

Ripley Convention and Visitors Bureau

2026 Annual Report

Overcoming Challenges, Celebrating Success, and Planning for the Future

Reporting Period: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Prepared by: Ripley Convention and Visitors Bureau

Executive Director: Brenda Mobley



Welcome to Ripley - a community defined by memorable experiences, strong partnerships, and West Virginia hospitality.

Message from the Executive Director

The Ripley Convention and Visitors Bureau is pleased to present its FY 2026 Annual Report, highlighting the Bureau's progress, partnerships, and continued commitment to strengthening tourism in Ripley and the surrounding area.

During 2026, the Bureau built upon the organizational recovery and renewed community relationships established in previous years. Our work focused on promoting Ripley as a welcoming destination, supporting local businesses and events, improving visitor services, and expanding cooperation with tourism and community partners.

This report celebrates the people and organizations whose dedication makes Ripley and surrounding areas a distinctive place to visit, live, and do business. It also outlines our priorities for 2027 as we continue developing a sustainable, effective, and community-centered tourism program.

Brenda Mobley, Executive Director

2026 at a Glance

The Bureau's work during 2026 centered on five strategic priorities:

- **Destination promotion:** Increasing awareness of Ripley through coordinated marketing and storytelling.
- **Event support:** Assisting events that attract visitors and generate economic activity.
- **Visitor services:** Providing accessible, accurate, and welcoming information.
- **Community partnerships:** Strengthening relationships with businesses, government agencies, and cultural organizations.
- **Organizational development:** Improving the Bureau's systems, resources, and long-term planning.

2026 Performance Highlights

Visitors assisted: Welcomed 78 visitors to the Welcome Center and entertained hundreds of phone calls and social media responses.

Events supported: City of Ripley 4th of July Celebration, America 250, City of Ripley America 250 Event, Ripley Christmas Parade, Ripley's WV Chocolate Festival, Christmas Jingle Mingle Market, Light The Way decorating for businesses, Silver Bells Stroll tour bus shopping event, Roots & Routes Agritourism Trail with 6 counties represented, Ripley Area Restaurant Week, Main Street Ripley Taste of Ripley, Ripley Believes Mothman event, Hull Pottery, Spooktacular, Monster Bash, Be Mine by the Lakes, WV Quilt Festival, Mountain State Art & Craft Fair, Jackson County Jr. Fair, Main Street Ripley Ripley On Sale, Jackson County CEOS De-Stash Sale, Tunnels 2 Towers, Main Street Car Shows, The Alpine Theatre, Promotions of Cedar Lakes Conference Center,

*Website visits: typical 3 month period 2.8K visitors with 57K impressions (website ads)

*Social media reach: 4K followers regained from lost FP page. 2.37M visitors on FB

*Hospitality and community partners: 30+

*Marketing campaigns completed: 15

Promoting Tourism and Community Experiences

Tourism Development

In 2026, the Bureau continued positioning Ripley as an inviting destination for leisure travelers, families, event attendees, outdoor enthusiasts, and groups. Conversations with hospitality and tourism partners provided valuable insight into visitor activity and travel patterns throughout the year.

The Bureau continues to work toward finding ways of consistent performance measurement. Establishing reliable benchmarks for lodging activity, event attendance, visitor inquiries, website engagement, and social media performance remains important to demonstrating tourism's value and guiding future investments.

