



putnam
county



CONVENTION AND VISITORS
BUREAU

2018-2019

ANNUAL
REPORT

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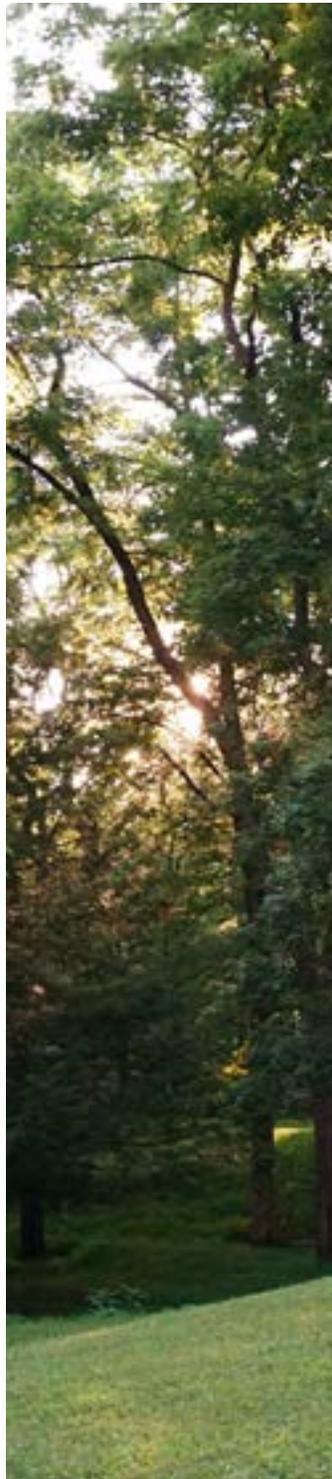
Marc Brown
FireSide Grille

David Allen Gilpin
Dave Allen Communications/
WV Secretary of State Office

Lowell Wilkes
Rivers to Ridges Heritage Trail

Evan Young
Appalachian Boarding Company

Cover photo @Winfield Bridge



Executive Overview

Putnam County is fortunate to be experiencing continued growth in population, the economy, and in travel and tourism. This across-the-board growth is a rarity in West Virginia, and we are thankful to serve our thriving communities.

This year we launched our mobile visitors center, a trailer that takes information about things to do in the county to where the people are. We are redesigning our website to allow us to better highlight things to do, and grew our social media following across all platforms. We released videos that highlight the area, and supported dozens of events. Our advertising campaign strategically targets those most likely to plan visits to our area. We provide support to local tourism partners and stakeholders, and our Visitors Guide showcases Putnam County as the thriving community it truly is.

With the opening of a new hotel in the upcoming year, we are looking forward to supporting the growing travel and tourism industry for the benefit of the businesses and residents of Putnam County.

Kelli S. Dailey
Executive Director



Events & Advertising

Event Sponsorship

We know special events is one attractor or visitors to the area, especially on weekends. Some of the events we were involved in during FY2019 include:

PRIMARY ORGANIZER

- West Virginia Food Truck Festival
- The Dog Jog 5k
- Tastes and Talents Month
- Art Outside the Walls Art Show

EVENT SPONSORSHIP AND/OR PLANNING

- Bear Wood Fairy Trail
- Go Red Girlfriends Teays Valley
- Glam Gala
- Putnam County Fair
- Putnam County Homecoming
- Putt Putnam
- The Speakeasy Fundraiser
- Treat Yo'Self to Putnam
- Veterans Appreciation Day
- Villains in the Valley
- WV Jeep Fest

The 3rd annual WV Food Truck Festival moved to Eleanor Park this year, and benefited the Sweet Julia Grace foundation.

