DISCOVER

Lehigh Valley®



ANNUAL REPORT

FY 25–26

DISCOVER
Lehigh Valley

OUR MISSION

Discover Lehigh Valley® builds the region's economy and image through destination marketing that increases the number of leisure and business visitors, the number of nights they stay, and the number of things they do in the two-county area of Lehigh and Northampton Counties. These marketing efforts also enhance the quality of life and sense of hometown pride for Lehigh Valley, PA residents.



Dear Partners,

Fiscal Year 2025/26 was another successful year for Discover Lehigh Valley® and our region's tourism and hospitality industry. It was a year defined by strong visitation, meaningful partnerships, and continued momentum as we worked together to strengthen Lehigh Valley's position as a destination for visitors, meetings, sports, and events.

This year also provided a unique opportunity to showcase our region on a much larger stage. As Pennsylvania and the nation celebrated America's 250th anniversary, Lehigh Valley proudly shared its history, culture, and communities with visitors from near and far. We also welcomed travelers making their way through Pennsylvania and the Northeast for the FIFA World Cup, further demonstrating the important role our region plays within one of the country's most dynamic travel corridors.

Tourism continues to quietly but powerfully help build Lehigh Valley's economy. Every visitor who stays in one of our hotels, dines in a local restaurant, attends an event, explores our attractions, or shops at a local business contributes to the economic vitality of our region. Tourism supports jobs, strengthens businesses, generates tax revenue, and enhances the quality of life that makes Lehigh Valley such a special place to live, work, and visit.

Throughout FY 25/26, Discover Lehigh Valley® remained focused on telling our region's story, driving visitation, supporting our hospitality partners, and pursuing opportunities that create meaningful economic impact. Our success is possible because of the collaboration that exists throughout Lehigh and Northampton counties and the shared belief that tourism is an important part of our region's continued growth.

As we move into FY 26/27, the opportunity before us is significant. With additional investment in destination marketing, sales, sports, meetings, arts and culture, and major events, we have the ability to build upon this momentum and compete for opportunities that will bring even greater economic impact to Lehigh Valley.

The future is bright, and I am confident that the work we are doing today will position Lehigh Valley for continued growth for years to come.

I remain deeply grateful to our board members, elected officials, community leaders, and partners for your continued trust and support. Most importantly, I am incredibly proud of the Discover Lehigh Valley® team. Their professionalism, creativity, and commitment to our mission continue to move our organization and our region forward.

Thank you for being part of this journey and for believing in the power of tourism to strengthen Lehigh Valley.

Sincerely,



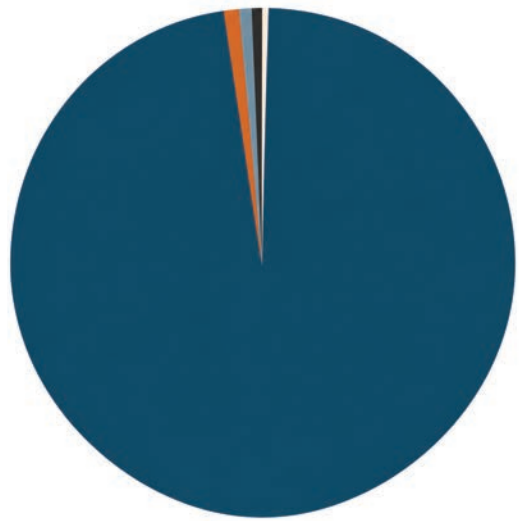
Alex Michaels
President & CEO

Financials

Following significant infrastructure and brand investments in FY 2024/25, Discover Lehigh Valley® (DLV) entered FY 2025/26 focused on balancing promotional investments with financial sustainability.

DLV maintained a disciplined approach to promotional spending throughout FY 2025/26, keeping expenditures aligned with available revenue. With hotel tax collections finishing 1.2% below budget, promotional spending came in 7.2% under budget, helping the organization maintain financial flexibility and finish the year with a ($50,297) operating loss rather than the anticipated deficit of ($326,470). This reflects progress toward balancing destination marketing investments with financial sustainability.

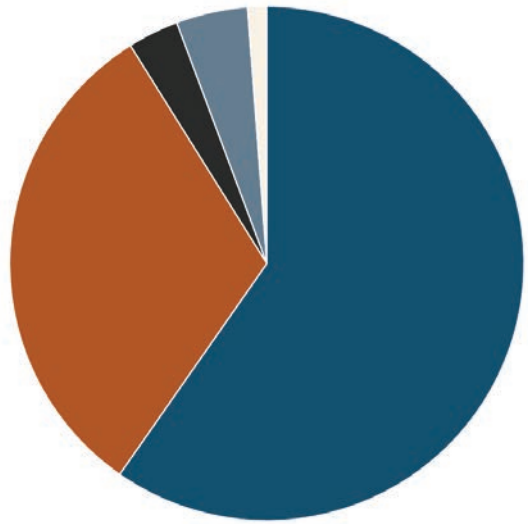
While cash balances decreased 7.1% year-over-year, continued priorities included strengthening grant funding opportunities and measuring the return on marketing investments.



REVENUE

- **Hotel Tax:** 98.5% *$3,090,584*
- **Interest Earned:** 0.7% *$21,080*
- **Advertising:** 0.5% *$17,277*
- **Partnerships:** 0.2% *$7,480*
- **Miscellaneous:** 0.1% *$1,055*

***Total:** $3,137,476*



EXPENSES

- **Promotions:** 59.7% *$1,902,630*
- **Salaries & Benefits:** 31.4% *$1,004,042*
- **Miscellaneous:** 4.5% *$142,072*
- **Outside Support:** 3.2% *$101,569*
- **Occupancy:** 1.2% *$37,460*

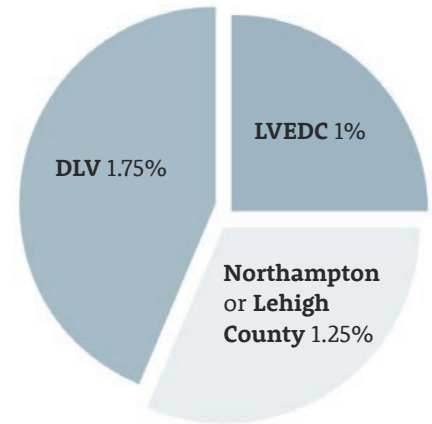
***Total:** $3,187,773*

HOTEL ROOM TAX DEPENDENCE

Hotel room tax remains DLV's primary funding source, accounting for 98.5% of total revenue in FY 2025/26 ($3.09 million), reinforcing the importance of aligning marketing investments with lodging performance while continuing to pursue funding opportunities.