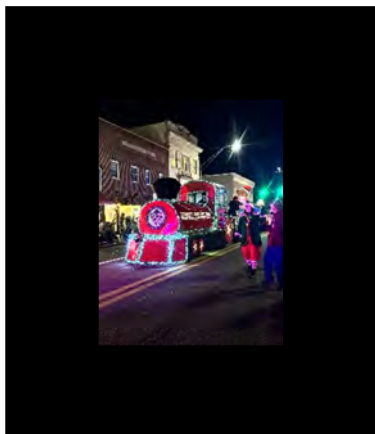
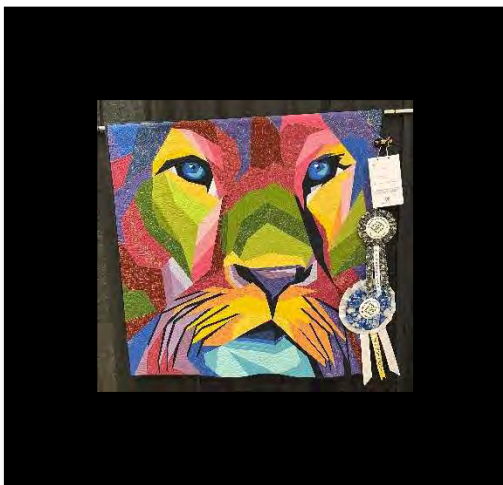
Signature Events

Community events continued to play an essential role in attracting visitors, supporting local commerce, and creating memorable experiences. The Bureau assisted with the creation, promotion, coordination, or visitor outreach associated with events such as:

- Ripley WV Chocolate Festival
- Ripley Area Restaurant Week
- Ripley's Fourth of July celebration
- Mountain State Art & Craft Fair
- WV Quilt Festival
- Ripley Believes Mothman Event

- The Alpine Theatre productions
- Veterans Day celebration
- Spooktacular
- Silver Bells Stroll Shopping Event
- Christmas Parade and Jingle Mingle
- Be Mine by the Lakes
- Roots & Routes Agritourism Trail

Additional community and partner events held throughout 2026. These events encouraged dining, shopping, lodging, and repeat visitation while showcasing Ripley's community spirit!



Signature events bring residents and visitors together while generating activity for local businesses.

Partnerships and Community Collaboration

Tourism succeeds when organizations work together. During 2026, the Bureau continued developing productive relationships with local businesses, hospitality providers, cultural institutions, government agencies, and civic organizations.

Key community partners included:

Holiday Inn & Suites, McCoy's Inn, Quality Inn and Super 8, City of Ripley, Main Street Ripley, Cedar Lakes Conference Center, Parchment Valley Conference Center, The Alpine Theatre, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, West Virginia Department of Tourism, Community organizations and event committees such as Tunnels 2 Towers coordinators and Ripley Rotary, over 20 Restaurants and Local farmer/producers.

These relationships improved coordination, expanded promotional opportunities, and helped create a more unified visitor experience. Regular communication with partners also allowed the Bureau to identify needs, share information, and respond more effectively to opportunities.

Restaurant Week Special February 23-28, 2026  ALL DAY \$2 Half Sandwich & Soup \$10 140 Charleston St. Ripley 304-583-7408	Restaurant Week Special February 23-28, 2026  Side salad Cajun Pasta with garlic bread Dessert \$16.99 per person 123 Clark St. N. Ripley 304-372-4343	Restaurant Week Special February 23-28, 2026  \$10.99 PRIME FIXE MENU Appetizer Choice of one Entree Choice of one Dessert Choice of one 150 Clay Lick Rd. Ripley 304-572-7057	2nd Annual Ripley Area Restaurant Week February 23-28, 2026 Sponsored by:  Ripley Convention & Visitors Bureau  Main Street Ripley Prize Sponsors: Harris & Holmes Law Vail Furniture Ripley CVB & Main St. Full menu preview at ripleycvb.com
Restaurant Week Special February 23-28, 2026  Monday-Thursday 5 pm - 10 pm Louisiana Specialty Dinner \$12.99 Friday-Saturday 5 pm - 10 pm Cajun Specialty Dinner \$14.99 250 Clay Lick Rd. Ripley 304-586-4700	Restaurant Week Special February 23-28, 2026  Monday-Wednesday Lunch \$8.99, Dinner \$11.99 Thursday-Saturday Lunch \$7.99, Dinner \$13.75 187 McGraw St. Ripley 304-524-2141	Restaurant Week Special February 23-28, 2026 Your Family Pizza One 12" Four Topping Pizza One 10" Garlic Cheesy Bread Choice of one Dessert \$25.99 875 Kentucky Rd. Karma 304-572-5545	
Restaurant Week Special February 23-28, 2026  Appetizers: \$9.99 Pick One Entrees: Pick One \$14.99 Dessert: \$7.99 Pick One 3850 Cedar Lakes Dr. Ripley 304-572-8858	Restaurant Week February 23-28, 2026  \$25 PRIME FIXE MENU Appetizer Entree Dessert 113 N Court. St. Ripley 304-572-7872	Restaurant Week Special February 23-28, 2026 Your Family Restaurant 2 Can Dine for \$35 Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Green Beans, and Roll 975 Kentucky Rd. Karma 304-572-5545	
Restaurant Week Special February 23-28, 2026  \$10 Meal Options Half Salad & Flat bread of Choice Side salad & Philly Large Strawberry Fields Salad Soup & Half Salad \$6 119 Highland Dr. Ripley 304-586-1202	Restaurant Week Special February 23-28, 2026  Osaka 2040 Charleston Rd. Ripley 304-372-5880	Restaurant Week Special February 23-28, 2026  Artisan Market 3411 Clay Lick Rd. Ripley 304-586-4622	



