

# Lehigh Valley Hits a Grand Slam with Another No. 1 Ranking: Coca-Cola Park is Best Minor League Ballpark

By Paul Muschick

LEHIGH VALLEY - The Lehigh Valley hit a true grand slam this month with the March 25 announcement that Coca-Cola Park, home of the IronPigs, was named the nation's Best Minor League Ballpark by readers of USA Today.

Following three other Lehigh Valley institutions earning the top spot in their categories, the 18-year-old ballpark added another No. 1 ranking to the region's growing list of accolades in the publication's annual 10Best Awards list.

"To be America's No. 1 Minor League Ballpark is something our entire community can and should be proud of. The IronPigs are delighted to receive this honor, and it speaks to our mission of providing a positive and memorable experience for every guest, every time," President and General Manager Kurt Landes said.

"This award is a testament to so many organizations and individuals who have proudly supported the IronPigs over the years," he said. "A very sincere thank you goes to our employees, partners, and guests who voted for us and who continue to attend games at Coca-Cola Park in record numbers."

This is the Lehigh Valley's fourth No. 1 ranking in USA Today's 10Best Awards in the past year, and follows the region also being named the No. 1 mid-sized market for economic development, by Site Selection Magazine.

The IronPigs invited representatives of those other winners, and other county and regional leaders, for a collective celebration on March 25 at Coca-Cola Park.

"There are great things happening in Lehigh Valley, and I'm proud to be just one in a series of number ones," Landes said.

The largest free ungated music festival in the U.S. drew nearly 1.45 million people in 2025, from 49 states and seven countries. The festival generated \$121.4 million in economic impact.

"There are so many number ones happening in this Valley. There's so much energy. That doesn't happen by luck. The cross collaboration, the partnership, looking always forward to the possibilities, is something that I think makes the Lehigh Valley unique," said Kassie Hilgert, President and CEO of ArtsQuest, the nonprofit that puts on Musikfest.

The hotel on Main Street has been named the No. 1 historic hotel in the USA Today rankings for five consecutive years. General Manager Kelly Reynolds said the hotel and all the other regional winners have succeeded and become known because of the people who patronize them, cherish their experiences, and proudly support them by voting.

She noted that Hotel Bethlehem was built as a community hotel.

"We still pride ourselves on that," she said. "And it's the community who votes for us to be the Best Music Festival, to be the Best Main Street, to be the Best Historic Hotel, and now what we already knew, the best Minor League Ballpark."

"Main Street in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, is super walkable, and offers lots of dining options ranging from Spanish to Thai. There are also numerous watering holes and a chocolate trail that runs through this part of downtown. The centrally located Historic Hotel Bethlehem is an ideal base for a weekend getaway to the Lehigh Valley," USA Today said.

That success is fueled in part by quality-of-place assets like Coca-Cola Park and other USA Today-recognized attractions that draw and retain a skilled workforce, said Nicole Radziewich Mertz, Vice President of Marketing, Communications, and Research at Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC).

"It underscores LVEDC's belief that the Lehigh Valley is doing today what it has always done best, that's making products and making places," Mertz said.

Lehigh County Executive Josh Siegel said attractions such as Coca-Cola Park play a key role in economic development.

"Businesses want to be where people want to be, and people want to be where there are recreations, where there are assets and amenities, where there are things that make life worth living. And I've always said people will come for jobs, but they stay because it's a place that you want to raise your family," Siegel said.



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