

An aerial photograph of Happy Valley, Pennsylvania, taken during sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the town and the surrounding hills. The buildings are silhouetted against the bright sky, and the streets are visible. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

CATALYST

Senior living in Happy Valley:
There's no better place
to call home!

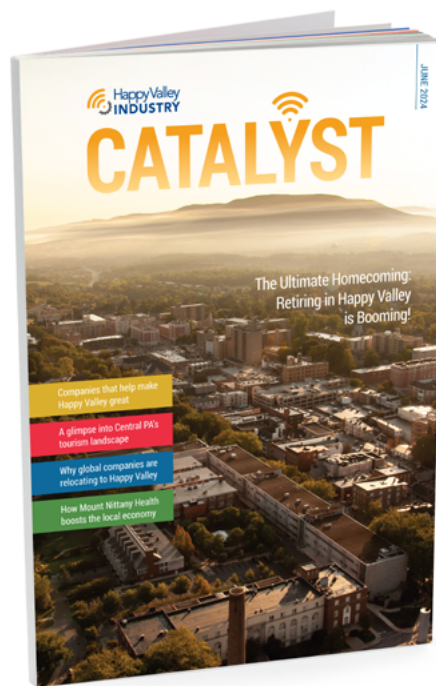
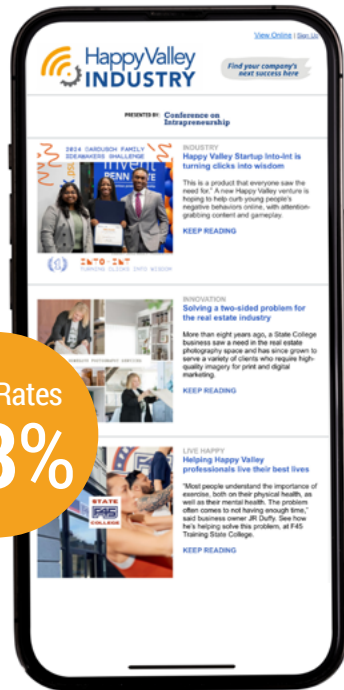
Companies that help make
Happy Valley great

A glimpse into Central PA's
tourism landscape

Why global companies are
relocating to Happy Valley

How Mount Nittany Health
boosts the local economy

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For stories you won't read anywhere else — from Penn State inventions and scrappy startups to industry leaders and innovative small businesses — get HappyValley Industry delivered weekly to your email inbox.

“Thank you for illuminating all the amazing stories from business owners in the Happy Valley region of Pennsylvania — and it's so cool that the Centre Daily Times picks up your best stories and runs them in the Sunday paper. We've heard from so many people, all over the country, that they learned about our company from the HappyValley Industry newsletter. I didn't realize Penn State alums read the weekly newsletter or see it on LinkedIn. Thanks!”

– A State College business owner

HappyValleyIndustry.com



CATALYST

FROM THE PUBLISHER

In Happy Valley, we have it all. You'll never convince me otherwise. A thriving ecosystem for entrepreneurs and established businesses. A world-class research university. Natural beauty and outdoor recreation. Music, theatre, dining and college sports.



Renowned for its quality of life, Happy Valley is a place with strong communities that welcome new neighbors and support local businesses. It also boasts a wealth of resources that turn innovation into industry and help businesses grow and attract top talent and investors, including Penn State alumni, eager to make Happy Valley their home.

Happy Valley is something to celebrate, and that's our mission at HappyValley Industry. Our platform and this inaugural issue of Catalyst amplify the solutions and success stories that make Happy Valley the best place to live, work, do business and thrive.

I'm eager for your feedback on the issue and always seeking more stories to tell. Share yours or send your ideas to me at greg@affinityconnection.com.

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The meaning behind the numbers of Penn State's economic impact

A 2019 study tallies **Penn State's** contribution to the Pennsylvania economy at \$11.6 billion. Behind this nearly unfathomable figure are a lot of the things that make Happy Valley one of the best places to live, work and play.

In a March 12 New America article, Shalin Jyotishi says, when universities, especially large flagship research schools like Penn State, tout their massive economic impact, it can harm rather than boost public perception. But why?

“Universities, particularly large flagship research institutions, generate these figures by tallying up almost every financial exchange driven by the institution — football game traffic, tuition payments, research grant funding, payroll (flagship universities are often among the largest employers in a state), construction costs and so on. Then, they usually apply ‘economic multipliers,’ a statistical calculation that accounts for the ripple effects of financial transactions,” he writes.

Without context, Jyotishi says, figures appear inflated. “This public relations approach to measuring universities’ ‘economic impact’ produces numbers that make for nice press releases to woo politicians. However, when it comes to public perceptions, they can come across as exaggerated and contribute to growing public skepticism of the value of universities in America,” he continues.

According to a 2019 study, Penn State contributes more than \$11.6 billion to the state's economy and supports over 105,000 jobs directly and indirectly across Pennsylvania. Indeed, a 2019 press release based on the study boasts that for every \$1 in state appropriations received by Penn State, the university returns \$1.24 in tax payments to the Commonwealth. Behind these

figures are a myriad of resources, programs, initiatives, activities, events and the list goes on, that are contributing to economic development in Happy Valley and Pennsylvania.

Jyotishi shares that the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), and the University Economic Development Association (UEDA) has created a set of definitions and a taxonomy of activities that can be classified as university-based economic development — which can help us start drilling down into Penn State's impact.

By their definition:

“University-based economic development refers” to intentional, strategic and sustained projects that universities undertake within and across three interconnected impact areas. Each focus area is an extension of the three mission pillars of most research universities — teaching, research and service:

1. Talent and workforce development

2. Innovation through industry research partnerships, technology transfer and startup incubation

3. Place development, or community development efforts, organized as public service and outreach, community engagement and Cooperative Extension contributions

When you begin to examine these three areas, Penn State's massive contributions come into clearer view, even just looking at a small sampling from the much bigger picture.

Penn State campuses across the state awarded more than 14,000 degrees during 2024 spring commencement ceremonies held earlier this year. More degrees will be awarded at the December commencement, following the 2025 fall semester. Penn State educates more Pennsylvania students than any institution in the state, and 380,000 Penn State alumni — more than half of all Penn State graduates — still reside in the state. In addition, almost 20% of Penn State's out-of-state and international students stay in Pennsylvania after graduation.

Through a partnership with Penn State, IBM set up a Data Engineering Center of Excellence located at Innovation Park to offer student internships. Interns work with IBM Consulting clients, giving the students real-world experience with a worldwide technology leader to boost their career potential. A partnership with Morgan Advanced Materials is advancing research and development of silicon carbide, known as SiC, a semiconductor material that can enhance a wide range of applications and help fulfill a demand for semiconductors. As part of the agreement, Penn State will house unique, highly specialized equipment that will be accessible to students and researchers, and will attract other industry partners.

From Invent Penn State and the Happy Valley Launchbox Powered by PNC to the Technology Center Incubator at Innovation Park and the Penn State Small Business Development Center, the university offers a wealth of resources to both Penn Staters and local residents to support technology transfer, startups, entrepreneurs and emerging businesses.

Penn State Extension boasts more than 320 subject matter experts, 1,500-plus events and thousands of articles, publications and fact sheets on an extensive range of subjects, all designed to improve the lives of individuals, communities and businesses. From agriculture, business and broadband access to youth and families, the environment and health, there are lifelong learning opportunities available to local and statewide citizens as well as to individuals around the world who can utilize its digital resources — many of them at no or very low cost.

The university also contributes a wide range of opportunities for local youth, like the

educational programs available through Science U and Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, both part of Penn State Outreach, which connects Penn State faculty and expertise with the community.

Beyond these examples, Penn State plays a lead role in events that define the region, like the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts, and new traditions like the Ironman 70.3 Pennsylvania Happy Valley. Its presence draws alumni back for football weekend visits and to communities like The Village at Penn State to become permanent residents seeking active retirement in their college town.

In other good news, Penn State trustees approved \$700 million for renovation plans for Beaver Stadium,

financed and paid for entirely by Intercollegiate Athletics using no tuition dollars or educational budget funds. Aimed at driving economic growth in the region, the renovations will advance year-round use of the facility.

On top of its enormous economic impact, Penn State is a foundational layer in the fabric of the region, connecting with individuals and communities from downtown State College to the small towns across Happy Valley who benefit from its agricultural expertise and its tourism dollars. While Penn State's positive influence extends to communities across Pennsylvania and around the world, it makes Happy Valley the place that it is and is becoming, providing jobs, honing talent, innovating life-changing technology, supporting communities and contributing to the region as a visitor destination and ideal place to live, work and play.