HOTEL TAX (4%) shared by four entities:

- **1.75%** DLV
- **1.25%** Lehigh County / Northampton County
- **1%:** Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation

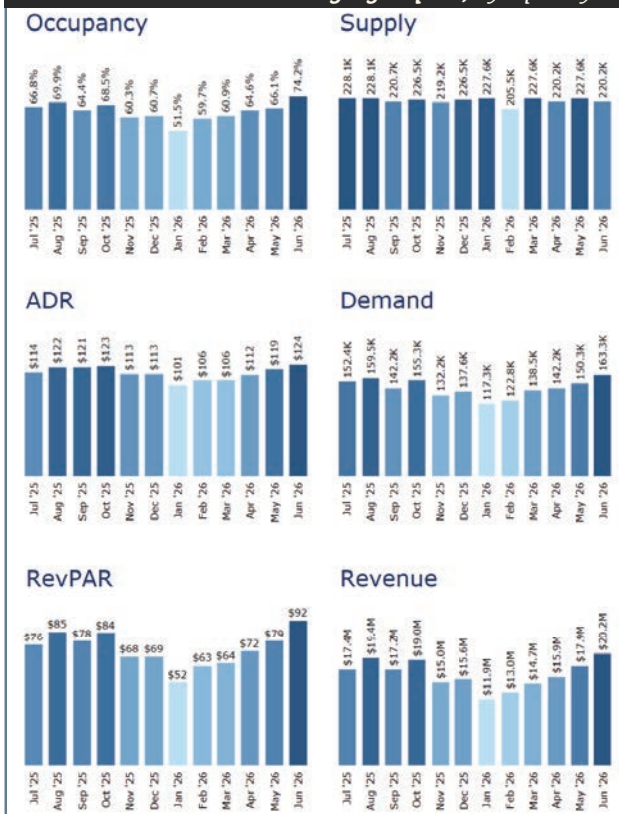


Lodging Performance & Data

Monthly Trends *(FY 25/26 v. 24/25)*

- **Best Month: June 2026.** The fiscal year concluded with its highest occupancy (74.2%), ADR ($123.74), RevPAR ($91.82), and monthly hotel revenue ($20.20 million). June revenue increased approximately 7.3% year over year.
- **Strongest Demand Growth:** December 2025. Demand increased 10.6% year over year, with hotel revenue growing 10.5%, signaling an improvement in winter visitation.
- **Softest Month:** January 2026. Occupancy reached 51.6%, with RevPAR at $52.13 and hotel revenue at $11.85 million. January remained the lowest-performing month, despite improvements over the previous year.
- **Seasonal Patterns:** Hotel performance strengthened in the spring and early summer, with June achieving the highest demand of the fiscal year at approximately 163,300 room nights.

***Lodging Report,** Symphony Tourism Economics*



Key FY Takeaways

Demand Outpaced Supply: Hotel room demand increased 2.7% while available room supply grew 1.1%, demonstrating continued growth in overnight visitation.

Occupancy Improved: Annual occupancy increased from 63.0% to 64.0%, reflecting stronger room-night demand despite expanded lodging supply.

Winter Is an Opportunity: While December experienced substantial year-over-year growth, January and February continued to represent opportunities for increased overnight visitation.

Strong Finish to the Fiscal Year: June 2026 achieved the year's highest occupancy, average daily rate, and hotel revenue, providing positive momentum entering FY 2026–2027.

TOURISM JOBS & WAGES

Lehigh Valley's restaurants, lodging, arts, entertainment and recreation industries provided approximately

28,100 JOBS

Employment approached

30,000 JOBS

during the summer quarter, highlighting the scale of the region's hospitality and recreation workforce.

Hospitality and recreation employment increased by nearly

3,900 JOBS

between the winter and summer quarters of 2025.

2025 Bureau of Labor Statistics

Visitor Migration Data, *PlacerAI*

December 2025

had the highest volume of 150+ mile origin visitors for Overnight Trips. Lehigh Valley's holiday season represents a major opportunity to attract overnight visitors from outside the immediate region.

Overnight Stay Leakage

We experienced approximately **203,000 nights of visitor leakage**—travelers who visited the region but stayed overnight elsewhere

Major drive markets, major advantage

Our proximity to major drive markets continues to be a competitive advantage. Regional visitation (50-149 miles origin) outperformed longer-distance travel, helping maintain stability in overall visitation.

Public Relations

Lehigh Valley secured 3,265 earned media placements, generating $78,882,665.41 in publicity value and reaching more than 650 million readers and viewers in FY 25 - 26. Coverage consistently positioned the region as a dynamic, year-round destination, with strong narratives around America's 250th anniversary, the region's rich history and cultural heritage, and accessible getaways for families, couples and drive-market travelers.

Seasonal experiences also sustained visibility throughout the year, from fall festivals and holiday traditions to romantic winter escapes and summer events. Coverage of Musikfest, family attractions, sports tourism, dining and major community celebrations further demonstrated the breadth of experiences available across Lehigh Valley and reinforced tourism's contribution to the regional economy.

Travel Media is More Fragmented

More than one-third of journalists publish outside traditional newsrooms, increasing the importance of targeted, relationship-based outreach. High-value coverage should be measured by outlet credibility, audience relevance, message quality and the action it inspires.

Editorial Validation Still Matters

Earned coverage gives Lehigh Valley valuable third-party credibility while potential visitors are researching and considering a trip.

