

PRESS KIT

# Southern West Virginia

Your Time. *Our Place.*

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Southern  
West Virginia

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**Lisa Strader**  
Digital Media & PR

Visit Southern West Virginia  
1408 Harper Rd  
Beckley, WV 25802

ph: 304.252.2244 or 800.847.4898  
fax: 304.252.2252  
em: [lisa@visitwv.com](mailto:lisa@visitwv.com)

Website: [visitwv.com](http://visitwv.com)

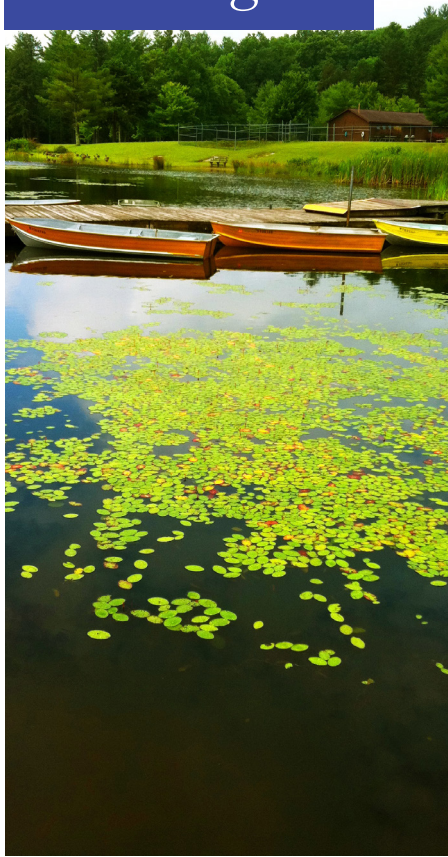
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## Outdoors / *Adventure in the mountains*

[www.visitwv.com/things-to-do/recreation](http://www.visitwv.com/things-to-do/recreation)



Southern WV's rolling waves and mountains offer a playground of "best in the world" terrain for many adventures, and gorgeous, sweeping scenery as far as you can see.

**Aerial acrobatics | Stunt and** soar over 70,000-acres of gaping

**Whitewater Rafting**- Gauley River, one of Top 10 for rafting worldwide; "Big 5" unique Class 5 Rapids. New River, great challenge for families. Seasonal guides who adventure for a living.

**Hiking & biking**- One of top 5 mountain biking destinations. Flat rail trails & single-track terrain. Sections of the renowned Appalachian trail.

**ATVing**- 500 miles of Hatfield-McCoy trail systems, accessible to all off-road vehicles. Wildlife, historic stops. Fishing- Some of the best small-mouth bass and trout.

river gorge and pristine parkland in the ever-vital relics of World War II. Wild Blue Adventure Company's antique restored bi-planes were once training tools for war pilots, and these bright blue battle birds still swoop with precision & grace. Chris Kappler has been flying solo

**Rock Climbing & Rappelling**- New River Gorge a climbers' hotspot. Diverse sandstone cliffsides. Friendly rivalry with Red River Gorge. Advocates for public access.

**Winter wonderland**- 25+ ski & snowboard trails, largest tubing park in state. 2 stunt terrain parks. Snowshoeing. Cross-country skiing.

**Sky-lovers paradise**: Annual BASE jumping festival, largest of its kind in World (Bridge Day). Challenge park of obstacles— in the air! Skydiving over the New River Gorge. Aerial tramways.

since 16, so his flight experience logs thousands of hours. Even his day job is aerial: he pilots an emergency helicopter. Who better to entrust your safety in the skies? Especially when doing loop-de-loops and other thrilling aerobatics.

**Ziplining**- Longest zipline on East Coast. Zip from New River Gorge Bridge only 1 day/year. Multiple ziplines available throughout the year.

**Fayetteville**- Recently named "Best River Town" by Blue Ridge Outdoor Magazine. The hot spot for all your outdoor adventure needs.

**Horseback Riding**, kayaking, jetboating, skiing, caving, 15 state parks, wildlife management areas and forests & 3 national parks, historic trails & more.



Birthered from Civil War conflict, WV's story stretches back yet further through deep Appalachian roots. Cultural roots are well-preserved here, where storytelling is still a cherished pastime.

After the boom | Imagine an entire lifestyle centered around a single company: isolated in the hills, hard labor underground through the day to purchase family goods from

**Coal Heritage Trail**- 5 Southern WV counties of coal history & stories.

**Midland Trail Scenic Highway**- 180+ miles through 40+ communities, stops incl. waterfalls, overlooks, museums, historic downtowns, artisan attractions & more.

the company store. This was life in early mining towns. Coal came in with a boom, bringing floods of families with it. And many of these pop-up towns disappeared just as suddenly.

