



Alleghany Highlands

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & TOURISM

Tourism Action Plan

Developed with assistance by:



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Executive Summary

The Allegheny Highlands Tourism Action Plan lays out a bold and comprehensive roadmap for strengthening the region's position as a premier tourism destination for the next 3-5 years. It emphasizes growth in lodging capacity, outdoor recreation, cultural offerings, downtown revitalization, and marketing reach, while also ensuring strong community engagement and sustainable funding. The plan is designed to attract new visitors, extend overnight stays, and foster pride of place among residents.

Core Themes of the Plan:

- Expand **lodging and accommodations** through new boutique, outdoor, and downtown options.
- Invest in **infrastructure and site enhancements**, including trails, signage, and historic restoration.
- Promote **outdoor recreation and adventure tourism** with improved marketing, trails, and signature experiences.
- Modernize **marketing and digital presence** to broaden regional and national awareness.
- Foster **community engagement and cultural tourism** through recurring arts, heritage, and wellness events.
- Drive **downtown revitalization and economic growth** by reducing blight, attracting businesses, and creating vibrant “third spaces.”
- Secure **funding and partnerships** to ensure sustainable execution.

Establish a Tourism Implementation Task Force

- Form a cross-sector leadership group including local government, chamber, businesses, and community partners.
- Ensure alignment across lodging, events, downtown revitalization, and marketing initiatives.
- Use this group to set timelines, monitor progress, and build accountability.

Launch Lodging Feasibility Study (Early Priority)

- Begin the **comprehensive lodging needs assessment** (Objective 1 under Lodging Development) to identify potential sites, types of lodging (boutique, outdoor, chain), and investment opportunities.
- This will directly guide investment attraction efforts and set the foundation for visitor capacity growth.

Quick Wins in Marketing & Community Visibility

- Further promote tourism website and break down barriers for use of unified event calendar with QR code integration.
- Begin a **community-driven storytelling campaign** on social media to shift perception and engage locals as ambassadors.
- Secure early influencer partnerships for 2026 to grow digital reach.

Pilot Event & Recreation Enhancements

- Select one or two **signature community events** (e.g., art festival, outdoor wellness weekend) to showcase the region early.
- Complete **wayfinding and signage improvements** in visible areas (downtowns, trailheads) as a high-visibility win.
- Partner with Parks & Rec and local schools to ensure community participation from the start.

Kickstart Funding & Partnership Pipeline

- Establish a **Funding & Partnerships Task Force (by early 2027)** to track grants, applications, and public-private opportunities.
- Apply for at least 2–3 new grants throughout duration of plan (e.g., USDA, VDOT, tourism-related foundations).
- Initiate conversations with Norfolk Southern, U.S. Forest Service, and healthcare providers on joint investment projects.

Background

The Alleghany Highlands offers an extraordinary quality of life for its residents and an exceptional range of opportunities for visitors. The Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism office strives to enhance both by fostering a healthy business environment and promoting economic growth.

The Chamber is the unifying voice for businesses in Clifton Forge, Covington, Selma, Iron Gate, Low Moor and other parts of Alleghany County, as well as neighboring communities that do business in the Alleghany Highlands.

Since 1906, the Chamber has served the community as an action-oriented organization that has emerged as the leading advocate for commerce in the Alleghany Highlands. The chamber continues the tradition through innovative programs in the areas of business development, communications, awards, education, government advocacy, and tourism promotion.

In 2024, the Alleghany Highlands economic impact generated \$43.8 million in visitor spend, with visitors contributing \$3.2 million in state and local taxes, and tourism jobs accounting for 8% of the employment share in the region. Retail captured the highest share of visitor spending, at \$12.9 million with food and beverage trailing behind at \$11.5 million. As is later indicated in this plan, efforts to drive more overnight visitors to the area will support increasing the lodging revenues above \$9 million. These figures include Alleghany County and the City of Covington. The Town of Clifton Forge excise tax information was not available to include with Alleghany County.

Digital engagement and outreach for tourism continue to show strong and measurable growth. The tourism website recorded over 175,000 views year-to-date, an increase from 160,941 during the same period in 2024. User activity has grown significantly, with 93,000 active users—up 23% from 74,000 in 2024—and 111,144 sessions, representing a 26% increase over 2024's 88,028 sessions.

Social media performance has expanded at an even greater pace. Tourism's Facebook audience continues to grow, totaling 33,000 followers at time of drafting, reflecting growth of more than 7,000 followers in 2025 alone, compared to 5,417 new followers in 2024. Engagement on the platform increased by 35% in 2025, while reach expanded dramatically to more than 5 million people, up from 1.1 million in 2024. The organization's Instagram account doubled its following in 2025.