EDITORIAL HEADLINES

"Stars, Stripes, Steel: The alloy that turned America into a superpower" *USA Today*

"This Magical Town is Known as 'Christmas City USA' — Home to the First Christmas Tree in History & 2 of the Best Holiday Markets in the U.S." *Secret NYC*

"33 Kid-Friendly Music Cities in North America That Hit All The Right Notes" *Scary Mommy*

"Last-Minute Labor Day Escapes: 10 Destinations You Might Not Have Considered" *The Independent*

"Romantic long weekends in every state worth booking now for Valentine's Day" *Travelhost*

yahoo! · TRAVELPULSE · Scary Mommy · TTW Travel and Tour World · metro Philadelphia · Mommy Poppins · USA TODAY · SECRET NYC · NEWSNATION · Positively Philly

EARNED MEDIA

1,564
MEDIA PLACEMENTS
+67.5% increase YoY

27,920,215
IMPRESSIONS
+931% increase YoY

$6,712,048
PUBLICITY VALUE

EARNED & ORGANIC MEDIA

3,265
MEDIA PLACEMENTS
+4.4% increase YoY

651,821,609
IMPRESSIONS
+345.6% increase YoY

$78,882,665
PUBLICITY VALUE

USA TODAY · The INDEPENDENT · Newsday · NEWSBREAK



WFMZ MULTI-PLATFORM PARTNERSHIP

DLV's partnership with WFMZ produced four tourism segments featuring **Lehigh Valley Grand Prix**'s winter activities for kids, **Da Vinci Science Center**, **Wind Creek Bethlehem** New Year's Eve happenings, and **Sigal Museum** in connection with **America's 250th** anniversary.

Each two-minute segment aired during the 4 p.m. News and Sunrise News the following day, supported by 10 promotional spots per segment, featured placement on WFMZ.com and social media promotion.

This integrated television and digital exposure provided DLV with multiple opportunities to showcase the region to locals and visitors alike, inspiring visitation.



1,736,009

Total Impressions across TV, web, and social media

MEDIA WINS: BRINGING LEHIGH VALLEY TO PHILADELPHIA AUDIENCES

DLV brought the region's food, culture and seasonal experiences to Philadelphia audiences through three live appearances on PHL17's Positively Philly, featuring Easton Garlic Fest, PA Bacon Fest and Christkindlmarkt Bethlehem.

Vault Communications secured the initial Easton Garlic Fest segment and turned that opportunity into an ongoing relationship with PHL17, leading to two additional broadcasts. Vault also prepared DLV staff for each appearance with tailored key messages, anticipated questions and on-air guidance, helping spokespeople confidently represent the featured event while connecting it to the region's broader appeal.

This established a trusted media relationship, creating a pathway for recurring coverage and continued visibility for Lehigh Valley.



3

live broadcast segments in a priority visitor market

22,200

viewers reached across the three appearances

$19,039

in publicity value

Special Projects

CELEBRATING AMERICA 250

DLV implemented a multi-faceted marketing strategy to highlight America's 250th anniversary. Working closely with organizers in Lehigh & Northampton counties, DLV engaged both local residents and potential visitors in key drive markets.

Content Creation:

- **Lehigh Valley 250 Landing Page:** Created a centralized page showcasing events, historical attractions, and celebrations.
- **Influencers:** Secured influencer coverage of unique regional experiences, extending awareness to new and engaged audiences.
- **Organic Social Media Content:** Developed content highlighting historic landmarks, lesser-known facts, and community activations.
- **Lehigh County Treasure Trail:** Developed a dedicated landing page promoting a self-guided trail of historic sites and social content.
- **Community Murals:** Advanced a collaborative initiative with ArtsQuest and the PA Council on the Arts to create commemorative murals in Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton. Project execution still underway.

Digital Marketing & PR:

- **Public Relations:** Pitched compelling storylines highlighting historic landmarks and unique celebrations to generate media interest.
- **Paid Digital Advertising:** Deployed targeted digital ads to drive traffic to the Lehigh Valley 250 landing page and inspire exploration
- **VisitPA Custom Email " 6 Ways to Celebrate 250 in Lehigh Valley"** highlighting activations in the region
- **Meta Campaigns:** Launched and optimized general awareness and promotion of events, activations, and experiences.
- **Billboard Advertising:** Planned additional out-of-home placements to promote events, actualizing in July–September 2026



Special Projects, *continued*

EXPANDING SOCCERFEST'S REACH THROUGH STRATEGIC MEDIA AND INFLUENCER OUTREACH

DLV and Vault Communications executed a targeted media and influencer strategy to raise awareness of ArtsQuest's SoccerFest across regional, Spanish-language and adaptive sports audiences. Through customized pitching, press release inclusion, interview coordination and a partnership with an accessibility influencer, the effort highlighted SoccerFest's inclusive programming, positioned it as a featured World Cup-season attraction and expanded awareness among engaged audiences.





Amplification from DLV's efforts:

Adaptive Sports: Free adaptive soccer clinic. Influencer content from @wonders.withinreach (16.9k followers)

Press Release: *"Lehigh Valley's Most Anticipated Summer Ever Arrives with World-Class Festivals, International Soccer, and America's 250th"*

LVB Interview: *"Lehigh Valley tourism officials tapping into World Cup fever"*

Event Photography

Paid & Organic Social Media

2,233,670
IMPRESSIONS ACROSS EARNED MEDIA & PAID DIGITAL ADVERTISING

$588,982
PUBLICITY VALUE FROM EARNED MEDIA

DESALES UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP: BRINGING CLASSROOM LEARNING TO LIFE

In Spring 2026, DLV partnered with **DeSales University** to bring real-world destination marketing experience into the classroom through *CS-400: Special Topics in Creative Intelligence Lab*. The course brought together sophomore, junior and senior students from a range of marketing and visual arts disciplines, including photography and videography. Students tackled actual DLV marketing needs through hands-on projects, gaining valuable professional experience while contributing fresh creative perspectives.

Coursework Included:

- Developing a campaign to increase college student sign-ups for Lehigh Valley Insider. *(Will be used winter 2026/27)*
- Create new brand photography opportunities for DLV.
- Editing and organizing video B-roll for marketing use.
- Utilizing the Virtual Production Studio to capture and document interview footage.



Social Media

ORGANIC SOCIAL MEDIA

This year, we prioritized follower growth and created content that gave travelers more reasons to visit Lehigh Valley. We grew our social community to 401,701 total fans (+12.6%) and pushed Instagram past the 100,000-follower milestone, closing the year with 110,202 followers (+23.1%).

Instagram and TikTok led follower growth, with TikTok increasing 46.4% to 54,670 followers. Facebook remained our largest audience at 180,981 followers (+6.4%), while LinkedIn grew 11.1% to 9,006. Our content also generated more than 11.6 million organic Facebook views and 9.1 million organic Instagram views.

