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### **Wedding industry generates more than \$118 million to local economy**

LEESBURG, VA (Nov. 2, 2017) The weddings industry contributed more than \$118 million to Loudoun County's economy in 2016, according to a study released by Visit Loudoun.

Boasting more than 55 wedding venue options that range from rustic barns and breathtaking vineyards, to historic mansions, full-service resorts and country clubs, Loudoun is positioned as a premier East Coast weddings destination.

According to a study conducted by the School of Business at The George Washington University, weddings in Loudoun County had an overall economic impact of \$118,606,290 in 2016 and generated \$7,063,158 in state and local taxes. This projected impact takes into account hotel stays and wedding services including venue rentals, caterers, florists, musicians and more.

Loudoun wedding venues reported hosting an average of 42 weddings and 18 dress rehearsals in 2016, according to the study, and 71% of the clients came from out of town, making it one of the strongest tourism drivers for Loudoun.

"Wedding guests contributed nearly 30% of our total hotel demand in 2016," Visit Loudoun President & CEO Beth Erickson said. "Not only did 90% of the estimated 207,000 wedding guests stay an average of two nights in our hotels, they also contributed to our economy by dining, shopping, and enjoying all that Loudoun has to offer."

Visit Loudoun's complimentary wedding services, coupled with the breathtaking views of the countryside and the diverse range of venues, make Loudoun an attractive destination for couples from across the country.

To continue support of growth in the weddings industry, Visit Loudoun will host the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Wedding Professionals Forum on November 6 from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Washington Dulles Airport Marriot.

"Visit Loudoun's annual weddings forum is a great opportunity for wedding professionals to network and stay up-to-date with industry trends," said Megan Hayes of Wedding Wire. "This fun-filled day is engaging, insightful and educational. With a wide variety of topics presented by their keynote speakers, attendees are sure to walk away with valuable takeaways."

The forum, open to wedding industry professionals, will cover everything from social media and branding to ethnic weddings and a panel with recently married couples.

"Visit Loudoun's wedding forum has grown from one session to almost a full day of learning and networking for the region's weddings industry," said Kevin Olivera of Olivera Music Entertainment. "It's rare to gather the best wedding professionals in Northern Virginia together, but it has become one of the most valuable opportunities in the area to network and learn from the industry's brightest stars."

For more information on Loudoun's weddings industry, visit <https://www.visitloudoun.org/weddings>