

MATPRA

MID-ATLANTIC TOURISM PUBLIC RELATIONS ALLIANCE

Destinations Across the Mid-Atlantic Showcase Unique Roadside Attractions

(Mid-Atlantic Region, USA, March 17, 2017)- Take a road trip through the Mid-Atlantic, where you'll find a plethora of out-of-the ordinary places. The Mid-Atlantic offers truly unique roadside attractions that will entertain drivers along the highways and byways.

Members of the Mid-Atlantic Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA.org) have compiled their area's most popular roadside attractions. If you're interested in learning more about a specific venue, contact the individual Destination Marketing Organization.

Delaware

Greater Wilmington

Travel the Brandywine National Scenic Byway and experience Greater Wilmington's chateau country. The Byway, which encompasses Routes 52 and 100, winds through a gorgeous river valley, rolling hills, fabulous gardens, historic mills and magnificent mansions now home to some of the nation's finest museums. Discover Hagley, Winterthur and Nemours Estate.

Greater Wilmington Convention & Visitors Bureau, Lyn Lewis,
lynlewis@visitwilmingtonde.com, VisitWilmingtonDE.com

Maryland

Annapolis & Anne Arundel County

Annapolis boasts a host of roadside and waterside attractions - from farmer's markets to dockside restaurants with live entertainment. Head to City Dock to watch the Wednesday Night Sailboat Races, kayakers and stand up paddleboarders. Watch the Harbor Queen, Woodwind Schooners, and other boats strut their stuff at Ego Alley. *Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County, Susan Seifried,* sseifried@visitannapolis.org, VisitAnnapolis.org

Baltimore

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, Camden Yards was named America's #1 ballpark for the third consecutive year. Baseball fans making the pilgrimage to Baltimore should not miss the Babe Ruth Birthplace and Museum. Explore the historic Baltimore rowhome where fans can learn about his early years and the history of baseball. *Visit Baltimore, Kelly Nagle,* knagle@baltimore.org, Baltimore.org

Calvert County

Calvert County's roadside stands and farm stores are brimming with fresh-picked produce, seafood, meats, and more. Visit one of eight roadside stands or four farmers' markets for a great selection of tasty vegetables, delicious fruits, meats, eggs, and more. *Calvert County Department of Economic Development, Joyce Baki, bakija@co.cal.md.us, ChooseCalvert.com*

Cecil County

Traveling through Cecil County, Gilpin's Falls Covered Bridge provides a great photo op! Make furry friends at Plumpton Park Zoo with tigers, bears, Jimmy the Giraffe, and more! Glimpse by-gone eras in at The Bee Hive complex with remains of a mill tavern, cooper, and worker's house. *Cecil County Tourism, Sandy Turner, sturner@ccgov.org, SeeCecil.org*

Frederick County

It may come as a surprise to visitors that Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo got its start as a small roadside attraction. Today this 100-acre habitat gives visitors a chance to get up-close and personal with the animals, either on foot or by taking a safari ride through the property! *Visit Frederick, Melissa Joseph Muntz, mmuntz@fredco-md.net, VisitFrederick.org*

Hagerstown-Washington County

Situated halfway between the historic towns of Boonsboro and Sharpsburg, Crystal Grottoes Caverns has been a popular Washington County roadside attraction since 1922. With more formations per square foot than any cave known to man and a 54-degree temperature year-round, it's a perfect stop on a hot day. *Visit Hagerstown, Betsy DeVore, betsy@visithagerstown.com, VisitHagerstown.com*

Harford County

Hike to King & Queen Seat, once a ceremonial gathering place for the Susquehannock Indians. Stroll 22 acres with over 100 life-size topiary sculptures at Ladew Gardens which was established in the 1930s. Built in 1827, the Concord Point Lighthouse is the second-oldest tower lighthouse on the Chesapeake Bay. *Visit Harford, Mindy Schneider, mindy@visitharford.com, VisitHarford.com*

St. Mary's County

Accessible only by ferry boat, St. Clement's Island State Park is the original landing of the first Maryland settlers who arrived nearly 400 years ago. This picturesque island in the Potomac River also features Blackstone Lighthouse, a 19th-century light that guided sailors who voyaged the waterway for many years. *St. Mary's County Division of Tourism, Andrew Ponti, andrew.ponti@stmarysmd.com, VisitStMarysMD.com*

