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## VALLEY FORGE TOURISM & CONVENTION BOARD TRANSFORMS BRAND WITH MARKETING CAMPAIGN, NEW WEBSITE AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

*Let Freedom Reign* Message Invites Visitors to Explore their Freedom  
in Valley Forge and Montgomery County, Pa.

**KING OF PRUSSIA, Pa. – June 25, 2014** – A new tourism campaign launching this month by the Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board (VFTCB) invites visitors to explore their freedom in Valley Forge and Montgomery County, Pa. The campaign, “Let Freedom Reign,” touts the county’s many wide-open spaces, unique places, and adventurous activities, from canoeing and kayaking, to go-karting and ziplining, hiking and cycling, to all-day shopping and nighttime dine-arounds, plus its many outstanding hotels and inns. Ads begin appearing on targeted TV, and in newspapers and magazines this month, as well as on digital billboards, buses, subway platforms and rail cars. An online campaign also launches across multiple social media platforms. A redesigned website debuts at [www.valleyforge.org](http://www.valleyforge.org). Themed itineraries -- from arts and culture, to family friendly, to history buffs – help provide travel ideas and inspiration, and a Let Freedom Reign hotel package offers special welcome gifts.

The “Let Freedom Reign” theme is also part of the VFTCB’s meetings and conventions sales efforts, appearing on a new sales kit for meeting planners, and on banners used at industry tradeshow.

Tourism in Montgomery County supports 19,723 jobs. Visitor spending resulted in \$1.5 billion in local economic impact in 2012, according to the latest data, and \$213 million in federal, state and local taxes (source: Tourism Economics).

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“Many people are familiar with Montgomery County’s most visited attractions,” said Bill Fitzgerald, VFTCB president and CEO. “Last year, Valley Forge National Historical Park welcomed nearly two million visitors for history and recreation, and the King of Prussia Mall attracted more than 20 million shoppers, a quarter of which came from outside the Philadelphia metropolitan area, including from around the world. This campaign builds on the interest in these destinations and invites visitors to explore more of what all of Montgomery County has to offer,” he said. “It reminds us what we love about travel – the feeling we get when we discover and learn something new, and the freedom to take a deep breath, relax and explore.”

The campaign features images of people exploring their freedom – such as unplugging at Green Lake Park, shopping in Ardmore, enjoying nightlife in King of Prussia, for example. Copy carries the freedom theme, and reads: “Freedom is the beating heart of every adventure, big and small. Explore your Freedom. [valleyforge.org](http://valleyforge.org)”

The VFTCB is investing approximately \$1M in the entire campaign, which also features a pride-building community outreach component themed with the hashtag, #MakeltMontco. Throughout the year, the VFTCB is taking a traveling tourism kiosk to dozens of area special events, including community days, First Fridays, concerts, festivals and attractions. Tourism representatives are sharing information about the campaign and the county, assisting with tourism questions, and distributing branded giveaways. A summer-long sweepstakes carries a \$500 gift card prize.

Visitors to the kiosk are being encouraged to tell others what they love about Valley Forge and Montgomery County by sharing photos and hashtagging their favorite Montgomery County moments with #MakeltMontco. The kiosk tour, which launched in May during National Travel and Tourism Week, has included stops at King of Prussia Mall, Horsham Day, Ambler Arts and Music Festival, and Elmwood Park Zoo. Future stops include Bryn Athyn (June 26), Valley Forge National Historical Park (July 4), and Pennypacker Mills (August 2). But, the fun isn’t just limited to these events; everyone in Montgomery County is encouraged to use the hashtag whenever and wherever they are in the county.

“Our #MakeItMontco backyard campaign is intended to instill pride in Montgomery County by its residents and to share that pride with others,” said Fitzgerald. “By uniting together, we can drive even more business to our Montgomery County destinations.”

In conjunction with the new brand launch, the organization underwent a name and logo change, from Valley Forge Convention & Visitors Bureau to Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board. Three stars in the logo emphasize the three components of the organization – Valley Forge, Montgomery County and the organization’s Board, which represents its more than 300 member organizations, including hotels, restaurants, attractions, as well as tourism and convention-related businesses.

In January 2014, the Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board selected AgileCat and Devine+Partners as its agencies of record to develop and implement the new and transformative brand strategy. The website was developed in partnership with Simpleview.

“AgileCat’s aim with this campaign is to surprise people with the many unique places and outdoor spaces to explore in Valley Forge and Montgomery County, and inspire them to express their adventurous spirit here, whether for a day, an overnight or a weekend visit,” said Peter Madden, AgileCat CEO.

The Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board (formerly Valley Forge Convention & Visitors Bureau) is a private, non-profit membership sales and marketing organization which aggressively promotes the Valley Forge and Montgomery County area as a convention site and leisure visitor destination. The Board promotes its more than 300 member hotels, restaurants, attractions, services and businesses throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania.

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