Solving global problems and growing:

Companies that help make Happy Valley great

Talk to enough Happy Valley transplants, entrepreneurs and startup founders and you'll start to see a pattern. Ambitious professionals love living in the region, in great part, due to the wealth of opportunities that await here, whether you dream of working for a company with global impact, or you have your own vision of changing lives. For the former, employment opportunities abound, and for the latter, so do the resources.

Here are just a few of the groundbreaking and emerging companies that call Happy Valley home.

Minitab

For nearly 50 years, **Minitab** has helped a wide array of organizations and businesses better understand data and make the right decisions based on that data. As of today, Minitab is the leading provider of software and services for quality improvement and statistics education. More than 85% of Fortune 100 companies use Minitab Statistical Software, the brand's flagship product. Clients include household names such as American Express, Nike, McDonald's and Walt Disney. Though headquartered in Happy Valley, Minitab's reach can be felt all over the world.

AccuWeather

AccuWeather serves the public with its network, app and website, delivering weather forecasts and news. However, the more-than-60-year-old company has a B2B side, too. AccuWeather provides white-glove weather outsourcing services to over half of Fortune 500 firms and thousands of other companies across varying sectors including transportation, utilities, retail, insurance and healthcare. In addition to receiving weather warnings tailored to their needs, these clients can also contact an AccuWeather operations center to speak with experts for on-demand consultations. AccuWeather also works with clients to help them prepare for severe weather in advance of a blizzard, ice storm, hurricane or flooding.

Before a medical device makes its way into a healthcare setting, it must be manufactured, validated, calibrated and then maintained. There are a lot of moving pieces and regulatory requirements for every step of the way. While this is all good news for patients, it can spell headaches for life sciences companies as they try to remain compliant — and that's where **Blue Mountain** comes in. As a resource asset management platform, Blue Mountain's Regulatory Asset Manager tracks life sciences equipment assets every step of the way, storing necessary information and ensuring best practice implementation. Over the last two years, Blue Mountain has doubled in size and boasts a global reach, working with clients in Europe, Asia and South America from its headquarters in Happy Valley.

Who knew such a small sensor could have such a big impact? **KCF Technologies** sensors monitor millions of assets across a wide variety of industries — oil & gas, automotive, paper — and the result is massive savings in both money and lost productivity, for the company's client base, which includes myriad household names.

EnergyCAP became a pioneer in energy and sustainability enterprise resource planning (ERP) software before energy conservation was high on everyone's radar and while PCs were in their infancy. The company was created to help users track their energy usage, and that was approximately 40 years ago, when EnergyCAP identified early on how to collect and aggregate energy data to make better decisions and drive savings. By the mid-1990s, thousands of EnergyCAP customers had tracked an estimated \$5 million in bills a year. The software was widely used by governments, universities, school districts and corporate campuses. More recently, in March 2021, the company established a strategic partnership with private equity investment firm Resurgens Technology Partners.

More companies that help make Happy Valley great...



Fluid Conservation Systems relocated to Happy Valley from Ohio, seeking opportunities to bring its sensor solutions to Pennsylvania. The company produces sensors that monitor water networks and ultimately, save clients hundreds of thousands of dollars, while keeping millions of gallons of treated water from being wasted and/or infiltrating and damaging natural waterways.



Homeland Manufacturing Services serves a range of industries, from medical to industrial sensors. A driving force behind the resurgence of manufacturing in Happy Valley, Homeland Manufacturing boasts a client list that includes large global companies, in part thanks to a steadfast commitment to quality, customer success and collaboration with like-minded local businesses. In fact, Homeland Manufacturing's dedication to excellence has inspired many businesses to pull their manufacturing from places like China and Mexico, and instead bring it here, to central Pennsylvania.



Xact Metal has made metal 3D printing accessible and affordable. According to the company, "With a desire to enable more and more designers, developers and manufacturers to experience the benefits of high-quality metal 3D printing at the best price possible, Xact Metal aims to change the perception that additive manufacturing is only for capital-rich companies."



Sensor Networks was founded in 2014, focused on creating ultrasonic non-destructive (NDT) sensors and systems for remote non-intrusive corrosion monitoring in the energy, aerospace, petrochemical and power generation industries. Over the last decade, it has developed a family of products that help make critical Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) technology widely available. Its sensors allow customers to monitor critical equipment, with the potential to save millions of dollars, enhance regulatory compliance and improve safety.



Originally founded by a Penn State student and taking full advantage of Happy Valley's entrepreneurial resources, including Invent Penn State, the Happy Valley LaunchBox, Ben Franklin Technology Partners and more, **Phospholutions'** signature technology, RhizoSorb®, is a soil amendment or fertilizer additive used to efficiently deliver phosphorus and other nutrients to crops. Phospholutions' technology has been proven to reduce the environmental impact of phosphate fertilizer by reducing runoff potential by 58%, leaching by 87%, and greenhouse gas emissions associated with the conventional use of traditional monoammonium phosphate sources by more than half.



RTX — or as you might know the company, Raytheon — may not be headquartered in Happy Valley, but the aerospace company definitely has historic ties to the region and the company is within the top 20 employers in the county. As for global impact, RTX's reach is mammoth. Approximately 90% of all Department of Defense and commercial space launches are supported by RTX products. Every second, an RTX technology-supported aircraft takes flight. RTX's aviation systems affect 11 million air travel passengers each day.



With a \$10 million, first-of-its-kind facility opening in Happy Valley, **BioMagnetic Solutions** is a next-generation cell selection and bioseparation technology company that develops advanced ferrofluid-based immunomagnetic cell selection systems. Dr. Paul Liberti and Ted Liberti founded the company in Penn State incubator space in 2011, to cultivate cutting-edge ferrofluid technology that could revolutionize the diagnosis and treatment of cancer.



Restek is a leading chromatography column and accessories developer and manufacturer that's won numerous awards for both its products and its work environment. While chromatography might not be all that easy to grasp for the average layperson, Restek's impact is pretty straightforward. Lori Dundon told HappyValley Industry: "We provide analysts around the world with the innovative tools they need to monitor the quality of air, water, soil, foods, pharmaceuticals, chemical and petroleum products." In other words, "Restek provides...solutions that touch people's lives every day."

Happy Valley HEAVY HITTERS

Some employers throughout the region are particularly impactful. You could almost say that the region wouldn't be the same without them (or, in some cases, even exist without them).



**WE ARE
PENN
STATE**

Penn State University – The largest employer in the county and the source of much of the region's appeal, providing entrepreneurial resources, lifestyle amenities and a wealth of business opportunities, Penn State contributes more than \$11.6 billion annually to the Pennsylvania economy. With Invent Penn State, the university has invested \$30 million in economic development to support regional entrepreneurs.

The university regularly ranks among the nation's best in research expenditures, continuously tackling the world's most pressing issues with some of the world's brightest minds. It's no wonder that so many people flock to the area for Penn State alone — then discover all the other things that make Happy Valley great.

The third-largest employer in the county, **Mount Nittany Medical Center** similarly impacts the region's economy. In fiscal year 2022, the Mount Nittany Medical Center's economic activity amounted to a staggering \$361,251,010, with an economic ripple benefit of \$209,995,212. Mount Nittany is hardly stopping there, though. The healthcare provider is expanding its reach through a new outpatient center project, to open this year, as well as a new ten-story tower at Mount Nittany's main campus, which will be finished in 2026.



Demystifying and mastering the art of the sale, with Moore Power Sales and the Sandler Selling System

"The Sandler system changed my life."

"Salespeople have come to us frustrated, and the system and the template take them from being beaten on the outside and the inside and picks them up and teaches them how to be successful."

"It works on the whole person, lifting their self-esteem, bringing confidence and bulletproofing them, so they can prospect consistently and close new opportunities."

"The process helped me close new accounts and maintain margins even in our competitive market."

"Moore Power changed who we hired in terms of a successful salesperson in our business. They ramp up faster and we have stronger salespeople. Previously all we focused on was their experience in our market and not enough on 'Could they sell?'"

"We redefined the true role of a sales manager to grow the effectiveness of our team."

This is the kind of feedback that John Moore has heard over his near-30 years of business, teaching companies and individuals the art of sales.

Moore founded **Moore Power Sales** in 1995, following his own decade-plus of experience in sales elsewhere. Since, he's worked with a range of long-term clients that represent the agriculture, manufacturing, IT, retail and startup spaces, and include Creative Composites, Cargill and McLanahan.

Alumni of the Moore Power Sales program, which utilizes the **Sandler Selling System**, say that the program picks you up, meets you where you are and sets you on the road to sales success. The program realizes that sales isn't just all about the gift of gab. There's an actual craft that must be mastered — but the Sandler Selling System makes it easier, demystifying the process and breaking it down into a step-by-step system, keeping you in control of the sales cycle without being pushy and shortening the sales cycle.

So, how does it work? If you know there's more potential to be had from your sales people, and you're frustrated with trying to capture all the business that you could, you're ready for Moore Power Sales and the Sandler Selling System.

