A Taste of History: Discover Some of America’s Oldest Places and Attractions in the Mid-Atlantic

(Mid-Atlantic Region, April 11, 2019) — With a history dating back centuries, the Mid-Atlantic is filled with some of America’s oldest attractions and natural wonders, but also serves as the birthplace for many delicious treats. Take a trip to discover some of the places that withstood the test of time and uncover the stories of this region’s rich past.

For more information on any of the following, contact the destination marketing organization listed below. For general information on the Mid-Atlantic, visit MATPRA.org.

MARYLAND

State of Maryland
Sip, shuck and slur p oysters at Maryland’s enduring oyster festivals along the Eastern Shore and in Southern Maryland. In St. Mary’s, explore Cove Point Lighthouse, the oldest continuously operating lighthouse along the Chesapeake Bay. Discover the art of decoy making in his torical Easton at the Waterfowl Festival. Maryland Office of Tourism, Matthew Scales, VisitMaryland.org, mscales@visitmaryland.org

Baltimore
Whether you love history or experiential family-friendly activities, Fort McHenry is a must-see when visiting Baltimore. The birthplace of extraordinary events like the War of 1812 and what inspired Francis Scott Key to compose The Star Spangled Banner, this National Monument and Historic Shrine brings history to life year-round. Visit Baltimore, Abigail Vitaliano, Baltimore.org, avitaliano@baltimore.org

Calvert County
Calvert Cliffs, oldest cliff-face in Maryland, was formed 10-20 million years ago. They dominate the shoreline of the Chesapeake Bay for roughly 24 miles. Today, these cliffs and associated beaches reveal the remains of prehistoric species including giant Megalodon shark teeth allowing the public to find rare fossils. Calvert County Department of Economic Development, Hilary Dailey, ChooseCalvert.com, hilary.dailey@calvertcountymd.gov

Cecil County
In the 17th Century Mt. Harmon prospered as a tobacco plantation. Today, visitors can experience the 18th Century manor house, colonial kitchen, tobacco prize house, and more on 200 acres of pristine countryside with nature trails and beautiful waterfront. Cecil County Tourism, Sandy Turner, SeeCecil.org, sturner@ccgov.org
Charles County
The nation’s oldest active parish with a continual pastorate, St. Ignatius Church, was founded in 1641 by the Reverend Andrew White, S.J., who accompanied Catholic settlers to Maryland in 1634. The church and manor house are located on a 120-foot bluff overlooking the mouth of the Port Tobacco River. Charles County Government, Department of Recreation, Parks, & Tourism, Catherine Herbert, ExploreCharlesCounty.com, herbertc@charlescountymd.gov

Hagerstown - Washington County
The first macadam surface in the United States was laid between Hagerstown and Boonsboro, Maryland in 1823 on the National Road. A National Road Museum will open in Boonsboro in 2019, honoring the first federal highway. Visitors can still see 200-year-old mile markers, bridges and inns along the National Road. Visit Hagerstown, Betsy DeVore, VisitHagerstown.com, betsy@visithagerstown.com

Harford County
The Hosanna School Museum in Darlington was the first public school in Harford County, Maryland built for African Americans in 1867, two years after the conclusion of the Civil War. Today, the building serves as a museum, complete with a fully furnished classroom, displays, and artifacts. Tours available upon request. Visit Harford, Mindy Schneider, VisitHarford.com, mindy@visitharford.com

Howard County
The Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Ellicott City Station Museum is the oldest railroad station in America and the oldest surviving train station. Come to Old Ellicott City and check out the famous attraction, where admission is free! Learn the history and explore America's first railroad museum. Visit Howard County, Crystal Abrom, VisitHowardCounty.com, crystal@howardcountytourism.com

Queen Anne’s County
Explore history throughout the landscape of Queen Anne’s County. Your journey through our past will take you to small historic communities, train stations, colonial houses, an operating grist mill, a country store, bank, post office, and churches. All sites are open the first Saturday of each month, May through October. Queen Anne’s County Office of Tourism, Ashley Chenault, VisitQueenAnnes.com, achenault@qac.org

Talbot County
Talbot County is rich with living history. Quakers have assembled at the Third Haven Meeting House since 1684. The Wye Grist Mill ground flour for George Washington's troops — and does for visitors today. Driving trails follow the paths of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, a native of Talbot County. Talbot County Office of Tourism, Cassandra M. Vanhooser, TourTalbot.org, cvanhooser@talbgov.org

Wicomico County
Take a ride on the oldest continuously operating ferry in the United States, the Whitehaven Ferry, in Wicomico County, Maryland. The ferry has operated across the Wicomico River since 1688. It accommodates three vehicles and is free to riders. Wicomico County, Vanessa Junkin, WicomicoTourism.org, vjunkin@wicomicocounty.org

