

**Real.**

**PROGRESS**

**2015**

**Annual  
Report**

WILD, WONDERFUL

**WEST VIRGINIA**



# Greetings

FROM AMY SHULER GOODWIN

Wild, Wonderful West Virginia Partners,

It is with great pride I submit the enclosed 2015 Annual Report. The GoToWV Team, in partnership with members of the travel industry, has created a powerful momentum of positive change for the tourism entities within the 55 counties we call home.

This past year we launched a new branding campaign focused on our truly unique assets. We developed a new logo and a new web portal—in addition to traveling across the state to film engaging videos and build a library of compelling new photos.

We created fresh content showcasing real people and authentic experiences. We developed and put into action a robust social media strategy—and now Wild, Wonderful West Virginia is recognized as a leader in social media marketing.

We were able to achieve these successes because we recognized the critical role research, data collection, measurement and tracking play in effectively marketing the Mountain State as a world-class destination.

As we move forward and work together I am confident we can continue to drive this near \$5 billion economy which supports 46,000 jobs—bringing more domestic and international visitors to experience all the Mountain State has to offer.

Yours truly in Wild, Wonderful West Virginia,



Amy Shuler Goodwin  
Commissioner, Wild Wonderful West Virginia  
Division of Tourism

## WEST VIRGINIA TOURISM COMMISSION

**Oshel Craigo** - Chairman

**Dave Arnold**

**Robert Fala**

**John Klemish**

**Jeffrey Lusk**

**Joseph Manchin IV**

**Randy Worls**

**Richard Atkinson III**

**Ron Marcus**

**Kelly Palmer**

**Sharon Rowe**

**Peggy Myers-Smith**

**Steve White**

**Cindy L. Cramer**

**William Bright**

# Real.

## WEST VIRGINIA

*"The café did really well participating in the first Restaurant Week! We saw up to 80% new customers and great sales on our specials. Business was great that week and we were happy to see new faces."*

Ashley Butler  
3/4 Café

The Real. campaign—launched June 20, 2015—focuses on real West Virginia experiences. We have developed meaningful content that will not only inspire—but move folks to action. We've compiled hundreds of new images and traveled to communities throughout the state to film and interview real West Virginians—chefs, outdoor enthusiasts, artists, lovers, bikers, fishermen and farmers who can tell their story better than we can because their story is real.

Data-driven, people-centric, and message-specific, the Real. campaign allows us to speak to all types of travelers, both in-state and out, to share the unique experiences that we all know exist in West Virginia.

## DATA & RESEARCH

Last year we invested in research to help us better understand why visitors are coming to West Virginia and what influences their travel decisions. We learned that we fare well in scenery, mountains, and streams, but are less known for other vacation experiences. We received great insight into what influences travel decisions, which we distilled into 10 travel "hot buttons." These guided our new marketing campaign.



Campaigns have been crafted to address the 10 travel "hot buttons." Utilizing digital ads, print, social media, sponsored content, video, photos and public relations opportunities, the data-fueled launch of the Real. campaign has been met with positive feedback across the state.

\*2014 Image & Advertising Accountability Research  
Longwoods International

## TRAVEL HOT BUTTONS\*

1. A fun place
2. Good for families
3. Must-see destinations
4. Good for couples
5. An exciting place
6. Lots of things to see and do
7. Kids would especially enjoy
8. Good place to relax
9. A real adventure
10. Unique experience

# Real.

## RESULTS

"2015 was a great season for members of the West Virginia Professional River Outfitters Association (WVPRO). Great weather and perfect water levels kept people coming to enjoy America's Best Whitewater—this Gauley Season saw a 10% increase from last year. 2016 is shaping up to be another amazing season."

Bobby Bower  
WVPRO

## MOBILE VS. DESKTOP

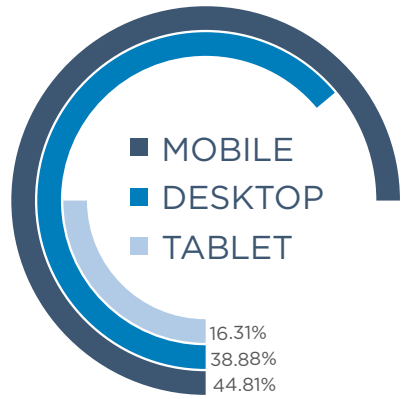
Analytics show that being accessible via mobile is incredibly important not only for those thinking of visiting, but for those that are here and looking for information.