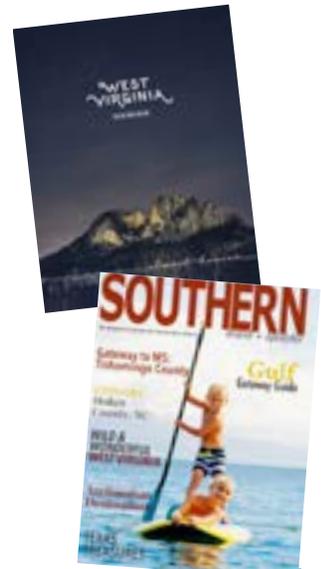


Advertising

We choose advertising strategically to promote events, attractions, and Putnam County as a destination. Some notable advertising vendors this fiscal year included:

2017-2018 Advertising Partners

- Mason County Visitor's Guide
- WV Living Magazine
- Southern Travel and Lifestyles
- GuestQuest Travel Magazine - OH edition
- Bristol Broadcasting
- WV Tourism Co-op with Madden Media Digital
- Social Media (Facebook, Instagram)



Marketing

We launched our **Mobile Visitors Center** in the spring of 2018, which allows us to take information about the area to where the people are.

In October 2019, our director traveled to the **TEAMS conference** along with CVB representatives from Huntington, Barboursville, and Charleston. This resulted in baseball tournaments being booked at Valley Park in summer 2019.



Print | Digital Reach

We had more than 5,200 different users last year from 47 states.

Visitors Guides

In April 2019 we made updates to the Putnam County Visitors Guide and reprinted a small number for distribution while working on a larger redesign for FY2020.

We directly mailed guides to 43 states and 12 countries, which does not account for those distributed through WV Welcome Centers and local attractions. We receive requests for guides directly through our website, or we receive leads from ads placed in various publications, such as the WV Travel Guide or GuestQuest.

The top states requesting Visitors Guides were West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia, Florida and Michigan.



Digital

We're been undergoing a major website update, which will be launching in the first quarter of FY2020. This will allow us to better feature

Knowing where our visitors are coming from and what they are interested in helps us make smart choices about how to spend our advertising dollars and developing our marketing strategies.

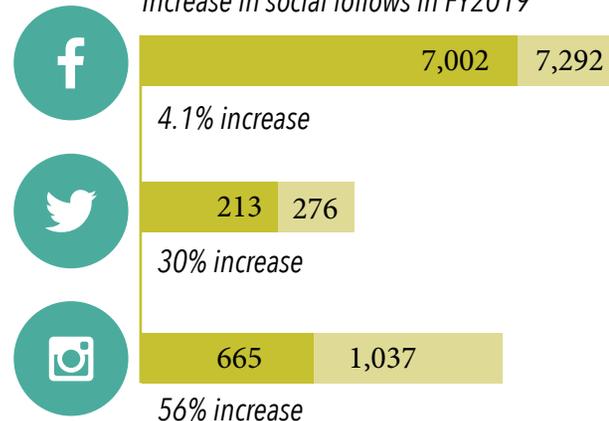
Our social media presence keeps important content in front of the eyes of residents and potential visitors.

Top site visits by state

1. WV
2. DC
3. PN
4. OH
5. VA
6. KY
7. TN
8. MI
9. NY
10. NC

Getting Social

Increase in social follows in FY2019



Economic Impact

Wages and Spending

While tourism is admittedly not one of the largest industries in Putnam County, it still packs a punch when it comes to employment, direct spending, and tax savings. Consider the following from the 2017 West Virginia Travel Impacts survey by Dean Runyan Associates.

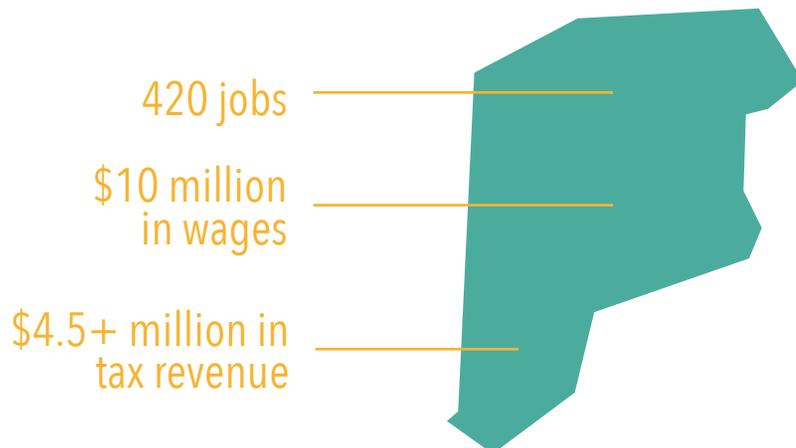


Employment

- The travel and tourism industry provides 420 jobs in Putnam County.
- Putnam County employees earned \$10 million in wages because of out-of-town visitors.

