



WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM ANNUAL REPORT  
**BREAKING RECORDS TOGETHER**

WEST  
VIRGINIA®

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

*almost heaven*

# TOURISM BY THE NUMBERS

## ANNUAL IMPACT

**\$9 BILLION**  
total economic  
impact

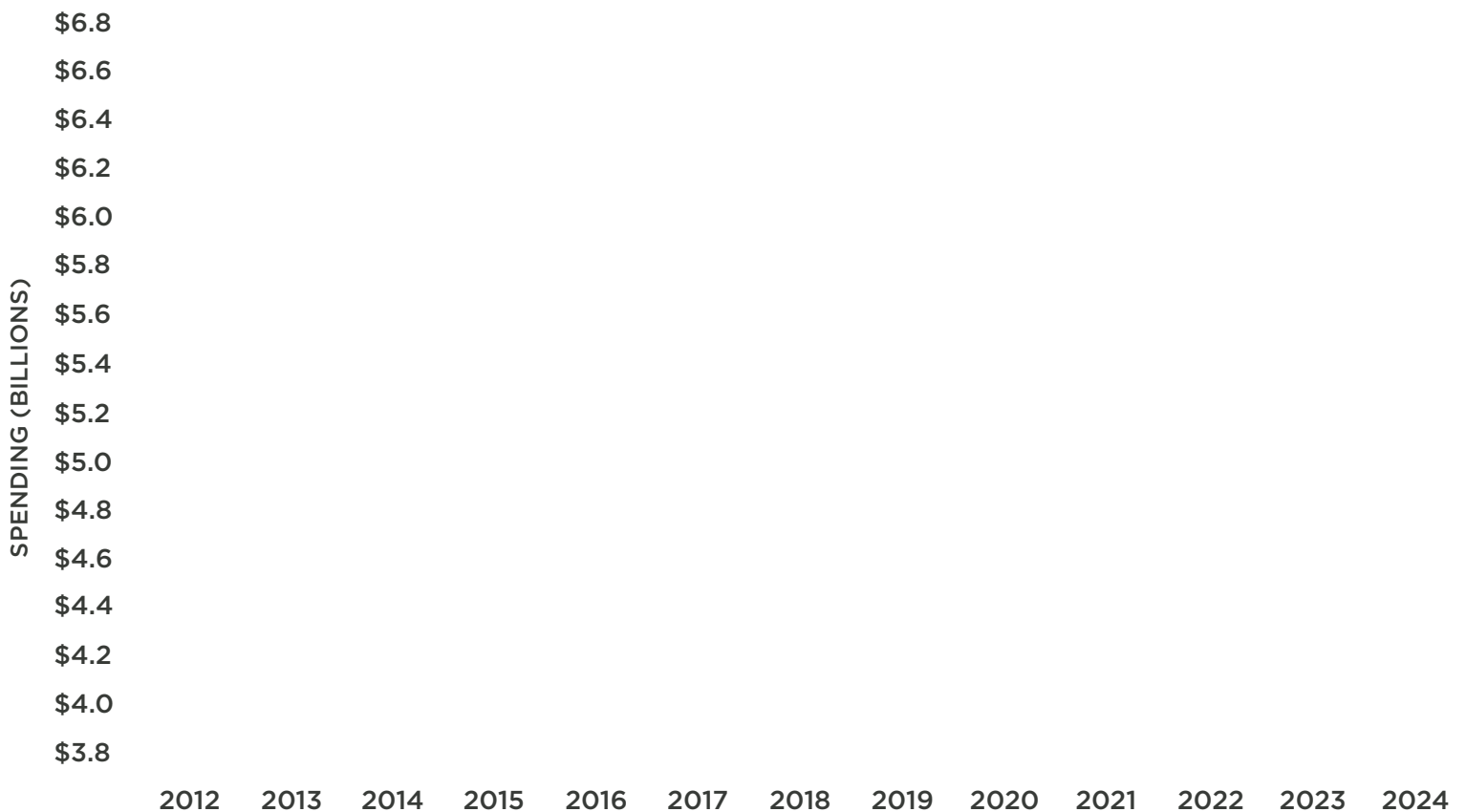
**\$6.6 BILLION**  
in traveler  
spending

