

VisitPITTSBURGH Unveils Forge On: A Bold Destination Campaign

A "rally cry" for the Steel City, Forge On invites travelers to experience a destination where industrial grit has been reborn as wonder.

PITTSBURGH, PA, UNITED STATES, March 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [VisitPITTSBURGH](#) today announced the launch of Forge On, a high-energy, fully integrated destination marketing campaign. Rooted in the city's legendary history of making and building, the campaign marks a



Forge on Hero Image

strategic pivot from simply inviting visitors to see Pittsburgh to challenging them to experience the "spark" of a city that is constantly reinventing itself.

The strategy was informed by Future Partners' 2025 Brand Tracking Study of 3,000 respondents and Madden Media-led stakeholder focus groups involving nearly 50 Pittsburgh visitor industry partners. This research identified a critical "awareness gap": among those who haven't visited, only a small percentage of respondents are familiar with the city's tourism assets, with half stating their reason for not visiting is simply that Pittsburgh is "just not on my radar." However, the study also found that among past visitors, 72.8% find Pittsburgh appealing, and nearly half agree it is a "city on the rise." The Forge On campaign is a solution rooted in data to increase visibility and galvanize a unified message of resurgence. With 83% of current travelers to Pittsburgh

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*Jerad Bachar, President & CEO
of Visit Pittsburgh*

consisting of repeat visitors, the campaign aims to increase first-time visitation and reach new travelers across the region, while continuing to inspire the city's loyal visitor base.

“Pittsburgh was built on the fire of an industrial era and the grit that shaped champions, but our legacy was never just about steel,” said Jerad Bachar, President & CEO of VisitPITTSBURGH. “It

has always been about resilience and creativity. This campaign is our new north star; it is a rally cry that honors our DNA while celebrating the new energy, flavors and ideas that make our city so inspiring today."

A Research-Driven Vision for the Maker City

Developed collaboratively by VisitPITTSBURGH and its agency of record, Madden Media/Karsh Hagan, Forge On seeks to ensure the brand resonates with the authentic spirit of the community. While Pittsburgh benefits from a strong identity tied to its industrial heritage and world-class sports, the team identified a primary challenge: limited perceptions lead to a lack of awareness regarding the city's broader cultural and culinary depth.

To increase understanding of these diverse experiences, the campaign centers on storytelling as both a brand platform and a call to action. From its storied industrial past to its vibrant contemporary arts and food scenes, the initiative highlights the 90 neighborhoods, small businesses and unique personalities that make Pittsburgh more than a day trip. The strategy celebrates local entrepreneurs, artists, chefs and makers who create meaningful, personal experiences for visitors and fuel a destination where industrial grit has been reborn as wonder.

The campaign is framed by five strategic pillars designed to shift national perception and guide all paid, earned, and owned media strategies:

History to Hero: Discovering how the Steel City reinvented itself into a vibrant cultural capital. This pillar showcases Pittsburgh's pivotal role in America's industrial era, highlighting how preserved landmarks and reimaged historic spaces serve as a canvas where the past is fused with the present.

Culinary Craft: Savoring a culinary identity where beloved traditions blend with innovative craft brews and diverse voices. The campaign illustrates a dining scene where "old world" staples like the pierogi meet the influence of James Beard-recognized chefs and creative cocktail culture.

Arts + Culture: Spotlighting a dynamic scene where world-class museums and galleries serve as global draws rooted in local stories. From world-renowned classical institutions to public art movements, the campaign weaves a cultural fabric that is both globally significant and deeply local.

Signature Events: Celebrating the vibrant spirit of the city through traditions that turn iconic bridges, rivers and stadiums into dynamic stages. Marquee annual festivals and "only-in-Pittsburgh" traditions are highlighted to showcase the city's unique creativity and community pride.

Neighborhood Makers: Highlighting the entrepreneurs, artists and chefs across our 90 neighborhoods who turn grit into wonder.

Creative Direction & Multi-Channel Outreach

This campaign positions Pittsburgh as one of the original “maker” cities and invites audiences to continue making with us. To shift behavior from a lack of awareness to active travel inspiration, Forge On will be supported by an aggressive multi-channel media strategy. This includes strategic out-of-home, streaming TV and audio, high impact display paired with paid and organic social media and a robust earned media program designed to tell the city's story on a national scale.

The visual system features frames tied to the VisitPITTSBURGH brand, designed to highlight beautiful destination imagery and authentic human moments. These design frames invite visitors to see Pittsburgh through a new lens, turning familiar landmarks and hidden corners into living postcards. By bridging the city's storied roots - from the Strip District to the legacy of Fred Rogers - with modern experiences, the campaign serves as an open invitation for travelers to carry on that maker tradition by forging their own unique connections.

Outreach will be concentrated across the following markets:

Core Markets: Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., New York City, Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Harrisburg, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, Erie, Youngstown, Johnstown/Altoona and the Pittsburgh regional DMA

Growth Markets: Buffalo, Detroit, Chicago and Atlanta

Explore the new campaign and find [trip inspiration here](#).

Download high-resolution campaign imagery and view [creative samples here](#).

ABOUT VISITPITTSBURGH

VisitPITTSBURGH is the official tourism marketing and promotion agency of the Pittsburgh region. The organization is dedicated to generating business events, sports events, and leisure travel for Allegheny County.

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