In addition to digital channels, the organization maintains a strong direct-marketing base with 23,000 email contacts and expanded its promotional footprint by advertising with more than 20 media outlets in 2025. The organization also demonstrated significant community and visitor engagement capacity by planning or hosting 75 events throughout the year, further reinforcing its role as a central driver of tourism, promotion, and regional activity for Alleghany County, the City of Covington, and the Town of Clifton Forge.

Allegheny Highlands Tourism Action Plan 2025-2030

Hotel & Lodging Development

- Conduct a lodging study/assessment omitting rooms occupied by utilities workers
- Feasibility study for open land and vacant buildings
- Lodging study that identifies potential sites
- Streamline various groups and efforts
- Prioritize hotel attraction efforts to accommodate visitor growth
- Attract out-of-town investors
- See if local governments could come together in a public/private partnership to purchase land or motel properties
- Development of downtown lodging/hotels (Clifton Forge)
- Central location for lodging options
- Chamber-owned hotel & center
- Continuing to encourage unique lodging options, including Airbnb and VRBO
- Boutique hotels/venues vs. chain hotels – fits local “vibe” more
- Take advantage of B&Bs we have now
- Explore outdoor lodging options (river/trail campsites)
- Renovation of Clifton Elementary to live/work art studios

Objective 1

Complete a comprehensive lodging feasibility and needs assessment by Q2 2026

Measurement

- Distinguishes long-term from visitor-use lodging
- Identifies at least 3 viable new hotel/lodging development sites
- Recommends target lodging types (boutique, outdoor, chain, etc.)

Objective 2

Engage with at least 2 new lodging development projects by end of 2027

Measurement

- One located in downtown Clifton Forge
- One developed through public-private or Chamber-led investment initiative
- Consideration to be made for conference space to host groups of varying sizes

Objective 3

Increase the number of unique/boutique lodging units by 20% by 2027

Measurement

- Incentives or promotional campaigns for B&B and Airbnb hosts
- Launch of at least one outdoor or alternative lodging site
- Establish Lodging Stakeholder group

Objective 4

Establish 2 formal partnerships by early 2027 for workforce and owner engagement

Measurement

- One with Mountain Gateway Community College to develop a hospitality certification or internship program
- One owner-engagement roundtable or mentorship program

Infrastructure & Site Enhancements

- Secure Allegheny Foundation Grant for improvements at Humpback Bridge
- Landscaping at Humpback Bridge
- C&O shops restoration for tourism
- Support C&O Historical Society to enhance renovation projects
- Longdale Furnace restoration & Green Pastures (+ Green Book Site)
- Develop CFHS (Clifton Forge High School) into shopping, art studios, apartments
- Enhance and expand the Allegheny Highlands Trail System
- Add sidewalk extensions to link Covington to Fore Mountain Trail
- Establish enhanced accessibility at Falling Spring Falls
- Work with USFS to maintain and improve Lake Moomaw facilities
- Develop Green Pastures beyond day-use park
- Public/private partnership for Lake Moomaw (Lake Lanier model)
- Work with Forest Service & Allegheny Outdoors to provide outfitter services at Lake Moomaw
- Develop downtown river walk in Covington
- #Skoolie campsites
- Complete signage and wayfinding projects
- Better wayfinding signage (listed twice)
- Each visited site/destination should have info on other area opportunities
- Education of site employees on other area attractions
- Local radio broadcast with area event information, sponsor info, etc.
- Stream the broadcast
- Finalize EV charger project in both downtowns
- Recycling centers
- Retirement/healthcare apartments/facility

Objective 1

Enhance unified visitor wayfinding system by 2026

Measurement

- Full region-wide signage/wayfinding completed across communities
- Begin pilot of radio + streaming visitor info broadcast by Q4 2026
- Incorporate community-wide signage design into outdoor recreation and trailhead kiosk signage

Objective 2

Add or improve 20+ miles of trail and recreation infrastructure by 2027

Measurement

- 3 Lake Moomaw infrastructure improvements (camping, lighting, ramp, outfitter services) - USFS
- Feasibility and conceptual plan for Green Pastures long-term development by mid-2026 (in partnership with DCR)
- Build-out of trails (5-miles added overall) to also include ADA-accessible paths (Falling Spring, river walk in Covington, sidewalk linkages throughout region)
- Further engagement on trail enhancement projects with the Allegheny Highlands Trails Alliance