Coal remains a strong industry in parts of Southern WV, but the emptied sections of rippled earth sit below ruins of long-abandoned homes and buildings. From the

**Hinton**- Historic rail town, 200+ examples of rare & unique architecture. Origin site of John Henry, Steel Drivin' Man, legend. Scenic train tours. Railroad Days annual festival downtown.

**Bramwell**- Most millionaires per capita in America in 1800s. Coal baron mansions on "Millionaire Row" houses open for inside tours twice annually.

towering coal tipples to the hollow mouths of the coke ovens, you can still stroll through ghost towns like Nuttallburg and Sewell, exploring the relics of these communities so bound to coal that they followed where it led next.

**Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine**- Underground museum including real abandoned mine & interactive youth museum. Glade Creek Grist Mill- Most photographed spot in the state.

**New River Train Excursions**- Antique rail car tours along the tracks. Mystery trains, Polar Express, weekend Greenbrier getaways.



Southern WV's arts scene is a varied blend of past technique, innovative spin and contemporary curation. Our distinct cultural heritage has flowed into the contemporary character of the area.

Arts in the valley: A strong blend of recreation, charm & history helped downtown Lewisburg make a name as one of America's "Coolest Small Towns," but most

**Tamarack**- Showcase of WV's top artisans. Live demos, studio artists.

**Riff Raff Arts Collective**- An all-in-one arts community: theater venue, gallery, in-house artists, recording studio, music school & more all in one.

notably stand out is its thriving arts community.

Home to one of only four renowned Carnegie Halls in the world, the performing arts scene welcomes a host of local talent alongside international musicians and actors. Classic films grace the local theater screens alongside modern movies. Take in the strong scent of the printed page as you browse the shelves of the bustling independent bookstore.

**Gauley River Pottery**- Ceramic studio and shop. Pottery process from clay to creation. Historic Fayette Theater- Restored theater. Award-winning acting troupe.

**Wineries & distilleries**- Grain, grapes & odd/experimental blends. Vineyards, tasting rooms, festivals, pairing dinners, tours.

Galleries dot the main street: you need only walk a block or so to explore fine arts from the Cooper Gallery, Washington Street Gallery, and sprawling antique shops. Explore handcrafted furniture, decor, kitchenwares, calligraphy and more. Grab a sip from the boutique coffee and wine bar as you browse the quirky handcrafted creations at Harmony Ridge Gallery.

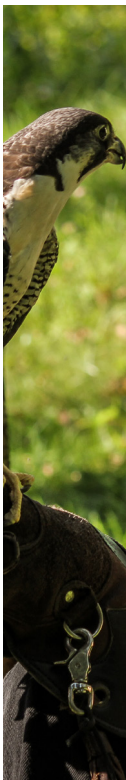
**Historic Main Streets**- Incl. 2 "Coolest Small Town" titleholders.

**Chicory Square** painted trains, The Clay Center (for Arts & Sciences), & more.



## Stops / *Browse Southern WV's best*

[www.visitwv.com/things-to-do](http://www.visitwv.com/things-to-do)



Our proud hard-working heritage breeds entrepreneurial spirit & flavor. You can find locally owned & operated handcraft markets, specialty shops and culinary creations bursting with distinct personality on every corner of town.

**The Climbers' Climbing Shop:** When they first got to the New River Gorge, they hit the cliff-sides hard, scaling the sandstone gorge from deep riverbed to towering mountain top, laying

**Tamarack-** Truly the best of southern WV. Everything under the domed roof was hand-crafted by a WV artisan. Full of hidden gems.

**Blue Smoke Salsa-** Kettle-cooked salsas and WV goods. Peach salsa, pepper jellies, guacamole chips. Started as a garden hobby & grew.

**Chimney Corner USA Store-** Old-time country store; penny candies, jarred goods, mountain knick-knacks and mementos.

new paths for others to follow. Pioneers of the climbing world, and growing to be some of the area's most outspoken advocates, Maura & Gene Kistler and Kenny Parker joined their priorities to protect outdoor access with their extensive knowledge of the climbing craft to share the sport with the masses... and make a living doing what they loved. Thus Waterstone Outdoors was born.

Dishing out tips, gear and activism 362 days a year for nearly

**Three Rivers Avian Center-** Rehabilitation of more than 150 native bird species. Educational/community outreach & conservation.

