



Bowles Rice

VIEWS & VISIONS

BOWLESRICE.COM

SPRING/SUMMER 2021



Jim Justice
Governor of West Virginia

James C. Justice, II was elected the 36th Governor of West Virginia in November 2016. He was reelected to his second term in 2020, winning nearly two-thirds of the vote. Justice is a former President and Chief Executive Officer of more than 100 different companies, including coal mines, farms, timber operations and more. As governor, his goal is to do everything possible to put West Virginia in a positive light.

West Virginia: Reaching New Heights on All Fronts

The time has come for West Virginia to take its place as a state where people from across the country are looking to visit, live, work and thrive. Over the past year, our nation has experienced great hurt and great loss. But like our mountains, West Virginians are resilient, and we have gone to work to find ways to overcome and position West Virginia as an industry leader in areas like healthcare, business development, tourism and remote work.

West Virginia is home to our nation's strongest vaccine rollout. We were one of the first states to provide this life-saving vaccine to our elderly through my Save Our Wisdom initiative. And with the rapid success of that program, we quickly expanded and found ways to get vaccines into the arms of our teachers, parents and now youth. We're well on our way to widespread immunity, and because of that, all eyes are on us.

Our fortitude and forward-thinking vision have led to major business development in the midst of the pandemic. Our country roads will soon be home to high-speed travel, thanks to recent investment by Virgin Hyperloop. And that's just



the beginning. Companies like Toyota, Procter & Gamble and N3 are making new business investments and expanding their operations.

Our mountains are also home to America's newest national park. The New River Gorge National Park & Preserve rightly took its place at a time when travel is reopening and visitors are flocking to outdoor destinations. We're already seeing upticks in visitation and traveler sentiment that echoes what we already know to be true: West Virginia really is Almost Heaven.

Collectively, these announcements have put our state in the national spotlight and have paved the way for yet another trend for West Virginia to take the lead – remote work. I've always said,





“If there’s one thing I’ve learned as governor of this great state, it’s that West Virginia has more potential than any other state in the country.”

West Virginians need to be proud of our home state. We live in a place that offers four beautiful seasons, unmatched outdoor recreation and the friendliest folks on earth. The Ascend West Virginia program highlights all of our state’s best and brightest assets and invites a new generation of remote workers to make the move and choose West Virginia as the place they belong.

I’m grateful for the private support and generous donation by Brad and Alys Smith that made this program possible. Their investment to the state will provide a lasting return and will help our communities thrive as we stand to welcome new residents.

As a coach, I’m always looking for ways to think outside the box and make plays that are bigger and better. It’s a mentality that Brad and I both share, which has helped push this team to the next level. We knew that for this program to work, we needed to evoke real change.

Collectively, we put our heads together and created a legislative proposal that would reform our tax structure and make West Virginia a more business-friendly place to support both companies and employees embracing remote work. This

landmark legislation passed with bipartisan support and will undoubtedly change the landscape of remote work in West Virginia.

Now geared with \$12,000 cash, a year’s worth of free outdoor recreation and a remote-work-friendly tax climate, the Ascend West Virginia program packs a big punch. It stacks among the highest in the nation with incentives that total more than \$20,000, and we’re already seeing success.

Thousands of remote workers have already applied for the program’s first city of Morgantown. Lewisburg and Shepherdstown are up next in the queue to accept applications, and dozens of other mountain towns have expressed interest in joining the ascent.

If there’s one thing I’ve learned as governor of this great state, it’s that West Virginia has more potential than any other state in the country. It’s up to us to uncover it and keep this momentum going. **W**