## Ad Age

HIGHLIGHTED OUR FOCUS ON DATA



## HOW PEOPLE ARE VISITING GoToWV.com



# 1.5 MILLION

GoToWV.com WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS SINCE LAUNCH (JUNE 18)

- 167,475 Total Social Media Followers
- 65,930 Referral Clicks for Industry Partners since June 2015
- 19 M Facebook Reach
- 125 Content Pieces

## TOP REGIONS\*

1. West Virginia
2. Ohio
3. Virginia
4. Pennsylvania
5. Washington DC
6. North Carolina
7. Maryland
8. New York
9. Michigan
10. Florida
13. California
14. Texas

## TOP METRO AREAS\*

1. Charleston/Huntington
2. Washington DC
3. Pittsburgh
4. Clarksburg/Weston
5. Bluefield/Beckley
6. New York City
7. Columbus
8. Cleveland
9. Philadelphia

Research has helped us tailor our marketing efforts to provide the right message, in the right place, at the right time. Data proves our efforts are working. Traffic to GoToWV.com has increased from in-state visitors in each of the major markets and from our core-market areas.

\*Google Analytics report on site visitation from June 18, 2015 - December 2, 2015

# Real.

## ENGAGEMENT

"Harpers Ferry National Historical Park experienced a near 10% increase in visitors during fall 2015 where for the past 8 years it has been flat. The merchants also experienced growth. In fact, one local merchant whose business was devastated by the fires rebuilt in a location just steps away and touted the best September and October sales she's seen in years."

Annette Gavin  
Jefferson County CVB

### ECONOMIC IMPACT 2014 (DEAN RUNYAN)

\$4.5 BILLION TRAVEL SPENDING

\$527 MILLION TRAVEL GENERATED STATE AND LOCAL TAX REVENUE

46,000 TRAVEL RELATED JOBS



#### REQUESTS AND CALLS

63,854 INFORMATION REQUESTS (JAN-NOV)

37,847 TOTAL CALLS (JAN-OCT)



#### WELCOME CENTERS (JAN-NOV)

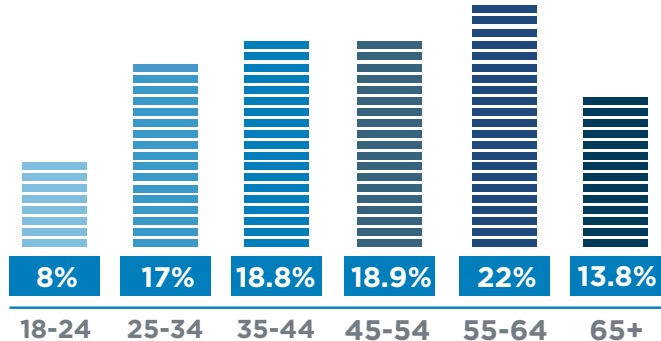
3,328,885  
TOTAL VISITORS

23,331  
INTERNATIONAL VISITORS



#### AGE RANGES\*

Travel experiences in West Virginia appeal to all interests and age groups. Our advertising placements are speaking to each age range visiting GoToWV.com.



#GoToWV

18,436

PHOTOS  
TAGGED ON  
INSTAGRAM



#### FULFILLMENT CENTER (JAN-NOV)



941,679

TOTAL FULFILLMENTS  
FOR COLLATERAL

\*Google Analytics report on site visitation from June 18, 2015 - December 2, 2015

# Real.

EARNED MEDIA

"Pricketts Fort has wrapped up another year of positive growth, from 10,500 visitors in 2012 to almost 17,000 in 2015, a 60% increase. School and group tours are up 55% just from last year. Pricketts Fort has not experienced growth like this since 1996."

Greg Bray  
Executive Director Pricketts Fort



Would you jump off THIS bridge?