**Smokey's on the Gorge-** Gourmet Appalachian dining overlooking the New River Gorge. A Food Network "Best of Best of."

**The Corner Shop & Soda Fountain** Working old-fashioned soda fountain. Homestyle meals & country store items.

20 years, the shop is easily the go-to for pros and new adventurers alike. With the largest shoe collection in the East, a staff of experienced outdoorsmen from all paths, and sock monkeys scattered about, you can gather every tool for a fulfilling outdoor adventure in 1 place. Even if you just need an idea of what to try or where to go.

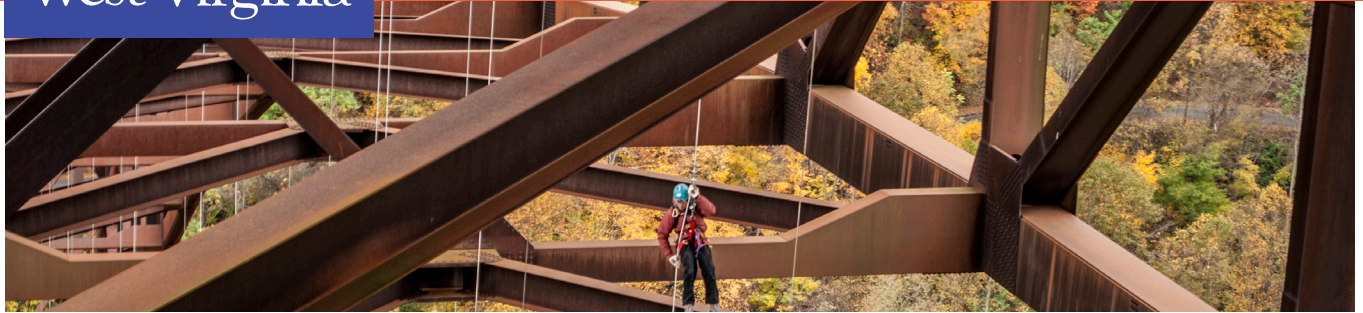
The gorge is vast, but the hub of the adventure is clear: just follow the passion to Waterstone.

**Mystery Hole-** Throwback to roadside attractions. Den of illusion & mystery.

**The Amish Barn Country Store & Deli** Handcrafted furniture, fresh deli sandwiches, take-home canned goods, jams and mixes.

**Pepperoni rolls** galore (state food), farmers' markets, Minor & Prospect League baseball, resort spas, roller derby & more

Your time. Our place.



## New River Birding Festival / *Spring*

Search the wild and wonderful for more than 100 native birds, from rare species to zipping hummingbirds and fierce raptors. Hike out to overlooks, board boats, or work your way through the forests on an expedition to find, band or learn about West Virginia's diverse wildlife from expert guides and workshops.

## Lewisburg Chocolate Festival / *Spring*

Sweet bliss! More chocolate concoctions than you can imagine— decadent truffles, fluffy pastries, creamy mousses, sweetly blended alcoholic drinks— all for sampling. Test your tastes with a mousse eating contest or bake-off. Balance sweet with savory chocolate-themed brunches and dinner pairings. Take home the gourmet touch (& taste) from chef demos.

## Feast of the Ramson / *Spring*

You can distinguish this wild onion by its strong scent, which will give you a hint of its powerful flavor. Try the bold traditional flavor yourself come harvest time, when trash bags full of the veggie are sizzled up along with other regional dishes and desserts. Fully immerse yourself in Appalachia with classic Southern WV entertainment and crafting before the feast.

## Appalachian Arts & Crafts Festival / *Summer*

Arts & Music - the most enticing features of Southern WV culture, together in one place. 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of this popular event. Feast your eyes on the colors, feel the textures, appreciate the love & care that went into making every piece. West Virginia is abundant with talent and this talent can be seen and purchased at the show. The show features daily musical entertainment by WV musicians, enjoy everything from traditional Celtic to Bluegrass.

## Grape Stomping Festival / *Fall*

Jump into the vat and squish some fruit through your toes! Ok, that juice is not actually used for the 30+ wines you can sample at the festival, but it's a nod to longstanding tradition. Enjoy folk dancing to the mountain music and raise your glass to the Appalachian crafters. Kirkwood Winery specializes in bottling the wild & wonderful into flavors from dandelion to ramp onion.

## Bridge Day / *Fall*

BASE jumpers leaping 800+ feet from the iconic New River Gorge Bridge to the riverbed below, rapelers dropping down the lines from the catwalk, skydivers parachutes unfurled above— Bridge Day is a one-of-a-kind, the largest, longest-running extreme festival of its kind in the world. Join the thousands of spectators, enjoy the fair-style entertainment, or get in on the action: zip down the highline or take a tandem leap.