Objective 3

Complete 3 major restoration or adaptive reuse projects by 2028

Measurement

- Securing grant funding for Humpback Bridge enhancements and signage in outdoor spaces
- Capitalizing on cultural heritage tourism hubs or interpretive sites
- Advancing local redevelopment through feasibility and partnership planning by end of 2026

Objective 4

Activate 2 new civic or economic hubs by 2027

Measurement

- Establishing conversations to explore site plan and development agreement for Fairgrounds/Civic Center
- Launching 1 pilot site for small manufacturing/maker space in partnership with small-business stakeholder group

Outdoor Recreation & Adventure Tourism

- Develop the mountain biking community through “Bike Alleghany”
- Market the Jackson River Scenic Trail as a premier rail-to-trail asset
- Connecting Jackson River Scenic Trail with urban walkways in Covington and historical/learning stops
- Need menus and lodging info at all Jackson River Scenic Trail trailheads
- Trail to bottom of Falling Springs Falls (low-impact, eco-sensitive)
- Map and market all hiking, biking, and walking trails
- More pickleball courts – including at Humpback Bridge
- Archery/shooting range (non-USFS) + host events
- Expand marketing to motorcycle and dual-sport tourists
- Promote mini-cations – include day trips promotions (especially weekdays)
- Utilize Roanoke media for broader reach – local and regional marketing (I-64 corridor)
- Increased marketing of outdoor amenities – include local marketing focus
- Grab influencers and locals for social media reels
- Promote parks for kids (playgrounds, mini-golf)
- Themed guided adventures (e.g., moonlight paddles, wildflower hikes)
- Kid-friendly events - promote all parks/attractions for kids
- Packaged adventures (activity + local dinner/lodging/market)
- Speak with U.S. Army BOSS (Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers) program for trip planning
- Partner with Wounded Warrior Project Virginia for veteran events
- Local awards for engagement in races
- Covington 5Ks
- Engage locals and influencers in storytelling

Objective 1

Double outdoor tourism marketing reach by end of 2026

Measurement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing at least 2 regional media partnerships (e.g., Roanoke) • Growing social media followers and digital impressions by 50% • Launching 3 seasonal "mini-cation" or day-trip themed campaigns
Objective 2
<i>Enhance and connect 3+ trail-based assets by 2027</i>
Measurement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New bike trail segments or bike-friendly infrastructure under "Bike Alleghany" • Install lodging/dining with consistent Alleghany Highlands branding info kiosks at 100% of JRST trailheads • Design/permit low-impact access to bottom of Falling Spring Falls by 2028 • At least 2 Jackson River Scenic Trail-connected urban or educational walkways
Objective 3
<i>Complete 3 major restoration or adaptive reuse projects by 2028</i>
Measurement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing grant funding for Humpback Bridge • Partnership with Dept. of Conservation & Recreation for Longdale Furnace enhancements • Advancing Clifton Forge High School redevelopment through feasibility and partnership planning by end of 2026
Objective 4
<i>Launch 5 new signature themed experiences by 2026</i>
Measurement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two seasonal guided adventure series – <i>wildflower hikes, moonlight paddling</i> • One family/kids-focused outdoor event or series

- One food + adventure package collaboration with lodging partners
- One arts + nature tour experience
- Design and implement a streamlined, scalable itinerary-building framework that improves efficiency, personalization, and consistency while enhancing the end-user experience and supporting business growth

Marketing & Digital Presence

- Adapt marketing strategies to align with the evolving digital landscape
- Increase traffic to the tourism website through targeted campaigns
- Use social media as a primary marketing tool (Goal: 50K followers by 2026)
- ExploreBoone.com (as a benchmark/user-friendly model)
- Scan codes (QR codes) used more
- Group B&B, AirBnBs, hotels on one website
- Streamline (marketing/communication tools and channels)
- One website for all events & volunteer sign-ups
- Directory of Allegheny-supported websites & social channels
- Build relationships with tourism influencers and travel writers
- Use social media influencers (general)
- Up & coming tourism influencers
- Family influencers
- Where is Waldo on IG (example of viral/creative engagement)
- Grab influencers and locals to highlight experiences
- Photo contest
- Young professionals group Facebook page promotion
- Convince the community to speak well of itself
- Get rid of the shadow! (implied: improve perception)
- Allegheny YouTube/TV channel or podcast
- Allegheny magazine (print is not dead)
- Utilize local media groups across platforms (radio, digital, print, etc.)
- Market the area as a filmmaking location
- Uniquely Allegheny App (must-do, experiences)
- Mobile App – maps, events, dining, news
- Maps curated toward interests (arts, outdoors, food)

