FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 3, 2026

Visit Canton Partners with Area Chambers to Recognize Inaugural Tourism Award Recipients

STARK COUNTY, Ohio — Visit Canton, the Stark County Convention & Visitors Bureau, partnered with four area chambers of commerce to present its inaugural Destination Impact Awards and Tourism Ambassador Awards at local chamber dinners and award ceremonies, recognizing the people and organizations helping strengthen Stark County's tourism industry and visitor experience.

Presented by Visit Canton, the awards were created to recognize the important role local businesses, attractions, organizations and community leaders play in making Stark County a destination worth exploring. From developing unique visitor experiences to providing exceptional hospitality, tourism takes a community-wide effort, and these awards celebrate the people who make that possible.

"Tourism is a community effort, and our local chambers are important partners in recognizing the people and organizations who make an impact on Stark County," said Allison Gromofsky, Community and Partner Relations Manager at Visit Canton. "Partnering with the chambers allowed us to celebrate these accomplishments in the communities where the impact is happening. It's a great way to strengthen our relationships, highlight the experiences that make Stark County special and recognize the people who help bring our destination to life."

The inaugural awards were presented in partnership with the Lake Township Chamber of Commerce, Massillon WestStark Chamber of Commerce, Minerva Area Chamber of Commerce and Alliance Area Chamber of Commerce.

About the Awards

The **Destination Impact Award**, presented by Visit Canton, recognizes organizations or individuals whose work significantly enhances Stark County's tourism landscape. The award honors innovative initiatives that elevate visitor experiences, drive economic impact and strengthen community vibrancy. Recipients exemplify leadership and a commitment to making Stark County a premier destination.

The **Tourism Ambassador Award**, presented by Visit Canton, recognizes organizations or individuals whose leadership, hospitality and dedication elevate the visitor experience. Recipients enthusiastically promote Stark County and serve as champions for the destination, helping create the positive experiences that inspire visitors to return.

Inaugural Award Recipients

Lake Chamber Awards – February 24, 2026

Destination Impact Award: Hartville/Lake Community Development (HLDC)

HLDC was recognized for its investment in the Hartville Gateway Marker and coordinated wayfinding signage, which strengthen Hartville's identity as a welcoming destination, improve the visitor experience, and support local businesses and long-term economic growth.

Tourism Ambassador Award: Megan Wise, Discover Hartville

Megan Wise was recognized for elevating the Discover Hartville brand and showcasing the local businesses, attractions and experiences that draw visitors to the community.

From the Lake Township Chamber of Commerce:
"Partnering with Visit Canton allows us to celebrate the local leaders who help drive our area's tourism and community spirit. Recognizing these local tourism champions is essential for inspiring continued collaboration and elevating Hartville as a premier destination," shared Chip Weisel, President, Lake Township Chamber of Commerce.

Massillon WestStark Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner – March 19, 2026

Destination Impact Award: Massillon Museum

The Massillon Museum was recognized for its award-winning exhibitions, engaging events, accessible educational programming and community partnerships that drive visitation to Massillon and Stark County while strengthening connections and expanding access to meaningful cultural experiences.

Tourism Ambassador Award: Judy Robinson, Cherry Road Winery & Tap Room

Judy Robinson was recognized for her warm hospitality, engaging storytelling and passion for the local community, which enhance guest experiences and strengthen Stark County's reputation as a welcoming destination.

From the Massillon WestStark Chamber of Commerce:
"The Massillon WestStark Chamber of Commerce is proud to partner with Visit Canton in promoting tourism and showcasing the unique attractions and experiences our community has to offer. Recognizing our local tourism leaders celebrates their dedication to strengthening our region, supporting economic growth, and making Stark County a destination worth visiting!" shared Debbie Busby, President, Massillon WestStark Chamber of Commerce.

Minerva Chamber Annual Dinner & Community Salute Awards – May 21, 2026

Destination Impact Award: Minerva Area Chamber of Commerce

The Minerva Area Chamber of Commerce was recognized for strengthening Minerva as a destination through expanded community events, enhanced programming at the Roxy Theatre, improved wayfinding signage and outreach that supports local businesses and creates new reasons for visitors to explore and return.

Tourism Ambassador Award: Andy and Amanda Conrad, Sandy Springs Brewing Company

Andy and Amanda Conrad were recognized for their continued investment in Sandy Springs Brewing Company, Brewer's Quarters, Century House and Great Trail Golf Course, which strengthens Minerva's appeal as a destination for visitors and overnight stays.

From the Minerva Area Chamber of Commerce:
"Our partnership with VisitCanton has been incredibly beneficial to the Minerva Area Chamber of Commerce and our community. Through continued collaboration and shared goals, we're able to create exciting opportunities that showcase all Minerva has to offer while attracting new visitors to our area," shared Nathan Meadows, Executive Director, Minerva Area Chamber of Commerce.

Alliance Business Awards – October 16, 2026

Destination Impact Award: Beech Creek Gardens

Beech Creek Gardens was recognized for its year-round visitor experiences, including new hands-on activities, accessible trails and gardens, diverse educational programming and strong community partnerships. The organization welcomed more than 33,000 unique visitors in 2025.

Tourism Ambassador Award: Sherry Groom, The Troll Hole Museum

Sherry Groom was recognized for connecting local businesses and community organizations, promoting Alliance as a destination, and helping attract visitors from across the country and around the world through The Troll Hole and her community partnerships.

From the Alliance Area Chamber of Commerce:
"The Alliance Area Chamber of Commerce was excited to partner this year with Visit Canton at our 2026 Business Alliance Awards to recognize our Alliance recipients of the Destination Impact and Tourism Ambassador Awards. We are so grateful for the partnership with Visit Canton and the impact they make not only in Alliance, but throughout Stark County," shared Rick Baxter, President of Alliance Area Chamber of Commerce.

Media Center : 2026 Visit Canton and Stark County Chamber Partnership Awards

About Visit Canton:
Visit Canton is the Stark County Convention & Visitors' Bureau. The organization's mission is to generate economic impact in Stark County through travel and tourism. Visit Canton facilitates operations that support a $2.3 billion economic impact in Stark County.

Visit Canton Contact: Allison Gromofsky | Senior Manager, Community & Partner Relations | 330.542.6375 | AllisonG@VisitCanton.com