



POCONO MOUNTAINSSM
VISITORS BUREAU

Natural Wonder Tourism: Mother Nature's Gift



Pike County EDA
WHERE BUSINESSES GROW



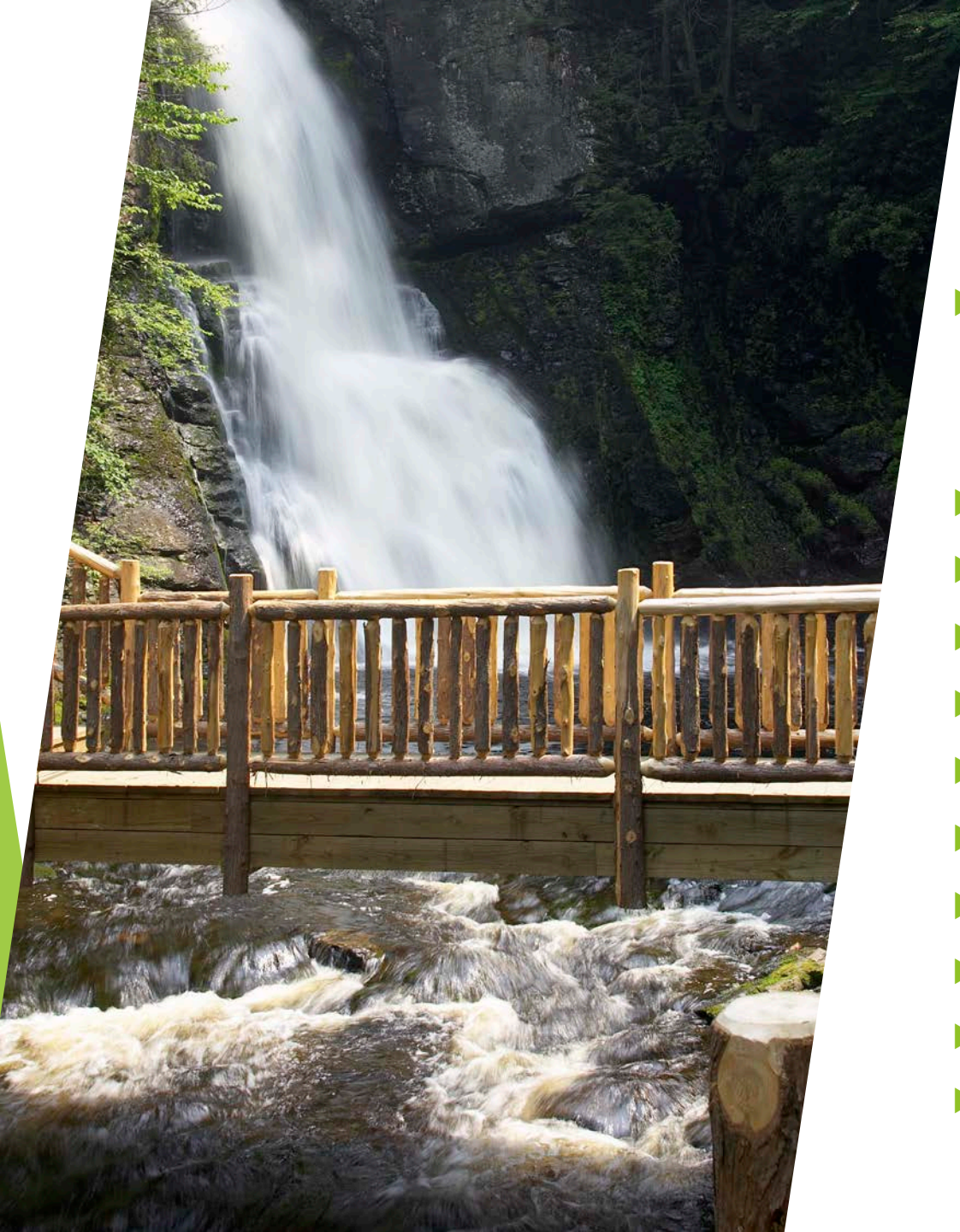
History of the Poconos

- ▶ Since the 1800's the Poconos have been an outdoor escape for many travelers
- ▶ Gifford Pinchot, known as the "Father of Conservation" lived in Milford
- ▶ Honesdale is known as the "Birthplace of the American Railroad"
- ▶ Golf's Greats vacationed and played in the Pocono Mountains at resorts like Shawnee Inn and Inn at Pocono Manor in the early 1900's
- ▶ Jim Thorpe was named after the famous American Indian football player and Olympic athlete
- ▶ The "Poconos" was known as the "Honeymoon Capital of the World" beginning after World War II through the early 1990's capitalizing on the beauty and allure of natural resources
- ▶ A true marketing success story that is still modeled after today. With iconic campaigns and slogans such as "Beautiful Mount Airy Lodge" and Cove Haven Resorts to this day are still known as the "Land of Love"
- ▶ However in the 1990's all inclusive vacations to locations like Jamaica, Mexico and the Caribbean started to impact visitation to many of the long standing honeymoon resorts
- ▶ Many of the stakeholders realized it was time to start looking at ways to rebrand and showcase the natural beauty and outdoor attractions of the Poconos once again while also celebrating the iconic Resorts that still exist to this day



