



2017 Press Kit

Contact Information

Tracy Kocher

Director of Marketing

tkocher@gettothebc.com

513.860.4194 x109

Amanda Ensinger

Inspire PR Group

amanda@inspireprgroup.com

419.366.9620

Mailing Address

8756 Union Centre Blvd.

West Chester, OH 45069

Website

GetToTheBC.com

Social Media

Facebook.com/GetToTheBC

Twitter.com/GetToTheBC

Instagram.com/GetToTheBC

YouTube.com/ButlerCountyVB

Pinterest.com/GetToTheBC

GetToTheBC.com/blog

*All Butler County Visitors Bureau social media handles are @GetToTheBC

Butler County Visitors Bureau Staff

Our dedicated staff are here to serve your every need, please feel free to utilize us for interviews, additional information and any other press need.

Mark Hecquet, Executive Director



Mark is responsible for developing and directing strategic development for the organization to enhance Butler County as a tourism destination. He works directly with the board on long term planning, finance and policy development. Mark also oversees all operations of the organization including personnel.

Tracy Kocher, Director of Marketing



Tracy identifies and creates marketing opportunities as well as short and long term marketing strategies with the objective of attracting overnight business and enhancing the image of Butler County as a travel destination.

Kathryn Trucco, E-Marketing Manager



Kathryn manages and implements the BCVB email marketing strategy, including the development, improvement, writing, and editing of the all BCVB electronic newsletters. In addition, Kathryn develops and implements the BCVB social media strategy, including the BC blog, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

Did You Know?

Fast Facts About Butler County

- Originally formed March 24, 1803 from portions of Hamilton County (which is located South).
- Named after General Richard Butler, a prominent general in the American Revolutionary War
- Major Communities Include: Hamilton, Middletown, Fairfield, West Chester Township, Monroe, Oxford, Liberty Township, Trenton, Okeana, Shandon
- Total County Population: 371,000+
- County Seat: Hamilton, OH
- Average Yearly Precipitation: 42.9"
- Average Temperatures: January (High 37, Low 21) July (High 86, Low 66)
- Home of Division I - Miami University in Oxford, OH
- Located between Cincinnati (20 minutes) & Dayton (35 minutes)
- Conveniently located within a one-day drive of 60 percent of the US population

How to Get Here

Butler County is in the Southwestern region of Ohio and borders Indiana to the West. It is easily accessed directly from Interstate 75 or Interstate 275, just a 20-minute drive north of Cincinnati or 35-minute drive south of Dayton. Access throughout the county is also available by traveling US Highways 27, 42 or 127 and State Highways 4, 63, 126, 129 or 747.

Butler County is served by two major airports: Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG) and Dayton International Airport (DAY). Each airport is an easy 45-minute drive away. Butler County also has three local airports that serve smaller private and corporate air traffic. Those airports include the Butler County Regional Airport, Middletown Regional Airport and the Miami University Airport.

Climate

Butler County enjoys beautiful seasonal weather throughout the year. From warm summer days to crisp fall air to cool winter nights, each season brings a new landscape and new climate to enjoy. The climate is perfect for a variety of outdoor activities, year-round. Summer temperatures range between the mid-90s to low 60s and winters range between the mid-40s to 10s.

Accommodations & Meeting Space

There are over 4,000 guest rooms within Butler County ranging from full service properties with flexible meeting space to select service options that offer affordability and convenience. Large events can be accommodated at a variety of off-site venues that provide a variety of unique experiences for potential groups and meetings.

Cultural Facilities

Butler County is home to a wide variety of cultural, artistic and performance venues that bring the spirit of the arts to life. From artist enclaves to stunning outdoor sculpture to live concerts and staged performances, the county's art scene is thriving. Butler County is the proud home of two symphonies and numerous art venues.

Attractions & Activities

Visitors to Butler County can enjoy a wide array of one-of-a-kind attractions and activities that are sure to make memories to last a lifetime. From unique shopping to thrilling adventures to peaceful hikes to cultural performances, Butler County's diversity of activities surprises many first-time visitors. There's so much to see and do, many people come back time after time to discover more of what the county has to offer.

