chair  
Scheffey

Jonas Nissley, Vice Chair  
Nissley Vineyards

Sara Murphy, Treasurer/Secretary  
Sight & Sound Theatres

Rebecca Gallagher, Past Chair  
The Historic Smithton Inn

Devon Burnley  
Burnley Enterprises, Inc. of  
Kitchen Kettle Village

Ashley Fleck  
DoubleTree Resort Lancaster

Jim Launer  
Spooky Nook Sports

Kevin Molloy  
Lancaster County Convention  
Center Authority

Lisa Riggs  
EDC Lancaster County

Stephen Sikking  
Eden Resort & Suites + Fulton  
Steamboat Inn

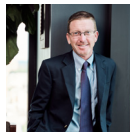
Carl Smucker  
Smucker Village + Treasure Place



ED HARRIS  
President & CEO



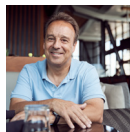
SARAH LONG  
Director of  
Marketing &  
Partnership



CHRIS ACKERMAN  
Director of Sales



KYLEE MCGUINNESS  
Sales  
Coordinator



JOEL CLIFF  
Director of  
Communications  
& Advocacy



BRYCE MERKT  
Digital Analyst



JULIE DAUTRICH  
Tourism Sales  
Manager



VICTORIA NONAMAKER  
Content  
Coordinator



MATT FAHNESTOCK  
Administrative  
Coordinator



OLIVIA NOVAK  
Marketing  
Manager



JUDY GERHART  
Director of  
Finance &  
Administration



KATIE ZIMMERMAN  
Partnership  
Manager

### PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

Marla Blank, Accounting Assistant

Wanda Wayne, Visitors Center Coordinator

Christine Weaver, Supervisor of Visitor Services



Front cover: **AARON & JESSICA'S BUGGY RIDES** | Photo courtesy of Gabe McMullen



# A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Discover Lancaster partners and friends:

As we reflect on 2022, it's safe to say that last year was a successful one for Lancaster County tourism, and I'm very happy with what our team accomplished on behalf of the industry.

In looking at key performance metrics that we measure, we saw significant gains in several areas compared to 2021. For example, growth in website users was 22%, which nicely complements industry-wide efforts that resulted in lodging demand increasing by 11% and revenue by 25%.

In January of last year, we had reasons to be optimistic about the 12 months ahead, coming off a strong fourth quarter in 2021, but we proceeded with caution due to unknown factors like potential shifts in the economy or any new COVID variants that could dramatically impact our results. The further sizeable growth that ultimately occurred in 2022 was impossible to predict at the start.

In our journey of navigating through the pandemic and digging out of it, we've become conditioned to expect that unpredictability is our new normal, and

that's okay. We need to have plans that move our organization forward as we set out in the beginning of each year, but we also must maintain flexibility to adjust when outside factors can cause shifts in consumer spending or interests.

2023 brings us into year two of our three-year strategic plan. Our strategy will continue to focus on maintaining strong levels of leisure travel while also elevating our efforts to secure group business and helping partners & the industry continue to succeed.

Although we still face challenges like economic uncertainty and workforce shortages, Lancaster County has proven to be a resilient & innovative travel destination time and time again. For that reason, our team is confident that we will see plenty of new and repeat visitors to our area this year, and we look forward to working with you in achieving that goal.

Sincerely,

*Edward Harris*

Edward Harris  
President & CEO





# 2022 MARKETING

@MIKEYROB.PICS

The Marketing team created strong 2022 goals to aid in recovery, and surpassed all of them. The most significant was to increase our website traffic, which had returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2021. The team not only increased traffic above 2021, but by a whopping 22%. Web traffic is a strong indicator of visitor economy recovery and travel intent to Lancaster County, and allows Marketing to continue to fulfill its mission of communicating to potential visitors what an incredible destination Lancaster County is.