The Process of Rebranding Begins

- ▶ Beginning in 2002 through 2006 the executive board of the Pocono Mountains Vacation Bureau decided it was time to put some resources and investment into rebranding the Poconos
 - ▶ Through this 4 year process the Pocono Mountains Vacation Bureau was renamed to the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau
 - ▶ In 2007 a new marketing campaign was launched to rebrand the “Poconos” to “The Pocono Mountains”
 - ▶ The Executive Committee also developed relationships with our 4 counties to enact a 3% room tax in 2007 that would become the main funding source for the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau
 - ▶ This new revenue stream was to be used for Marketing and Promotion of the Pocono Mountains in the New York DMA and Philadelphia DMA
 - ▶ Now the Pocono Mountains is looked at as an example of how to use your natural resources, rebranding, reinvestment and economic growth



Rebranding the Pocono Mountains

- ▶ With 2,400 square miles encompassing northeast Pennsylvania's Wayne, Pike, Monroe and Carbon counties, the Pocono Mountains region is home to
- ▶ Rolling mountain terrain
- ▶ Breathtakingly beautiful waterfalls
- ▶ Thriving woodlands
- ▶ 170 miles of winding rivers
- ▶ Over 150 lakes
- ▶ 6 Ski Resorts totaling 163 ski trails
- ▶ Over 260 miles of hiking and biking trails
- ▶ 35 Golf Courses
- ▶ 9 State Parks
- ▶ 2 National Parks

Focusing on the Natural Beauty of the Region

- ▶ Pocono Mountains Brand Values:
 - ▶ Preservation of the natural environment
 - ▶ Preservation of small town character
 - ▶ Responsible development
 - ▶ Consumer centricity
 - ▶ Genuine hospitality
- ▶ Pocono Mountains Brand Pillars:
 - ▶ Ease
 - ▶ Authenticity
 - ▶ Refreshment



Positive Growth in the Four County Region

- ▶ 2008 The Pocono Mountains saw 23.8 Million Visitors generating over 1.3 Billion in travel spending annually
- ▶ 2016 The Pocono Mountains saw 26.6 Million Visitors generating Over 3.5 Billion in travel spending annually
- ▶ That's over 10% Growth in Visits and Over 60% Growth in Travel Spending in the past 8 years



New Investment “Indoor Waterparks”

- ▶ Fall 2005 Great Wolf Lodge and Indoor Waterpark Opens
- ▶ Spring 2015 Camelback Lodge and Aquatopia Indoor Waterpark Open
- ▶ Summer 2015 Kalahari Resort and Conventions with and Indoor Waterpark opens, “The Largest Indoor Waterpark in the world”
- ▶ Over \$620 million in investment
- ▶ Over 1800 rooms
- ▶ Over 740,000 square feet of Waterpark, Retail and Convention Space has been added



Re-Investment and rebuilding

- ▶ Fall 2007 Mount Airy Casino and Resort opens. This \$412 Million dollar project was built on the location of the original Mount Airy Resort.
 - ▶ Mount Airy will be doubling their room space and conference space by spring of 2019
- ▶ Iconic Resorts like Skytop, Woodloch and the Shawnee Inn to name a few have re-invested millions of dollars into their resorts over the last 10 years
- ▶ Kalahari will be having a groundbreaking this week to double the size of their convention space to totaling over 300,000 square feet by 2020
- ▶ 2021 Pocono Springs by Alberta Development Partners scheduled to open
 - ▶ Total Overall Development
 - ▶ Acreage: Approximately 175 Acres
 - ▶ Gross Leasable Area: Approximately 1.42 Million Square Feet



Demographic Profile

- ▶ The population in the Pocono Counties was 338,973 per American Community Survey data for 2012-2016.
- ▶ The region has a civilian labor force of 167,632 with a participation rate of 59.7%. Of individuals 25 to 64 in the Pocono Counties, 22.9% have a bachelor's degree or higher which compares with 31.8% in the nation.
- ▶ The median household income in the Pocono Counties is \$56,348 and the median house value is \$166,973.

