



# Visiting the POCONOS

Site is a useful tool for planning a visit, but it could use some enhancements

**T**he World Wide Web, as its name implies, can help you connect with people, places, products, services and information from almost anywhere on the planet. It also can be useful for exploring much closer to home. **VisitPoconos.com** is a new, regionally based website dedicated to making the Pocono Mountains accessible to all.

The Web has become an invaluable tool when planning a trip.

Researching attractions, lodging, transportation, dining and more has never been easier or faster. There are many, many sites dedicated to the individual parts of your travel plan, such as reserving hotel rooms or booking flights. VisitPoconos.com strives to bring all of these tools together in one convenient location.

### A good start

The site was created by David Good, president of M3 Internet Marketing in Honesdale. He wanted to create a virtual handbook full of all of the resources needed for anyone interested in visiting the Poconos. It's off to a good start, but it has room for some improvement.

The content on the site is logically organized with intuitive navigation. It has the look of a clean, simple template-built site. A series of tabs under the page-top banner connect you to all the sections on the site: Lodging, Attrac-

tions, Events, Dining, Shop, Water Parks, Poconos Travel Info and Contact Us.

Under the tabs is a slide show carousel featuring images of different Pocono attractions. The photos are nice, professionally shot images, but clicking on them just opens the same slide show in a floating window. It would be more useful if clicking on an image took you to more information about the attraction.

### Useful features

Below the slide show is a list of upcoming events. Clicking on an item in the list takes you to the Events section of the website. This section features calendars for each month of the year, displayed one month at a time. Event listings are placed in the calendar on the day they're scheduled. Click on an event to bring up a description with times, dates and locations. There also are links to event websites and social media.

The home page also contains a general description of the Pocono region, some advertisements and a feature called Hotel Deals, which can be used to find lodging for your stay. Enter your arrival and departure dates, and a new page opens with a list of area hotels. This is a full-service hotel-booking feature. There are rates, photos, descriptions, reviews, maps and more for each hotel. You can filter your search by location, price, amenities and ratings. Once you've found a place that meets your criteria, you can book a room from the site.

The Attractions section has a half-dozen featured attractions on

the main page and a link to a second page with a more complete list. Clicking on an attraction takes you to a page with a photo and more information. This is one of the areas where VisitPoconos.com needs a little work. Some of the attraction listings have a good deal of useful information. However, many of them have only a bare-bones description. Granted, there are links to the websites of all of the attractions where you can get more information, but if this site wants to be a one-stop shop for the Poconos, it needs to beef up the information for all of the listings.

### Site needs finishing

The sections for Dining, Shop and Water Parks are similar to the Attractions section, sharing its strengths and weaknesses. The amount of information provided for the various listings is inconsistent. In most cases the site could use more details for them.

In fact, in the Water Park section, the listings appear as if they are still in the development stage. At the bottom of each page is a generic place holder for a page peel, an interactive section of a webpage that reveals underlying information when you hover your cursor over it.

VisitPoconos.com is a useful site with lots of good information if you're planning to visit the Poconos. Hopefully it will grow to be even more informative and useful for viewers.

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