

TALKING TOURISM

Sept. 2, 2018

Each month this space will be devoted to a column written by Debbie Robinson, executive director of the Cambridge/Guernsey County Visitors & Convention Bureau (VCB). She will provide information about upcoming events, area attractions, bureau services and projects, and most importantly, communicate the tremendous impact that the travel and tourism industry has on this region.

TOURISM HELPS DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Tourism is everyone's business, and in Cambridge/Guernsey County it is not only about generating great memories for our visitors, it is also about helping the local economy grow and thrive.

Tourism has a direct economic impact of \$160.9 million* in Guernsey County. Visitors also generate taxes upwards of \$23.3 million* in our area. You may also be surprised to learn, tourism is one of the largest employers in this region. More than 1,597* people are directly and indirectly are employed by a tourism related business or organization (sustaining 9.2%* of salaried employment).

Tourism is an integral and driving component of our local and state economy. Visitor spending and employment figures are essential factors to consider when evaluating the importance of travel and tourism. By shaping the quality of our lives, leisure destinations play an important role in shaping our climate for business. The indirect benefits that result from this important industry span across various industries including transportation, recreation, retail, lodging, and food and beverage.

The VCB staff and board of directors actively engage the area's tourism businesses and organizations to provide new and exciting products and services.

One the VCB's most successful programs is the Grant Assistance Program (GAP). Launched in 2013, the VCB is able to boost the local economy annually by offering a tourism grant program to qualified non-profit organizations by assisting organizations with the advertising and promotion of activities which directly increase lodging occupancy in designated periods throughout the year, create positive image building publicity for the Cambridge/Guernsey County area, and enhance the tourism environment of our area. Grants are available from a minimum of \$500 to \$5,000 and are contingent upon the amount of overnight stays the event, project or program generates. In 2018, the VCB will have invested over \$45,000 into our community.

Earlier this year, the VCB hosted its first Restaurant & Refreshment Week in conjunction with National Tourism Week (May 7-12) and the promotion of a new Food Guide. The program was a success. The event encouraged visitors and locals to explore local dining establishments and specialty shops. More than 100 entries were submitted for three gift packages worth over \$100 each in local restaurant gift cards.

We continue to create aggressive marketing plans, lobby on federal and state levels for tourism growth, and participate in industry meetings, as well as conduct local Team Tourism meetings to help our tourism partners stay abreast of the latest trends and services.

Finally, social media continues to grow in popularity and importance. The VCB is active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. We invite local residents to become a fan or follower of the VCB social media outlets – it's a great way to keep in the know with events special offers and giveaways.

*Source: TourismOhio Economics Impact 2017 Study

Events to Discover

Sept. 3	Cambridge City Band Labor Day Concert, Cambridge City Park
Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27	Guernsey County Farms & Flea Market, Old Washington Fire Department
Sept. 7, 14, 21, 28	Rise & Shine Farmer's Market, Tractor Supply Parking Lot

Sept. 7	Cambridge Main Street "First Friday", Downtown Cambridge
Sept. 8	Jerusalem Experience, Living Word Outdoor Drama
Sept. 10-16	171 st Guernsey County Fair, Guernsey County Fairgrounds
Sept. 14-15 & 21-22	Guernsey County Gospel Jubilee Fall Sing, Spring Valley Campground
Sept. 21	Chef in the Vineyard, Terra Cotta Vineyards, New Concord
Sept. 22	Main Street Fall Festival, Downtown Cambridge
Sept. 27	Chamber of Commerce Bid Bash, Pritchard Laughlin Civic Center
Sept. 29	Lore City Car Show, Lore City
Sept. 29-30	Heritage Arms Gun Show, Pritchard Laughlin Civic Center

To learn more about the VCB, area events, and activities, visit the Cambridge/Guernsey County VCB office at 627 Wheeling Avenue, Suite 200 in downtown Cambridge, call 740-432-2022, email info@VisitGuernseyCounty.com, or visit www.VisitGuernseyCounty.com.

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