Butler County Tourism Facts

Butler County Visitors Bureau (BCVB) Facts

- The BCVB is the premier marketing organization for Butler County and its cities, townships and communities.
- The organization increases the awareness of the county and inspires travel through public relations, marketing and sales efforts on a local, regional and national level.
- The BCVB markets through a variety of means, including, but not limited to, direct sales, online advertising, print advertising, non-traditional advertising and public relations efforts.
- The BCVB is a partnership-based organization representing businesses across the county who play a role in welcoming visitors to the region.
- The organization contributes to the vibrant communities by driving economic impact through tourism.
- A tight working relationship is maintained between the BCVB and various stakeholders throughout the community, including, but not limited to, county, city and township offices and other community organizations.
- The BCVB provides a variety of complimentary services to both out-of-town visitors and residents through various means, including websites and several tourism publications.
- Other services provided by the BCVB include generating bids and proposals for group meetings and sporting events, assisting with event coordination, public relations efforts and promoting travel to general business and leisure travelers.

Importance of Tourism

- Travel & tourism is a \$2.1 trillion industry in the US generating \$147.9 billion in tax revenue annually and supports 15.1 million domestic jobs.
- Over 207 million people travel to Ohio annually, resulting in visitor spending of over \$33 billion and \$49.7 billion in total business sales.
- In Ohio, there are 484,000 tourism support jobs and the average consumer spends \$110 per person on a day trip and \$354 per person on an overnight trip.
- The tax revenue generated from tourism-related spending saves each Ohio household over \$690 per year in taxes.
- Visitors generated \$1.1 billion in business activity within Butler County in 2015, resulting in \$26.7 million in local tax receipts.
- Tourism supports 1 in every 13 salaried jobs in Butler County and generated personal income of over \$282 million in 2015.

Overview & History

Butler County Summary

Founded in 1803, Butler County is nestled between Cincinnati to its south and Dayton to its north and is within a one-day drive of 60 percent of the US population. Characterized by an eclectic mix of historic cities, suburban development, rural farmland and a trendy college town, the county offers visitors the opportunity to experience the city life, yet retreat into the country all in one afternoon. Unique and one-of-a-kind shopping abounds and a new memory waits around every corner. Butler County leaves new visitors surprised by its diversity, range of activities and family-friendly environment.

Our Communities

Butler County is home to many cities, townships and communities each with their own distinct flavor and culture. Please see below for information on each.

West Chester – The most populated township in Ohio is in the Southwestern portion of Butler County. West Chester is an emerging area, which has experienced large amounts of growth and development in recent years. Recent additions to West Chester include Ohio's only IKEA, Voice of America Athletic Complex and Ohio's only Topgolf among other things. It is easily accessed via I-75. (Total Population: 61,000+)

Hamilton – Often referred to as the “City of Sculpture”, Hamilton is distinguished as Butler County's County Seat. This city is undergoing a tremendous urban renaissance and is framed by magnificent architecture and the mighty Great Miami River. Arts and events are the hallmark of Hamilton as the city hosts a variety of cultural events throughout the year that draw thousands of people annually. Hamilton can be easily accessed via SR 129 from I-75. (Total Population: 62,000+)

Fairfield – Offering an eclectic mix of one-of-a-kind attractions and culture, Fairfield leaves visitors surprised by its diversity. Home to the original Jungle Jim's International Market, Wake Nation and a renowned arts center, Fairfield hosts attractions and events that are truly unique. Fairfield can be easily accessed via US 127 from I-275. (Total Population: 42,000+)

Middletown – With its roots in the Steel Industry, Middletown has now transitioned into an artist haven. Nestled along the Great Miami River, the community is home to Start Skydiving and the Pendleton Arts Center, home to numerous artists producing incredible pieces in a variety of mediums. Middletown can be easily accessed via I-75 (Total Population: 48,000+)