## Bramwell Oktoberfest / *Fall*

Cheers to history, heritage and flavor! Millionaire Row fills with the finest craft beer selection from Southern WV's own artisan brewers and breweries from around the country. Once home to the most millionaires per capita in the country, lavish coal baron mansions tower over the tiny Bramwell street. After your beer, take a tour of the intricate architecture and decor.

## Rocket Boys October Sky Festival / *Fall*

When a young boy set his sights out of his small town and into space, he captured the hearts of the nation with his memoirs of rocket engineering with his friends. Homer Hickam's writings were retold on screen in "October Sky," and his triumph tale from Coalwood, WV, is still celebrated back home with family festival fun, concerts, contests, and workshops.

Your time. Our place.



## Under bridge, over gorge. Way over.

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One of the most compelling views of the New River Gorge was illegal to access for decades, but it's finally open for visitors. Bridgewalk tours stroll the steel of the iconic New River Gorge Bridge from the catwalk below.

## Classic's classy new home

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The elegant, modern atmosphere of the Raleigh Playhouse and Theatre (with Sir Walter's Tavern lounge below) not only regales contemporary arts with live performance, it pays homage to history with classic cinema. Catch old-timey black-and-white film, contrasted with the fresh vibrance of this state-of-the-art venue.

## Topping off a Top 5

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The biking trails in Southern WV have already earned recognition as a Top 5 destination, but the Boy Scouts of America just pulled together the largest service project in its history to craft a new interlocked looping system, Arrowhead Trail System, designed for endless trail combinations. And the New River Gorge has announced more trails to come.

## Drive back through decades

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Monroe County hardly seems real, an undisturbed farmland community. Trace time-honored tradition as it has remained over decades. The new heritage quilt trail will lead you from one traditional design to the next, through not only age-old mountain artistry, but the history, highlights and heritage of the countryside.

## Ever-expanding off-road adventure

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Locking into two other systems in the The Hatfield & McCoy Trails, the Pocahontas Trail System connects into the lengthiest leg of continuous off-roading. Its entry point at historic Bramwell, a town of lavish coal baron mansions, sits near quality lodging, quaint dining and quick fuel stops.

## Spiked, ever so smoothly

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The artisan whiskeys, vodkas, bourbons and gins, "from grain to glass." Smooth Ambler distillery mills its own local grains, blending the finest of ingredients with pure mountain spring water. Each carefully crafted bottle is hand-checked and labeled for quality.

## Fly, no wings necessary

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The adventure moves upward as more ziplines elevate explorers through and over the trees. Speed down the East Coast's longest, whip above whitewater, and trek swinging sky bridges for a unique aerial overview of the sweeping mountain scenery.

## Go Mobile

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The heritage, the adventure, and the latest, all at your fingertips. Get lost in the wild and wonderful culture, but stay on track with itineraries, directions and updates from the Visit WV app.



THERE ARE MORE THAN:

**2,500**

great lodging options

FOR VISITORS IN

**SOUTHERN WV,**

including hotel rooms, vacation/cabin rentals and B&B's.

Tourism brought  
AN IMPRESSIVE  
\$768.5 million  
to  
Southern WV  
IN 2012.

(And travel income is growing:  
that's a 20% increase compared to  
only 2 years before.)

Southern  
West Virginia

is within a  
DAY'S DRIVE

of

**60-70%**

of the

United States  
population.



Southern West Virginia is home

to the  
New River Gorge National Park,

which includes more than

**70,000 acres**

OF LAND  
along the

**NEW RIVER.**

There are **10** state parks,  
a state forest

and

4 wildlife management  
areas area

within  
our region.

Southern West Virginia

is the  
home

to the  
newest high

ADVENTURE BASE

of the

Boy Scouts of America.

THE SUMMIT BECHTEL RESERVE

POPULATION of our 9-COUNTY REGION is 333,634

Visit Southern West Virginia is the Destination Marketing Organization for 9 southern WV counties: Fayette, Raleigh, Mercer, Monroe, Summers, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Wyoming and McDowell.

The New River Gorge Bridge in Fayette County is 3,030 feet long, making it the 4th longest steel single-span bridge in the world. It towers 876 feet above the New River. Every 3rd Saturday in October, the bridge closes to host WV's largest one-day festival: Bridge Day.

The Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine is a unique history and heritage attraction where people can ride a man car through what was once the operational Phillips-Sprague Mine, which closed in 1953. On property, there are restorations of buildings typically found in a coal camp.