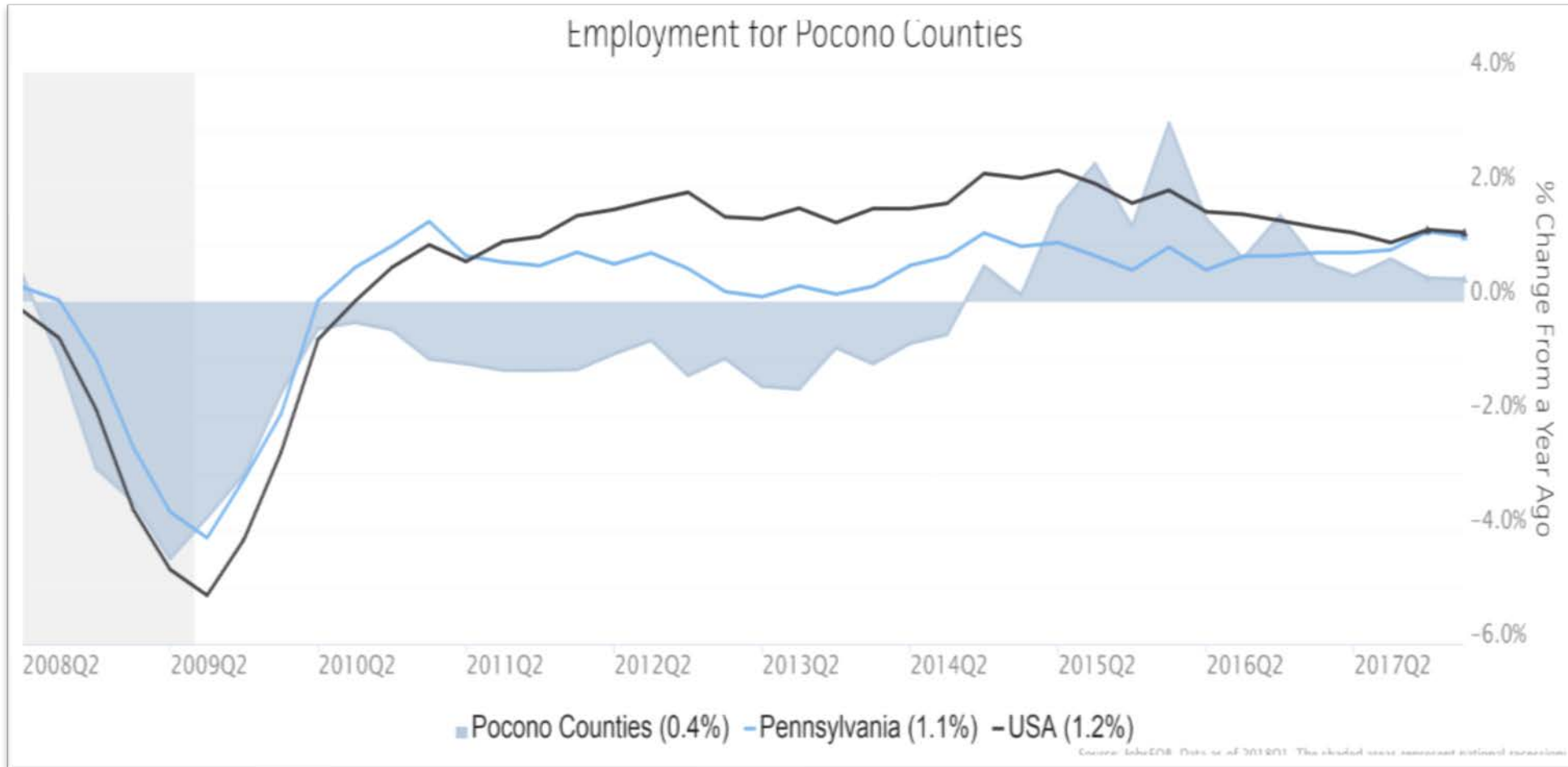


Employment Trends

- ▶ The average worker in the Pocono Counties earned annual wages of \$38,964 as of 2018Q1. Average annual wages per worker increased 0.2% in the region during the preceding four quarters. For comparison purposes, annual average wages were \$53,893 in the nation as of 2018Q1.
- ▶ Our wages are increasing due to the increased competition, especially in the tourism industry
- ▶ Our unemployment rate (while not high) is still always higher than the PA rate. This happens for 2 reasons:
 - ▶ We have a lot of seasonal employment
 - ▶ People who commute outside of the area to work are not included as part of our workforce until they lose their job and file a claim for unemployment
- ▶ Tourism has shown the strongest growth over the past 5 years
- ▶ Healthcare is a strong growth area for the next few years as well as other areas like Warehouse/Distribution and Small Manufacturing