Wicomico County

Explore the world's largest decoy collection at the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, located conveniently off of Route 50 in Salisbury. Featuring a collection of wildfowl art, from antique working decoys to contemporary carving, sculpture and painting. *Wicomico County Tourism, Kristen Goller, kgoller@wicomicocounty.org, WicomicoTourism.org*

Pennsylvania

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Pull over and check out Pennsylvania's quirky roadside attractions you'll have to see to believe! Wave hello to Strasburg's 15-foot-tall Giant Amish Man, stop at Ringing Rocks Park where the scenery actually sings, or marvel at a home built inside of a humongous stucco

boot along the Lincoln Highway. *Pennsylvania Tourism Office, Robin Tilley, rtilley@tierneyagency.com, VisitPA.com*

Butler County

Butler County is home to some out-of-this-world roadside attractions that draw a wide range of visitors. From the futuristic look of Playthings Etc.'s metallic spacecraft building where its toys match its extravagant theme, to a UFO that seems to have crash landed in the town of Mars. *Butler County Tourism & Convention Bureau, Kimberly Windisch, kimberly@krolmedia.com, VisitButlerCounty.com*

Central Pennsylvania

Beaver Stadium, home to Penn State Football, is the second-largest stadium in the Western Hemisphere. Penn's Cave, located in Centre Hall, is America's only all-water cavern. The Pennsylvania Military Museum, just off 322 in Boalsburg, greets visitors with tanks and warship guns as they pull into the parking lot. *Central PA Convention & Visitors Bureau, Andy Rupert, andy@visitpennstate.org, VisitPennState.org*

Chester County

Herr's Snack Factory Tour is a must-see and a might taste! Herr's Factory is located off Old Baltimore Pike in Nottingham. The tour demonstrates how these delicious snacks are made. Sample warm chips straight from the production line and visit the gift shop for a tasty souvenir. *Chester County Conference & Visitor Bureau, Nina Kelly, nina@brandywinevalley.com, BrandywineValley.com*

Huntingdon County

The roadside attractions in the Raystown Lake Region hold interesting history to explore, The Isett Heritage Museum features 40,000 items organized by era. Along Pennsylvania's Route 22, travelers visit Lincoln Caverns (discovered 85+ years ago when the road was built) and Swigart Antique Automobile Museum. *Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau, Ed Stoddard, estoddard@raystown.org, Raystown.org*

Indiana County

Visitors love the 12-foot bronze statue of Hollywood Icon Jimmy Stewart along main street of his hometown near the Jimmy Stewart Museum. Down the road, custard lovers pull over at The Meadows for hand-turned custard flavors. A giant cow standing 25 feet greets visitors at Smicksburg Amish Specialty Shopping Village. *Indiana County Tourist Bureau, Maria Jack, mjack@visitindianacountypa.org, VisitIndianaCountyPA.org*

Lackawanna County

Explore Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands on the Lincoln Highway, the first cross-country highway. Along the way pass giant kitschy sculptures; Fort Ligonier where George Washington began his military career; and the Storybook Forest at Idlewild Park. Experience with exhibits on quirky architecture including the Ship Hotel and Coffee Pot. *Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, Anna Weltz, aweltz@laurelhighlands.org, LaurelHighlands.org*

Lancaster

Enjoy the world famous shoo-fly pie at Dutch Haven bakery in Ronks. Still made from its original 1946 recipe, this yummy dessert and many other goodies, plus a variety of Amish hand-made goods and souvenirs, are all housed inside a unique, windmill-shaped structure along the famed Lincoln Highway. *Discover Lancaster, Joel Cliff, jcliff@discoverlancaster.com, DiscoverLancaster.com*

Lehigh Valley

Add a detour packed with stunning scenery to your itinerary on your next drive through Pennsylvania. The Lehigh Valley Covered Bridge Tour provides a glimpse at the seven bridges throughout the region, all offering beautiful photo opportunities and charming picnic locations while you take a break from the busy highways. *Discover Lehigh Valley*, Kaitie Burger, kaitie@discoverlehighvalley.com, DiscoverLehighValley.com

Pennsylvania's Americana Region

A visit to Pennsylvania's Americana Region wouldn't be complete without a trip to the iconic Pagoda. Perched high atop Mount Penn, the Pagoda signaled messages to area residents before the use of radio. A century later, it still intrigues. Visitors climb its seven stories for incredible views of the area. *Pennsylvania's Americana Region*, Lisa Haggerty, lisa@visitpaamericana.com, VisitPAAmericana.com

