

The Mid-Atlantic Region is Home to Innovative Firsts and Pioneering People

(Mid-Atlantic Region, USA, November 17, 2017) - The Mid-Atlantic Region is home to destinations that recognize and celebrate the innovative inventions that have made significant changes around the world. While also playing host to creative developments, destinations represented by the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance ([MATPRA](#)) are also the hometowns of some of the people who made a difference in the world.

Interested in learning more about an invention or person highlighted below? Contact the visitors bureau in the description for information.

Delaware

Delaware's Quaint Villages

Visit the Johnson Victrola Museum, in Delaware's Quaint Villages and discover the history of recorded sound. This museum pays tribute to Delawarean Eldridge R. Johnson, founder of the Victor Talking Machine Company in 1901. The Museum documents his success as a pioneer, inventor and successful business man during the 20th Century. Delaware's Quaint Villages, *Danielle Jonigan*, djonigan@visitdelawarevillages.com, VisitDelawareVillages.com

Maryland

Annapolis & Anne Arundel County

Annapolis was our nation's first peacetime capital, Maryland's first incorporated city, home of the first parochial libraries and the colony's first newspaper, the Maryland Gazette, which still publishes. Maryland's State House is the oldest state capitol in continuous legislative use. It's topped by the largest wooden dome in the U.S. Visit *Annapolis & Anne Arundel County*, Susan Seifried, sseifried@visitannapolis.org, VisitAnnapolis.org

Baltimore

Baltimore was the first city in the U.S. to illuminate its streets with gas-powered lamps. Over two-hundred years later, that transformation is celebrated with the nation's first large-scale festival of light, art, music, and innovation: Light City, which happens each spring with light-art installations decorating the Inner Harbor and neighborhoods. Visit *Baltimore*, Deanna Martino, dmartino@baltimore.org, Baltimore.org

Calvert County

Arthur Storer, known as the first Colonial American astronomer, was among the first to observe and record data describing Halley's Comet in Calvert County in the 1600s. Go stargazing at the Arthur Storer Planetarium and visit the Spaceflight America Museum and Science Center featuring exhibits, artifacts and hands-on activities. *Calvert County Department of Economic Development*, Katie Brittain, katie.brittain@calvertcountymd.gov, ChooseCalvert.com

Caroline County

Taking an early stand on slavery, Preston residents operated at least three Underground Railroad stations before the Civil War, including one run by Harriet Tubman's parents. In the 20th century, Preston was Caroline County's first small town to have concrete sidewalks, a sewer system (circa 1914), and electric streetlights (circa 1910)! *Caroline County Office of Tourism*, Ceres Bainbridge, ceres@visitcaroline.org, VisitCaroline.org

Frederick County

An elderly Barbara Fritchie waved her union flag out the window of her Frederick home as Confederate troops passed on the street below, inspiring the popular poem "The Ballad of Barbara Fritchie". See her house and her gravesite in Frederick all year long. Visit *Frederick, Melissa Joseph Muntz, mmuntz@fredco-md.net, VisitFrederick.org*

Hagerstown - Washington County

Major Jonathan Letterman, Army of the Potomac medical director, instituted a new era of medical command and control during the Battle of Antietam that is still used today. Learn about his protocols for triage, first aid and an ambulance system at the Pry House Field Hospital Museum at Antietam National Battlefield. Visit *Hagerstown, Betsy DeVore, betsy@visithagerstown.com, VisitHagerstown.com*

Harford County

Harford County native Jim McKay was an American television sports journalist with his own unique style. His reporting on equestrian sports and 12 Olympic Games were highlights of his career. Visit *Harford, Mindy Schneider, mindy@visitharford.com, VisitHarford.com*

Howard County

New research suggests that Ellicott City and the surrounding Patapsco Valley may have been the real epicenter of the industrial revolution, beginning a full generation before the textile mills of New England. Discover what could be America's first factory town for yourself with a visit to Maryland's Patapsco Heritage Area. Visit *Howard County, Sarah Kurtanich, sarah@howardcountytourism.com, VisitHowardCounty.com*