Oxford – Home to Miami University, Oxford is a trendy college town with boutique shopping, fantastic locally owned restaurants, a quaint downtown and all the arts, culture and sports events that come along with a nationally-renowned university. Set in

the peaceful and tranquil Northwestern section of Butler County, Oxford is a quick getaway even for Butler County locals. Can be accessed via US27 from I-275. (Total Population: 21,000)

Monroe – Straddling I-75, on the western side of Butler County, Monroe has emerged with extensive new investment and development over the past few years. Home to Cincinnati Premium Outlets, the region's premier outlet center and Miami Valley Gaming, the region's only casino/horse race track combination, people visit Monroe to bet on the ponies and shop, shop, shop all in one afternoon. (Total Population: 12,000+)

Liberty Township – Located just north of West Chester, Liberty Township an emerging area featuring new development. This township is home to Liberty Center, a mixed-use development featuring over 1.1 million square feet of retail, dining, entertainment, lodging and living options. The township also features a popular fall festival at Niederman Family Farm. Can be accessed via I-75. (Total Population: 37,000+)

Okeana & Shandon – These quiet and peaceful retreats are in the Southwestern section of Butler County. Characterized by a slower pace of life and a tranquil setting, Okeana and Shandon are marked by a rich agriculture heritage and are surrounded by breathtaking, rolling hills. If you need to get away, these communities will take you back in time and help you reset your clock and spirit. Accessible via OH-126 from US27.

Tourism Profile

For hundreds of years, visitors have recognized the beauty and splendor of the area. One famous visitor noted in 1859 during a stop in Hamilton, OH, “this beautiful and far-famed Miami Valley is the garden spot of the world.” That visitor was Abraham Lincoln. And the same feeling still holds true for visitors today.

Butler County, Ohio is a hidden gem of the Midwest. Featuring a family-friendly atmosphere, all the amenities of home, one-of-a-kind shopping, as well as unique attractions and beautiful, lush scenery, first-time visitors are pleasantly surprised. With convenient access from the I-75 corridor between Cincinnati & Dayton, Butler County welcomes a wide variety of visitors each year. Many come to shop at the region’s best and most unique stores. Others come to participate in national and regional level sports events. And still others come for a relaxing getaway or to visit friends and family.

Main Attractions

Butler County Donut Trail – Founded in 2016, this is Ohio’s first and only trail of its kind. Featuring nine family-owned businesses with a combined 236 years of donut-making experience, each business has their own unique flavor, including s’more, tiger tail, raspberry cheesecake and Reese’s Cup donuts. Grab a passport as you embark on the trail and get a stamp at each location. Collect all nine stamps and receive a free t-shirt to commemorate your experience. www.gettothebc.com/donut-trail

Jungle Jim’s International Market – This foodie paradise is a unique shopping experience like none other and has been frequently featured in outlets including the Travel Channel, Good Morning America and BusinessWeek. Often described as a theme park of food, Jungle Jim’s spans over 6 acres and features over 180,000 food items from around the world. www.junglejims.com

Topgolf – Ohio’s only Topgolf is the ultimate in golf entertainment. This is the perfect place to drive microchipped balls into an interactive range, relax with friends and enjoy gourmet food and drinks. www.topgolf.com

EnterTRAINment Junction – Home to the world’s LARGEST indoor train display, this whistle stop features 90 G-scale model trains chugging around over 2 miles of track inside a 25,000-square foot facility. Perfect for kids from 9 months to 99 years and train enthusiasts alike, the Junction also houses an indoor play area and a circus midway fun house. www.entertrainmentjunction.com

Wake Nation – The Midwest’s only full-sized cable wake park invites visitors to wakeboard, water ski, kneeboard and wake skate WITHOUT a boat! Incredible thrills excite boarders as they are towed around a 10-acre lake on a moveable cable system with optional sliders and rails. wakenationcincinnati.com

