



VIEWS & VISIONS

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Plentiful West Virginia

Matt Knott, President and Chief Executive Officer
River Riders Family Adventure Resort

As President and Chief Executive Officer of River Riders Family Adventure Resort, Matt Knott has 25 years of experience in the outdoor adventure industry. Starting as a raft guide at River Riders while attending Shepherd College, he purchased the business in 1998, and had made it into a full-service family adventure resort. Knott has twice been appointed by the Governor to the West Virginia Whitewater Commission and is currently serving on the West Virginia Tourism Commission.

He was also named as the Small Business Person of the Year for the State of West Virginia in 2017 by the US Small Business Administration.

The single most important point I try to communicate to people today is that there is plenty to go around – plenty of folks who want to enjoy Wild, Wonderful West Virginia and plenty of Wild, Wonderful West Virginia for folks to enjoy. Accordingly, I think it's imperative that all of us in the tourism industry appreciate this point and foster a sense of collaboration whenever and however we can by building the trusted relationships that enable us all to better serve our guests and grow, both individually and collectively.

Given today's age of global information, communication and marketing, we find our customer base growing geographically. Like other regions in our beautiful state, we continue to enjoy the proximity to our border states and their considerable metropolitan areas. We are also seeing more and more guests travel to our



resort from greater distances as a part of their regional destination vacations, both domestically and internationally. This additional customer base indicates that we have to be better prepared to suggest, collaborate with and understand our regional tourism partners, attractions and networks.

At River Riders Family Adventure Resort, every employee's mission is to create remarkable experiences for our guests. While this remains ever present and at the forefront of our service for all of the right reasons, we also appreciate that information travels far and fast in today's climate of social media and global information networks. Thus, we remain vigilant.

With an expanding geographical guest base, we realize the necessity to not only be better informed about our regional partners but also more keenly aware of our competitors. Whether this translates on the micro level to something as simple as partnering with another outfitter to help meet the needs of a large group that wants to enjoy something as simple as biking, or offering guests a range of dining options, including those external to our properties, we focus on the idea that the better the experience is for our guests, the better it is for the entire industry over time.

On the macro level, we collaborate with our regional tourism partners to engage on natural resource management, local and state legislation and policy, regional education and business development. For example, the Jefferson County Convention & Visitors Bureau (JCCVB)





currently operates from our resort hotel – the Clarion Inn – rent-free while they update their facilities. We also provided the facilities and sustenance for the annual JCCVB Tourism Summit while our friends from the Bavarian Inn moderated and otherwise assisted in execution of the same. We also recently partnered with the Bavarian Inn and the Clarion Inn of Shepherdstown to show our support for the renovation of the historic Hilltop House – a project that will greatly enhance the tourism opportunities in Harpers Ferry and the greater Eastern Panhandle.

In sum, we here at River Riders Family Adventure Resort love West Virginia and all of her natural beauty and resources. We passionately seek to provide remarkable experiences in the family outdoor adventure space, including rafting, tubing, zip-line tours, camping, vacation rental homes, cabins, hotel lodging, full service food, banquet and meeting space, and other adventures. ♡

If you want to explore mutual opportunities, or we can help you in any way, please contact me at matt@riverriders.com or visit our website at www.riverriders.com.