Moore comes in and takes a thorough evaluation of your selling engine, including how many salespeople have a strong Will to Sell and the Six Hidden Weaknesses that can nullify your sales team's ability to execute your vision. He identifies your unique needs, never taking a cookie-cutter approach to his clients. Then, he offers a tailored scope of services based on those findings, and begins by building a very strong Sales Infrastructure to support the growth desired.

According to Moore, "You may be doing well, but you know you could be better. We'll help you hire stronger sales performers and evaluate your current salespeople to uncover specific sales weaknesses and grow your effectiveness."

SANDLERSM

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xsalta™

Mental health practices and providers have specific marketing needs: reaching prospective patients, quickly establishing credibility and engaging current patients in trusted, long-term relationships. While achieving these goals is critical to success, they don't warrant a full-time marketing role.

State College-based **Xsalta** caters exclusively to mental health practices and has been expertly fulfilling their digital marketing needs since 2010. The team at Xsalta understands the unique challenges of marketing mental healthcare, and their experience yields the most professional and effective mental health marketing. Even better, they understand that affordability is important.

Working directly with private practice psychiatrists, regional healthcare providers and TMS clinics, Xsalta has created a suite of specialized digital mental health marketing strategies, which include their optimized TMS Therapy websites with an integrated suite of digital marketing services, including pay-per-click ad campaigns and social media management — all at the most affordable rates available from any company serving the mental health marketing industry.

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Making bespoke software faster and more affordable

Loop Software, LLC, in State College, creates innovative cloud-based, software solutions. Historically, Loop has served the manufacturing space with a suite of custom e-commerce solutions to support parts sales for medium to large manufacturers. However, with the launch of their latest product, Loop CORE, they plan to diversify into other industries.



The Loop CORE development framework enables rapid development and deployment of database driven applications. It offers the scalability and flexibility to build enterprise-grade, bespoke software faster and more efficiently than ever before.

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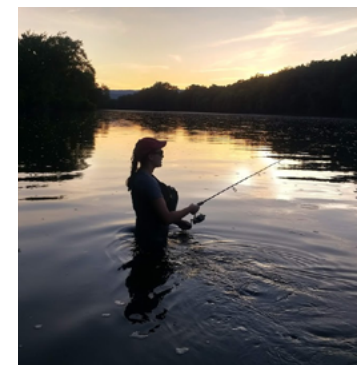
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Boomerangs combat brain drain: How Happy Valley companies are winning talent over larger cities

"Having experienced another city, I came to realize that Happy Valley is a true gem," Katelyn Stark said of her move back to the area to take a job at **Restek** in human resources following a stint on the West Coast.

"I grew up in State College and went to Penn State, so Happy Valley has always been home to me. After several years here [and] after receiving degrees from Penn State, I left for a career opportunity on the West Coast," she explained. "After a few short months away, I was offered another job that would allow me to return to State College and jumped at the opportunity."



Stark is an example of a common phenomenon among Happy Valley professionals: a boomerang, someone who leaves and later returns to Happy Valley, lured back by a thriving business ecosystem, exceptional career opportunities, quality of life and more. Sometimes boomerangs have grown up here; other times, they're Penn State alumni who long to build a life in a place they grew to love as college students.

"Between the amazing and innovative organizations that call the Central Pennsylvania region home, the friendly and welcoming people and proximity to other cities, it has so much to offer young professionals," Stark said.

Preventing brain drain

Boomerangs are helping Happy Valley combat a statewide issue of talent leaving for career opportunities elsewhere, aka "brain drain." In 2019, a report from Congress's Joint Economic Committee found that brain drain particularly affected a handful of states, Pennsylvania among them, and where brain drain occurred, political and cultural divisions were exacerbated.

At **Ben Franklin Technology Partners**, Kate Alward, Director of Human Resources & Training, is one of the people working to prevent brain drain from occurring in Happy Valley.

"After a few short months away, I was offered another job that would allow me to return to State College and jumped at the opportunity."

She noted that young talent, especially recent graduates, don't account enough for the higher cost of living in large cities when being lured by higher salaries. To combat this, local businesses can be proactive in educating candidates about the cost of

living in Happy Valley compared to bigger cities, and how the difference can impact major milestones like investing in a first home.



That said, Alward said local employers should consider the point of view of young talent and make sure salaries and benefits are competitive and that career growth opportunities are clearly defined and promoted in the recruiting process.

Why talent should take a closer look at Happy Valley

Restek's Stark has a suggestion to those comparing career opportunities in Happy Valley to opportunities outside the area: simply look a little deeper.

"I would encourage everyone to dig a little deeper and you will soon see the number of innovative organizations that call Happy Valley home. I've had more success here than I think I would have elsewhere, because of the connections that I have been able to forge in this wonderful community," she said.



Start here, grow here, stay here – with the College Township Industrial Development Authority

As the heartbeat of innovation at Penn State fuels the birth of exciting startups, the **College Township Industrial Development Authority (CTIDA)** is working towards bridging the gap between academia, entrepreneurs, local businesses and the Centre County community. The CTIDA's vision is clear: to create an economic development ecosystem that encourages businesses to not only start here, but to flourish and stay here in Happy Valley.



At the core of CTIDA's approach is the belief in the power of relationships. By forging strategic partnerships with key stakeholders such as the Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County (CBICC), Ben Franklin Technology Partners (BFTP), Happy Valley Launchbox, Invent Penn State and State College Downtown Improvement District, as well as local financial institutions, developers and property owners, the CTIDA is building a robust network that nurtures innovation, supports local businesses and enriches the community by diversifying job growth and retention.

One of the key challenges faced by startups and businesses in Happy Valley is an understanding of what business resources and support are available and how to access them. The CTIDA, in collaboration with its partners, is working to address this challenge by providing a comprehensive and navigable support system for entrepreneurs. This includes access to funding, mentorship, networking opportunities and

affordable commercial and industrial spaces. By providing these resources, CTIDA and partner organizations aim to create an environment where startups can not only survive, but thrive, contributing to the growth and sustainability of the local economy.

“Our piece of the ecosystem is to provide financial support to businesses that add value to our community, but who are not quite established enough to receive funding directly through a traditional financial institution,” says Keri Miller, CTIDA Executive Director.

Further, she added, “By adopting the mindset of establishing relationships with entrepreneurs from the inception of their ideas, we promote a culture that increases the likeliness of successful outcomes and encourages businesses to start here, grow here and stay here.”



The CTIDA, incorporated in 1972, provides businesses with financial support through loans, lines of credit and grants, as well as the ability to serve as a guarantor for loans through financial institutions. Other opportunities include the CTIDA acting as a pass-through entity for grants and tax-exempt bond



financing. In its nearly 52-year existence, the CTIDA has directly provided assistance to over 180 businesses and administered over \$122 million in funding.

By fostering an economic development ecosystem that values relationships and community, the CTIDA is paving the way for exponential growth and prosperity in the region. As Happy Valley continues to evolve into a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship, the College Township Industrial Development Authority remains committed to supporting businesses, partner organizations and the community, ensuring that Happy Valley remains a place where industry thrives.



Learn more about CTIDA at www.ctida.com

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Your Journey to Retirement



Will It Be Smooth Sailing or Are There Rough Waters Ahead?

We all think of retirement as our careers' end destination. We spend decades as focused professionals, leading teams, launching businesses and making a difference in our chosen industries, all assuming the end of the journey will include kicking back to finally, truly and thoroughly enjoy the hard-earned fruits of our labors.

However, in your journey toward retirement, are you following a trusted financial roadmap — or just going with the flow? If the latter, you could end up in some rough waters, and find the end of the journey doesn't quite look like you'd hoped.

Regardless of your age, if you've been cruising along in your career without thinking about when and how you'll retire, now's the time to do so, and **J. Gordon Financial Services** can help. Our team will provide you with a second opinion and, most importantly, a plan.

Our trusted and proven six-step process starts with goal setting. What do you want to achieve? What does your dream retirement look like?

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We will do an assessment of where you are now. After a solid understanding of your goals, we can begin building your map to retirement. This path will show you what step you will take to get you to where you want to go. As you implement the plan and embark on the next leg of your journey, we'll be by your side every step of the way, checking in to ensure you stay on course despite any career changes or major milestones that come your way.

Just think of us as your trusted guide. As you undertake the exciting-but-sometimes-perilous journey toward retirement, we'll help you avoid the pitfalls and mitigate the risks — so you can spend less time worrying about where you're going, and more time enjoying the ride.



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Why Happy Valley is a sensor technology hotspot

You don't notice them, but they're always there — measuring, monitoring, helping you live a safer, more convenient life. Sensors have become widely used in manufacturing and are now commonplace in homes and personal items, from smartphones to cars to smart-home devices like robot vacuums, lights, thermostats, cameras and more. Sensors now track human health data, just like they track the health data of heavy equipment and machinery in factories.