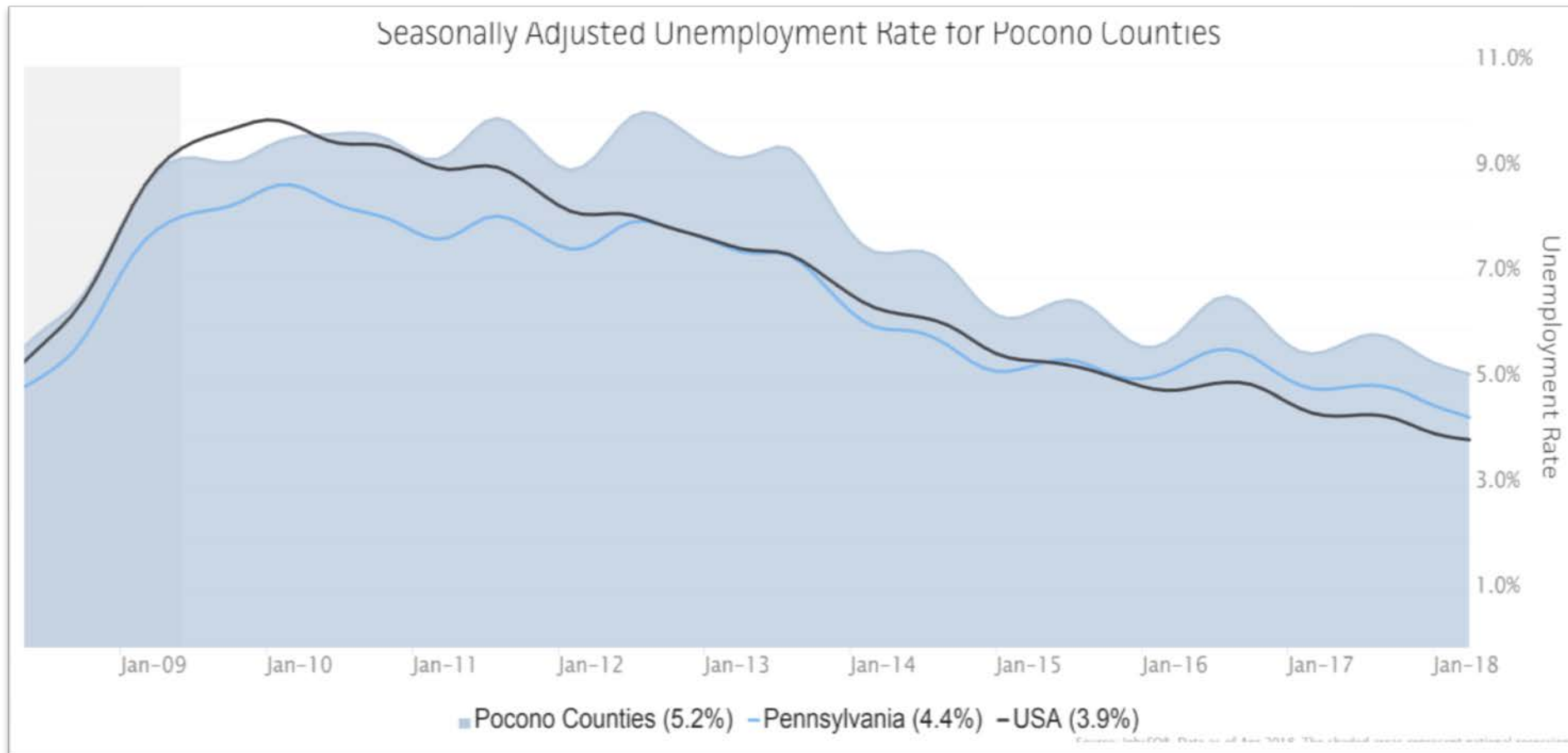
Employment Trends continued

- ▶ As of 2018Q1, total employment for the Pocono Counties was 109,058 (based on a four-quarter moving average). Over the year ending 2018Q1, employment increased 0.4% in the region.



Unemployment Rate

- ▶ The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Pocono Counties was 5.2% as of April 2018. The regional unemployment rate was higher than the national rate of 3.9%. One year earlier, in April 2017, the unemployment rate in the Pocono Counties was 5.6%.



Key Factors that Contributed in the Region's Growth

- ▶ Developing strong relationships with local, county and state governments
- ▶ Developing cooperative relationships with the four county Economic Development Corporations
- ▶ Utilizing research and data to market the region efficiently and correctly
- ▶ Showing positive growth consistently during weak and strong economic trends
- ▶ Continued re-investment into the our resorts and attractions
- ▶ Utilization of the natural attractions and outdoor recreation elements throughout the region
- ▶ New Development and Investment into the region
- ▶ Challenges for continued economic development are:
 - ▶ Lack of adequate infrastructure
 - ▶ High property taxes
 - ▶ Availability of skilled workers

Special thanks to Michelle Bisbing, Director of Marketing at PMEDC