**\$1.1 BILLION**  
in tax revenue  
generated

**1 IN 15**  
of all jobs in  
the state

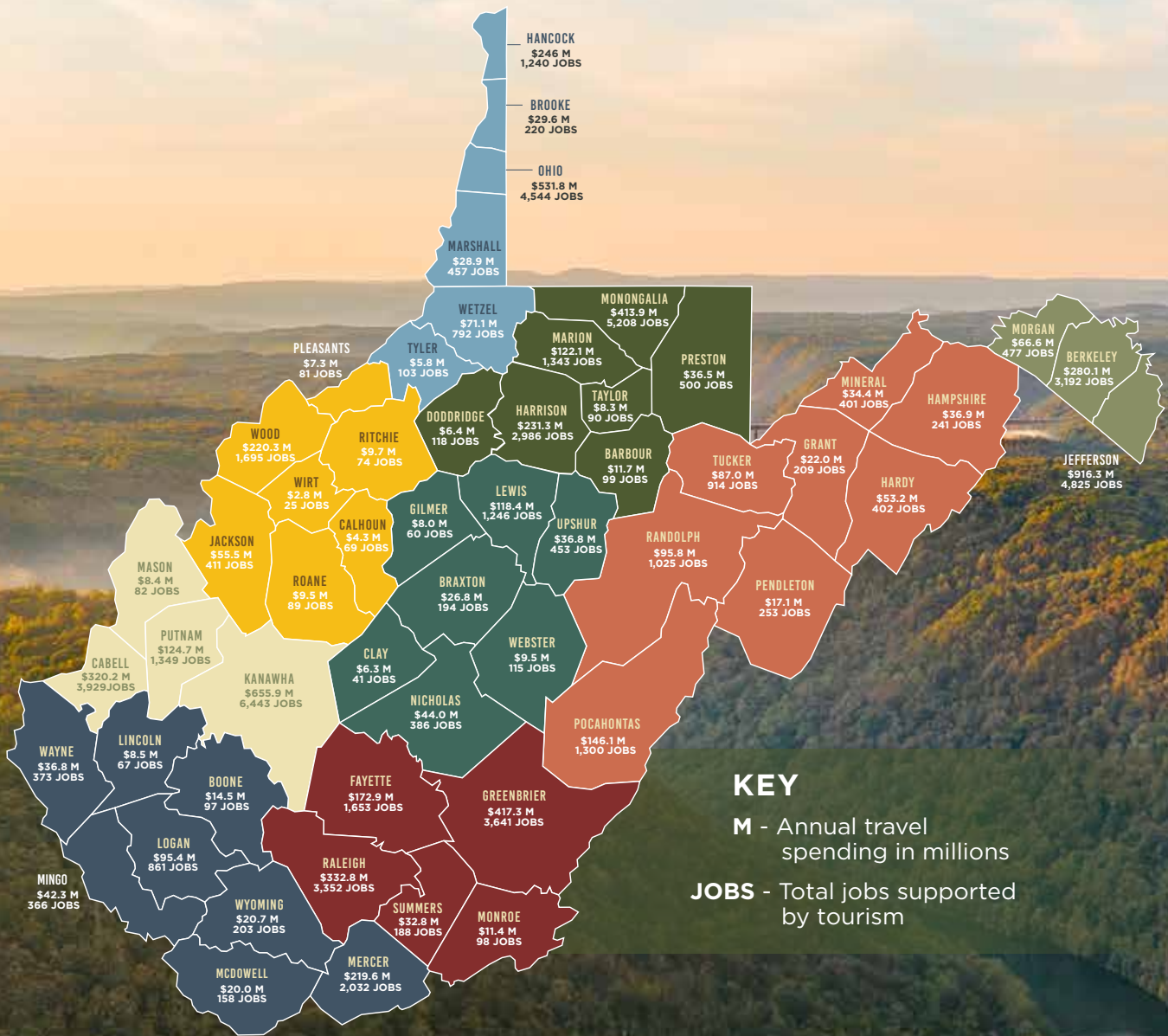
Visitor spending in West Virginia has grown 28% since 2019, compared to only 12% nationally.