In Happy Valley, sensors play a role in our research and business ecosystem, with extensive sensor research taking place at Penn State and several established sensor companies growing or starting up in the area.

Here's why some local experts believe Happy Valley has an affinity for sensor technology and how they see them changing the world for the better.

Why Happy Valley is a sensor technology hotspot

For **KCF Technologies**, the "why" behind the company's Happy Valley headquarters is clear. This is where the company got its start and there were never plans to grow anywhere else.

"We're operating on six different continents, with over 600 manufacturing locations, as we scale our business."

As Sean Buda, vice president of marketing, explained, KCF Technologies came out of Penn State research more than two decades ago. At that time, the company's three founders, all Penn State researchers, including current CEO Dr. Jeremy Frank, were working on wireless vibration sensors for various government agencies.

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As the sensors proved applicable in a broad range of applications, KCF's reach expanded to more industries. As the company grew, it relied on adding more Penn State talent.

"When I started with KCF two-and-a-half years ago, I would say at least 70% of our company was from Penn State. Now, that continues to diversify, coming out of [the Covid-19 pandemic], as we become more of a global player," Buda noted. "We're operating on six different continents, with over 600 manufacturing locations, as we scale our business."

Still, its global reach doesn't tempt KCF to relocate. The company is deeply embedded in the Penn State community, through athletics sponsorships, internship programs and quality of life for its employees. Buda has an optimistic outlook on continuing to grow as a global business from central Pennsylvania.

"Every June, we hold an industry-wide manufacturing event in Happy Valley and, last year, we had 250 people attend from around the world," he said. "State College is becoming an easier place to do business, with some great venues... If we were to do this... 10 years ago, it wouldn't have been quite as easy."

Another sensor innovator with a strong Penn State connection is Dr. Larry Cheng, Professor of Engineering Science and Mechanics at Penn State. We've covered Dr. Cheng's research many times in the past, including his work on wearable sensors.

Cheng credits Penn State's unique interdisciplinary approach to research in aiding him in his work. "Working with students and researchers with diverse backgrounds in my research group, I have been continuously exposed to different areas that include material, mechanical, electrical, biomedical, physics and chemistry... The research collaboration with colleagues from different places at Penn State

and in Happy Valley in particular also provides me with the opportunity to converse, interact and learn from physiologists, neuroscientists and bioinformaticians," he said.

"State College is becoming an easier place to do business, with some great venues."

Fluid Conservation Systems recently relocated to Happy Valley from Ohio, seeking opportunities to bring its sensor solutions to Pennsylvania. The company produces sensors that monitor water networks, a big need across the state according to company president Beth Powell.



"We relocated here because of the condition of the drinking water network in Pennsylvania," she explained. Pennsylvania's public water systems are not only some of the oldest in the country, but they are also prone to damage caused by the annual freeze-thaw cycle.

"There are water districts in Pennsylvania that lose 80% of what they're pumping out of wells and taking out of the streams. They're treating all that water with chlorine and then they're losing 80% of it — and if they lose that near a stream, the drinking water can kill fish. What we're trying to do is help them lose less water," she said.

Local innovation, big impact

What kind of impact is Happy Valley's sensor technology making?

In one of State College-based Sensor Networks' proudest customer success stories, an aircraft engine manufacturer reached out to the company after multiple instances of catastrophic engine failure on specific aircraft, which had resulted in emergency landings and, in one instance, a fatality.

The engine manufacturer commissioned Sensor Networks engineers to design a sensor to detect cracks within the dovetail section of the aircraft's engine fan blades — and they needed them fast to keep the aircraft operational. The Sensor Networks team created the necessary sensors (enough for 1,200 aircraft), and successfully



detected other engine damages that had not yet been detected, preventing potentially countless additional failures.

Fluid Conservation Systems shared this example of the impact of its technology: a client was withdrawing approximately 10 million gallons of water, daily, to serve its 60,000 customers with drinking water — but was losing more than 40% of it in the process. Using the company's sensors, the client detected 127 hidden leaks along its water system and managed to save 2.6 million gallons of treated water per day that would otherwise be lost, resulting in nearly \$500K in annual cost savings.

"The research collaboration with colleagues from different places at Penn State and in Happy Valley in particular also provides me with the opportunity to converse, interact and learn from physiologists, neuroscientists and bioinformaticians."

Dr. Cheng's development of new sensor technologies can change the way that we track vital health data and collect biofluids — and because these sensors are specifically made with soft, stretchable materials designed to mimic the physical properties of skin, they're no longer burdensome to wear. As Dr. Cheng described, "Such a system can continuously capture clinically relevant signals from freely moving individuals for preventative monitoring and early diagnostic confirmation."

For KCF Technologies, widespread implementation of its sensors and technology by long-time manufacturing clients like Georgia Pacific illustrate the impact of solutions. With 62,000 KCF Technologies sensors across its plants, the paper and building products giant has reduced surprise machinery failures by 50%.



Continuous advancements

Just like the industries it serves, Happy Valley sensor technology isn't standing still.

Fluid Conservation Systems, for example, is hopeful about a project in its planning stage with Penn State's Applied Research Lab and Center for Acoustics and Vibration to further develop its sensor technology; the team has also moved into a new space, ready for future expansion and moving manufacturing into the state.

KCF Technologies is already a leader in the newest machine health technologies, like AI and machine learning, and eager for innovation from young generations joining the workforce.

"In the short term, there is this huge demand for what we call 'a single pane of glass' — it's taking all these ancillary sensors and third-party legacy information and pulling it into one single platform," said KCF's Buda. "As you can imagine in manufacturing, there's a lot of old legacy equipment. Then there's new equipment, and both have a different level of technology associated with it, and we can service both... The key is bringing all the information together and

using machine learning and AI to really catapult how that information is digested."

He added, "We like to say our work is elevating people through technology. You hear a lot right now about the fear of AI taking jobs. The reality for us is, that's not the case; what we can do is get better information and focus people on the right work at the right time. That's what's going to be key. You're going to see more of that [need], due to... people retiring and Baby Boomers making up a lot of the workforce where, historically, there's been a lot of tribal knowledge on how all this stuff works. That just doesn't exist today, and we help fill that gap."

He believes that Happy Valley will be a good place for sensor technology to grow. "Our business has never been healthier, and we're certainly a company that's super-proud to operate and do business out of the State College area. We love Happy Valley," Buda said. ■

UNLOCKING THE CHARMS OF HAPPY VALLEY:

A glimpse into Centre County's tourism landscape

Recent data analysis conducted by The **Happy Valley Adventure Bureau** (HVAB) utilizing Placer.ai technology reveals an exciting growth trajectory in visitors to Happy Valley.

In 2022, the region welcomed over 4.4 million visitors, marking a significant increase from the previous year's 3.9+ million visitors. This surge boosts Happy Valley's status as a sought-after destination, drawing travelers with its captivating blend of natural beauty, cultural richness and overall charm.

Here's what else the data showed.

Understanding visitor demographics and behavior

Looking deeper into visitor demographics and behavior, HVAB's research delves into the impact of major events on tourism. For instance, 2024 Happy Valley ComicCon boasted a remarkable 104.1% increase in attendance compared to the previous year.

Additionally, insights into household income, education level and attendee demographics helped to inform strategic destination marketing and event planning efforts, ensuring targeted outreach and engagement. Each of these efforts contributes to the success and expansion of tourism in Happy Valley.



Lodging performance and short-term rentals

Total visitors to Happy Valley through May are at 2.4 million, which is the highest ever at this point and compares to last year's 2.3 million. In 2017, the total was around 2.7 million visitors for the entire year! April lodging results were the best ever. With that, Centre County is now the 11th best county in the state based on total room revenue. The county was No. 19 at the end of 2019. The HVAB's goal is for Centre County to be a top 10 Pennsylvania county for tourism economic impact by 2026.

In 2022, the region welcomed over 4.4 million visitors, marking a significant increase from the previous year's 3.9+ million visitors.

Destination marketing campaigns

Collaborative destination marketing campaigns, such as the co-op advertising initiative with the Pennsylvania Tourism Office, have yielded remarkable results for Happy Valley.



With an investment of \$100,000 in one recent campaign alone, HVAB has garnered \$300,000 in media value primarily through digital, social media, and TravelSpike channels. Targeting specific demographics — such as women aged 25-55 within 250 miles of Happy Valley, with a household income of \$70,000+ — campaigns have driven increased website traffic and future bookings demands at area hotels.

With a robust calendar of upcoming events, further growth and excitement are anticipated in the sports tourism sector.

Sports tourism: A key economic driver

Finally, sports tourism continues to play a pivotal role in driving economic impact and visitor engagement in Happy Valley.