Pocono Mountains

From a giant gorilla statue and all sorts of oddities at Country Junction, to the haunted Old Jail Museum in Jim Thorpe, and even an ice sculpture factory and museum at Sculpted Ice Works in Lakeville, the Pocono Mountains is full of roadside attractions sure to wow the passerby. *Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau*, Kelly Shannon, kshannon@poconos.org, PoconoMountains.com

York County

Built by a flamboyant shoe salesman in 1948, the Haines Shoe House in York County started as an advertising gimmick. The owner even allowed elderly couples to stay in the shoe for vacation. Now, it's a unique roadside attraction off U.S. Route 30, featuring ice cream and seasonal tours. *York County Convention & Visitors Bureau*, Andrew Staub, astaub@yorkpa.org, YorkPA.org

Virginia

Alexandria

At the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, one of the oldest pharmacies in the nation located in historic Old Town Alexandria, Harry Potter fans can step back into a pharmacy exactly as it was when it closed in 1933 and see real-life ingredients like dragon's blood and mandrake root. *Visit Alexandria*, Leah Spellman, lsPELLMAN@visitalexva.com, VisitAlexandriaVA.com

Charlottesville & Albemarle County

Located a few miles east of Charlottesville in Shadwell is the birthplace of our country's third president and Founding Father, Thomas Jefferson. Though his childhood home burned down, there is a marker commemorating his birth. *Charlottesville Albemarle Convention & Visitors Bureau*, Bri Warner, warnerb@charlottesville.org, VisitCharlottesville.org

Hampton

An eye-catching outdoor museum, Air Power Park pays tribute to Hampton's legacy in early space exploration and aircraft testing. Using the provided brochure, guests can conduct their own self-guided tour of the park which features jets, missiles, and rockets. Air Power Park is located on Mercury Blvd., north of I-64. *Hampton Convention & Visitor Bureau*, Elizabeth Severs, elizabeth.severs@hamptoncvb.com, VisitHampton.com

Harrisonburg

Come enjoy a taste of the past at the Shenandoah Heritage Market in Harrisonburg. Sample some old-fashioned valley goodness at the area's largest country market. Enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of water gardens and park benches while you wander through 20+ locally-owned and operated shops. *Harrisonburg Tourism, Jessica Williams, jessica.williams@harrisonburgva.gov, VisitHarrisonburgVA.com*

Richmond

St. John's Church, located in historic Church Hill, is a National Historic Landmark where Patrick Henry gave his famous "Give me liberty or give me death" speech. Reenactments occur every Sunday between Memorial Day and Labor Day. *Richmond Region Tourism, Meghan Gearino, mgearino@visitrichmondva.com, VisitRichmondVA.com*

Shenandoah County

Originally built in 1894, Meems Bottom Covered Bridge is the longest publicly-accessible covered bridge in Virginia. This 204-foot-single-span Burr arch truss bridge spans the North Fork of the Shenandoah River near Mount Jackson. Although burned by vandals on Halloween 1976, the bridge was reconstructed after salvaging the original timbers. *Shenandoah County, VA, Jenna French, jfrench@shenandoahcountyva.us, VisitShenandoahCounty.com*

Virginia's Blue Ridge

A true roadside attraction below ground directly off Interstate 81 is Dixie Caverns. Rather than descending into the caverns, you ascend. Above ground is the Roanoke Star, a 100-foot neon star that has 2,000 feet of neon tubing and can be seen from 60 miles away as it shines nightly. *Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge, Catherine Fox, cfox@visitvbr.com, VisitVBR.com*

Winchester-Frederick County

Dinosaur Land, just outside of Winchester, has been a favorite family road trip stop for over 50 years. But don't forget the numerous orchards and family-owned farm stands, such as Marker-Miller Orchard, Richard's Fruit Market, and Virginia Farm Market, which have lured travelers off the highway for generations. *Winchester-Frederick County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Justin Kerns, justin.kerns@visitwinchesterva.com, VisitWinchesterVA.com*

About Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance

The Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA) is a cohesive unit of regional tourism partners encompassing Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Washington, D.C. The group serves travel journalists by creating a regional resource that ignores geographical boundaries. The Alliance promotes common threads and offers saleable stories to journalists about the mid-Atlantic destination as a whole. For more information, visit www.matpra.org.

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