

surroundings

akron/summit convention & visitors bureau | john s. knight center

newsletter

communiqué

information

report

correspondence

update

summer 2016

president & ceo's message



Gregg M. Mervis

With fall just around the corner, it's the perfect time to look at the collaborations, strategies and celebrations that have enabled Summit County's hospitality partners to accelerate

the momentum our industry is experiencing this year.

Most recently, we joined our northeast Ohio colleagues in welcoming 50,000 visitors for the Republican National Convention. We were excited to promote the RNC-inspired exhibit created by the Summit County Historical Society and The University of Akron Archives featuring Akron native and past Republican Chair, Ray C. Bliss. Valued local partners mobilized months in advance

to put our best foot forward, including hotels, attractions, restaurants and retailers. With the world watching, their preparation allowed us to garner positive feedback for our efforts and the appreciation of guests.

In May, National Travel & Tourism Week allowed us to cast a bright spotlight on the tireless work and boundless positive spirit of our partners.



G. Mervis, V. Fleischer, L. Heppner & J. Mahon



R. McQueen & E. Damson

The Zenith Awards celebrated the people who create the foundation upon which our exceptional brand of hospitality rests. Their dedication, ideas and advocacy for Summit County are what fuel our local "visitor economy." Professionals, they continue to strive for excellence in customer service while never forgetting to deliver quality products and experiences.

Turning our attention to nurturing future industry leaders, we held our 13th annual Donald L. Patterson Hospitality Scholarship Golf Tournament. With this year's \$2,000, we have proudly contributed a total of \$26,000 to deserving students in The University of Akron College of Applied Science and Technology Hospitality Management program. Doing our part to ensure their success is an investment in our community that will reap tremendous dividends.

On behalf of my entire team, we're so proud to call Greater Akron home. We're grateful to everyone for their

work and enthusiasm. And most importantly, we're honored to work each day promoting the very best of Summit County.



G. Mervis, J. Arrietta & R. McQueen



Zenith Award Winners

come to play

Powered by the Bureau, the Sports Alliance of Greater Akron was formally launched to expand efforts to secure sporting events of all sizes and types for area communities. Brittany Wigman's promotion to Sports Development Strategist will focus full-time resources to build upon the work of Bureau Director of Sales, Mary Tricaso, who worked to develop the market and to establish partnerships with event rights holders and venues.

To position Greater Akron as an attractive, accessible and affordable sporting event destination, the Bureau will continue attending regional/national trade shows, publish a new comprehensive sports venue directory and promote the new web site, www.playakron.com. Equally important, hospitality partners will play a vital and ongoing role in creating the overall experience players, teams and spectators have while visiting; the hospitality industry, like no other, is in the business of inspiring great memories that will last a lifetime.

"Sports is an integral market segment, representing a profitable business opportunity. We want athletes to know that they can 'come to play' in Greater Akron all year-round," states Wigman.



the center of your back yard



In partnership with Summit Metro Parks, the Center transformed the gallery space near the skywalk. Visitors will now be welcomed by photography representing every season. New benches are set in front of life-size wall wraps, which are framed by maple and beech branches for the perfect photo-op, all using reclaimed materials from throughout the park system.

360° at the center

The Center has launched a new interactive web site to compliment an equally-engaging print ad campaign appearing in national industry trade publications, *Successful Meetings* and *Meetings & Conventions Magazine*. Dynamic 360° tours of each space allow planners to move freely between the Center's two levels to



explore and discover the perfect location for their next event. Leveraging its human capital, the ads underscore the Center team's 279 years of combined dedicated



employment, consistently high customer service scores and their unwavering commitment to excellence. Call today and let's start planning!

sculpture of celebration

To commemorate the privilege of hosting the 2014 Gay Games (GG9), a sculpture was created by world-renowned Akron artist, Don Drumm. The work captures the sporting events that were held in Summit County and honors the partners who dedicated time and resources to ensure GG9's success. "The 2014 Games were the first to have a profit in the history of the event, allowing us to create the first permanent memorial for the Games anywhere in the world," states Dirk Breiding, Bureau V.P. of Sales. A narrative plaque tells the story of Greater Akron's pivotal role in securing the event that celebrated inclusion, personal dignity and the amazing power of diversity.



Dedicated May 15, 2016 on the Center's Susan L. Hamo Plaza

you may have heard a few things... & yes, you heard right



With a big splash of self-deprecation, the Bureau launched a summer ad and digital campaign featuring iconic events that are undeniably only ours to promote.

This Place Is Going Downhill, All-American Soap Box Derby; *It's Nothing But A Party Town*, RNC; *We're Rough Around The Edges*, Bridgestone Invitational; *This Place Is Unoriginal*, Twins Days Festival; and *We're Starving For Attention*, National Hamburger Festival. With untapped creative potential, the initial campaign is being expanded to feature other key tourism assets (*This Place Is For The Birds*, National and Summit Metro Parks). Keep your eyes peeled for more headlines to come!



waste not & save more

The Center's operations team works diligently to conserve energy and maximize **cardboard and paper recycling**.