## MARKETING NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS

### LANCASTER STAYCATION

The marketing team highlighted "Lancaster Staycation" again, featuring things that locals can do and unique local lodging properties. Seventeen partners participated in the campaign, which encouraged locals to stay overnight at 22% off their room rate. We saw a 50% increase in referrals to lodging properties on our site. The campaign produced 35,709 pageviews to the staycation page, 2,991 outbound link clicks to participating partners, and an Average Time on Page of 2 minutes 24 seconds.

### RECORD WEBSITE NUMBERS

Fresh content on our website drove incredible gains in visitors to our website of 22% over 2021, and 57% over pre-pandemic numbers.

### NEW CAMPAIGN CREATIVE FOR 2023

Discover Lancaster produced new creative for our integrated summer & fall campaigns which ran in Philadelphia, Long Island, DC, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and nominally in the local market, with an additional small digital test in Boston & New Haven.

### VIDEO CREATION

We also began the creation of a web video series of YouTube shorts, which get repurposed on our Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook accounts.

### HOLIDAY PROMOTION

The team continued the flow of digital promotion into the holiday season, with some added TV in Philadelphia, to promote all of our holiday events and drive visitation through the end of the year. Website users increased during the holidays by 11% over 2021, and 51% over pre-pandemic numbers.





# 2022 PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership team had a busy 2022, as they sought innovative methods to support our partners in a season when the economy was uncertain, tourism was returning, but staffing was a challenge. The ability to connect with partners face-to-face at events this year was a joyful one, and the team pulled off our first post-pandemic Annual Meeting in celebratory fashion. Despite some headwinds, the team also acquired 47 new partners and attained a retention rate of 91%, both of which exceeded goals.

## *PARTNERSHIP* NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS

### **AQUISITION + RETENTION**

Combined with a partnership retention rate of 91%, Discover Lancaster ended the year with 466 partners. The partnership team onboarded 47 new partners in 2022.

### **PARTNERSHIP ADVERTISING**

The partnership team collaborated with partners and other industry members to create \$230,000 of property-specific advertising that was shared with the traveling public via our Getaway Guide, e-news, and on our website & social channels.

### **LANCASTER COUNTY COFFEE TRAIL**

In 2022, the Partnership & Marketing teams introduced a web-based "Coffee Trail" as a gamified way for visitors to explore the county and participating partner businesses. Since its introduction in August, the trail has acquired 1,520 passholders and 1,850 check-ins.

### **EXPANDED BOOKING ENGINE FOR LODGING PARTNERS**

The team also launched a new booking engine giving visitors an easier option to explore lodging options in the county and then book their stay directly through [DiscoverLancaster.com](https://DiscoverLancaster.com).

### **PARTNERSHIP EVENTS**

This year the team was excited to elevate partner events post-COVID. Discover Lancaster hosted quarterly mixers giving partners valuable opportunities to network with fellow industry leaders, stay current on tourism trends, and learn ways to maximize their Discover Lancaster benefits. In addition to an educational session in Q1 from our team covering social media, data analytics, partner page, and website best practices, the team brought in renowned keynote speaker Susan Salgado in Q3 to share her timely message "Happy Employees = Happy Customers." Engagement in these events by partners exceeded expectations and attendance ranged from 80 to 200 partners.





In 2022, the Sales team had an active and successful year, contributing to record-breaking results for tourism in Lancaster County! The team exceeded their lead room nights goal with an estimated economic impact of \$16,121,356. In addition, lodging demand (room nights sold) across the county increased 10% from 1.6M to 1.7M compared to 2021, and total revenue increased 25% from \$192.6M to \$240.7M over the same time period.

## SALES NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS

### LEADS SENT TO PARTNERS

The Sales team sent out 96 leads comprising a total of 29,439 room nights at an estimated economic impact of \$16,121,356.

### TRADE SHOWS

Additionally, Sales staff held over 350 appointments at various trade shows representing Group Tour, Student & Youth, Meetings & Conventions, Sports, and International Travel markets.

### CLIENT EVENTS

Alongside numerous Discover Lancaster Partners, the Sales team hosted client events in Philadelphia (June) and Harrisburg (December), with a total of over 60 meeting planners in attendance.