Pyramid Hill Sculpture Park – Find peace and tranquility with monumental art set in the natural surroundings of Pyramid Hill. Visitors can walk or drive through a world-class collection of modern sculpture or reflect on ancient culture and art at the indoor Ancient Sculpture Museum also on site. pyramidhill.org

Start Skydiving – Ready to feel the rush! Jump into Butler County thrills at Start Skydiving, DropZone.com's #1 Best Rated Drop-Zone in the world. A staff of over 60+ professional personnel is waiting to provide visitors the best training and skydiving experience. www.startskydiving.com

Hanover Winery – Taste the finer side of life with a glass of wine at Hanover Winery. Set in a peaceful landscape of rolling hills in Northwestern Butler County, visitors relax in the Tasting Room and can sample varieties that will delight their senses. www.hanoverwinery.com

This is just the beginning. For more information on all there is to do and see in Butler County, please visit www.gettothebc.com

History of the Region

Butler County's history spans hundreds of years. Long before the first European settlers came to the area, Butler County's first inhabitants were Native American tribes including the Shawnee and Miami Tribes among others. With the western expansion of American settlements, Native American tribes were driven out during the Northwest Indian War between 1785 and 1795. Out of this conflict, the city of Hamilton was born as "Fort Hamilton" in 1791. By the time the fort was abandoned around 1800, Hamilton was becoming a hub for agriculture and trading commerce throughout the region.

Officially, Butler County was formed on March 24, 1803 from portions of Hamilton County (which now borders it to the south). The county was named after famed American Revolutionary War general, Richard Butler who was stationed at Fort Hamilton and was second-in-command of an expedition to Northern Ohio during the Northwest Indian War. He was killed during the Battle of the Wabash on November 4, 1791.

As the 19th Century progressed, Butler County settlements gave rise to larger centers of population and emerging towns and cities became more prominent: Oxford (1810), Monroe (1817) and Middletown (1833). Aided by the western expansion of population in the US and its location between population hubs in Dayton and Cincinnati, Butler County communities grew throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Middletown and Hamilton, which are accented by the Great Miami River, became large centers of industry focused on Steel production and industrial manufacturing. Oxford also gained prominence as the home of Miami University, the 10th oldest public university in the US.

The end of the 20th century ushered in new changes for Butler County. With the northern expansion of the suburbs of Cincinnati, areas like West Chester Township, Fairfield, Liberty Township and Monroe experienced increased development and growth. Historic areas also experienced renewed interest in historic preservation and community involvement. Overall, the dawn of the 21st century has brought Butler County a renewed focus on preserving the past, while welcoming the progress of the future.

Story Ideas

Idea #1 – The Wide World of Shopping

Butler County offers some of the best shopping in the Midwest. This regional shopping Mecca offers a variety of different options sure to please even the most discerning shopper. Everyday thousands of people visit from hundreds of miles away just to shop at IKEA. Crisp, modern, Scandinavian-style is on display in a 344,000-square foot store that is a truly unique shopping experience. No trip is complete without the Swedish meatballs! Another one-of-a-kind shopping stop is close by. Jungle Jim's International Market has been featured on media outlets from BusinessWeek to Good Morning America. Its 6 acres of food represent cuisines from over 80 countries. The store that started as a humble produce stand has grown to stock over 180,000 products from around the world. From retro candy to Moroccan delicacies, culinary traditions are at the forefront of this foodie paradise. Boutique shopping is also not-to-be-missed, shopping districts in Downtown Hamilton, Downtown Middletown and Uptown Oxford all offer unique boutique shops and local goods that represent the diversity and eclectic nature of the region.

Idea #2 – Feel the Rush

Never considered Butler County as a place for thrill seekers? Think again. Butler County is home to two unique attractions that are sure to make anyone's heart pound. Get ready to fly with Start Skydiving. Rated the #1 place to skydive in the world by DropZone.com, their team of experienced professionals will lead you through an experience to remember. As you exit the plane thousands of feet above Butler County, you are sure to experience a thrill like none other. Follow that up and cool down at Wake Nation. Here you'll find the only place in the Midwest where you can wakeboard, water ski, kneeboard or wake skate WITHOUT a boat! Riders are towed around a 10-acre lake using a cable harness system that is suspended above the water. Each rider can choose to glide or be challenged by a series of obstacles along their loop around the lake.