- Better signs (physical infrastructure supporting digital)

Objective 1

Modernize Alleghany’s digital marketing ecosystem by end 2026

Measurement

- Grow combined social media following to 50,000 across platforms
- Utilize Arrivalist findings from successful grant application for data-driven decisions
- Drive a 60% increase in website traffic through targeted digital campaigns and SEO
- Refresh Alleghany Highlands tourism newsletter to drive interest to blog, itinerary, influencer spotlight, unique stays, and hidden gems

Objective 2

Leverage influencer and UGC (user-generated content) to boost reach and engagement

Measurement

- Launch 6 influencer collaborations or takeovers throughout 2026, with successful efforts continuing through 2030
- Continue to grow annual “Uniquely Alleghany” photo/video contest to collect more user generated content imagery
- Increase local social engagement by 30% through community-driven storytelling and perception-shifting campaigns

Objective 3

Diversify media channels in 2026

Measurement

- Launch one Alleghany-branded multimedia initiative (YouTube series, podcast, or TV/radio show)
- Release a quarterly Alleghany magazine (print + digital edition) by end of 2026
- Secure at least one filmmaking project or film location inquiry per year through active promotion

Objective 4

Deploy visitor-facing mobile tools by end of 2026

Measurement

- Curate thematic maps (e.g., Arts, Outdoor, Foodie) available online and in print
- Add QR code and branded mapping on signage across 10+ high-traffic sites by Q4 2026

Events & Community Engagement

- Art festivals (yearly)
- Arts/dance festival (see Jacob's Pillow model)
- Kid-friendly events
- Events at historic landmarks
- Garth Newel at Historic Masonic Theatre
- More events at the Masonic
- Use Masonic as hub
- Natural/wellness events
- Keep encouraging arts groups to work as a collective
- Strengthen Covington Parks & Rec's relationship with Sports Virginia
- Community bike/hikes/floats
- Kid-friendly events
- Natural/wellness events
- Build a local volunteer base for events
- Involve school students (parents follow)
- Speak at local community meetings, attend local events, council meetings
- Partner with Mountain Gateway CC for workshops and trainings
- Tourism Summit in 2026
- Partner with CDA (Clifton Forge School of the Arts & others for cross-education/festival content)
- Streamline various groups and efforts
- One location (online) to advertise events
- Strengthen existing resources – include QR codes
- Work on scheduling events to avoid conflicts
- Have events on different weekends
- Weak local media connectivity – need to reach I-64 corridor audience
- Use radio, digital, and social media for event awareness

Objective 1

Support recurring arts- and culture-based signature events

Measurement

- One regional-scale arts/dance festival modeled after
- Support annual art festival in partnership with local creatives and visiting artists
- Host at least 10 community events annually at signature venues in the community
- Coordinate arts organizations to host non-competing events

Objective 2

Grow community-active events to 12+ annually by end 2026

Measurement

- Collaborate with Sports Virginia on at least 2 regional youth/adult tournaments or meets
- Launch quarterly community wellness or outdoor rec events (bike, hike, paddle, yoga, etc.)
- Offer inclusive family/kid-focused recreation programming every season in partnership with local Parks & Recreation and recreation focused groups

Objective 3

Deepen civic participation and volunteer capacity for tourism events by through 2030

Measurement

- Build and maintain a volunteer database of 200+ active participants
- Partner with all local schools for student involvement in 3+ annual events
- Establish an **Allegheny Highlands Tourism Ambassador Program in 2027**
- Host a regional **Allegheny Highlands Tourism & Culture Summit in 2026** to align stakeholders
- Develop a youth engagement initiative tied to events or arts to build future community stewards

Objective 4

Improve event coordination and reach by end of 2026

Measurement

- Enable cross-team alignment in itinerary building to prevent duplication of dates and interests while improving efficiency, consistency, and personalization.
- Implement event scheduling coordination protocols with 10+ key partners to avoid overlaps
- Partner with regional media outlets to promote events across I-64 corridor
- Increase event attendance by 30% through strategic digital promotion by end of 2026
- Continue to build economic impact and attendance of outdoor events