St. Mary's County

Accessible only by ferry boat, set foot on St. Clement's Island State Park and Museum, the original landing of the first Maryland settlers nearly 400 years ago. Then, head south on the Potomac River to Historic St. Mary's City, Maryland's first settlement and capitol along the picturesque St. Mary's River. *St. Mary's County Division of Tourism, Andrew Ponti, andrew.ponti@stmarysmd.com, VisitStMarysMD.com*

Talbot County

In 2018, Talbot County celebrates the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederick Douglass - pioneering African American abolitionist, statesman, and author. Annual events, including the Juneteenth celebration of abolition and Frederick Douglass Day in September, will have special resonance. Visitors can explore year-round with a self-guided Douglass driving tour. *Talbot County Office of Tourism, Cassandra M. Vanhooser, cvanhooser@talbgov.org, TourTalbot.org*

Pennsylvania

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Whether it's a banana split straight from its birthplace in Latrobe, bifocals from Benjamin Franklin's days in Philadelphia, or even the beloved smiley face emoticon from Carnegie Mellon, the Keystone State has plenty of firsts on its list. Declaration of Independence, anyone?

Pennsylvania Tourism Office, Emily Hemming, ehemming@tierneyagency.com, VisitPA.com

Butler County

Butler is the birthplace of the Jeep. The county celebrates this through the annual Bantam Jeep Heritage Festival in June. Thousands of visitors attend this event to embrace the vehicle's past

and the lifestyle it now promotes. The Festival has off-road trails, obstacles, Jeep History exhibits, and more! *Butler County Tourism & Convention Bureau, Tiffany Hernandez, tiffany@visitbutlercounty.com, VisitButlerCounty.com*

Central Pennsylvania

Bellefonte is the birthplace of seven Pennsylvania governors, but perhaps none more famous than Andrew Gregg Curtin. Curtin, who was a close confidant of Abraham Lincoln, served as governor during the Civil War and later became the driving force behind the formation of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg. *Central Pennsylvania Convention & Visitors Bureau, Andy Rupert, andyr@visitpennstate.org, VisitPennState.org*

Chester County

Wharton Esherick has been called the first link between the Arts and Crafts Movement and the resurgent interest in furniture making. A National Historic Landmark for Architecture, his hilltop studio/residence, now the Wharton Esherick Museum, includes more than 300 of his works on exhibition, and is available for tours seasonally. *Chester County Conference & Visitors Bureau, Nina Kelly, nina@brandywinevalley.com, BrandywineValley.com*

Endless Mountains

The Dennis Farm in Susquehanna County is the first continuously-documented property owned by African Americans in a largely white county in the US northeast. The remarkable story in American history continues to offer lessons for us today. The farm will soon welcome tourists, history buffs, and groups looking to learn more about this history. *Endless Mountains Visitors Bureau, Morgan Christopher, sales@endlessmountains.org, EndlessMountains.org*

Franklin County

Chambersburg was home to inventor Joseph Winters. Winters worked on the Cumberland Valley Railroad. He also invented the fire escape and fire alarm in 1876, the first aerial escape ladder in 1877, and the hose conductor in 1882. His life is documented in publications by the Franklin County Visitors Bureau. *Franklin County Visitors Bureau, Lauren Cappuccio, lcappuccio@explorefranklincountypa.com, ExploreFranklinCountyPA.com*

Hershey Harrisburg

In 1900, Milton S. Hershey became the first person in the U.S. to mass-produce milk chocolate. He built his famous factory in 1905, opened Hershey Park in 1906, and, in 1909, established his boarding school for pre-kindergarten through grade 12 that today supports 2,000 students from income-eligible families in U.S. *Hershey Harrisburg Regional Visitors Bureau, Rick Dunlap, rick@hersheyharrisburg.org, VisitHersheyHarrisburg.org*