15 quirky U.S. spots to visit in 2015  
(J.Q. Dickinson Salt Works)



Woman Overboard!  
Get swept away rafting Gauley River



See an entire valley change colour in this lovely timelapse



A Culinary Road Trip Through Appalachia



WV's Most Breathtaking Waterfalls



One tank destination: Train trips take you into the heart of West Virginia



Peep Show: Ten Secret Fall Foliage Getaways



The West Virginia Forests Ideal for Digital Detox Getaways



A Snow Country Road Trip

## WEST VIRGINIA FILM OFFICE

The West Virginia Film Office supports economic development through recruitment of motion picture, television, and related media productions for the state.

IN 2015

95 people participated in film workforce training workshops, many of whom were then hired on productions that filmed in the state. More than 300 people have been trained since May 2013.

More than 425 businesses were added to the Film Office's Vendor Directory, bringing the total listings to 874, (a 96% increase from 2014).

More than 35 skilled laborers registered in the Film Office's Crew Directory, bringing the total listings to 339 (a 13% increase from 2014).

There were 505 inquiries about potential filming opportunities in West Virginia. Nearly 85% of the inquiries specifically made the connection because of the Film Office's tax credit program. These connections resulted in several dozen productions choosing to film in West Virginia.

In calendar year 2015 through November, the Film Office reserved more than \$4.2 million in tax credits (24 productions). These productions plan to incur approximately \$12 million in direct in-state expenditures.

"Harpers Ferry National Historical Park visitation saw significant increases in non-traditional months (i.e., usually low visitation months). September increased 23%, and November - normally a very quiet month - was up 37%!"

Dennis Frye  
Chief Historian at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

# Awards

## STS 2015

State Tourism Office of the Year

## ESTO 2015 Road Trip

2nd runner up

## ESTO 2015

Best Public Relations Campaign  
“Go Outside and Play”

## WV PRSA 2014 *\*awarded in 2015*

Honorable Mention - Written Articles  
WV Travel Team

## WV PRSA 2014 *\*awarded in 2015*

Crystal Award - Social Media Campaign  
GoToWV Social Media

## 2015 Stars of the Industry

Tourism Professional of the Year  
Amy Shuler Goodwin

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## 2015 FILMOGRAPHY HIGHLIGHTS

### “THE WEST”

Discovery Channel (Berkeley and Jefferson counties)

### “AMERICAN SPEED”

CMT (Berkeley and Jefferson counties)

### “SOUTHERN FRIED ROAD TRIP”

Food Network (Cabell, Kanawha, and Greenbrier counties)

### “SHARK TANK”

ABC (Webster County)

### “AULD LANG SYNE”

Independent Feature Film (Pocahontas County)

### “BARNWOOD BUILDERS”

(Seasons 2-3) - DIY Network  
(Greenbrier County)

### “THE MUTINEER”

Independent Feature Film (Ohio County)

### “MEADOW BRIDGE”

Independent Feature Film (Fayette County)

# Real. FUTURE

We have taken great strides in the past year and will build upon that success, presenting West Virginia as an amazing place to visit. Developments in our in-house technology will make us more efficient. New pocket guides will help travelers have the most authentic experience possible.

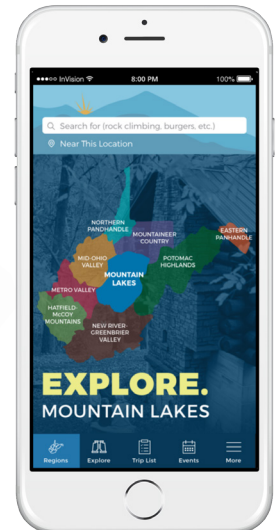


## APP iOS & Android

*On the horizon, an upcoming launch of a first-of-its-kind mobile app with beacons.*



*And this spring, the Travelocity Roaming Gnome will share the experience of West Virginia!*



# WILD, WONDERFUL WEST VIRGINIA

“Wild, Wonderful West Virginia, in collaboration with private and public partners, promotes the state as the premier outdoor destination offering unmatched natural beauty, exhilarating adventures, and authentic experiences. Tourism is a robust economic driver in the state. The tens of thousands of jobs created through the tourism industry generates billions of dollars by promoting West Virginia as a welcoming place to work, play and raise a family.”



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