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CONTACT:

Meghan Risch
R4 Communications Strategies, Inc.
312.388.1174 • meghan@r4commstrategies.com

DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau Hosts Annual Meeting of Partnership

Former State Representative Patti Bellock and County Board Economic Development Committee Chair Tonia Khouri Honored with Friend of Tourism Award

OAK BROOK, IL — Beth Marchetti, executive director of the DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau (DuPage CVB) presented former State Representative Patti Bellock and DuPage County Board Economic Development Committee Chair Tonia Khouri with the organization's Friend of Tourism award. Bellock and Khouri were honored during the DuPage CVB's Annual Meeting of Partnership on Thursday, September 27 at which 200 travel and tourism partners convened at Cantigny Park in Wheaton, IL. As a county-wide CVB, the organization's sales and marketing strategies impact hundreds of businesses, contribute to resident quality of life, and to DuPage County's economy.

Bellock and Khouri have consistently supported the DuPage CVB's efforts to grow visitation throughout DuPage, recognizing the tourism industry is a key economic engine for the County's economy.

A longtime champion of tourism as an essential economic driver for DuPage and the state, Representative Bellock understands the challenges and opportunities associated with growing visitation to DuPage County. She has been an avid supporter, working as a leader in the General Assembly with the DuPage CVB to protect its state tourism funding - a critical element for continued development and implementation of strategic initiatives to grow business and leisure visitation throughout DuPage.

In her role as Chair of the DuPage County Board Economic Development Committee and also as a board member of the DuPage CVB, Khouri has been an active partner with the DuPage CVB leadership working to secure additional annual funding and dedicated dollars for targeted initiatives. As a small business owner herself, Khouri recognizes tourism is an essential part of a healthy economy for DuPage County, delivering a significant return on investment for residents and the business community. Chairman Khouri successfully advocated for the creation of a grant program that creates funding from the CVB, the County, and participating DuPage communities to help collectively drive group business to local hotels, and ultimately increased tax revenue to the County. This particular initiative has generated significant financial returns for the tourism industry throughout DuPage.

"On behalf of the DuPage CVB Board of Directors, our members and partners, it is my sincere pleasure to officially recognize the continued commitment and support from former State Rep Bellock and County Board Chair Khouri," said Marchetti. "They have each contributed significantly to an industry that supports more than 23,000 employees and generates more than \$200 million in local and state tax revenue."

Last month, Marchetti announced that the growth in 2017 visitation contributed to a 3% increase in visitor spending to \$2.6 billion; 9% increase in state tax revenue to \$160 million; 3% increase in local tax revenue to \$46 million and a 1.7% increase in tourism-related employment over the previous year, respectively. During the last five years increases in the key performance indicators - spending, tax revenue and jobs - has exhibited between a 1.5 - 6.1 percentage change. The growth represents a savings of approximately \$1,300 per year in taxes for the average DuPage County household, according to the Illinois Office of Tourism.

This is the third year the DuPage CVB has presented the Friend of Tourism award. Past honorees include Jim Elsener, founder of Ledger Publishing and Mike Feigenbaum, general manager Westin Lombard Yorktown Center in 2017, and Chris Johnson, general manager Doubletree by Hilton Chicago-Oak Brook in 2016.

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The DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau is the official sales and marketing organization for DuPage County. The DCVB was formed to attract business and leisure travelers to DuPage County's 38 communities and is responsible for generating billions of dollars in revenue every year in the form of hotel nights, tourist attractions, meals and more. The DuPage CVB is the only Illinois State certified not-for-profit organization authorized to represent DuPage County's tourism and convention business.

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