As a result of their efforts in **2015**, the Center **recycled 27,154 lbs.** and **saved:**

- 231 trees
- 5,159 gallons of oil
- 41 cu. yds. of landfill
- 54,308 kilowatts of energy
- 95,039 gallons of water
- 814.6 lbs. of pollution
- 3,394 lbs. of carbon dioxide

Additionally, the Center **recycled 584 lbs.** of plastic bottles, cans and glass.



a stroll along mill street

In addition to the majestic spaces that make Greystone Hall one of the most sought-after special events venues in the region, we are tremendously proud of our efforts and those of other community stakeholders to fill its remaining Mill Street retail outlets. Anchored by Carmen's Studio, visitors and residents can enjoy Sweet Mary's Bakery, Rubber City Comics and Apotheclaire. The offices of Buckeye Energy Brokers, Inc. occupy the corner unit. "Doing our part to encourage local business growth and job creation, while helping increase the vibrancy and diversity of our downtown, is a responsibility we take seriously. Hope to see you on Mill Street soon," states Gregg Mervis.



partnerships in motion

Bringing Summit County's diverse hospitality industry partners together for food, fun and conversation continues to be the goal of the Bureau's outreach events, Partnerships In Motion. Showcasing venues throughout the county, the gatherings have provided important first introductions, encouraged new collaborations and generated a higher level of camaraderie. Together, we can accomplish so much more and we do.



sales | marketing | branding

Representation at national and regional tradeshows and promotional events allows the Bureau to market the area as a viable destination for meetings, conventions, sports events and group tours. Additionally, welcoming meeting and tour planners to our area for familiarization tours and conducting sales missions are equally effective in showcasing area accommodations and points of interest.

January - July 2016:

- American Bus Association Marketplace
- Heartland Travel Showcase
- Destination Marketing Association International Sales Academy
- Toronto Star Golf & Travel Show
- Partnerships in Motion Columbus Sales Mission
- National Association of Sports Commissions Tradeshow
- National Travel & Tourism Week
- Your Military Reunion Connection Marketplace
- Monthly Columbus Sales Calls
- Ohio Society of Association Executives Annual Conference
- Eastern League All-Star Game
- Adventures in Northeast Ohio AAA Show & Sales Mission
- Ohio Travel Pavilion - Ohio State Fair
- Ohio High School Athletic Association's State Softball Championships Coaches Meeting

a few words from our clients



"The staff at Greystone Hall was beyond wonderful. Everyone was kind, knowledgeable and patient."
Katherine H., July Bride

"I have planned meetings for 15 years and this, by far, was the best experience I have ever had - start to finish. This staff is the definition of excellence."
Mary N., SDMyers

"I'm consistently impressed with the Center staff. They are creative, friendly, extremely professional, and truly a joy to work with year after year."
Sharyn B., Babcock & Wilcox

"The Bureau's Mary Tricaso is remarkable. She made wonderful suggestions that really helped make our visitors feel welcome."
Mary Ann F., Summit County Probate Court

jsk rewind/jsk fast-forward

The following list is a sample of events held at the Center between January & July 2016:

- Today's Bride, ArtsNow, Synchrony Financial, Mayors Association of Portage, Stark & Summit Counties, JAM Brands Coastal, IATSE Local 48, Glowpoint, Akron Roundtable, OSU Pesticide Recertification, Angel Art Auction, Rubber City Rollergirls, Ohio State Bar Association Continuing Legal Certification Institute, Fortis



hba akron home & flower show

- College, Summa Health System, HBA Akron Home & Flower Show, Carter Lumber Company, Connexus, Pinnacle Events & Expos Women's Expo, MarkerNET/MMP, The University of Akron School of Law, Signet Jewelers, St. Hilary School, Seek the Light Holistic & Psychic Fair, Greater Akron Chamber, Northern Ohio Bibliophilic Society's Book & Paper Sale, Akron/Canton CSI, Jolly Peterson & Truckenbrod, Akron Press Club, Asian Sun, Ohio State Bar



black male summit

- Association District 11, Northeast Ohio Teacher Education Day, The University of Akron's Black Male Summit, JOG, Akron Art Museum, United Way of Summit County, Adventures in Stamping's Rubber Stamp Convention, Heart to Heart Communications, Mutha Oith Creations Oddmall, The University of Akron's School of Nursing, Stark State College, NEO Synod, Gay Community Endowment Fund, FirstEnergy,

The following "public events" are scheduled for the remainder of 2016 at the Center: Scrapbook Expo, Summit For Kids, Akron Marathon Health Expo, Rubber City Rollergirls, Log Home & Timber Frame Show, Mutton Hill Quilt Show, Akron Comicon, Seek The Light Expo, Holiday Tree Festival and First Night Akron. See a complete/up-to-date list at www.johnsknightcenter.org.