The Alleghenies Profile

The Alleghenies, a region located in Southcentral Pennsylvania, is an area of vibrant history and rich traditions that trace back hundreds of years to the first settlers in the region. Visitors to *The Alleghenies* will find an abundance of historical sites and landmarks dedicated to preserving the events and heritage of previous generations while presenting a wealth of opportunities to explore and learn about the region. The region is made up of seven counties: Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset.

The history of the region is linked to coal, steel, railroads and agriculture. The region had numerous mines and huge steel mills during the peak periods of those industries. The coal and steel industry in the region declined sharply in the 1980s. Today, the region features a diverse mix of jobs in manufacturing, health care, service industries, retail and wholesale trade, tourism (this sector is growing with a variety of investments in lodging and attractions) and government.

Population: There are more than 600,000 people residing in the seven county region. The most populous city in the region is Altoona with a population of more than 46,000.

Location: The Alleghenies region is a two-hour drive from Pittsburgh, three-hours from Washington, DC, four-hours from Philadelphia and five-hours from New York City, with convenient access to the Pennsylvania Turnpike, I-70, I-80 and I-99.

Climate: The Alleghenies region experiences four distinct seasons with relatively cool summers and snow in the winters. The climate has been described as mountain-like.

Annual Events:

- **January:** First Night Celebrations (various locations)
- **February:** Penn State University Dance Marathon or 'Thon'
- **March:** Pennsylvania Maple Festival
- **April:** Mayfest
- **May:** The National Road Festival
- **June:** Fulton County Strawberry Festival, Thunder in the Valley, Tour of Pennsylvania
- **July:** Central PA 4th Fest, Central PA Festival of the Arts, The International Tour de Toona
- **August:** 64th Annual AAABA Baseball Tournament, Johnstown Folkfest
- **September:** Mountain Craft Days
- **October:** Fulton Fall Folk Festival, Bedford Fall Foliage Festival
- **December:** Festival of Trees (various locations)

Attractions:
A sampling of attractions: Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site, Covered Bridges, East Broad Top Railroad, Flight 93 National Memorial, Horseshoe Curve, Incline Plane, Johnstown Flood Museum, Old Bedford Village, Penn State University, Penn's Cave, Quecreek Mine Rescue Tribute, Raystown Lake, Swigart Antique Automobile Museum and the Windber Coal Heritage Center.

Outdoor Recreation:
The region is home to some of the best outdoor recreation opportunities in the Mid-Atlantic from fishermen casting their lines in blue ribbon trout streams to kayakers and rafters running Class III and IV

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rapids to day hikers and backpackers exploring a maze of scenic trails to cyclists enjoying on- and off- road routes to boaters enjoying the endless miles of waterways to birdwatchers observing the more than 275 species of birds in the region.

Some of the highlights include:

- **On-road Cycling**: region annually hosts the International Tour de Toona cycling race and features more than 700 miles of mapped routes.
- **Off-road Cycling**: region features Pennsylvania's only EPIC trail as designated by the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA).
- **Hiking**: region features more than 60 routes from day hiking to backpacking.
- **Fishing**: region features more than 20,000 acres of lakes and 9,500 miles of streams.
- **Boating**: region has the largest inland lake in Pennsylvania.
- **Birding**: region is home to more than 1,000 species of wildlife in their natural habitat.

Did You Know?

- *Flight 93 National Memorial:* Shanksville, Somerset County is home to the Flight 93 National Memorial. Currently there is a temporary memorial that honors the passengers and crew of Flight 93. The permanent memorial is slated for dedication in 2011.

- *Quecreek Mine Rescue Memorial*: In the same county as the Flight 93 tragedy, nine trapped miners were rescued in 2002. Today, the *Quecreek Mine Rescue Memorial* honors the rescue workers who saved the nine trapped miners. The site also features an arbor garden with bronzed statues of the rescued miners.

- *Horseshoe Curve:* During World War II, the German government sent saboteurs to the United States to destroy/sabotage 12 key industrial sites. The Horseshoe Curve and Gallitzin Tunnels were on their list. Fortunately, they were captured before they could carry out their mission.

- *Johnstown Incline Plane:* The incline is the world's steepest vehicular incline. Rising 900 feet from the valley below at a 71.9% grade, the incline cars carry passengers and automobiles up the mountain for a breathtaking view of the city below.

- *Lincoln Highway:* The first coast-to-coast highway travels right through the region including downtown McConnelsburg, originating in New York City and ending in San Francisco. The Lincoln Highway helped to start automobile tourism.

- *Memorial Day*: A Lutheran cemetery in Boalsburg was the birthplace of Decoration Day. Later the day became known as *Memorial Day* and in 1971, the federal government made it an official national holiday.

Visitor Web Site: www.TheAlleghenies.com, *The Alleghenies* official website
Note to Editors: For photos of *The Alleghenies*, visit our online photo gallery.

CONTACT: Eric Ash, Mullen
(412) 402-0186, eric.ash@mullen.com