As we headed into 2026, we began a gradual shift toward more overnight conversion posting, placing greater emphasis on attractions, events, itineraries, and experiences that help people plan a visit. This approach reduced our reliance on one-off influencer-style content and brought a more consistent destination focus to our storytelling.

Our partnership with WFMZ expanded that storytelling beyond our social channels. Monthly packaged features highlighted things happening across Lehigh Valley, complemented by live in-studio interviews during the 4 p.m. newscast.

Together, these efforts grew our audience while strengthening our focus on inspiring travel and connecting visitors with experiences across the region.

401,701

total social fans *(+12.6%)*

CHANNEL GROWTH

Facebook
180,981 followers **(+6.4%)**
11,604,147 organic views

Instagram
110,202 followers **(+23.1%)**
9,135,299 organic views

X
45,277 followers **(–10.0%)**
65,516 organic impressions
6,880 organic video views

TikTok
54,670 followers **(+46.4%)**
5,724,663 organic impressions
5,751,568 organic video views

LinkedIn
9,006 followers **(+11.1%)**
218,597 organic impressions
16,873 organic video views

YouTube
1,565 subscribers **(+7.9%)**
61,061 organic video views

TOP POSTS



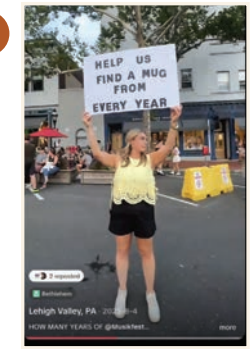
TOP ORGANIC FACEBOOK

Oktoberfest Preview
Views: 805,538
Reactions: 2,520
Clicks: 12,139
Comments: 210
Shares: 515



TOP ORGANIC INSTAGRAM

Musikfest Mugs
Views: 556,403
Reactions: 22,840
Comments: 128
Shares: 2.2k
Reposts: 45
Saves: 401



TOP ORGANIC TIKTOK

Musikfest Mugs
Impressions: 522,037
Views: 531.6k
Likes: 40.7k
Comments: 92
Saves: 674



TOP ORGANIC LINKEDIN

Historic Hotel Bethlehem Christmas Eve Sign
Impressions: 16,944
Likes: 377
Comments: 3
Reposts: 21

Social Media (continued)

PAID SOCIAL EFFORTS

In FY25–26, DLV refined its paid digital strategy to prioritize higher-intent audiences. As performance and cost efficiency declined, budget shifted to an Instagram profile-visits campaign focused on growing followers and increasing the impact of organic content. Net audience growth rose 161% over the previous period, helping DLV **surpass 100,000 followers**.

DLV refined its geographic targeting. Hotel and major-event content initially reached travelers within roughly two tanks of gas, then shifted to a one-tank radius as gas prices increased. Local campaigns continued promoting nearby activities, supporting the broader goals of driving qualified website traffic and building destination awareness.

PAID SOCIAL RESULTS

28,521,698
IMPRESSIONS

516,130
CLICKS

3%
AVG. CTR (-25.8%)

$0.33
AVG. CPC (+266%)

Facebook/ Instagram

- 14,078,244 Impressions
- 511,608 Link Clicks
- 21,279 profile visits
- $5.85 CPM
- 5.98% CTR
- $0.10 CPC

Outbrain

- 4,787,664 Impressions
- 4,522 Link Clicks
- 0.09 % CTR
- $0.56 CPC

TikTok

- 6,923,537 Impressions
- 1,785 Follows
- 6,896,632 video views
- $0.02 cost per 6-second video view

YouTube Shorts

- 2,732,253 Impressions
- $0.02 cost per view

SPOTLIGHT: INFLUENCER STORYTELLING

Throughout the fiscal year, DLV used influencer partnerships to bring regional experiences directly to engaged family, lifestyle and accessibility-focused audiences. Creator visits paired authentic, firsthand storytelling with DLV's organic content and paid amplification, extending partner visibility beyond each influencer's existing following.

THE IMPACT

12,000+
LANDING-PAGE VIEWS
$0.11 cost per click

6,600+
VIDEO ENGAGEMENTS



@WondersWithin Reach

spotlighted ArtsQuest's SoccerFest and its adaptive, inclusive sports programming.



@Britt Around Town

featured the Allentown Art Museum, Coca-Cola Park and Let Freedom Sign alongside the region's event lineup.



@KidsFind

introduced family audiences to America On Wheels and the National Museum of Industrial History.

Marketing & Advertising

DLV's integrated marketing and advertising strategy strengthened destination awareness and reached targeted visitor audiences. Building on the "It's All Here." campaign, creative evolved with seasonal adaptations. Strategic placements positioned Lehigh Valley as a convenient home base for fans attending FIFA World Cup matches, while a diverse media mix maximized reach across key audiences and markets.

VISITPA MEDIA BUY (Fall & Holiday 2025)

DLV continued our relationship with the PA Tourism Office, in a co-op media buy during the first half of our fiscal year. DLV contributed $225,000, matched at nearly 4:1 by the state, for a total of $800,000 advertising to the markets Philadelphia, HLLY, Wilkes Barre/Scranton, NY, and NJ. The campaign delivered strong metrics, effectively promoting the region as an attractive destination for Fall and Holiday visits.

Key FY Insights

- **Google Display** delivered the most digital impressions (43.4M) as well as the **main click driver of this campaign (560.7K)**
- Top location by clicks and CTR was **New York**, followed by Philadelphia, and Baltimore
- On **Meta**, over 1.7M people had been served the ads for the first time since campaign launch
- **Ages 35-44** were interacting with the ads the most, followed by 45-49
- **Google Video** delivered most video completions and had the lowest cost-per-view of the campaign ($0.01)
- **Paid Search** delivered the campaign's highest CTR which increased from 9.79% to 10.48% since last report