WEST VIRGINIA DIRECT TRAVELER SPENDING 2012-2024



Source: Tourism Economics 2025; Dean Runyan Associates 2018

# RECORD STATEWIDE IMPACT



## KEY

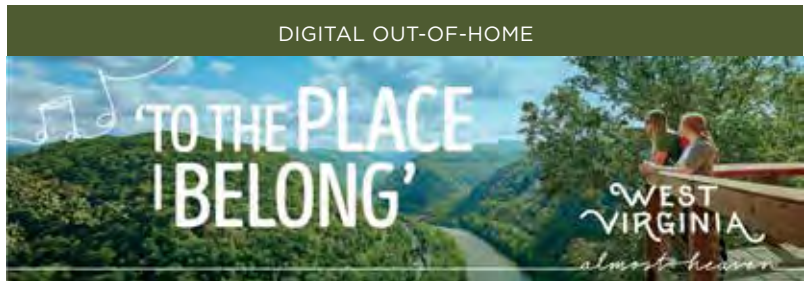
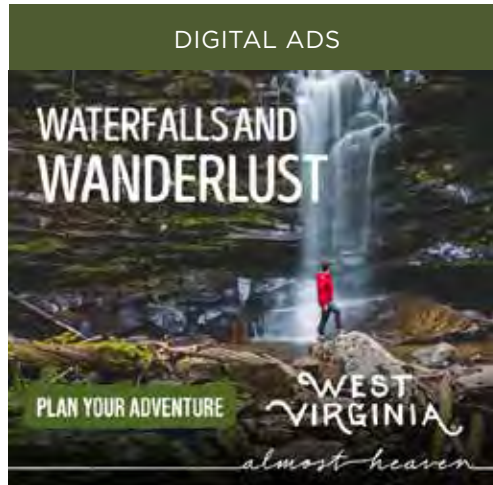
**M** - Annual travel spending in millions

**JOBS** - Total jobs supported by tourism

On average, visitors spend  
**\$18 MILLION**  
 per day in West Virginia

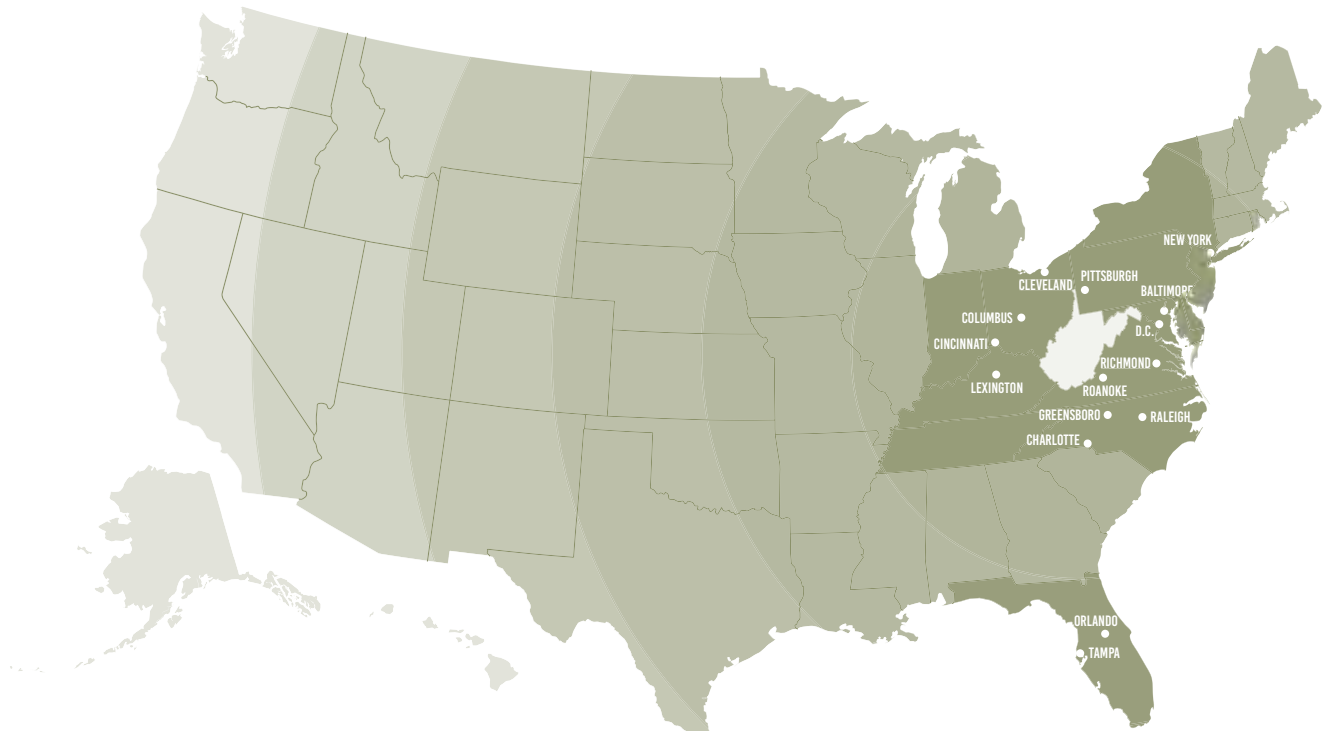
Visitor spending reduces  
 the tax burden by  
**\$859 PER HOUSEHOLD**