Strong partnerships create a coordinated and welcoming experience for visitors.



SAVE THE DATE! SATURDAY, MAY 9
REGISTRATION OPENING THIS WEEK



Marketing and Destination Awareness

Uniquely Ripley & Ripley Believes

The Uniquely Ripley brand continued to provide a foundation for destination marketing in 2026. The campaign highlights the people, businesses, attractions, events, and experiences that distinguish Ripley from other destinations.

Marketing content emphasized authentic local stories and encouraged visitors to explore the area's dining, shopping, entertainment, outdoor recreation, and cultural offerings. Local businesses remained an important part of this storytelling strategy.

Digital Marketing

The Bureau continued improving its digital presence through its website, social media channels, event promotion, and partner content. Priorities included providing accurate visitor information, maintaining a consistent publishing schedule, and creating engaging material that reflects the character of the community.

The Bureau's 2026 digital efforts included:

Promoting local events and seasonal experiences.

Featuring tourism-related businesses and attractions.

Sharing visitor information and travel-planning resources.

Producing or coordinating photography and video content.

Rebuilding and expanding online audiences.

Improving coordination with media and marketing partners.



Digital storytelling extends Ripley's reach and helps visitors plan their experiences.

Visitor Information and Services

The Visitor Information Center at 107 1/2 West Main Street continued serving as a visible and accessible resource in the heart of Ripley. Its downtown location allows the Bureau to welcome travelers, answer questions, distribute materials, and connect visitors with local businesses and attractions.

During 2026, the Bureau worked to improve the quality and availability of visitor resources through:

Updated brochures, maps, and event information.

Displays highlighting local attractions and businesses.

Personalized travel assistance and referrals.

Improved communication with hospitality partners.

Continued development of the Ripley Visitors Guide.

More consistent collection of visitor inquiries and feedback.

Photo placement: Exterior and interior photographs of the Visitor Information Center.

Suggested caption: The Visitor Information Center connects guests with the experiences, businesses, and hospitality that make Ripley unique.

Tourism's Economic Contribution

Tourism supports Ripley's economy by generating spending at lodging properties, restaurants, retailers, attractions, and service businesses. It also contributes to employment, entrepreneurship, tax revenue, and the overall visibility of the community.

The Bureau uses economic-impact information issued by the West Virginia Department of Tourism and other reliable sources to help communicate the value of the visitor economy.

2025 Total State Economic Impact: \$9 BILLION

Visitor spending in Jackson County \$55.5 M

Tourism-supported employment: 411

Lodging or occupancy indicator: up 7.07%

The Bureau will continue encouraging tourism-related investment, including opportunities for additional lodging, dining, retail, recreation, and visitor services.



Visitor spending supports businesses, jobs, and economic opportunity throughout the community.

Challenges and Organizational Response

The Bureau's earlier challenges included personnel transitions, relocation of the office, loss of access to essential communications and digital accounts, and seasonal changes in visitation.