### KEYSTONE CROSSROADS

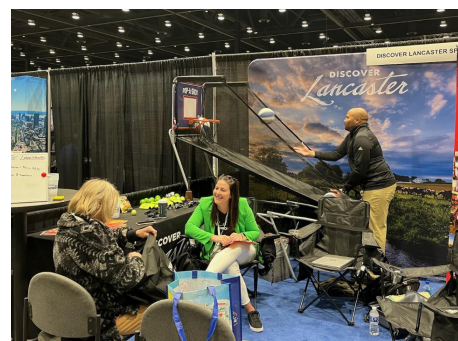
We also launched Keystone Crossroads, a regional partnership between Discover Lancaster, Destination Gettysburg, and Visit Harrisburg/Hershey to promote the broader area as a whole.

### ADVERTISING

Sales-related advertising and editorial content appeared in *Business View Magazine*, *Meetings Today*, *Mid-Atlantic Events Magazine*, *Sports Destination Management*, and the *Business Journals*.

### PARTNER COLLABORATION

The Sales team continued to host meetings to collaborate with partners, including their quarterly Sales Committee meeting. They also implemented bi-annual theater meetings to promote awareness of Lancaster's significant theater presence.





# 2022 COMMUNICATIONS & ADVOCACY

During 2022, the Communications & Advocacy team was working hard for our partners and our industry in the press, in the halls of government, and in the community – from achieving nearly \$18 million in press coverage to conducting more than 25 meetings with public officials.

## COMMUNICATIONS & ADVOCACY NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS

### BIG MEDIA METRICS

Garnered \$17.7 million in press coverage (2nd highest amount in the past 15 years), with over 900 stories and 950 million in total audience reach. Resulted from 240 separate media interactions – 136 via pro-active pitch and 104 via re-active response – including assisting 19 visiting travel journalists (16 domestic and 3 international).

### FANTASTIC COVERAGE

Particularly noteworthy national/trade story examples included FoodAndWine.com, AARP magazine, *Meetings Today*, “The TODAY Show,” *Good Housekeeping*, and *Tribune* national newswire. In our key feeder markets, examples included ABC6 Philadelphia, *New York Times*, *Northern Virginia* magazine, *Newsday*, WTOP radio (D.C.), and PhillyGrub.com.

### PRESS PITCHING

Pitched story ideas at the ASJA writers conference outside NYC in April (15-20 travel journalists), a PA State Tourism-sponsored media lunch in NYC in September (8-10), and MATPRA Media Marketplace in State College in October (approx. 20).

### NEW TOOLS

Worked with American Community Journals on periodic autumn/holiday pieces that appeared in ACJ's four Philadelphia area online media networks. Also utilized StatePoint's NY/PA newswire service for spring & fall pieces on golf, brews/wines/distilleries, and the holidays.

### GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Assisted with 25+ meetings throughout the year with city-, county-, and state-level officials (as well as periodic updates to federal representatives), including Lancaster County Commissioner presentations, Harrisburg visits in June for tourism promotion, and an advocacy night at a Barnstormers game in late July. Also supported industry COVID recovery initiatives on tax credits, international travel, hospitality & attractions grants, restaurant relief, and workforce development.

### BUILDING BACK STAFF

Helped address workforce issues by providing partners with best-practice tactics & resources, placing an industry rep on the county's Workforce Development Board, encouraging dialogue on existing & potential hospitality programs at area colleges, supporting PRLA career messaging & event initiatives, and conducting discussion of an upcoming Lancaster County Workforce report.

### GREAT LOCAL PRESS

Facilitated 18 stories regarding Discover Lancaster initiatives and/or “industry impact,” including major pre-season & mid-year *LNP* features, our meetings-oriented “free flights” partnership with Southern Airways Express, our April Hourglass Forum presentation, the release of our annual Economic Impact Report, our new Coffee Trail, our second Lancaster County Restaurant Week, and our sponsorship of a new ice-skating experience at Park City Center for the holiday/winter season.

