



2019 marked record year for Loudoun tourism as industry brought close to \$2 billion in revenue to county

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LEESBURG (October 1, 2020)- Visitor spending in Loudoun County increased for the sixth consecutive year in 2019, contributing almost \$2 billion to the local economy, according to the latest data released by the US Travel Association.

Loudoun was the third highest revenue generator in the Commonwealth, bringing in \$1.9 billion in visitor spending, up 3.6 percent from 2018, according to the data. Tourism also supported 17,809 jobs and generated \$755 million in wages in Loudoun County.

"Tourism remained a strong segment of Loudoun's economy last year, but we know this industry that we love took a devastating hit in 2020," Visit Loudoun President and CEO Beth Erickson said. "Tourism is a critical part of the community and the fact that we show year-over-year growth, demonstrates we are a strong and resilient industry poised to recover. It may take some time, but we will be ready to celebrate when we surpass \$2 billion in revenue one day."

In addition to increased spending, tourism-related state tax receipts for Loudoun in 2019 were about \$50.8 million, up 4.6 percent, and local tax receipts were at \$29.6 million, up 3.6 percent, according to the data.

Last summer, Visit Loudoun executed the successful Summer of Love campaign, which featured 28 events that attracted almost 40,000 people. The campaign received national media coverage as well as garnered more than 6 million impressions on Visit Loudoun's social channels. Other 2019 highlights include the opening of Ion International Training Center and a new Home2Suites by Hilton-the first hotel to open in Loudoun in five years.

According to the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), tourism in Virginia generated \$27 billion in visitor spending in 2019. The tourism industry also supported 237,000 jobs for Virginia communities and provided \$1.8 billion in state and local revenue. Virginia ranks 8th in the nation for domestic travel spending.

The travel industry in the Commonwealth has continued to grow 10 years in a row with a compound annual growth rate of 3.9 percent since 2010. However, these figures do not account for the devastating impact that COVID-19 has had on the tourism industry. The pandemic put the Virginia travel and tourism industry in crisis and, as a result, early numbers for 2020 project a sharp decrease in tourism spending.

As the pandemic escalated through March and April, Visit Loudoun pivoted quickly, implementing a variety of creative and impactful initiatives to support tourism and hospitality partners. The organization's efforts were recognized Wednesday when it received the Hospitality Hero Business award from the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging and Travel Association.

Some of Visit Loudoun's COVID-19 response efforts included an online partner portal with access to up-to-date guidelines, information about financial assistance programs, data and analytics. The organization also implemented a 16-week webinar series, which more than 500 industry professionals attended to learn about everything from leveraging social media to applying for various federal loans and grants.

To directly support individuals in the industry, the Visit Loudoun Foundation created, in coordination with both the Community Foundation and the Loudoun Chamber Foundation, the Loudoun Tourism and Hospitality Relief Fund. The fund distributed more than \$98,000 through charitable organizations to provide direct financial assistance to individuals who work or were working in the Loudoun tourism and hospitality industry.

Visit Loudoun, along with Loudoun Economic Development and the Loudoun Chamber of Commerce, also launched the "Loudoun Is Ready" campaign, which unites business owners who pledge to follow the latest safety guidelines. More than 700 businesses signed onto the campaign and the county's support of this program further demonstrates the importance of tourism in the local economy.

While the coronavirus has had a significant impact on Virginia's tourism economy, the industry remains hopeful for a robust return to 2019 numbers in the future. Tourism will be key to economic recovery as the pandemic stabilizes and leisure and business travel resumes.

The Virginia Tourism Corporation receives its annual economic impact data from the U.S. Travel Association. The information is based on domestic visitor spending (travelers from within the United States) from per-person trips taken 50 miles or more away from home. Detailed economic impact data by locality is available on www.vatc.org under Research.