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“Wild & Wonderful, Wyoming County”

Hidden in the Appalachian Mountains is a small slice of heaven known as Wyoming County. Wyoming County, also known as Coal Country, was created in 1850 and is known for its coal mines, trail rides, sceneries, and traditions. The most delightful attributes Wyoming County has to offer is the natural beauty of the land, the outdoor activities, and the genuine people that call the County home.

The picturesque scenery and natural landscape are significant for tourism. Wyoming County Convention & Visitors Bureau claim, “Twisting roads, mountainous, terrier and pure rugged beauty make Wyoming County a favorite destination for outdoor enthusiast of all types” (CVB). The tourist attractions in Wyoming County include Twin Falls Resort State Park, the Hatfield-McCoy trails, R.D Bailey Lake, and more. These attractions are just a few of the reasons that this county continues to flourish. Outdoor enthusiasts admire the raw beauty found in the mountains and hollers, along with activities offered outside. The landscape provides the tourists with many exciting, adventurous, and breath-taking views, which keeps the people coming back year in and year out. The natural beauty of the great Wyoming County has inspired many visitors to lay down roots within the county, which has been a key component to the growth of this county. The people in Wyoming County are what keeps the county afloat. This county continues to strive because of the people, without the great people laying the foundation, Wyoming County would not be even be close to the level it has achieved today. This place is nothing short of special. Special is the perfect word for describing the people and landscape of Wyoming County. The true beauty in the County is indescribable.

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The genuine people in Wyoming County are a significant reason of why this county is so wonderful. Everybody knows everybody. If you walk down the street to get your mail, chances are that you will have multiple people greet you and just simply say a few kind words that will brighten your day. When someone needs help, there are so many people within the county that will run to help them. They will give the shirt off their back to their next-door neighbor.

Selflessness is a trait that many members of Wyoming County possess. People have each other's back. There are so many examples of honorable deeds that the people have committed. Whether its mowing someone's grass because they just had surgery, or loaning money to a single parent that just needs a diaper for her baby, the people in Wyoming County are there with helping hands. Those types of things happen every single day. Most of them are never heard about unless you permanently live here, but as someone once said, "the best deeds go unnoticed." The people of Wyoming County treat everyone with the respect and dignity they rightfully deserve. Again, special is the only word to use when describing the generosity and love within the county. The close bonds in the community help form a safe and comforting place to live, which is a key aspect in finding a place to call your forever home.

Wyoming County is the ideal place to start a family. The multiple small towns create an environment that will allow new families to feel extremely comfortable. The scenery is beautiful, but so is the love that is shared between the communities. People who have lived in Wyoming County their whole lives can show you to some incredible lands that you cannot find on the map. Dot Hopson, who has lived in Wyoming County for all of her life, claims that "In all of my life I have never been tired of exploring my small hometown. When I grew up and started my own family the most sentimental thing was showing my kids to the backroads and creeks I played in as a child." Generations of families have lived in Wyoming County. The small county holds the

precious of many families. It is the perfect place to escape the noise and relax. Living in this great county is perfect for people who love nature, small towns, and good hunting. If you enjoy the great outdoors, this is a spectacular place to begin your new journey in life. The county provides residents with endless activities to keep them smiling.

Annual events are held in Wyoming County to attract more tourism and collect profits.

Some popular events include the chili fest, the Dogwood, the Labor Day parade, the Christmas parade, and more. The chili fest is held in both Pineville and Mullens where talented cooks compete to win the award for the best chili. The Dogwood is in Mullens during the first week of

May. Carnival rides, food, and entertainment are offered right in the middle of the street of

Mullens during this week. The event is unique, and the County members look forward to attending the event every year. During the first week of September Pineville hosts a Labor Day parade. The event is like the Dogwood but there is a parade that drives through the town of Pineville. Children stand excitedly on the sidewalks as they wait for candy to be thrown to them.

Mullens hosts the annual Christmas parade as well. The Christmas parade is the perfect way to bring families together for some free holiday fun. Other small events such as homecoming and fourth of July fireworks are events that the residents of Wyoming County adore. Simply getting together as a community is refreshing at times. These events are not typically something that people would travel for, but for the residents the events are special. Starting a family in a place that offers events with traditional and historical value is important. Without hosting events to bring the County together, the community members would be more divided which is toxic for making future improvements within the County.

Wyoming County is also home to the rival high schools known as Wyoming East and Westside. Wyoming East is located between Mullens and Pineville in a town named New

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Richmond. While Westside is located between Oceana and Baileysville in a small town named Clear Fork The two schools compete every year in sports and have a lot of fun in doing so. The basketball and football seasons are the most intense. Students make posters and prep themselves with school pep rallies. Both schools offer talented athletes which creates entertaining competition for County members. However, the rivalry extends beyond the sports. Towns compete to have the best businesses and adults compete to have the best-looking houses. The harmless competition pushes the county to become better. Without any competition no one would be inspired to do better which in return slows down progress. The healthy competition amongst the towns provides residents with entertainment and fun. Attending a rival game in Wyoming County is a must do. The fire and drive in the residents are evident when attending a rival game. Raising a child in Wyoming County would be good for their schooling being that both schools are so driven and involved. Every child has their place in Wyoming County and the community members are very accepting of others. If you want your child to grow up in a competitive environment so they are always pushed to be the best version of themselves then Wyoming County is the place. Wyoming County also offers hobbies outside of school related activities which allows everyone to participate in some sort of activity for enjoyment.

Trout fishermen ascend upon Wyoming County during fishing season yearly seeking their legal catch limits of six trout per day, which is enough to go home satisfied. Pinnacle Creek offers over four miles of bountiful trout fishing to anglers, with very accessible trails to walk down. This stream is stocked regularly by the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources. The natural habitat ensures plentiful harvest for those seeking to catch the gorgeous, native trout. Anglers seeking to catch other types of fish are attracted to the R.D Bailey Lake and Wildlife area. Bass, bluegills, catfish, stripers, and bluefish are in good supply in the R.D Bailey waters.