PENNSYLVANIA
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania is home to some iconic firsts in the U.S., including the first zoo (Philadelphia Zoo), oldest brewery (Yuengling), first commercial pretzel bakery (Julius Sturgis), first Little League Baseball game, oldest theatre (Walnut Street Theatre), first oil well, and oldest book store (Moravian Book Shop). Pennsylvania Tourism Office, Lisa Zahn, VisitPA.com, lisa.zahn@tierneyagency.com
Allegheny National Forest
The Kinzua Viaduct, when first constructed in 1882, was the highest and longest railroad viaduct in the world. Following a 2003 F1 tornado, while the structure was undergoing a $17 million restoration, 11 of the historic towers tumbled to the ground. Six were reinvented as the Kinzua Sky Walk in Mt. Jewett, PA.

Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau, Linda Devlin, VisitANF.com, devlin@visitANF.com

Altoona
Altoona, Blair County is home to the world’s oldest wooden roller coaster, Leap the Dips, located at Lakemont Park. Lakemont Park will reopen in 2019 after closing for two summer seasons for updates. The park will feature new walking trails, a new miniature golf course, rides, water park, and events.

Explore Altoona, Jennifer Fleck, ExploreAltoona.com, jfleck@explorealtoona.com

Butler County
Founded in 1832, the German town of Saxonburg features restaurants, a museum, and shops. The park pays homage to John Roebling, founder of the town, creator of wire-rope and designer of the Brooklyn Bridge. Main Street still retains much of its original character including 32 buildings over 100 years old!

Butler County Tourism & Convention Bureau, Tiffany Hernandez, VisitButlerCounty.com, tiffany@visitbutlercounty.com

Endless Mountains
Spanning two mountains, the historic Tunkhannock Viaduct in the Endless Mountains is considered an "Engineering Wonder of the World." Constructed over 100 years ago, trains still travel across the 11 arches high above Tunkhannock Creek. The annual Bridge Day celebration in September draws crowds to celebrate the history.

Endless Mountains Visitors Bureau, Morgan Christopher, EndlessMountains.org, sales@endlessmountains.org

Lancaster
America’s history runs deep in Lancaster County, home of the Fulton Theatre, the nation’s oldest continuously-operating theater; the Lancaster Central Market, the nation’s oldest continuously-operating farmers market; the Julius Sturgis Pretzel Bakery, the nation’s first commercial pretzel bakery; and the Strasburg Rail Road, the nation’s oldest short-line railroad.

Discover Lancaster, Joel Cliff, DiscoverLancaster.com, jcliff@discoverlancaster.com

Laurel Highlands
The oldest professional stock theater in Pennsylvania and one of the 12 remaining in the U.S., Mountain Playhouse hosts a range of Broadway-quality shows from musicals to classic dramas. Housed in a restored 1805 gristmill nestled in a gorgeous lakeside setting, this charming theater is a must-see!

Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, Anna Weltz, LaurelHighlands.org, aweltz@laurelhighlands.org

Lehigh Valley
Explore three historic attractions still in operation today. A summertime favorite, Shankweiler's Drive-In is America’s oldest drive-in movie theater. The Easton Farmers' Market is the oldest continuously operating open-air market in the country. Tucked along Bethlehem's Main Street, the Moravian Book Shop is the oldest operating bookstore in the country.

Discover Lehigh Valley, Katie Burger, DiscoverLehighValley.com, kaitie@discoverlehighvalley.com

Montgomery County
Since 1961, Montgomery County has hosted one of the region’s largest musical events; The Philadelphia Folk Festival. The four-day festival is the longest running festival of its kind, hosting crowds of over 35,000 people in its near 60-year run.

Visit Montgomery, Rachel Riley, ValleyForge.org, riley@valleyforge.org
Philadelphia
America’s most historic square mile is a must-see when visiting Philadelphia. Visitors can see where the Declaration of Independence was signed and the U.S. Constitution was created with a trip to Independence Hall. Nearby, the Liberty Bell Center displays the beloved symbol of freedom, continuous inspiration for believers in civil rights. Visit Philadelphia, Daniel Davis, VisitPhilly.com, daniel@visitphilly.com

Pittsburgh
The Fort Pitt Museum is a historical gem located in the middle of Point State Park. Inside what is the oldest building in Western Pennsylvania, discover artifacts, videos, maps, and placards that tell the story of our region’s role in the French & Indian War, American Revolution, and Early Republic. VisitPITTSBURGH, Kristin Wenger, VisitPittsburgh.com, kristin.wenger@visitpittsburgh.com