Idea #3 – A Walk on the Artistic Side

One little known fact about Butler County is that the region is overflowing with arts. Our arts community is thriving and contributes to an increased quality of life for our residents as well as interesting experiences for visitors. Butler County arts offerings start with a true jewel of the artistic world – BeauVerre Riordan Stained Glass Studios (Middletown, OH). This world-renowned studio is the oldest, continuously operating stained glass studio in the US. True craftsmanship is on display and visitors can take a tour of the studio and see artisans at work. Nearby, also in Middletown, visitors can take in street art through the dazzling display of murals painted by local artists. A quick drive down the road will lead you to Hamilton, OH. Also, known as the City of Sculpture, over 40 outdoor art installations dot the city featuring modern art to realistic statues. A trip to Hamilton isn't complete without a stop at Pyramid Hill Sculpture Park & Museum. Here, a drive or walk through a picturesque park is complimented by monumental art and historic ancient sculptures.

Idea #4 – There's History in the Those Hills

Butler County's historic legacy runs deep through our rolling countryside. From the days of early settlement, something about our majestic surroundings has drawn people from around the world to call Butler County home. This history has given Butler County incredible historic

treasures and a passion for preservation. This passion is highlighted at Governor Bebb MetroPark. The jewel of this lovingly preserved pioneer village is the rustic 1799 birthplace cabin of Ohio's 19th Governor, William Bebb (surprisingly only the 3rd native Ohioan to hold the office). More history is on display in Hamilton, Ohio where you will find the graceful architecture of the Dayton Lane Historic Area, eclectic Rossville Historic District and the historic downtown corridor of German Village. Highlights include the Lane-Hooven House (1863), one of only 40 octagonal houses in the country, and the stunning Butler County Courthouse (1885). Middletown and Trenton are also full of history. Harken back to a time when commerce traveled via river and visit a lock tender's house at Middletown's Canal Museum. Or stop at Chrisholm Farmstead, once the home of a leading family of the Amish-Mennonite Settlement in the region. Here you can find a historic farmhouse (1874), outbuildings and a wealth of history paying tribute to agricultural and Amish-Mennonite.

Idea #5 – Time for Tykes

Perfect for tykes, Butler County has some unique options that are perfect for little ones. All aboard for a train adventure at EnterTRAINment Junction, the world's largest G-scale indoor train display. Here, miles of track wind through amazing model scenery, perfect for kids of all ages. Let them release some steam at indoor play area featuring Thomas & Company. If they still need to run off some energy, parents can head over to Jump & Jack's – an incredible climb, slide, jump and play indoor space. Great for kids from toddlers to 11 years old, kids can maneuver themselves through a multi-story play maze! Families like to cap the day off on an adventure at Niederman Family Farm. Get up close and personal with farm animals, take the kids on a hayride and be sure to visit during the fall for a spectacular corn maze and pumpkin patch.

Idea #6– The Tastes of the World

From a trail dedicated to tasting the best donuts the region has to offer to cuisines that will transport you to the other side of the world, the food in Butler County is as diverse as the region. Start your culinary adventure off with a trip on the Butler County Donut Trail. Featuring nine businesses with over 236 years of donut making experience, visitors can sample classic flavors or try something new with flavor offerings like s'mores, raspberry cheesecake and Reese's Cup. After all these sweets, add some meat to your diet with wings, burgers or seafood. If you are looking for something exotic, try some Korean BBQ, fresh sushi, Greek shawarma or a southwestern chimichanga. Vegetarians also will love favorites like the caprese salad, mujadara plate and the fried green tomatoes salad.