PERFORMANCE

259m
Total Digital Impressions

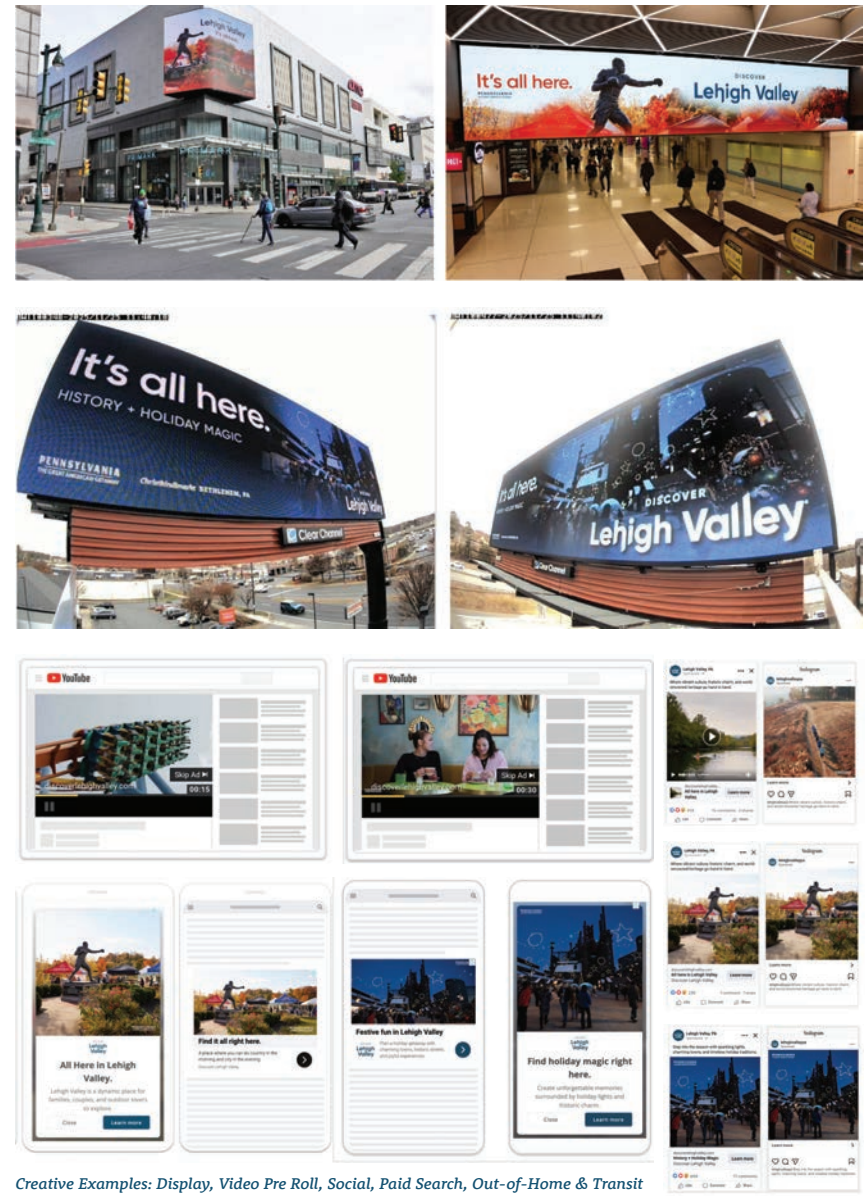
88.3m
Total Out-of-Home Impressions

716,000+ Total Clicks

8.1m
Total Video Completions

CO-OP FUNDING LIMITED REACH & EXPOSURE

DLV's paid media experienced reduced reach due to the absence of matching funds from VisitPA's Co-Op Media Buy program in 2026. DLV had less media spending power to extend campaign reach to key target markets.



Creative Examples: Display, Video Pre Roll, Social, Paid Search, Out-of-Home & Transit
General Brand Awareness: It's All Here, Fall & Holiday

Marketing & Advertising, *continued*

ADARA MEDIA BUYS

Digital display and video campaigns ran from August through December 2025, targeting potential visitors considering travel to the region for FIFA World Cup matches and related events. Messaging emphasized the Lehigh Valley's convenient proximity to match sites in New York and Philadelphia, with geotargeting strategies layered in following the announcement of participating teams. Additional general brand awareness messaging targeted DLV's traditional drive markets to broaden destination awareness.

The campaign delivered strong results across display and video channels, generating 35.7 million impressions, 124,155 clicks, and an overall 0.348% CTR. The video component performed particularly well, with paid pre-roll placements achieving CTRs above 1.1% and a combined video completion rate of 63.66%. The campaign also drove an estimated 10,772 hotel and flight bookings, generating more than 22,700 hotel room nights and an estimated $3.17 million in revenue, representing a 12.69x return on media investment based on enriched attribution.

General Brand Awareness:

- **Pennsylvania** (exclude 25 miles radius around Allentown),
- **HLLY** (Harrisburg, Lancaster, Lebanon, York) and **Wilkes-Barre/Scranton**
- **New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Washington DC**

World Cup Campaign:

- **Nationwide**, **Brazil**, **France**, **Norway**, **Germany**, **England**, **Ecuador**, **Haiti**, **Morocco**, **Panama**
- Viewers of the 2022 World Cup and other signature soccer events, alongside ticket purchasers and searchers/buyers for the 2025 and 2026 FIFA World Cups (via Ticketmaster)

WORLD CUP VIDEO CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE

35.7m
Impressions

1.1%
Pre-Roll Video Click through Rates

64%
Video Completion Rate

10,722
Hotel & flight bookings, generating more than

22,700
hotel room nights

$3.17m
in revenue, a nearly 13x return on media investment

Display Creative Examples: ***World Cup***



Display Creative Examples: ***Brand Awareness***

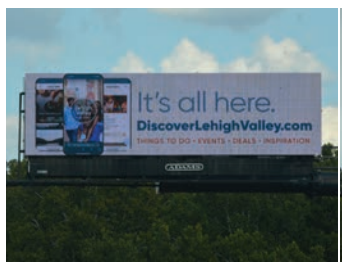
Things to Do with Kids & Cozy Winter Escapes





Marketing & Advertising, *continued*







DIVERSE MEDIA MIX

In addition to the major investments with VisitPA and Adara, DLV diversified with additional out-of-home placements with **Adams Outdoor** extended brand visibility among local audiences and into the Pocono and Wilkes-Barre/Scranton markets. Additionally, DLV partnered with Allentown Art Museum, Arts at Lafayette, Greater Easton Development Partnership, Lehigh Valley IronPigs, Lower Macungie Township Historical Society, and Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor to amplify our partners' initiatives and activations.