Funding & Partnerships

- Identify additional funding sources beyond VTC & Alleghany Foundation
- A plan that links funding sources to outdoor tourism projects (FEMA, VDOT, DHCD, etc.)
- Farmers market grants / USDA
- Community grant funding for collaborative projects
- Dial-a-thons
- 5K race with race proceeds going to xyz
- Earmark % of sales tax to xyz
- Enhance public-private partnerships to attract/apply for funding
- Improve collaboration with the Forest Service
- Norfolk Southern – Thriving Communities
- Retirement healthcare living apartments
- Community sweat equity (Habitat-style project model)
- Actually have working CMTs (Community Management Teams) and council members – stop the nonsense
- Earmark % of sales tax for tourism/rec-related improvements
- Build accountability for follow-through with funding planning

Objective 1

Secure and diversify funding with at least 5 new funding sources by Q3 2027

Measurement

- At least **3 new grant applications submitted per year** (e.g., USDA, VDOT, FEMA, DHCD)
- Work with local government to explore percentage growth of local tourism tax revenues with increases dedicated to infrastructure improvements to tourism assets.

Objective 2

Initiate or deepen at least 5 strategic partnerships by end of 2026

Measurement

- One formalized MOU or joint project with the **US Forest Service** on Lake Moomaw or **DCR** with Green Pastures and Falling Springs Falls
- Establish 2 new **public-private partnerships annually** with local businesses, real estate developers, or healthcare providers
- Develop a **Community Equity Program** by 2028 that includes quarterly sweat-equity volunteer improvement projects
- Engage with at least **one corporate partner** (e.g., Dominion) on infrastructure or wellness housing investment
- Strengthen relationship with Allegheny Highlands Trails Alliance in their dedication to maintain access to the area's pathways and trails

Objective 3

Strengthen local governance alignment and funding stewardship by end 2026

Measurement

- Annual planning session with elected officials and department heads to align on priority projects
- Establish a **Funding & Partnerships Task Force** by early 2027 to track grants, deadlines, and partnerships
- Ensure at least **80% attendance** at regional collaboration meetings by community management member and council liaisons

Cultural & Heritage Tourism

- Support and promote performing and visual arts
- Support public art initiatives
- Beautifying the area with art (murals, transformer boxes)
- More events at the Historic Masonic Theatre (including Garth Newel musicians, bigger acts)
- Continue with Historic Masonic Theatre as cultural gem
- Recruit traveling exhibits (arts/history) w/ digital elements
- Highlight & promote historical attractions and the cultural heritage of the region
- Visit/tour CCC trails from the 1930s
- Events at Green Pastures
- Planned cultural and heritage weekends
- Promote via coordinated media strategies
- Recruit digital + physical exhibits to expand interpretation
- Partnerships with all groups
- Streamline various groups and efforts for farmers market and art events
- Sponsored events at AEP, Masonic Theatre, Amphitheatre
- Work on connecting outdoor tourism together between communities
- Electronic community events kiosks in Covington and Clifton Forge
- Some kind of visual arts map
- Fairgrounds in County
- More development of Farmers Market
- Covered farmers market with flexible setup in Clifton Forge
- Arts & crafts tour in Clifton Forge (e.g., Cora Dance, Masonic Theatre)
- Agritourism

Objective 1

Preserve and celebrate local heritage by supporting programming by 50% by end of 2027

Measurement

- Promote **12+ annual performing or visual arts events** throughout the year (1 per month)
- Explore **at least 3 new public art installations per year** (murals, transformer art, sculpture)
- Work with Arts & Culture stakeholder group to **promote two traveling exhibits per year** (partnering with museums or state-level programs)

Objective 2

Activate **“Cultural Alleghany” umbrella campaign** to unify art, history, music, and markets under one brand by end of 2030

Measurement

- Strengthen the **regional culture collaborative** by early 2027 (representing arts, agribusiness, history, music)
- Build out **annual business sponsorships** for cultural events
- Increase visitation to key cultural sites by **10% by 2029**, measured via sales or visitor counters