Recent events, such as the USA Field Hockey National Indoor Tournament Qualifier and the “We Build You Play” Sports Group Happy Valley Rally volleyball tournament, have contributed over \$2.09 million in economic benefits during the first quarter of 2024.



With a robust calendar of upcoming events, further growth and excitement are anticipated in the sports tourism sector.

Central Pennsylvania’s premier destination

Happy Valley invites travelers to unlock the endless possibilities and adventures that await in this vibrant region. With The Happy Valley Adventure Bureau leading the way, visitors can embark on a journey of exploration and discovery, immersing themselves in the unique charm and allure of Central Pennsylvania. ■



2.4 MILLION VISITORS

WELCOMED BY OUR REGION THROUGH MAY, PACING TOWARDS TARGET OF 5 MILLION FOR 2024

#1 IN PA

HAPPY VALLEY IS RANKED NO. 1 IN THE STATE FOR REVENUE PER AVAILABLE ROOM (REVPAR) GROWTH SINCE EARLY 2023



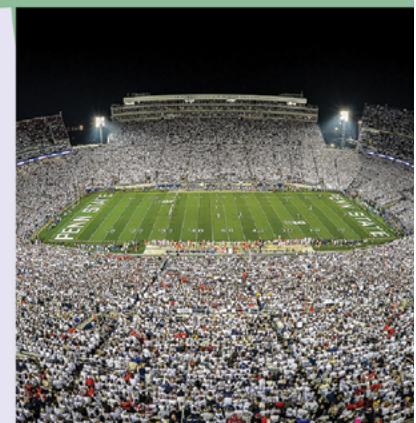
\$800,000

ANNUALLY SPENT TO PROMOTE HAPPY VALLEY, PA AS A YEAR-ROUND DESTINATION



\$417 MILLION

ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT FROM SPORTING EVENTS, SUPPORTING 4,315 JOBS WITH \$133 MILLION IN EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION



HAPPYVALLEY.COM

Fostering innovation at every level: How Ben Franklin Technology Partners supports tomorrow's Happy Valley entrepreneurs and changemakers

You may know **Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern PA** for the organization's work supporting, educating and investing in Pennsylvania entrepreneurs. With resources that range from Ben Franklin's seasonal TechCelerator program, to the BIG IDEA contest, Ben Franklin offers a range of ways for startup founders and new business owners to jumpstart their ideas and find their spot within the Happy Valley entrepreneurial ecosystem. This support has resulted in the establishment and growth of myriad businesses that are now long-standing staples within the community, such as KCF Technologies and Sensor Networks.



However, Ben Franklin's support goes even further, beyond those budding entrepreneurs with just the seeds of an idea. The organization also actively engages the future generations of innovators and thought leaders within our local community, as can be seen with Ben Franklin's support of the Centre County 4-H Robotics Team (CC4H Robotics).

More than 100 area students, ranging from 4th to 12th grade, participate in the CC4H Robotics club. The club gives those students experience in hands-on STEM activities, including real-world engineering, design, manufacturing and programming, teaching them skills that translate to further interest in STEM fields post-graduation — and even for those participants who don't pursue a STEM career, they're still honing lifelong skills in teamwork and innovation.

While Ben Franklin provides financial sponsorship to the club, it also offers further valuable experiences and connections. In the past, Ben Franklin has helped facilitate demonstrations of the club's robots to companies within the Ben Franklin incubator network, providing valuable exposure for CC4H Robotics and fostering potential partnerships. Through these demonstrations, CC4H Robotics has had the opportunity to garner recognition for its teams' ingenuity and broach possible collaborations for future projects.

Most recently, a CC4H Robotics team visited the Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern PA office, located in Innovation Park. There, team members were able to not only once again demonstrate their robots, but also interact with Ben Franklin's incubator tech companies and tour the facilities of several Innovation Park tenants — including Xact Metal, Magnitude Instruments and Impulse Technologies — and learn more about their operations.



"CC4H Robotics can have a profound impact on our area's young minds, empowering them with valuable STEM skills and teaching them to innovate, create and problem-solve — all of which will help mold these talented students into the Happy Valley leaders of tomorrow, whatever career paths



they pursue. Our new support of CC4H Robotics aligns directly with Ben Franklin's goal to support innovation at all levels, through not just funding, but opportunities for education and networking as well," commented Todd Erdley, director and portfolio manager at Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern PA. "Their recent visit to the Ben Franklin office was an excellent opportunity for these students to connect with local tech businesses and get a first-hand look at the innovation happening in our own backyard."

Learn more about Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern PA at cnp.benfranklin.org.



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SEPT 17 Voice of Business: State of the County

OCT 10 Voice of Business: Centre County's Economic Development Strategic Plan

OCT 24 Save the date for our Annual CBICC Awards Celebration at the Nittany Lion Inn
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The Chamber is Centre County's leading economic-development organization and business advocate.



The Downtown State College Improvement District (DSCID) and the Borough of State College Redevelopment Authority (RDA) are pleased to announce the appointment of Kendra Kielbasa as the new Retail and Commercial Business Advocate.

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Once team members get to the area, they're often sold.



Individuals are attracted to Happy Valley due to the area's amenities, high quality of life and relatively low cost of living — and entire companies with global reach have been attracted to the area for many of the same reasons.

Here's what two of those companies told us about their experiences in Happy Valley and what they'd tell other companies that might be considering relocating to the region.

A RELOCATION SUCCESS STORY

Shaner Hotel Group relocated to State College in 1993, moving its headquarters from western New York and never looking back.

According to Plato Ghinos, president at Shaner, "The company was growing at a fast pace and, at the time, western New York was not an attractive place to grow a company, financially. It was hard to recruit and relocate people in western New York."



Decision makers at Shaner looked at potential new homes around the East Coast, from North Carolina to Georgia to Pennsylvania, and finally settled on State College for a few key reasons, including quality of life and Penn State.

"I can tell you from personal experience, it was a great decision," said Ghinos. "It all boils down to quality of life."

"We all live here. We travel for work, but it's always great to get back to State College."

Today, Shaner operates in 18 states and three countries, but the State College headquarters, with its approximately 200 employees in the corporate office and another approximate 300 across Shaner's local properties, is the heart of it all. This headquarters location doesn't just benefit current Shaner employees, though. It's



also advantageous to up-and-coming talent within the hospitality industry who might be graduating from The Penn State School of Hospitality Management and looking for career opportunities closer to home.

“The Penn State [School of Hospitality Management] is one of the top in the country, with great faculty and students ... Throughout our portfolio, we employ multiple Penn State alumni,” said Ghinos.

As Shaner marks 30 years of business in Happy Valley, Ghinos noted that the team considers their move “a success story.”

“We all live here. We travel [for work], but it’s always great to get back to State College,” he said.

MAKING THE SALE ON HAPPY VALLEY

Much like Shaner, **Stan’s NoTubes**, the inventor of tubeless bike tires and outfitter to Olympic bikers and World Cup racers, likewise relocated one of its offices to Happy Valley from New York (while retaining a warehouse and support facility in Big Flats, New York). While Shaner focused on offering its employees a high quality of life with its move, Stan’s NoTubes’ needs were a little more niche.

President Mike Bush explained: “The biggest problem with the [New York] location is the lack of quality mountain biking. There’s one spot about 20 minutes away that’s quite small. There’s another location an hour away — and that’s it for the area. There’s very limited mountain biking. Having gone to Penn State, I knew what was here. I can see Rothrock State Forest right out my window. It has 290 miles of combined trails and forest roads. It connects to Bald Eagle State Forest with another 200,000-plus acres and countless trails and gravel roads. The riding here is classic East Coast, technical, rock-filled trails. It’s an amazing testing ground for our product.”

Stan’s NoTubes serves the high-performance cycling and competitive mountain biking sectors, providing a range of products that help alleviate what Bush called the single biggest problem riders have with their bicycles — flat tires. Products like a liquid sealant that repairs tires on the fly, as well as high-end performance wheels, give competitors an edge in a race environment, but also make hobbyists’ experiences more enjoyable.

When Bush pushed to open the Pine Grove Mills office, he initially received some hesitation, and that’s something that still exists today when recruiting. Stan’s NoTubes’ team requires talent that’s passionate about its industry — an industry that’s by and large focused on the

western portion of the country. However, once team members get to the area, they’re often sold.

“There’s always been a good cycling scene here, which was part of the motivation [to open the office]. We thought we could source some talent locally,” Bush explained. “I’ve also had folks relocate here from [the West Coast], but it’s always a hard sale. You have to do the job of a tourism bureau to sell people on the idea that the riding is just that good.”

He added, “Once someone’s here, they identify with the area. The school system is obviously quite good. The resources of Penn State are nearby. The cycling communities are pretty active ... Once people are in the community and realize what it has to offer, they tend to stick around.”