Strategic content partnerships with **Philadelphia Magazine**, **Fig Lehigh Valley**, and **VisitPA's custom email newsletter** further connected engaged audiences with inspiring Lehigh Valley content.



EMAIL MARKETING

40%
AVERAGE OPEN RATE

Email marketing is a key component of DLV's overall marketing strategy, providing a cost-effective and efficient way to reach engaged audiences. Through custom email content developed by our team, DLV promotes regional partners and highlights destination experiences.

Segmentation

DLV evolved its email marketing efforts by creating segmented distribution lists to optimize overall email performance, reduce spam complaints, and unsubscribe rates.

Subscribers were divided into weekly and monthly audiences based on their email engagement. Those who regularly opened or clicked on newsletter content continued receiving weekly communications every Wednesday, while less-engaged subscribers transitioned to a monthly distribution schedule.



35,364
WEEKLY LEISURE E-NEWS SUBSCRIBERS
+55.9% YoY

32,386
MONTHLY LEISURE E-NEWS SUBSCRIBERS
+37.3% YoY

3,800
LEHIGH VALLEY INSIDER SUBSCRIBERS
+27.9% YoY

Website Performance

Declines across several metrics reflected a decrease in advertising spend after **Discover Lehigh Valley® did not receive state matching funds, resulting in a significant reduction in display activity.** Despite this shift, paid social, paid search and direct traffic each recorded double-digit growth as acquisition channels. We continued to reach a diverse geographic audience, with Ontario appearing as a top market for the first time following a 1,968% year-over-year increase in sessions.

3,061,926
TOTAL USERS **-21% YoY**

4,109,317
SESSIONS **-18% YoY**

2:43
SESSION DURATION
+23 seconds YoY

7,624,109
PAGEVIEWS **-16% YoY**

Top 10 Locations of Visitors to Website

1. **Pennsylvania** *1,189,040*
2. **New York** *567,324*
3. **Ontario** *394,876*
4. **New Jersey** *311,593*
5. **Virginia** *164,109*
6. **Ohio** *138,828*
7. **Florida** *131,765*
8. **Georgia** *130,372*
9. **Michigan** *115,661*
10. **North Carolina** *113,617*

Top Acquisitions Channels

1. **Display** *971,634 (-32.45%)*
2. **Organic Search** *694,375 (-3.17%)*
3. **Paid Social** *424,282 (+52.57%)*
4. **Direct** *354,683 (+11.58%)*
5. **Paid Search** *201,463 (+45.56%)*

Visitors by Gender

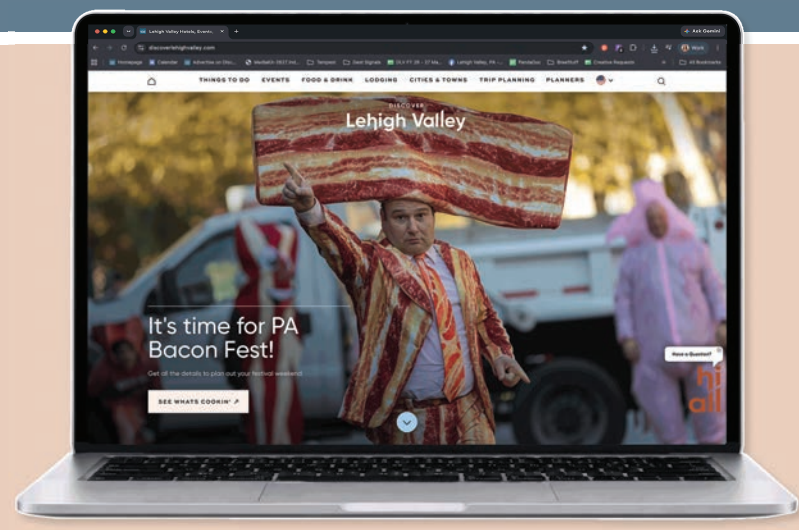
60% FEMALE

40% MALE

AN EVOLVING DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

The growing prominence of AI-powered search features, including Google's AI Overviews, ChatGPT, and similar generative AI platforms, has changed traditional search behavior, with more users finding answers directly within search results or AI-generated responses rather than clicking through to destination websites.

These factors underscore the importance of adapting digital marketing strategies, while strengthening SEO and AI search visibility



A New **DiscoverLehighValley.com**

Following the website launch in August 2025, DLV continued to optimize and enhance DiscoverLehighValley.com, building on its transition from Simpleview to Tempest, a Philadelphia-based leader in digital marketing and destination technology.

- **Smarter search**, seasonal inspiration, and fresh content tools drive deeper engagement for visitors
- **Heritage-inspired visuals** with modern typography & playful icons
- A prominent **AI-powered search** that acts as a digital concierge
- Easy to use **language translation**

Website Optimization

AI-DRIVEN DISCOVERY SURGES

DiscoverLehighValley.com experienced significant growth in traffic originating from Large Language Models (LLMs) during FY 2025–26, demonstrating the growing role of AI platforms like ChatGPT and Google Gemini in destination discovery. While traffic sources like organic traffic and display are down, audiences are finding DLV as a cited source within Ai results, **reinforcing the importance of maintaining fresh, relevant, well-structured website content optimized for AI**.

Key FY Takeaways

Substantial YoY growth: The website generated 6,693 LLM-referred sessions, representing a 437.2% increase over the prior year.

Strong engagement: LLM traffic achieved a 68% engagement rate, indicating that visitors from AI platforms are actively exploring website content.

Content drives discovery: Top landing pages included seasonal blogs and event-related content, like last-minute summer family activities, the Great Allentown Fair, Oktoberfest, and fall corn mazes.

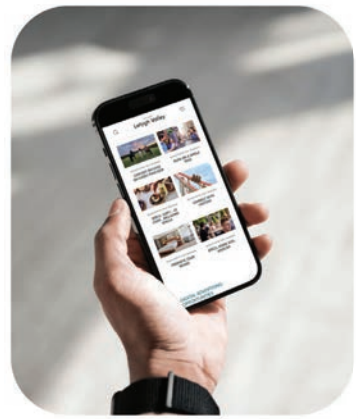
6,693
LLM SESSIONS
+437.2% YoY

4,554
ENGAGED LLM SESSIONS
+446.7% YoY

68%
ENGAGEMENT RATE
+513.6% YoY

PARTNER ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES ON DISCOVERLEHIGHVALLEY.COM

DLV reintroduced native advertising opportunities on DiscoverLehighValley.com, giving partners a new way to reach an engaged audience of more than 3 million visitors, annually. During the final months of FY25–26, DLV worked with **Destination Signals** to develop the offerings. The program officially launched July 1, 2026, creating new opportunities for partners to increase visibility and connect with visitors actively exploring our region.



