

Yahoo! Finance lists Parkersburg among country's most affordable overnight destinations

One of the world's leading digital news media groups, *Yahoo! Finance*, took notice of Parkersburg this spring and named it among the "10 Most Affordable Places to Book Hotels in the U.S."

Yahoo! Finance noted that consumer confidence appears to be on the rise and hotel stays are increasing. The article from March 25 indicated that while some areas of the country are experiencing increases in hotel lodging rates, travelers can still find a number of very affordable destinations when traveling, including Parkersburg.

"As someone who oversees two area lodging properties this is great news for the region," said Alan Hardway, vice president for MPH Hotels (Wingate by Wyndham and Holiday Inn Express & Suites) and Greater Parkersburg CVB board chairman. "While we've always known this region's hotel rates are competitive...it's nice to know others have taken notice."

Greater Parkersburg CVB President Steve Nicely indicated that Wood County's hotel occupancy rate has been on a steady incline over the course of the past two years. The hotel occupancy rate in Wood County was up 4.8% in 2011 over 2010, and the occupancy percentage through the first four months of 2012 over the same period in 2011 is up 4.5%.

Bureau Nets Strong Results from Spring Ad Campaign

The Greater Parkersburg Convention & Visitors Bureau spring advertising campaign has generated almost 7,000 visitor inquiries through late May 2012 with more expected as different ad placements occur later this year.

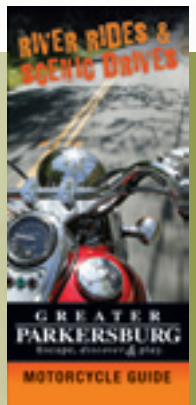
The bureau placed both general print display ads and co-op ads within the following national and regional publications: *2012 West Virginia State Travel Guide*, *Guest Quest Newspaper Inserts*, *Midwest Vacation Guide Newspaper Insert*, *America's Best Vacation Newspaper Insert*, *Parade Magazine*, *Long Weekends Magazine*, *Civil War Traveler Magazine* and several additional heritage and cultural publications. The estimated circulation of the combined publications is in excess of three million readers.

Regional Padded Maps Now Available

The bureau recently published 10,000 updated padded maps featuring regional points of interests, hotels and area attractions. The maps are used primarily by frontline tourism employees at hotels, shops, attractions and visitor centers, who interact with travelers on a daily basis. They are distributed to meetings, groups, and sporting events visiting the area, as well as individuals. The maps were printed courtesy of Camden Clark Medical Center, Grand Central Mall, WineTree Vineyards and Woodcraft. Maps were printed by CR Malcom and Vienna Office Supply.

CVB Publishes Motorcycle Guide to Area

The Greater Parkersburg CVB recently published an eight-panel full-color brochure detailing five scenic motorcycling routes in the area.



"River Rides & Scenic Drives Motorcycle Guide," details rides that loop along the Ohio River in West Virginia and Ohio. Each ride is designed to start and stop at the WV Welcome Center off I-77 Exit 185 in Williamstown and average 100-150 miles each. Routes were developed by S&P Harley-Davidson and a local HOG (Harley Owners Group) chapter. Rides are marked for various skill levels and range from beginners to experienced riders. The brochure features maps, points of interest and detailed directions for each suggested ride.

The bureau printed 10,000 copies of the brochure and distributed them during the third annual Thunder Road Madness event June 1-3 at S&P Harley-Davidson.

"We anticipate enhancing and building out the motorcycle guide even more next year," noted Mark Lewis, CVB president-elect. "Several regions of the state have developed similar guides and the West Virginia Tourism office is active in marketing to this specific niche. Motorcycle enthusiasts love to travel and we see this as an opportunity to entice them to stay in the area for several days or make plans for repeat visits."