Huntingdon County

Huntingdon is the hometown of Tom Hoover the "Father of the Hemi" engine that changed NASCAR forever and powered generations of muscle cars. J.C. Blair invented the paper writing tablet in Huntingdon. Samuel Clemens (aka Mark Twain) wrote a letter in 1884 thanking Blair for the invention of the tablet. *Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau, Edward Stoddard, estoddard@raystown.org, Raystown.org*

Lancaster County

Founded in 1861, the Julius Sturgis Pretzel Bakery in Lititz is the first commercial pretzel bakery in America. Visitors can still tour the original bakery, get a hands-on lesson in pretzel twisting,

and taste the results of 150+ years of pretzel baking heritage. *Discover Lancaster*, Joel Cliff, jcliff@discoverlancaster.com, DiscoverLancaster.com

Laurel Highlands

In 1904, Dr. David Strickler of Tassel Pharmacy in Latrobe, invented his banana-based sundae at the pharmacy's soda fountain. News of his delicious creation quickly spread and the recipe was published in 1907. Celebrate the banana split in its birthplace at The Great American Banana Split Celebration every August! *Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau*, Anna Weltz, aweltz@laurelhighlands.org, LaurelHighlands.org

Pennsylvania's Americana Region

William Luden, a young candymaker, created cough drops in his mother's kitchen in Reading, providing an alternative to cumbersome vials of menthol. Luden then gave railroad workers his invention. Through their travels, Luden's Cough Drops became known coast to coast.

Pennsylvania's Americana Region, Lisa Haggerty, lisa@visitpaamericana.com, VisitPaAmericana.com

Pocono Mountains

In 1946, the Poconos opened Big Boulder Ski Area, the first commercial ski area in Pennsylvania. By the winter of 1956, the first patent application for the system of snow-making by blowing water through a nozzle was perfected and used at Big Boulder, making the Poconos an official ski destination. *Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau*, Kelly Shannon, kshannon@poconos.org, PoconoMountains.com

Potter County - Tioga County

The Pennsylvania Lumber Museum along Route 6 is home to the Shay Locomotive, a gear-driven engine used to transport goods of the state's lumber industry. Ephraim Shay's engine used gears, as opposed to traditional pistons, to provide required power to address terrain challenges loggers faced moving product to marketplace. *Visit Potter-Tioga*, Morgan Christopher, morgan@visitpotertioga.com, VisitPotterTioga.com

York County

Looking to expand his ice cream cone business, Henry Kessler started making candy from his York Cone Company in 1940 - specifically, dark chocolate-covered peppermint. He had high expectations: It had to crack down the middle when snapped. It did, and today we know it as the York Peppermint Pattie. *York County Convention & Visitors Bureau*, Andrew Staub, astaub@yorkpa.org, YorkPA.org

Virginia

Alexandria

Be inspired by some of the country's greatest technological achievements at the newly renovated National Inventors Hall of Fame located on the United States Patent and Trademark Office campus in Alexandria. Experience the gallery of icons illustrating each of the 500+ inductees and their inventions. *Visit Alexandria*, Leah Spellman, lspellman@visitalexva.com, VisitAlexandriaVA.com

Charlottesville and Albemarle County

The Charlottesville area is home to Thomas Jefferson, one of the country's most innovative and influential Founding Fathers. In addition to founding the University of Virginia, he is credited with many revolutionary inventions. Charlottesville hosts the Tom Tom Founders Festival each

spring in a celebration of innovation, art, and creativity. *Charlottesville & Albemarle County CVB*, Bri Warner, warnerb@charlottesville.org, VisitCharlottesville.org

Fairfax County

On the southern peninsula of Fairfax County sits Mason Neck State Park & Elizabeth Hartwell National Wildlife Refuge - the very first refuge established specifically for the protection of America's symbol, the bald eagle. Visitors can enjoy wildlife/habitat viewing, outdoor recreation/education, and, of course, ample opportunities for eagle-spotting. *Visit Fairfax*, Ali Morris, amorris@fxva.com, FXVA.com