AI-POWERED ASSISTANT TO IMPROVE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

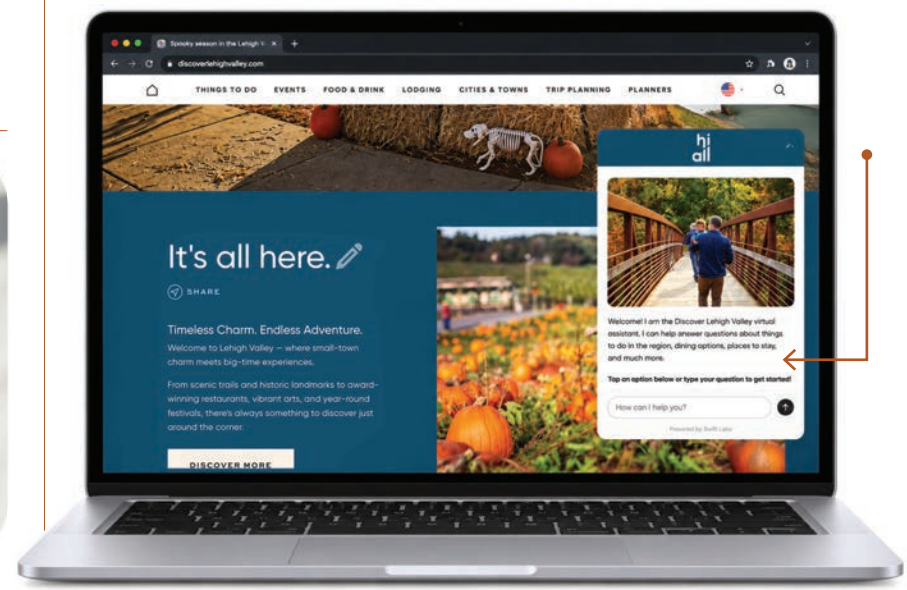
DLV continued to embrace emerging technologies, finding innovative ways to improve the visitor experience. In April 2026, DLV launched an AI-powered assistant on the website through **Satisfi Labs**. Early results are encouraging, with strong initial engagement and valuable insights, helping DLV better understand and respond to their needs.

384
conversations with 372 unique visitors, peaking in May with 210 conversations.

94%
of scored responses were rated correct, keeping visitors confidently informed.

Top Five Topics

1. Things to do & activities
2. Events & festivals
3. Towns & cities
4. Plans for today & this weekend
5. Lodging & hotels



Partnership

DLV partners are tourism-facing businesses across Lehigh and Northampton Counties that contribute to the rich diversity of experiences available to visitors each day. These businesses can participate in a wide range of services enhancing their visibility and engagement with visitors and residents.

DLV implemented a new iDSS Partner Portal alongside the launch of its new website in late summer 2025. Throughout the year, the Partnership and Sales Teams worked to onboard new and existing partners and sales lead catchers, helping them become familiar with the new system. The elevated platform allows DLV to streamline internal processes, including newsletters and hosted events, while providing partners with individual logins to manage their accounts, update information, and access resources whenever needed.

Top 5 Partners, by referrals

1. **Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom** *8,401*
2. **America On Wheels** *4,451*
3. **Glasbern** *3,830*
4. **Historic Hotel Bethlehem** *2,716*
5. **The Sayre Mansion** *2,504*

Top 5 Events, by pageviews

1. **Illumination at Coca-Cola Park** *25.4K pageviews*
2. **Holiday Lights Spectacular at Becky's Drive-In** *25.4K pageviews*
3. **Musikfest** *18.3K pageviews*
4. **Christmas City Village** *12.1K pageviews*
5. **Christkindlmarkt Bethlehem** *6K pageviews*



DLV's National Travel & Tourism Week Celebration for partners at Wind Creek Bethlehem's Mixx Lounge.

1,200+

Total partners

163,289

Partner Referrals

-38.9% YoY

88

NEW PARTNERS ONBOARDED

457,265

PARTNER LISTING HITS

What partners updated, vs previous year:

- **Accounts:** 164 v. 192
- **Listings:** 119 vs 142
- **Coupons** Added 105 vs 70

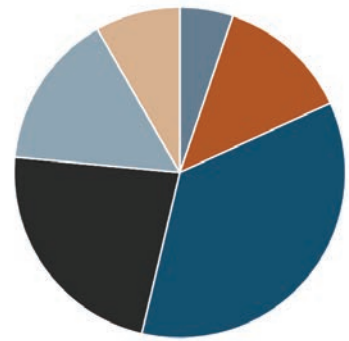
1,563

Leisure Events Added by Partners +54% YoY

vs 1,016 the previous year



Caleb Danielson, Manager of Partner Relations attended PACE, Partnership & Community Engagement Conference in Kissimmee, Florida alongside DMO representatives from across the country.



CATEGORY BREAKDOWN

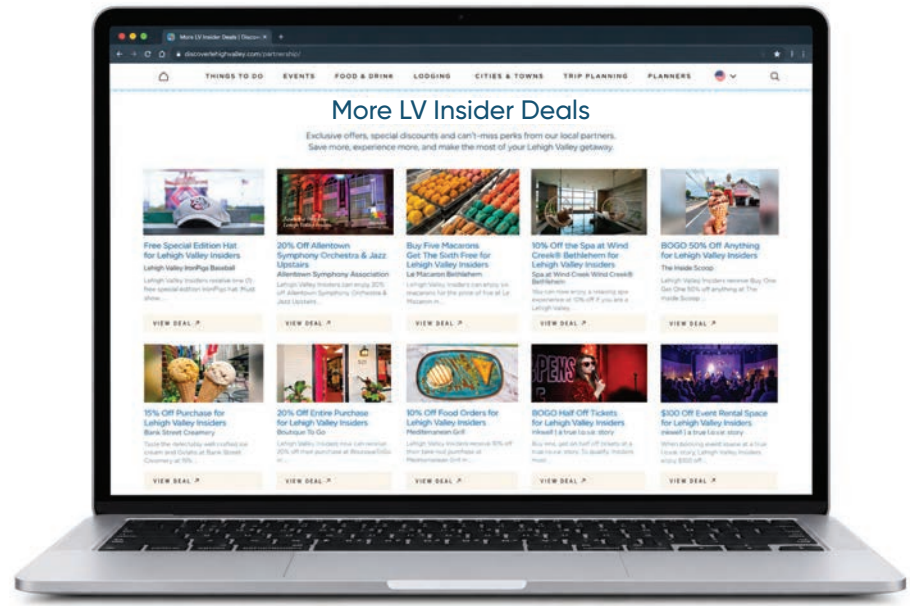
- Food & Beverage: 35.6%
- Attractions & Recreation: 22.8%
- Services: 15.2%
- Retail & Shopping: 12.9%
- Venues & Meeting Spaces: 8.3%
- Accommodations: 5.2%