“Once someone’s here, they identify with the area. The school system is obviously quite good. The resources of Penn State are nearby. The cycling communities are pretty active. Once people are in the community and realize what it has to offer, they tend to stick around.”

For other companies considering making the move to Happy Valley, Bush noted multiple other benefits that they can expect, including easy access to major East Coast cities, lots of available talent and ample entrepreneurial resources.

NEED MORE?

Businesses (and employees) looking to relocate to Happy Valley should check out happyvalleyindustry.com/relocation for more info on what to expect.



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Senior living in Happy Valley:

*There's no better place
to call home*

Pay any attention to news surrounding senior care, and you'll likely hear a few of the same themes over and over again. "We're approaching a senior care crisis." "Senior care is more expensive than ever." "The senior population is growing at an unsustainable rate."

While the study found that the majority of these seniors live in their own homes or with a family member, about 2.5% live in senior communities — so about 1.45 million people.

In Pennsylvania, more than 2.5 million seniors call the state home. The American Health Care Association reported more than 1,100 assisted living and personal care homes in the state, offering nearly 70,000 beds. If the national percentages apply to Pennsylvania as well, then, we can assume that 2.5% of our seniors will need or want to live in a senior community, and that's 62,500 people, for 70,000 beds.

In other words, Pennsylvania is well-equipped to serve the state's seniors, and nowhere can that be seen like it can in Happy Valley, where senior care is a thriving industry that taps into the state's \$1.62 billion total economic activity generated by assisted living.



Photo by Jessica McKeon, Foxdale Village

Some of these claims are more or less rooted in truth. According to a Harvard 2023 study on housing America's older adults, America's senior population, defined as those ages 65 and up, is growing. In 2022, this population numbered approximately 58 million individuals (up from 43 million in 2012).

Photo by Jessica McKeon, Foxdale Village



Photo by Jessica McKeon, Foxdale Village



Photo by Juniper Communities



Photo by Jessica McKeon, Foxdale Village



Photo by Jessica McKeon, Foxdale Village

Meeting today's needs and anticipating the future

For many in the business of senior care in Happy Valley, recent growth in the area's senior care options is simply a direct response to the area's growing demands.

Jennifer Getgen, executive director at **Juniper Village Senior Living at Brookline**, noted, "The growth of senior living options is a direct reflection on the surge in senior population. Our Baby Boomers will all be retirement age, 65, by 2030, and life expectancy is generally longer than prior generations, given the better healthcare and nutritional advantages available."

She added, "There are a lot more options in senior living, so now families and seniors can be more selective in what would work best for them."

Plentiful options, though, doesn't necessarily mean that all the gaps are filled. At **Valley View Retirement Community**, in Belleville, the organization performed a market study in 2022 that revealed "a large need for memory care in central Pennsylvania." As such, the retirement community is expanding to meet that need, starting in 2024.

"As senior care providers, we have an obligation to know the needs and preferences of those we serve today or will serve in the future," Valley View CEO Nicole Sarver explained. "...People are living longer than they were 50 years ago,

and many need care during the later seasons of life. A big push has been for more wrap-around, in-home services that are created for people who desire to stay at home. Even with local growth in home and community-based services, we still see strong interest in and demand for the services we provide."

Mark Sapko, owner of **Senior Living Placement Specialists**, started his business about three years ago, with the aim of helping regional seniors and their families find the best living facilities to meet their needs. The business provides free care need assessments and then connects families with area facilities best suited to their requirements.

"I think there's always room for additional communities across State College and Centre County."

"As the Baby Boom population ages, there's going to be an increased need," he said. "There's still a wait list for some of the different independent living facilities in the area...I think there's always room for additional communities across State College and Centre County."

The Happy Valley appeal

Many in the regional senior care industry are seeing not just growing needs from the area's existing aging population — some notice that seniors are actively relocating to retire and age in Happy Valley, too. This is for myriad reasons. Some are Penn State alum and love the area; some have family nearby.

"Our personal experience shows that, instead of moving to a warmer state or moving to be near their grown children, many seniors want to come home to a place that they love."

Sarver said, "Our personal experience shows that, instead of moving to a warmer state or moving to be near their grown children, many seniors want to come home to a place that they love. We have many residents who moved back — some from Hawaii, Florida, overseas — to what they call 'God's country' and see mountains and cornfields and beautiful sunsets."

Similarly, Sapko also mentioned how a good portion of his clients are those who retired to Happy Valley within the last 15 to 20 years and, as their needs have changed, they've sought out assisted living communities.

"State College has kept up with these needs over the last few years," he said. "There have been a few more facilities built to help with this population... State College is a growing community and a lot of individuals who...went to school here, they want to come back here. Maybe they have kids or grandkids in the area and they want to be closer to their families. Especially with Covid, some individuals wanted to leave the city and State College offers a small city feel, but is also remote and, with the university, there's still activities and events."

Giving Happy Valley seniors what they want

For those who've yet to encounter the need to seek a senior living solution for a parent or grandparent, they may recall visiting relatives at senior living facilities in decades past, and remember grim, border-line depressing nursing homes that no one quite liked, least of all the residents.

Today's senior living facilities are a far cry from those memories, in part thanks to the growing demands from modern seniors — Baby Boomers who can recognize that independent living is no longer a fit for their needs, but who also want more to love about their last years of life.

The region's facilities are well-equipped to take on the growing population of seniors. As industry leaders explained to us, though, they're not just growing their number of rooms or care options; they're also evolving how they serve seniors, so that residents not just live at these facilities — they actually love living at these facilities.

A service-rich, choice-driven experience

At State College's **Foxdale Village**, Meg Clouser, director of health services, notes that, among Foxdale Village's 350 residents, as well as incoming residents, her team now sees both seniors who want to retain control their lifestyle after moving into a facility, but then also seniors who want to be catered to on a more extensive level, which is a somewhat new shift.



Her colleague Lisa Harrington, director of residency planning and marketing, further explains, describing what seniors want as a combination of a service-rich and choice-driven experience.

“They want to control their environment. That’s what they’ve done their whole lives. Why should it change?” Harrington said. “More choice options in their living accommodations, their activities, their food — it’s a really big thing.”

She continued, “They’re also more active. They want access to wellness programs, so gyms, classes and pools, and they want it where they are. They don’t want to have to go elsewhere. It’s the same thing with dining... They drive initiatives themselves, too, as much as they want to be served. We have between 60 and 70 special interest groups — clubs, committees, et cetera — and [the residents] run it. They wanted a model railroad room, so they found space and built it. I’ve been asked recently about HAM radio operating, and I say, ‘No, we don’t have it, but when you get here, you can start it.’”

“They’re really looking for something that allows them to be engaged, and social opportunities. Wellness is a big thing, and more than just physical wellness — mental wellness and spiritual wellness. They want...[a] holistic lifestyle.”

Kristin Hambleton, vice president of sales and marketing for **Presbyterian Senior Living**, which oversees multiple properties in the region, including Westminster Place in Huntingdon and Windy Hill Village in Philipsburg, likewise said that she sees residents looking for more social and special interest opportunities, as well as seniors taking a greater interest in wellness.

She said, “They’re really looking for something that allows them to be engaged, and social opportunities. Wellness is a big thing, and more

than just physical wellness — mental wellness and spiritual wellness. They want...[a] holistic lifestyle.”

Nurturing the spirit of life

At the end of the day, though, it’s not the individual wellness opportunities or the clubs that make the decision for seniors shopping around for a new place to call home. Instead, it’s that all-encompassing idea of what a new home could look like.

“Seniors and their families want to feel like they are in a home-like setting, rather than a medical or clinical facility,” said Kammi Booher, director of admissions at Valley View Retirement Community. “Even though Valley View provides excellent clinical services, we pride ourselves on our home-like environment. Our residents are our family...”

Similarly, Jennifer Getgen, executive director at Juniper Village Senior Living at Brookline, said, “Our seniors and families are looking at ... the atmosphere, culture, technology and the activities/amenities available. They want to see themselves ‘living’ in the community, so when they visit, they must see life and action.”

As such, she said the Juniper brand actively seeks partnerships within the region, to extend its community beyond its physical footprint, enhance senior services and better accommodate resident needs.

Getgen added, “We personalize each senior experience to enrich their quality of life. Here at Juniper, we nurture the spirit of life. Our mission is to foster active bodies, engaged minds and fulfilled spirits.”



Photo by Juniper Communities



Photo by Juniper Communities

Is the high cost of senior care in Happy Valley a misconception?

Much of the United States considers itself headed for a “senior care crisis.” Not only is the population of seniors growing at what is purported to be an unsustainable rate, but the cost of senior care is, for some, described as “crippling.”

According to a 2023 Washington Post report on the subject, assisted living facilities, on average, cost residents \$60,000 per year, while more specialized facilities, such as those for patients with dementia, cost residents \$80,000 per year.