By 2026, the Bureau's focus had shifted from immediate recovery toward organizational resilience and sustainable growth. Continued priorities included:

Maintaining secure control of websites, social media accounts, telephone services, and organizational records.

Establishing documented procedures and account-recovery protocols.

Improving the consistency of tourism and marketing data.

Addressing seasonal fluctuations through year-round experiences.

Securing sufficient resources for marketing and visitor services.

Coordinating infrastructure needs with community partners.

Balancing tourism development with responsible stewardship.

These lessons have strengthened the Bureau's commitment to good governance, documentation, transparency, and continuity. It is important to note that the CVB successfully maintained budget expenditures and operated within the 40-40-20 threshold, as mandated by WV Code.

Opportunities for Growth

Ripley is well positioned to expand its appeal by connecting community traditions with new visitor experiences. Opportunities identified for future development include:

Expanding signature events and developing complementary activities.

Promoting outdoor recreation, trails, parks, and scenic experiences.

Strengthening group-tour and motorcoach outreach.

Developing themed travel itineraries and seasonal packages.

Increasing cooperative marketing with lodging and local businesses.

Improving wayfinding and pedestrian connections.

Expanding video, photography, and user-generated content.

Pursuing grants and cooperative programs through the West Virginia Department of Tourism.

Measuring visitor activity more consistently.

Signature events bring residents and visitors together while generating activity for local businesses.



Outdoor recreation and regional partnerships provide significant opportunities for future tourism growth.

Strategic Priorities for 2027

Increase Visitation

The Bureau will use targeted campaigns, partner promotion, event marketing, and improved travel-planning resources to reach priority audiences and encourage overnight stays.

Enhance the Visitor Experience

Work will continue to improve visitor information, hospitality resources, accessibility, wayfinding, and connections among local attractions and businesses.

Support Local Businesses

The Bureau will expand opportunities for tourism-related businesses to participate in guides, campaigns, events, itineraries, and cooperative promotions.

Strengthen Digital Performance

The website and social media platforms will be regularly maintained, measured, and improved. Content will emphasize useful information, compelling stories, and clear calls to action.

Advance Sustainable Tourism

The Bureau will encourage responsible use of natural and cultural resources, support community beautification, and promote experiences that benefit residents as well as visitors.

Improve Measurement and Accountability

The Bureau will establish measurable goals and report progress using consistent indicators, including:

- Visitor inquiries.
- Website traffic.
- Social media reach and engagement.
- Event attendance.
- Partner participation.
- Lodging and occupancy data, when available.
- Campaign results.
- Visitor feedback.

Leadership and Governance

Officers

President Carolyn Waybright

Vice President Suzette Lowe

Treasurer Larry Chancey

Secretary Kelley Adcock

Board of Directors

Dick Waybright

Carolyn Rader

Dallas Skeen

Steve Hamrick

Hollie Vanater

Peter Coffey

Meghan Parsons

Brenda Mobley, Executive Director



The Ripley Convention and Visitors Bureau's leadership provides strategic direction and community-focused oversight.

Looking Ahead

The Ripley Convention and Visitors Bureau entered 2026 with renewed relationships, stronger organizational foundations, and a clear commitment to serving visitors, businesses, and residents. The year's progress reflects the dedication of the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, hospitality partners, local organizations, and public agencies that contribute to Ripley's success.

In 2027, the Bureau will continue building a distinctive and sustainable visitor economy through purposeful marketing, strong partnerships, improved visitor services, and responsible planning. Together, these efforts will help ensure that Ripley remains a welcoming destination with memorable experiences and lasting economic opportunity.

Acknowledgments

The Ripley Convention and Visitors Bureau recognizes the contributions of its Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, community partners, local businesses, event organizers, hospitality professionals, residents, and visitors. Their support makes the Bureau's work possible.

Attachments

FY 2026 Budget

Financial Statements for the fiscal year ending 2026

Economic Impact of Tourism in West Virginia, relevant excerpts issued by the West Virginia Department of Tourism.

2026 Strategic Marketing Plan.