"Wildlands Conservancy is grateful to have a friend in Discover Lehigh Valley. Their Partner Portal makes it easy to share our get-outdoors programs every month. It's one of the many ways Discover Lehigh Valley® collaborates with us to help more friends, families, and neighbors connect with nature right here at home. And in turn, those experiences inspire the protection of open space, clean water, quality of life, and sense of place." *Megan Sciarrino, Wildlands Conservancy*

Lehigh Valley INSIDER

Lehigh Valley Insider completed its first full fiscal year, continuing to grow as a free way for visitors and residents to experience more of the region. The Insider community has grown to more than 4,500 members, with a free digital pass providing access to **85 exclusive deals** and discounts across Lehigh Valley. A bi-weekly e-newsletter keeps Insiders connected to the latest places to eat, stay, and play.

This year, DLV also launched a dedicated Lehigh Valley Insider landing page, creating a central hub where users can sign up, explore current deals, and discover a Featured Deal.. Partners can submit their own perks through the page, providing an additional opportunity to showcase their business and offers directly to the growing Insider community.



726

New Lehigh Valley Insiders

July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026

4,500+

Lehigh Valley Insiders


Lehigh Valley Grand Prix


inkwell.


Inside Scoop

Sales, Services, & Sports

FY 25/26 was a year of continued growth for Discover Lehigh Valley's Sales Team. The team generated 210 business opportunities for partners, a 41% increase year over year, while securing more than 15,800 future room nights across meetings, conferences, and sporting events.

The Sales Team strengthened its support of regional partners and event organizers by providing economic impact data, destination insights, and letters of support that contributed to $173,000 in state grant funding awarded to Lehigh Valley events. These results demonstrate continued momentum in positioning Lehigh Valley as a competitive destination while driving future visitation, overnight stays, and economic impact throughout the region.

Team Growth

DLV welcomed Kaleigh Hess-Davila as Tourism Development Coordinator, expanding the Sales Team's capacity to support the organization's tourism development efforts. Kaleigh assists across all areas of the department, including sales initiatives, client and partner support, and the recruitment and servicing of meetings, conferences, and sporting events.

Tradeshows & Conferences Attended

- MPI NY Golf Outing - In Partnership with Wind Creek Bethlehem
- Connect Marketplace
- Northstar Destination East
- NCAA Symposium
- Sports Events & Tourism Association Annual Symposium
- Meetings Professional International NJ Lehigh Valley Showcase Co-op
- PA Sports Olympic Sales Mission

DLV Hosted Groups & Event Organizers:

- FeistyMedia Site Visit
- Pennsylvania Downtown Center Association Site Visit



DLV Hotelier event, "Preparing for 2026" at Four Points by Sheraton Allentown Lehigh Valley



Destination East, Providence

DLV Sales/Hotelier Events:

- Meetings Professional International NJ Lehigh Valley Showcase Co-op
- Preparing for 2026: Events & Opportunities in the Lehigh Valley



Olympic Sales Mission, Colorado Springs



Sports ETA, Las Vegas



MPI NJ Lehigh Valley Showcase CoOp, Jersey City

LEADS GENERATED

210
total leads generated
(+41% YoY)

102
Meetings and Conventions
(+7% YoY)

108
Sports
(+7% YoY)

ROOMS BOOKED for the future

15,800+
Overall
(+9% YoY)

6,400+
Meetings/Conferences
(+16% YoY)

9,400+
Sports
(+4% YoY)

Sales, Services, & Sports, continued

STATE GRANT FUNDING & PARTNER SUPPORT

The Sales Team provided critical data, insights, and letters of support to assist partners and event organizers applying for state funding for several events across the Lehigh Valley. These efforts helped strengthen funding applications by demonstrating the anticipated economic impact, overnight visitation, and overall value these events bring to the region, while supporting continued efforts to attract and grow impactful events throughout our region.

$173,000

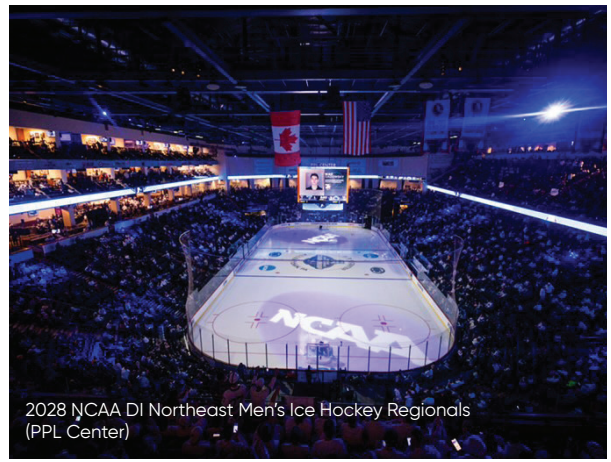
TOTAL GRANT MONEY AWARDED FY 25/26

SMAT Grants

- **2026 United States Golf Association Junior Amateur Championship (Saucon Valley Country Club)**
- **2028 NCAA DI Northeast Men's Ice Hockey Regionals (PPL Center)** *(Actualizes in FY 27/28)*
- **2026 Banana Ball (Coca-Cola Park, now Jefferson Park)**



Saucon Valley Country Club


2028 NCAA DI Northeast Men's Ice Hockey Regionals (PPL Center)


Banana Ball