Imagery

Butler County is happy to provide royalty free imagery for your editorial usage upon request. For high resolution images, please email Tracy Kocher at tkocher@gettothebc.com or Amanda Ensinger at amanda@inspireprgroup.com or call 513.860.4194 x109 or 419-366-9620.

Top Notch Events in Butler County

Every year, Butler County hosts a wide variety of events that draw thousands of people from throughout the Midwest and the world. Below is sampling of events occurring in 2017.

Feb. 11-12 – Jungle Jim’s Cheese Festival – Sample cheeses from around the world, as well as perfectly parred meats, olives and other appealing appetizers. Wash it all down with some mouthwatering wine and beer.

March 4-5 and 11-12 – Maple Syrup Festival – Take maple syrup tour, enjoy a hay ride and hike through Big Woods State Nature Preserve.

March 18 – Shamrock Shuffle – Let the luck of the Irish be with you during the 5K & 10K races benefiting local community organizations.

April 28-29 – Goggin Annual Spring Ice Show – From learn to skate tot classes to elite level figure skaters, this event is fun for the whole family. Watch the Miami University Synchronized Skating Team, nationally ranked guest ice skaters and a fun-filled finale featuring the RedHawk Hockey Team.

May 19-20 – Buckeye BBQ Fest – This signature event features BBQ, live blues music, a classic car show and a kid zone.

May 20 – Oxford Wine Festival – Sample wines from around the world during this popular spring festival.

June 10 – 92nd Annual Strawberry Festival – Celebrate all things strawberry during this family fun summer festival.

June 16-17 – Jungle Jim’s International Beer Fest – Grab a brew and sample beers from more than 100 breweries from across the nation!

June 26-31 – Christmas in July – Beat the heat and celebrate Christmas in July! Take a "Journey to the North Pole", where you can get a midyear check in with Santa himself.

July 15 – Crazy Cardboard Regatta – Be prepared to laugh until you cry during this whacky summer festival. The regatta is a people-powered-boat race where the boats are made entirely out of cardboard.

July 18-23 – Butler County Fair – Featuring livestock, arts & crafts, games, rides and delicious fried fair food!

July 21-22 – The Ohio Challenge Hot Air Balloon & Skydiving Festival – Watch as balloon pilots take to the sky to compete in a variety of air challenges! The festival features skydivers, live music, kid’s activities and more.

July 22 – Antique & Classic Car Parade – Fall in love with automobile history and see more than 300 antique and classic cars tour through the streets of Hamilton and Fairfield.

August 11 – Union Centre Food Truck Rally – Over 35 food trucks will converge at The Square, serving unique flavors and foods from around the world. Don't miss out on delicious food, live music and more!

September 15 – October 29 – Niederman Family Farm Fall Festival – Enjoy the beauty and colors of fall in Ohio at the Niederman Family Farm Fall Festival. At this popular fall event you can navigate a 14-acre corn maze, take a hayride and pick the perfect pumpkin. Family photo opportunities can be found around the farm. Enjoy fall treats such as kettle-corn, caramel apples or the famous Niederman cinnamon-sugar donuts. In the evening, gather around a bonfire and cozy up with family and friends for stories and s'mores.

September 29-30 – Pyramid Hill Art Fair – Stroll through the beautiful setting of Pyramid Hill and browse the arts and crafts for sale by local, regional and national artists.

October 7-8 – Jungle Jim's Weekend of Fire – Think you can handle the heat? This spicy Jungle Jim's festival celebrates all things burning hot. Featuring hot sauces from around the world, the festival is sure to be the hottest ticket in town.

October 13-15 – Operation Pumpkin – All we can say is it is a lot of pumpkin fun wrapped up into a great fall festival!

November 23 – December 31 – Light Up Middletown – Take an awe-inspiring tour through this drive through holiday fantasy display featuring a tunnel of lights, Santa's workshop and dozens of animated displays.

December 2-3 – Oxford Holiday Festival – Celebrate the holidays with a gingerbread house contest, horse drawn carriage rides, holiday crafts and more.