# THE MARKETING MESSAGE



## THE AUDIENCE

Our markets are expanding more and more as people find out about West Virginia's world-class destinations.



# COOPERATIVE ADVERTISING PROGRAM

## WHAT IS CO-OP?

Our Cooperative Advertising Program is a **public-private partnership** through which tourism businesses and partners across the state can purchase co-branded media. The fund allows partners to receive up to a **75% match on their advertising investment**. The Department also covers all creative and placement costs.

PRINT | DIGITAL | BROADCAST | OUT-OF-HOME | EXPERIENTIAL

SOCIAL MEDIA AD



DOUBLE DECKER BUS IN WASHINGTON D.C.



TRAIN STATION TAKEOVER IN WASHINGTON D.C.



NEW OFFERING  
HISTORICAL MARKERS



*The Highway Historical Marker Program highlights the people, places, and events that shaped the state. Together, these markers guide travelers through West Virginia's history.*

## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP QUICK FACTS

- This program has supplemented our private partners' advertising investments by **\$35 million+** since its creation in 2017.
- In addition to the state's match, participants get **20-30% lower media rates** on average by partnering.
- Participants gain access to state-controlled marketing content, including the ability to use "Country Roads" in TV and radio ads.

*almost heaven*

# SPECIAL INITIATIVES

## THE SWINGS

High school students at Nicholas County Career and Technical Center were the masterminds of the Almost Heaven Swings. This partnership is just one example of how the Department of Tourism leverages students' creativity and skills to promote travel, while also highlighting tourism career paths.



**1M+**  
all-time  
interactive  
map views

**85%**  
of counties  
have a swing



**10K**  
passport  
sign-ups

**6K**  
check-ins at  
West Virginia's  
spooky landmarks  
last fall



**NEARLY  
140K**  
check-ins

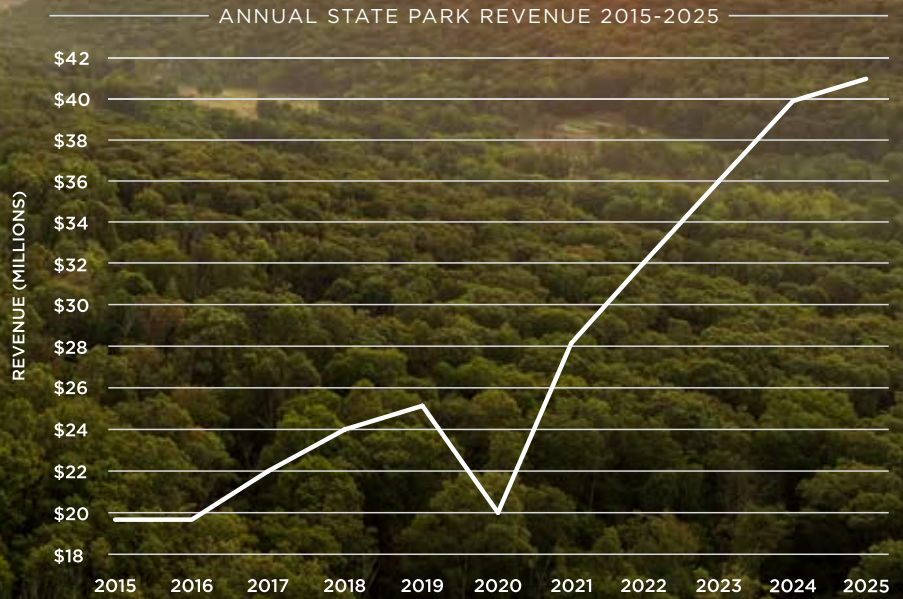
**MORE  
THAN HALF**  
of check-ins at  
lesser-known  
waterfalls



# STATE PARKS ARE SOARING

West Virginia State Parks achieved an unprecedented financial milestone this past year, generating over **\$40.9 million in revenue.**

This represents a **\$1.7 million increase** from the prior year and marks the highest revenue recorded in the system's history.