Pocono Mountains
In the Pocono Mountains, visitors can find a replica of the first commercial locomotive in the country, the Stourbridge Lion, at the Wayne County Society’s main museum building in Honesdale, PA. The locomotive, now renamed to be the Stourbridge Line, runs periodic scenic passenger train rides through the Poconos. Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau, Kelly Shannon, PoconoMountains.com, kshannon@poconos.org

Potter County - Tioga County
The historic Hotel Crittenden in the heart of Coudersport was one of the spots retired law enforcer Eliot Ness wrote his autobiographical book, "The Untouchables." The hotel is one of the sites visitors will tour during July's annual Eliot Ness Fest celebrating that historic time of gangsters and G-Men. Visit Potter-Tioga, Morgan Christopher, VisitPotterTioga.com, morgan@visitpottertioga.com

VIRGINIA

Alexandria
Founded in 1749, Alexandria, Virginia offers a wealth of historic sites alongside new restaurants, boutiques, and waterfront happenings. Carlyle House, built in 1753, offers visitors a glimpse into 18th-century life in Alexandria. Here, five royal governors and General Braddock met to discuss funding of the French and Indian War. Visit Alexandria, Leah Spellman, VisitAlexandriaVA.com, lspellman@visitalexva.com

City of Fredericksburg
Check out these retro eating establishments: experience a walk up window at Carol’s Ice Cream offering soft serve treats for 60 years; The Snack Shack boasts over 40 years of serving hamburgers, fries and shakes, cooked to order. Gooricks, established 1867, still offers root-beer floats and egg-salad sandwiches. Fredericksburg Regional Tourism, Debbie Aylor, VisitFred.com, daylor@spotsylvania.va.us

Hampton
Explore over a century of African-American, African, and Native American fine art and folk art at the Hampton University Museum. Founded in 1868, the Hampton University Museum is the oldest African-American museum in the country. Notable works on display include “The Banjo Lesson” by Henry Ossawa Tanner. Hampton Convention and Visitor Bureau, Elizabeth Severs, VisitHampton.com, elizabeth.severs@hamptoncvb.com

Loudoun
Established in 1728, Red Fox Inn & Tavern is one of America’s oldest continuously run inns. On the National Register of Historic Places, the inn has housed everyone from Civil War soldiers to the
Kennedys. Today, guests can see a letter from Jackie O while enjoying Virginia peanut soup in the tavern. Visit Loudoun, Jennifer Sigal, VisitLoudoun.org, sigal@visitloudoun.org

Orange County
Germanna, 1714 - Westernmost settlement of the of the Virginia Colony; a birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. Montpelier, 1751 - lifelong residence of the fourth President and architect of the Constitution, James Madison. Ellwood Manor. 1861-1865 - American Civil War raged throughout Orange County for all four years. Orange County Virginia Tourism, Lori Landes-Carter, VisitOrangeVirginia.com, lcarter@orangecountyva.gov

Prince William County
Rippon Lodge is one of the oldest known homes in Prince William County. It provides a vital link to Colonial Virginia. This tranquil historic site allows visitors to learn more about the history of the region, as well as consider this unique venue for their next wedding or special event. Prince William County Office of Tourism, Nicole Warner, VisitPWC.com, nwarner@pwcgov.org

Richmond
"Give me liberty or give me death" is one of the most famous quotes in American history and it all started at Richmond's Historic St. John's Church! While Patrick Henry gave his speech at this site back in 1775, visitors can see weekly reenactments every Sunday during the summer season. Richmond Region Tourism, Meghan Gearino, VisitRichmondVA.com, mgearino@visitrichmondva.com

Shenandoah County
At the top of a small storefront in the town of Mount Jackson, a neon bowling pin buzzes and glows, inviting visitors to stop and see the oldest Duckpin alley in Virginia. The miniature lanes and their mechanical charm are a relic from times past. Even the décor hasn’t changed. Shenandoah County Tourism, Jenna French, VisitShenandoahCounty.com, jfrench@shenandoahcounty.va.us

WEST VIRGINIA

Hampshire County
In 1851, Daniel Webster gave the dedication address ushering in the golden era of “healing waters” vacations. Preserved through history, Capon Springs & Farms continues as a family-owned and operated resort providing an all-inclusive experience with 19th century cottages, pool, and spa - all supplied by this famous spring water. Hampshire County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Jonathan Bellingham, ComeToHampshire.com, info@cometohampshire.com

About the 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 while promoting common threads, offering story ideas about the Mid-Atlantic region as a whole. For more information, visit MATPRA.org.