In State College specifically, the annual median cost of senior care is around \$50,000–\$60,000 for in-home or assisted living care, with nursing home facilities costing over \$100,000 per year for even just a semi-private room. This, of course, prompts the question: How will Happy Valley’s seniors pay for care in the later years of their lives?

Plan, plan, plan ahead

This issue isn’t new for local professionals who work in the industry.

Jennifer Getgen, executive director at Juniper Village Senior Living at Brookline, admits that many seniors and their families are not prepared for the costs of senior care.

She said, “Selecting senior living options can

be a very stressful time. It can be very confusing to determine what care is covered by Medicare and other government benefits, and what the out-of-pocket expenses would be. Long-term care policies might not cover everything. Seniors and their families may have in mind where they would prefer ...for senior living communities; however, the cost of that community may be out of reach if unprepared.”

Mark Sapko, owner of Senior Living Placement Specialists, helps seniors and their families find regional facilities that meet their needs, at no cost to the seniors or families. He mentioned that assisted living personal care is typically not covered by Medicaid or Medicare. “At that time,” he said, “individuals would pay with money that they’ve saved... If they move into a skilled nursing facility, that’s where Medicare or Medicaid would be able to offer services.”

Finding the right resources

Luckily, preparing for the cost of senior care is feasible, and our interviewees in the industry had a few tips.

Getgen said, “It is never too early to start planning. The cost of healthcare in general is rising and there are many options for medical coverage; it’s not one size fits all. I would suggest consulting with a financial planner or senior care attorney. They are the experts in conserving assets and planning for senior living.”

At Valley View Retirement Community, director of admissions Kammi Booher likewise stressed the important of planning for care costs sooner rather than later. Additionally, CEO Nicole Sarver mentioned long-term care insurance as a viable resource.

Sapko additionally mentioned long-term care insurance, but said it's not an option that many seniors that he works with utilize.

Misunderstood fees and costs?

While costs may, at first, appear to be an insurmountable problem, though, at Foxdale Village, Lisa Harrington, director of residency planning and marketing, cautions seniors to not simply and immediately assume that they can't afford a particular care option.

“Simply looking at the fees does not tell the whole story.”

She said, “Cost is always going to be a factor, no matter where you go. The best advice I have is to plan, start early, talk to their retirement planner, talk to their tax advisor and talk to the community. Get information. Fees are scary... Someone might look at the fees for a community and say, ‘Oh my gosh. I can never do this.’ Sit down and talk with someone at the community and have a financial analysis run...Talk to your retirement planner...There are multiple models of senior living healthcare... Simply looking at the fees does not tell the whole story.”

Similarly, also at Foxdale, Megan Clouser, director of health services, tells seniors to look at what they're getting from the price of senior care services at a live-in facility, not just at the price alone.

“So many people look at the fees, but inflation hasn't hit residents or people of this generation that live in communities, as much as it has hit people living independently in their homes, because they're not subject to the inflation of utility costs,” Clouser said. “You're not subject to food inflation to the level that a lot of people have been. While, financially, it looks hard on one side, there are so many other things that you're not subject to...”

Kristin Hambleton, vice president of sales and marketing at Presbyterian Senior Living, which oversees multiple properties in the region, including Westminster Place in Huntingdon and Windy Hill Village in Philipsburg, likewise noted

the value seniors receive at the organization's facilities.

“The cost factor is something of a misconception. Many people think that it's cost-prohibitive to come to a community. If you begin to add up the cost of home ownership, living expenses, taxes, entertainment, food, gym memberships, wellness programs — if you begin to think about your cost of living in your home and then you compare that with the cost of living in a life plan community such as ours, often people find that they're quite comparable, when they really sit down and they look at it side by side.”

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She added, “I would tell people to, even though they may come in with the notion that it's too expensive, at least take a look at something like a life plan community and whether or not it's a good fit for you financially.”

Additionally, on both Presbyterian Senior Living's regional campuses, the organization offers affordable senior housing with rent limits based on the area's median income.

Shopping for a senior living facility? Insight and advice from Happy Valley experts



Photo by Jessica McKeon, Foxdale Village

We spoke with our range of industry experts and leaders throughout Happy Valley, and asked them for a little advice. For seniors and families of seniors just now considering their care options, what do they need to know? What should they consider as they shop around for a senior living facility?

Here's what the experts had to say.

Location, location, location

According to Mark Sapko, owner of Senior Living Placement Specialists, which helps regional seniors and their families find the best living facilities to meet their needs, one of the first things seniors should consider when choosing a care facility? Location, location, location.

He told us, “If they want to be in State College and still be on a bus route and closer to family, location is always important. [Then there's] room type. Most facilities, nowadays, especially with [Covid-19, don't have] shared rooms. Most

individuals have a single room... Make sure there are showers in each room and they're handicap accessible. [Make sure] the community is a place they can age in place when their needs progress, and that they can still live in the same room and community, and the facility can meet those needs. Also, different social activities... I would say every facility in State College and Centre County tries to make [the facility] feel like home for the individuals, that they're not living in a 'facility,' but as part of a community and this is their new home.”

Jennifer Getgen, executive director at Juniper Village Senior Living at Brookline, mentioned many of the same considerations, including location, continuing care and amenities. She also, however, pointed out that seniors will want need to consider two other factors: pet policies and cost.

On the former, she said, “Pets are very important to our seniors and the thought of having to leave them behind may prevent them from transitioning. Ask about the community's pet policy and if the furry friends can transition with them through the different levels of care.”

“I would say every facility in State College and Centre County tries to make [the facility] feel like home for the individuals, that they're not living in a 'facility,' but as part of a community and this is their new home.”

For the latter, she posed, “Will the senior community living expenses fit within the budget? You will want to find out if there are entrance fees involved. Senior living communities offer rental options or a varying fee structure, and some offer benevolent care after resources are depleted. Gain as much information as you can about the costs of living in the community.”

Along the lines of costs, Foxdale Village's Lisa Harrington, director of residency planning and marketing, noted, “Take into consideration whether the community you're looking at is for-profit or nonprofit. What happens if you outlive



your assets? If the actuaries tell us you're going to be around until 92, but now you're 102... what happens in that community if something like that happens?"

Where to start

Of course, the first place to start looking for a senior living facility, for many seniors and families, is with a simple online search. Some care facilities, however, make finding information about their offerings easier than others. Whereas some rely on a sales technique that requires potential residents to reach out for valuable information, others realize that this is a barrier that can prove frustrating, and even deter a potential resident.

At Presbyterian Senior Living, which oversees multiple properties in the region, including Westminster Place in Huntingdon and Windy Hill Village in Philipsburg, Kristin Hambleton, vice president of sales and marketing, said, "We have worked diligently to unburden people, by giving them the information they need as quickly as we can get it to them."

This unburdening occurs in the form of the organization's online Waypoints Learning Center, filled with resources, from blogs to checklists, that help seniors, family members and caregivers begin their search for a senior living facility.

"We really want to provide you with the education and resources for you to make an informed decision about what's best for you," Hambleton said. "A lot of organizations gate their content and force people to turn over their email address, phone number and information in order to get educational material about senior living. We don't do that. I believe in giving the consumer all of the information they need to make an informed decision, including the pricing... Our pricing is right there on the website. Not a lot of senior living communities do that, but we do."

Once seniors have identified possible options, scheduled tours are typically the next step.

"Go visit the community and feel the atmosphere," suggested Getgen. "Maybe consider a short-term stay to see if it would be a good fit. Touring the communities and getting a feel for what it would be like to live there will ease the fear of the unknown. Can you picture yourself living there after the visit? Were the staff and other residents friendly? Do they offer amenities that align with your interests? Does it feel like home?"



Photo by Juniper Communities

Some suggest stopping by unannounced for a tour, in an effort to "catch" the facility with their guard down, but Foxdale Village's Megan Clouser, director of health services, says this isn't necessary. "We don't have time to fake it. Dropping in unexpectedly means there might not be somebody there to show you around, and it's not for lack of wanting to, so please call ahead," she cautioned.

Additionally, consider talking to the facility about their cost options and how seniors can finance the next step of their lives.

Continued on Page 40

Valley View helps working professionals care for aging parents

The mental load of caring for an aging parent is difficult for working professionals, and as Brenda Geary will tell you, it's even harder for an only child. Then she and her mom Florence visited Valley View Retirement Community in Belleville, just thirty minutes from Happy Valley. "I cried when I visited," she remembers. "The sheer relief of my mom being at Valley View was unbelievable."

"I tell people, you need to check out this place. It's worth the drive."

"When she was at Valley View, it felt like I had siblings — brothers and sisters who said, 'You can go to work, we'll take care of Mom.'"

"The food was great, the care was great, the love was wonderful," she said. "It felt like home."