## Pipestem Aerial Tram

This strategic investment has already begun to drive returns, contributing to a **revenue increase of \$671K at Pipestem alone.**



## Coopers Rock Stargazing Cabins

Highly sought-after, these unique accommodations drove a \$270K revenue increase, pushing the park's **annual revenue past \$1M.**



# OUR COMMUNITY IMPACTS



Poetry Out Loud

West Virginia is not only a destination for travelers. It is our home. The Department of Tourism leads a range of programs that enrich the lives of West Virginians and help to attract new residents.

## HERITAGE

### ARCHIVES & HISTORY

**320**

students competed in the History Bowl

**\$550K**

in records management grants to 37 counties

### STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**17 NEW SITES**

added to the National Register of Historic Places

**2.6K** Section 106 reviews completed

with an average response time of **20 DAYS**

*Well under the standard 30 days required*

CHARLESTON  
Charmco Building



HUNTINGTON  
930 6th Ave



Grave Creek Mound  
Archaeological Complex



West Virginia  
Independence Hall



### MUSEUMS

our facilities welcomed

**82K**

visitors in 2025

West Virginia Culture  
Center & State Museum



Camp Washington-Carver



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ARTS

\$2.3M to support arts programming & grants

686K

West Virginians served  
236K kids & 450K adults

12K

artists supported

\$40K

for senior arts programs

2.8K students participated in Poetry Out Loud



STATE LIBRARY

1M

West Virginians have library cards

\$10M

in funding to local libraries

WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC BROADCASTING

592K

monthly viewers

22K

educators, children and families were served by WVPB's Education Team

VOLUNTEER WV

\$3.3M

to support AmeriCorps programs and volunteers

450

AmeriCorps members served WV communities

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

\$2.8M grant funding



supporting 400 fairs & festivals



across 54 counties



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# TELLING OUR STORY

## LANDMARK SOCIAL MEDIA SUCCESS

The Department of Tourism continues to promote West Virginia as a four-season vacation destination across several social media platforms, generating landmark success.



### WV TOURISM



**Over 17%**  
more impressions



**20%**  
more link clicks



**Over 1M+**  
social following\*

**100M** total impressions across all platforms  
*a 34% increase*



### WV ARTS & HERITAGE

Since its launch in August, @wvartsandheritage has seen



**Over 35%**  
more impressions



**Nearly 30%**  
more engagement



**Over 14%**  
increase in followers

Social following\* includes: Instagram, Facebook, X, YouTube, Pinterest & LinkedIn

# GROWING WEB TRAFFIC



WVTOURISM

**4.6M**

active users,  
up 13%

**8.5M**

page views,  
up 5.5%

**31M** total clicks

*a 7% increase*



GOLDENSEAL

Since its launch in September, the Goldenseal website has garnered

**6.6K**

active users

**22K**

page views

grown from a readership of  
4K print subscribers



**A BOOM IN  
VACATION  
GUIDE  
REQUESTS**

**281K**

guide requests,  
*an 81% increase*

## FEATURED PLACEMENTS



25 of the USA's  
Most Underrated  
Destinations

**TRAVEL+  
LEISURE**

West Virginia Has  
Some of the Best  
Fall Foliage



Best Places to Travel in 2025

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# TOURISM, ARTS & HERITAGE AS ECONOMIC DRIVERS

The grants and tax credits that we provide – across the tourism, heritage, and arts sectors – serve as critical incentives for private industry to invest in West Virginia.

## RECORD-BREAKING TOURISM INVESTMENT

In 2025, six new Tourism Development Act tax credit projects were approved, generating over **\$117 million in new investment across 6 counties.**



**VALLEY VIEW CABINS**  
Completed 2025

**HILL HALL HOTEL**  
Under Construction

**MYLAN PARK KOA**  
Under Construction

**SNOWSHOE RESORT**  
Under Construction

**HERITAGE FARM**  
Under Construction

**WHEELING WATERFRONT HOTEL**  
Under Development

## RECRUITING THE NEXT GENERATION

**2.2K**

workers  
trained

**37K**

students enrolled in  
tourism courses since 2023

**17K**

microcredentials  
awarded in 2025



## SUPPORTING ARTS INFRASTRUCTURE & IMPACT



The State Arts Office awarded

**\$718K**

in arts building renovations at

**13** cultural facilities

across the state.



