



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CAMBRIDGE/GUERNSEY COUNTY VISITORS & CONVENTION BUREAU RECOGNIZED FOR RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC

Cambridge/Guernsey County Visitors & Convention Bureau recently received recognition for their response to the global pandemic during the Ohio Travel Association's Spirit of Ohio Travel state tourism conference, held Oct. 6-9. The VCB staff received a RUBY (Recognizing Uncommon Brilliance Yearly) Award for their demonstration of Spirit of Innovation for the video entitled *Hope* they released during the shutdown phase of the pandemic.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gO7WSifSL6w> . They also received Citations of Excellence for Spirit of the Community for a coloring book created by their summer intern, Sydney Campbell, celebrating iconic sites in Guernsey County <https://visitguernseycounty.com/blog/coloring-pages.html> as well as for online puzzles created by communications manager, Karen Castello <https://visitguernseycounty.com/blog/puzzle.html> and their holiday leisure package <https://visitguernseycounty.com/getaway-packages/getaway-packages.html> created by sales manager, Dixie Lacy.

“The leisure and hospitality industry was among the first to close its doors, among the last to open, and is subsequently the hardest hit in the Ohio economy. And yet, our businesses stepped up despite the hardships and lent a hand to those living in our communities,” said Melinda Huntley, executive director of the Ohio Travel Association. “Businesses in the travel industry responded to the crisis through not only shifting focus to supporting local businesses, but also through serving others. The stories collected through the RUBY Award process demonstrate the importance and impact of Ohio's travel industry during this time.”

Due to the pandemic and resulting shutdowns and limits on capacity, there has been a \$10.5 billion loss in traveler spending thus far in Ohio, based on weekly spending reports by Tourism Economics. Resulting job losses exceed all other Ohio industries, with current industry unemployment rates of more than 30%.

Historically, the Ohio Travel Association’s Recognizing Uncommon Brilliance Yearly (RUBY) Awards recognize excellence in Ohio’s travel industry for efforts in advertising, marketing and public relations. This year, the awards focused on two categories – how the industry has served others and how businesses have pivoted during the crisis. The awards are sponsored by *Ohio Magazine*.

“We at *Ohio Magazine* could not be more proud of how Ohio’s tourism industry has stepped up to support their local communities while at the same time being faced with incredible hardships of its own,” said Lute Harmon, Jr., president of Great Lakes Publishing. “It is a remarkable and resilient group.”

The Ohio Travel Association is the non-profit association representing attractions, destination marketing organizations, hotels, museums, suppliers, restaurants, campgrounds and other businesses who make up Ohio’s \$48 billion travel industry. For more information about the Ohio Travel Association and how to get involved with colleagues in the travel economy, visit OhioTravel.org.

For more information on Cambridge/Guernsey County and upcoming events, log onto VisitGuernseyCounty.com, e-mail info@VisitGuernseyCounty.com or call 740-432-2022.

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