This spring, Brenda lost her mother, and she says that Valley View's team surrounded her and her

mother during that last chapter. "When I spoke with the funeral director the following day she said, 'In all of my years in this profession, I've never seen this kind of love and care anywhere, ever.'" Brenda said. "Their love for my mom was just so incredible."

At her job at Penn State College of Engineering, Brenda says that she encounters many people who are in the same position that she was several years ago—caring for aging parents and struggling with finding the best place for them.

"I share our Valley View experience every time that I can. People need to hear my mom's story," she said. "I tell people, you need to check out this place. It's worth the drive. I'm so, so grateful that my mom was at Valley View."



To learn more about Valley View Retirement Community, go to vvrconline.org or call 717-935-2105

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Individualized care to meet your needs

Valley View offers quality, affordable living options for older adults in a caring, compassionate environment. Call today for more information on how we can partner with you!

4702 E. Main St | Belleville, PA 17004 | (717) 935-2105 | vvrconline.org

When should you start?

All of the experts we spoke with seem to agree: the earlier you can start a senior living facility search, the better. Some facilities have wait lists that are years long, and the longer you wait, the more likely it is you won't get into the facility you want.

Sapko said, "If anyone's having appointments with estate lawyers or discussing their future wishes, that's a good time to have this conversation [about senior living facilities]."

Hambleton added, "It's like buying a house. You don't just look on the internet and say, 'I like that house' and buy it. You're searching for something that's going to meet your whole life and your future... You want to find an apartment or cottage or villa that really is something that you love and you're going to love living in for 10 years or so. You want to find a community that resonates with the lifestyle you're seeking."



Photos by Jessica McKeon, Foxdale Village



Gather. At Foxdale, our residents love to gather together. Whether enjoying a movie in the auditorium, serving on a committee or catching up over cheese and crackers, the community spirit here runs deep. Learn about all we offer and plan a visit at (814) 272-2146.



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Balancing care and commerce: How Mount Nittany Health boosts the local economy



Noah Galaxy Robot



Mount Nittany Health's DaVinci Robot



Late last year, the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) released a report that shed light on **Mount Nittany Health's** significant contributions, both direct and indirect, to the Happy Valley region's economic well-being.

According to Kurt Kissinger, chief strategy and system development officer at Mount Nittany Health, the system's role goes beyond providing healthcare services. "Mount Nittany Medical Center does more than treat illnesses and injuries," he said. "Whether investing in staff, facilities or purchasing supplies, we are helping strengthen the region's economic development and growth. The report from HAP highlights the importance of our mission of 'healthier people, stronger community.'"

"Mount Nittany Medical Center does more than treat illnesses and injuries. Whether investing in staff, facilities or purchasing supplies, we are helping strengthen the region's economic development and growth."

Economic ripple effect

In fiscal year 2022, the Mount Nittany Medical Center's economic activity amounted to a staggering \$361,251,010, with an economic ripple benefit of \$209,995,212.

To start, Mount Nittany Health is the second-largest employer in Centre County, and it plays a crucial role in the local economy through job creation and paying competitive wages for its employees.

"We paid around \$130 million in wages to our 1,600 employees in fiscal year 2022 at the medical center," Kissinger said.

From there, the hospital's operations influence other businesses and their employees throughout Happy Valley.

"The hospital's direct impact extends to the purchase of goods and services, including essentials like linens, communication services, mechanical contractors and various other services necessary to support our daily operations," Kissinger said. "These expenditures have an indirect impact too, as the wages paid to contractors and employees eventually circulate within the local economy, benefiting other local business sectors."

"Our major capital expenditures, particularly the construction of the outpatient center at Toftrees and the new patient tower at Mount Nittany Medical Center, provide substantial economic opportunities," Kissinger continued. "Many contractors employ local subcontractors for these projects, providing additional economic benefit to the local economy."

Balancing medical mission with economic impact

Balancing its medical mission with economic impact, Mount Nittany Health is working to ensure that healthcare is accessible to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

"We absorb the costs of providing care to those who can't afford it and partner with organizations like Centre Volunteers in Medicine to bridge healthcare gaps for low-income and uninsured individuals," Kissinger shared. "This commitment to the community translated into a total community benefit that exceeded \$28 million in fiscal year 2022."

"The hospital's investment in addressing chronic diseases and high-risk factors, like high blood pressure and diabetes, not only contributes to community health but also reduces absenteeism and healthcare costs for local businesses," he continued. "By providing primary and secondary



Mount Nittany Health's
Linear Accelerator



Rendering of future
Patient Tower

care to residents within the community, Mount Nittany Health minimizes the need for patients to seek healthcare services outside the region, further bolstering the local economy.”

Continued investment in the community

Mount Nittany Health is continually seeking ways to support the economic development and growth of the Centre region.

“We are excited to be opening our first Mount Nittany Health Express Care clinic at the Hills Plaza,” Kissinger shared. “This new point of access for same day or unscheduled care is projected to open in...2024.”

“The hospital plans to continue positively impacting the local economy by investing in clinical care environments, expanding clinical programming and fostering partnerships with other organizations.”

“The hospital plans to continue positively impacting the local economy by investing in clinical care environments, expanding clinical

programming and fostering partnerships with other organizations,” he added. “Our representation on the Economic Development Council of the Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County reinforces the system’s commitment to supporting the region’s economic well-being and vitality.”

Mount Nittany Health’s contributions to the local economy highlight the essential role that healthcare institutions play in fostering both community health and economic prosperity. As a pillar of the community, the hospital’s dedication to its medical mission and economic impact exemplifies the critical synergy between healthcare and economic development.

SHOP THE Alleghenies

Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset Counties

Shopping local is easier than ever during one of the best times of year in the Alleghenies: market season! From locally grown to locally made, markets are great spots to visit for a huge selection of local items you simply won’t find anywhere else!



Since launching in July 2023, the **Alleghenies Marketplace** has been a source for shoppers from around the Alleghenies, across the country and even around the world to find unique items made right here by locally owned small businesses. Merchants are always adding new and seasonal inventory and the online shopping destination is growing all the time with new merchants and offerings. Don’t miss out! Follow the Alleghenies Marketplace on Facebook and Instagram for great gift ideas, seasonal products and much more!

Visit our website www.AllegheniesMarketplace.com and follow us on Facebook and Instagram for great gift ideas, seasonal products and much more!



Advancing printing in Happy Valley for more than five decades



K-B Offset Printing has been advancing and innovating the local printing industry since it opened for business in 1973, but the longtime State College-based company can trace its roots even farther back to the early 1950s and its predecessor, Offset Centre, Inc.

One of the first printers in the region to offer full-color offset printing in large format sheets and complete bindery support, K-B Offset's current systems and techniques rely on the latest technology. The firm is a full-service and single-source operation for graphics and printing, employing in-house and contracted creative and design talent in addition to its experienced printing and production team.

With five acquisitions since 1995, K-B Offset has proven its capacity for expansion and growth is virtually unlimited thanks to a foundation built on strong systems and a unique blend of diverse federal and state governments, industry, education and business accounts. For the past 20 years, the company has been ranked among the top 100 small commercial printing companies.

Despite a business environment with shrinking opportunities for print and the rise of alternate forms of media, K-B Offset has continued to grow. Customers attribute this success to unparalleled communication and exceptional performance meeting deadlines and project specs.



- 1973 K-B Offset Printing, Inc. begins operations
- 1992 Express-Tech Volume Printing Centers, Inc. is independently created to market and produce digital printed products for the printing trade as well as high-volume commercial accounts
- 1995 Express-Tech and K-B merge
- MID 1990s In the Mid-1990s – K-B acquires the Tech-Print Company, a 30-year small-format offset shop, and Dots-Enuff Imaging Service Bureau, a color separation and film-imaging service bureau, and a division of Adobe Systems
- 1999 K-B integrates the Agfa Apogee workflow system, as well as the Presstek digital direct imaging technology, and creates Centre Mailing Services, Inc. to provide full letter-shop and data management services including mailing list acquisition, addressing, variable data, mailing operations, data management, product assembly and fulfillment services
- 2022 K-B acquires the assets of Handy Delivery of State College, a regional delivery and courier company established in the 1950s
- 2023 K-B acquires King Printing, a 45-year printing company in State College, and merges a loyal customer base of business, civic and individual accounts



American Printer Magazine named us to the **Top 50 U.S. printers** in 1997 and 1998, which included our 1998 silver award as **Printer of the Year**.



In 2004 and 2005, we were named to the **Inc Magazine 500 fastest-growing companies in the U.S.**, earning the 247 and 163 spots, respectively.

Printing Impressions

For 2013 and 2014, we were ranked in the **Top 400 printers in North America** by Printing Impressions Magazine.

TOP 100

During the past 20-plus years, we have been ranked in the **top 100 small commercial printing companies** every year.

Award-winning care

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mountnittany.org