## LEVERAGING HISTORIC PROPERTIES FOR GROWTH

**\$880K** in annual funding from the National Park Service

to support West Virginians in preserving historic sites in their communities

In FY25, 11 new historic tax credit projects were approved, generating over **\$121 million in new investment across 7 counties.**



Interwoven Mills, Martinsburg

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# OUR IMPACTS ARE GREATER THAN MARKETING

## 58%

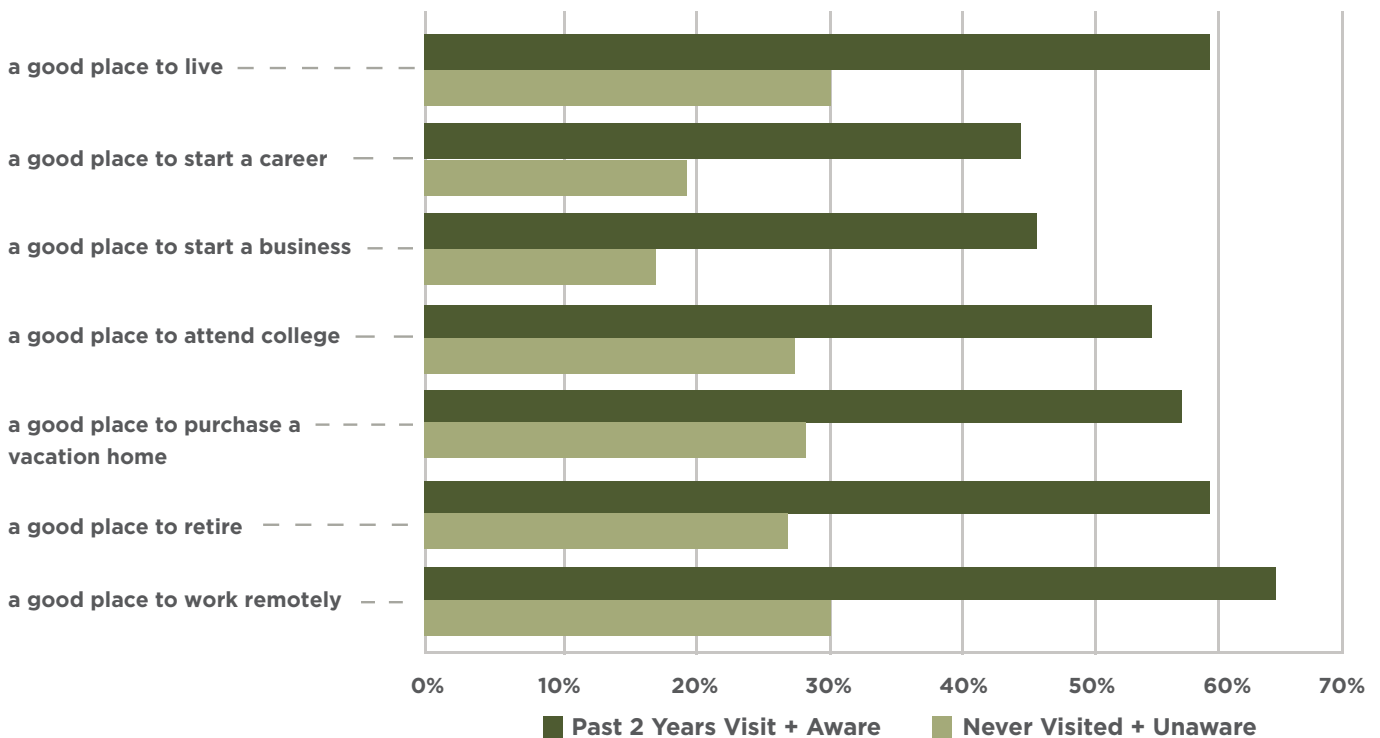
of those who saw at least one West Virginia tourism ad said they **strongly agreed that West Virginia is “a place I’d really enjoy visiting.”**

## 51%

said they intend to visit West Virginia during the next 12 months, **compared to about a quarter (26%) of those who did not see an ad.**

## THE HALO EFFECT

Tourism spending helps more than just the tourism industry. Research shows that travel-focused advertising improves West Virginia’s image as a place to live, start a business, go to college and retire. The Almost Heaven advertising campaign creates a halo effect that improves West Virginia’s image over all, not just for tourism.