Hampton

In 1917, the first aeronautics laboratory in the United States was established in Hampton. NASA Langley Research Center studied issues of flight and aircraft performance until the creation of NASA, when space flight took precedence. Discover NASA Langley's history and future at Hampton's Virginia Air & Space Center. *Hampton Convention and Visitor Bureau*, Elizabeth Severs, elizabeth.severs@hamptoncvb.com, VisitHampton.com

Harrisonburg

Downtown Harrisonburg has been designated Virginia's first Culinary District. The variety of both locally-owned and nationally-recognized restaurants will take you on a culinary trip around the world. Local eateries offer every kind of dining experience including farm-to-table and unique international options. Come taste why Dining is Better in the 'Burg. *Harrisonburg Tourism & Visitor Services*, Jessica Williams, jessica.williams@harrisonburgva.gov, VisitHarrisonburgVA.com

Lexington & Rockbridge

Cyrus McCormick built the first practical grain reaper in 1831, starting the mechanical revolution that changed agricultural production worldwide. From Rockbridge County, evolved one of the world's manufacturing giants - International Harvester Company. The annual McCormick Farm Mill Day features the working grist mill, artisan crafts, music, and food. *Lexington & Rockbridge Area Tourism*, Patty Williams, marketing@lexingtonvirginia.com, LexingtonVirginia.com

Lynchburg

Lynchburg is innovative! 1868: Malcolm Loomis successfully sends electro-magnetic waves through the atmosphere, inventing radio six years before the "father of radio's" birth. 1889: Charles Fleet invents and sells Chap-Stick. 1962: Anne Spencer is only Virginian included in Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry. Learn more at the Lynchburg Museum!

Lynchburg Office of Economic Development & Tourism, Krista Boothby, krista.boothby@lynchburgva.gov, LynchburgVirginia.org

Prince William County & Manassas, VA

Stand where Stonewall Jackson got his name and where the 1st and 2nd battles of the Civil War were fought at Manassas National Battlefield. Take a scenic horseback ride or join the park historian for a guided hike along the trails to explore the parks hundreds of acres of history.

Prince William County Office of Tourism, Nicole Warner, nwarner@pwgov.org, VisitPWC.com

Richmond

When the Richmond region launched the Richmond Beer Trail in 2016, this was not the first time Richmond has shown its love for craft brew. Back in 1935, Richmond was the first place

where beer was sold in a can. Richmond is now home to over 30 breweries, with more on the way.

*Richmond Region Tourism, Meghan Gearino, mgearino@visitrichmondva.com,
VisitRichmondVA.com*

Shenandoah County

As part of Franklin D Roosevelt's "New Deal", the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was developed to create jobs for thousands of young men for emergency preservation of natural resources, and to create trails and recreation areas nationally. Camp Roosevelt, the first of these camps, is in Fort Valley. *Shenandoah County Tourism, Jenna French, jfrench@shenandoahcountyva.us, VisitShenandoahCounty.com*

West Virginia

Hampshire County

Golf now has many new varieties, including disc, foot, and fling. In 2017, Capon Springs & Farms in Hampshire County became the first in the state to offer Hickory Golf. This version of the sport brings back the original feel playing with wooden (hickory) clubs and non-compression balls. *Hampshire County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Jonathan Bellingham, jonathan@caponsprings.net, ComeToHampshire.com*

Pocahontas County

West Virginia is a state full of attractions and scenic vistas. But nothing compares to the view of the world's largest steerable telescope housed at the Green Bank Observatory. Come see for yourself over 480 feet of innovation and experimentation, all housed in the US National Radio Quiet Zone! *Pocahontas County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Chelsea Walker, cwalker@pocahontascountywv.com, NaturesMountainPlayground.com*

About Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance

The Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA) is a cohesive unit of regional tourism partners encompassing Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Washington, D.C. The group serves travel journalists by creating a regional resource that ignores geographical boundaries. The Alliance promotes common threads and offers saleable stories to journalists about the mid-Atlantic destination as a whole. For more information, visit www.matpra.org.

#