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Picnic tables, shelters, paved parking, accessible restrooms, and free use of charcoal grills contribute to the many reasons' tourists come to Wyoming County for fishing trips. R.D Bailey Lake can be a place where you have the fishing trip of your life, and something that will be cherished for the rest of your life. If anglers seek the beauty of nature, varieties of fish to catch, and affordability, Wyoming County has much to offer.

Along with fishing, hunting is a particularly important aspect of Wyoming County.

People from all over the state of West Virginia make their way south to see if they can tag the buck of their dreams. Many of the dedicated hunters achieve that dream. Hunting in West Virginia is exceedingly popular compared to hunting in some other states. All year long the hunters prepare for the season and share their expectations amongst friends. Without hunting, West Virginia would not be the same. The stigma around being a talented hunter in West Virginia is equivalent to the stigma around being an outstanding athlete. There is an abundance of substantial bucks in the area. A great deal of bucks is always present due to hunters only being allowed to use bows. In fact, this year was an outstanding year for hunters here. The ninth biggest buck killed with a bow in North America in the last twenty years was killed in Wyoming County just this past hunting season. It scored an impressive score of 191 and 2/8's. Hopefully the news of the 9th placed buck will encourage other determined hunters to travel to West Virginia for future hunting seasons. The colorful fall and white winters create a lovely place to hunt. Any hunter would be pleased with their experience in Wyoming County's wild woods.

Perhaps the most exciting tourist attraction in Wyoming County today is the ATV and off-road trail riding. These trails bring in people from across the United States. The Hatfield McCoy Trail System is near the towns of Mullens and Pineville. The trailhead is located on Pinnacle Road just outside of Pineville and riders have easy access to food, fuel, lodging, and

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trails that connect all throughout the beautiful mountains. There are times when you ride through Mullens or Pineville and you will see every gas station or restaurant filled up with ATVs. The people that come here just simply do not want to leave. West Virginia Public Broadcasting claims “The Hatfield McCoy trails are riddled with historical markers and sites, which can teach visitors more about a state some are admittedly unfamiliar with” (Allen, Emily). The trails are very well-known for their scenery, rugged challenges, and historical value that will keep riders on their toes. Trail riders can easily obtain riding permits. The price of these permits is very affordable, which contributes to the popularity of the Hatfield McCoy Trail System. Visiting the trails is a fantastic way to spend a weekend with friends and family. Riding through the mountains enjoying the fresh air that Wyoming County has to offer is a great attraction. It is most certainly not something that you want to miss. The endless mountains of West Virginia will fill you with memories that will last a lifetime.

The most surprising of Wyoming County's tourism attractions would be the archeology. Archeologist buffs are attracted to Wyoming County annually. Many ancient rock carvings are found on a cliffside near the town of Oceana. Some historians believe the Petroglyphs were carved by pre-Columbus Celtic priests, while others believe the Native American Indians more than likely made the carvings. Many explorers of archeology consider the rock carvings a piece of hidden history due to their unknown origin. The mystery about the origin of those petroglyphs is sometimes also attributed to the Algonquian people. David Sibray, from West Virginia Explorer, clarifies that “Scientists who are studying ancient carvings in West Virginia say stories that propose a non-native origin for prehistoric landmarks ignore evidence and may dishonor Native American heritage”(wvexplorer). West Virginia has plenty of untold stories and hidden treasures, Wyoming County just happens to be home to a few. All the theories of origin, along

with these detailed rock carvings allure, continue to attract amateur archeologists to Wyoming County.

The history of Wyoming County is filled with hard working coal miners and the rugged logging industry, but those industries have suffered over the past two decades due to government regulations and poor market conditions. Coal, for the longest time, created a flourishing industry in West Virginia. When the state was deprived of the industry that supplied most fathers with jobs the people were devastated. This has been a contributing factor in the new upswing of the County's tourism industry. The Wyoming County Economic Authority and local business investors have put forth earnest effort and financial resources to develop one of the better tourism areas in the region. The investments are paying off for both investors and tourists, as Wyoming County is now thriving with tourism and the future shows great promise for continued affordable family-oriented adventures. If the improvements in Wyoming County continue the outcome could be fantastic for residents. West Virginia has typically been looked down on and the residents are ready to make the changes necessary to create a better environment. If someone loves the outdoors and is looking for the best value for the money, Wyoming County should be at the top of their list of destinations.

After readjusting to a life where the coal fields were failing, Wyoming County has made great progress. New businesses have begun, and more hard-working people are beginning to take leadership, which was a huge step towards success. The future for Wyoming County looks bright. Since most indoor activities have been closed due to the global pandemic, people have rediscovered the importance and beauty of going outside and connecting with nature. Wyoming County offers such a variety of outdoor activities that the community members can safely go out and have an enjoyable time while still following the safety guidelines for the coronavirus. The

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number one priority of Wyoming County is to keep the people safe. Living in a place that has more than expensive fun to offer is particularly important, especially in times like today. Money may be hard to come by for a lot of people in today's time, which is another incredible reason to come here. You will not spend much money coming to these mountains. Being able to walk outside and easily finding an exciting or interesting venture is a luxury that is typically overlooked. That is most certainly not the case here.

Wyoming County is a beautiful place to visit or call home. The determined small County is home to breathtaking landscape, rich history, loving residents, adventure, and so much more. From riders, hikers, hunters, and anglers to archeologist, historians, and photographers, Wyoming County has something to offer to everyone. A visit to Wyoming County would be a trip worthwhile.

Works Cited

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