# ASCEND WEST VIRGINIA BY THE NUMBERS



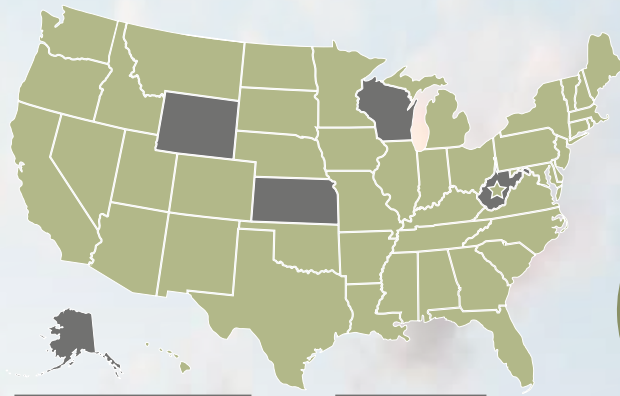
We have welcomed

**951**  
NEW RESIDENTS  
to West Virginia.

- 509 Ascenders
- 442 Family Members
- 13 babies born



**HAILING FROM  
46 STATES & 8 COUNTRIES**



**12%**  
Native WV

**88%**  
Non-native  
WV



**64%**  
Renting

**36%**  
Home Purchase

**96.4%** PROGRAM  
RETENTION  
RATE

AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL  
ANNUAL INCOME  
**\$97,128**



## TOP INDUSTRIES

- Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Healthcare
- Computer Systems Design and Related Services
- Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services
- Other Services (Except Public Administration)

  
**ASCEND**  
— 🌲 🌲 🌲 —  
WEST VIRGINIA

As of 06/30/25

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# ANNUAL 2025 WRAP UP

## ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

On July 1, 2025, the Department of Tourism merged with the former Department of Arts, Culture, and History, bringing all of their sections and agencies under one umbrella.

As we brought the teams together and expanded staffing to over 200 from 40, our mission has also expanded. In addition to our mandates to bring visitors into the state and support the tourism economy, we are now responsible for supporting infrastructure that enriches the lives of West Virginians every day.

The 2025 accomplishments of all of our new sections and sub-agencies are woven into this annual report, and we have pulled some additional highlights here:

### ———— NATIONAL COAL HERITAGE AREA COMMISSION ————

The Department of Tourism now manages the activities and grantmaking of the National Coal Heritage Area, a program that receives \$500,000 from the National Park Service annually for heritage tourism development and historic preservation in southern West Virginia. In 2025, we paused grantmaking while we worked to resolve longstanding budgetary and federal reporting requirements. The Department has plans to relaunch this heritage tourism grant program and to devote even more marketing resources to the region in 2026.

The Heritage Area also operates the Bramwell Depot, a coal heritage museum that welcomed 6,200 visitors in 2025.



### ———— ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION ————

In 2025, the Department of Tourism combined our finance and administration teams from various sections into one unit that oversees grantmaking, administration, and finances across the entire agency. We undertook an audit of all administrative processes and revamped them for greater efficiency and consistency.

## BECHTEL SUMMIT REVENUE

In compliance with §11-3-9(h)(7)(A) and §11-3-9(h)(11), the Department of Tourism has received eight deposits into the Tourism Promotion Fund from revenue generated at the Bechtel Summit Reserve since 2015. In 2025, the funds were used to assist with marketing the Spartan Trifecta World Championship. This event marked the first time in history that this championship was hosted on U.S. soil.

DATE	AMOUNT
7/1/17 - 6/30/18	\$321.85
7/1/19 - 6/30/19	\$555.74
7/1/20 - 6/30/20	\$638.87
7/1/21 - 6/30/21	\$416.92
7/1/22 - 6/30/22	\$952.14
7/1/23 - 6/30/23	\$1,487.70
7/1/24 - 6/30/24	\$2,634.06
7/1/25 - 6/30/25	\$3,376.26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,383.54</b>



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