Downtown Revitalization & Economic Growth

- Support downtown revitalization initiatives and Virginia Main Street efforts (Covington & Clifton Forge)
- Focus on being a walkable community + multimodal projects
- First Fridays, extended retail hours (Sat/Sun), events timed to Amtrak
- Close Main Street during festivals (Fall Festival)
- More block parties in different areas (Art School, Jack Mason's)
- Pop-up shops and open houses
- Connect downtowns to outdoor activity assets
- Creative economy festivals (dance/arts, CDA idea)
- Create "third spaces" (casual gathering, co-working, cultural venues)
- Stronger farmers market, extended hours
- Enforce existing blight laws; secure, resell or redevelop properties
- Work with owners of derelict properties (rent or sell)
- Clean up vacant/trashed buildings in Clifton Forge
- Encourage 2nd floor living/mixed-use (housing above retail)
- Recapture retail, add housing, fill vacant storefronts
- Tax penalties for vacant/deteriorating buildings
- Property owners setting unreasonable rents – address via Main Street or policy
- Visual restoration (e.g., restoring murals/brickwork)
- Underground tours of Clifton Forge
- Attract fine dining/date night restaurants
- Diversify business types – not just office/retail
- Support and retain current businesses
- Education on importance of open hours
- Co-working spaces
- Open houses for business owners
- Creative economy business attraction

- Create a list or map of available commercial spaces for rent/sale
- Encourage upper-story residential downtown (2nd floor living)
- Encourage and inspect B&Bs, Airbnbs, hotels for code/occupancy standards
- Promote and expand short-term lodging near downtowns
- Continue to grow lodging tax revenue through increased visitation
- RADAR shuttle support on weekends (Douthat, hiking trails)
- Coordinate weekend events with Amtrak schedule
- Area day trips promoted via shuttle: spa, dining, shopping
- Thrift store tourism loop

Objective 1

Partner on "Live Local / Visit Downtown" Campaigns

Measurement

- Secure 2 traveling exhibits per year (partnering with museums or state-level programs)
- Explore tourism shuttle pilot by 2028 with 3 loops (hiking, shopping, culture)
- Promote themed weekend shuttle events annually (e.g., "Soak, Sip & Shop" tours)

Objective 2

Reduce Blighted Buildings & Expand Property Readiness

Measurement

- Promote the development of a Vacancy Dashboard and Downtown Property Toolkit by mid-2027
- Work with local government partners to decrease downtown vacancies by 12% by 2028
- Identify 10 commercial properties that can be renovated, restored, or repurposed by 2030

Objective 3

Create Event Programming That Feeds Economic Activity

Measurement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit new destination restaurants (date night/fine dining) to conduct dining pop-ups by 2029 • Launch bi-annual small business workshops in collaboration with Main Street programs • Expand pop-up or seasonal retail businesses each year
Objective 4
<i>Build Downtown Housing & “Third Space” Amenities</i>
Measurement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert or incentivize downtown 2nd-story spaces for residential use by 2028 • Encourage intergenerational housing, especially for young professionals and retirees • Increase downtown pedestrian foot traffic by 20% by 2030, using counters or mobile tracking

Conclusion

The Allegheny Highlands Tourism Action Plan creates a clear, coordinated, and forward-looking blueprint for elevating the region as a premier destination over the next five years. Rooted in extensive stakeholder input and shaped through close collaboration with Virginia Tourism Corporation, local governments, nonprofits, and private partners, the plan reflects both a shared community vision and a pragmatic path forward. It positions the Allegheny Highlands to build upon recent momentum and leverage tourism as a powerful driver of economic vitality, workforce support, and community pride.

By expanding lodging options, enhancing outdoor recreation and trail networks, revitalizing historic and cultural assets, and modernizing destination marketing strategies, the region is prepared to attract new and repeat visitors while improving the overall quality of life for residents. Importantly, this plan recognizes tourism not as a standalone industry, but as an interconnected ecosystem that supports small businesses, downtown vitality, arts and culture, and outdoor stewardship. The emphasis on community engagement—through signature events, volunteer development, educational partnerships, and

authentic local storytelling—ensures that tourism growth remains inclusive, locally supported, and true to the character that makes the Alleghany Highlands distinctive.

Critical to the plan’s success is its intentional focus on implementation. The establishment of clear governance and partnership structures, including the Tourism Implementation Task Force and the Funding & Partnerships Task Force, provides accountability, shared ownership, and measurable progress. These groups will guide prioritization, align resources, and ensure that strategies outlined in the plan translate into tangible outcomes. With a strong emphasis on diversified funding, public-private collaboration, and alignment among localities, the plan creates the conditions necessary for sustained impact rather than short-term gains.

Ultimately, this action plan is both a roadmap and a call to collective action. It builds on a foundation of demonstrated success, growing regional collaboration, and increasing visibility in the tourism marketplace. By committing to intentional, data-informed, and measurable steps, the Alleghany Highlands is well positioned to expand its reach, strengthen its economy, and tell its story with confidence. Through continued partnership and shared investment, the region can create destination experiences that inspire visitors, empower residents, and ensure that tourism remains a meaningful asset for generations to come.