Spending

- Visitors accounted for \$58.2 million in direct spending in Putnam County during 2016.
- Visitors to Putnam contributed over \$4.5 million to the local and state tax revenue streams.

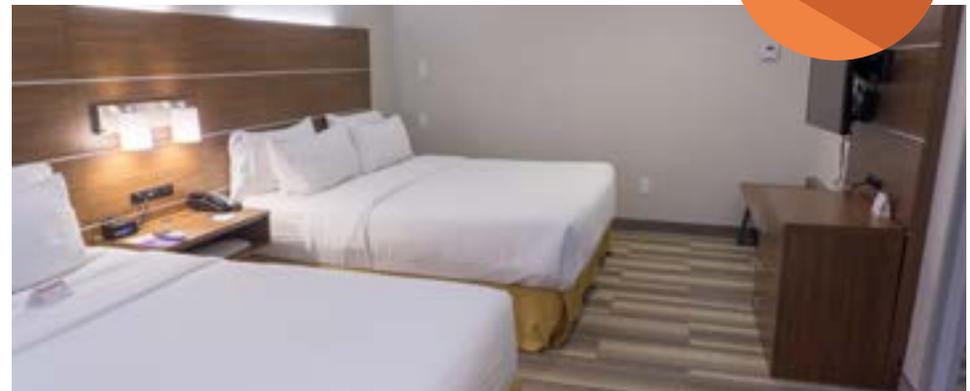


Hotel Stays: By the Numbers

According to Smith Travel Research, **hotel occupancy was up 2.9% in FY2019** vs. F Y2018, and revenue (based on rooms sold) was up 5.4%. This means we expect to see an increase in wages and spending on travel in the next year's economic impact report from the WV Tourism office.

Also according to the study, business travel (Sunday through Thursday nights) is slightly higher than leisure travel (Friday and Saturday nights), although the numbers for both are very strong.

We are working to attract both types of visitors for mid-week conferences at Valley Park Conference Center, or for weekend travel for sports, special events, or general leisure.



Goals and Finances

Looking Forward

It's an exciting time for Putnam County. Yet we never want to take for granted that people will continue to visit, so we work hard to develop meaningful, achievable goals.

After reviewing research and planning to make our budget as effective as possible, we've identified the following goals for FY2020:



- Complete and launch the website redesign in the first quarter of FY2020
- Increase social media follows and website visits
- Build more meaningful digital and print content designed to attract visitors.
- Place advertisements to reach key markets such as central Ohio, northern WV, and Washington DC., and make use of other opportunities that match travel interests that are a good fit with our tourism product.
- Implement research to learn more about the travelers to our area.
- Enhance the perception that Putnam County as a great place to live and visit through branding, imagery, and #PutnamWV strategies.
- Continue ongoing work with our tourism partners through meetings, workshops, advertising cooperative programs and social media support. This includes supporting Valley Park in efforts to bring groups to the area.
- Work with the WV Tourism Office, the WVACVB and the WVHTA to help improve and support the tourism industry across WV.



Financial Overview

Income

Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue	\$162,850
Additional Revenue	\$503

Total Income: \$163,353

Expenses

Advertising / Marketing	\$45,644
Events / Sponsorships*	\$13,261
Operations	\$33,786
Salary / Wages	\$57,606

Total Expenses: \$150,297

**Events and sponsorship expenses may include additional event-specific advertising and marketing.*





Putnam County Convention and Visitors Bureau
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VisitPutnamWV.com

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