



NEWS RELEASE

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ORANGE COUNTY INCREASES TOURISM REVENUE IN 2015

Orange County, VA - Data released by the U.S. Travel Association reveals that all regions in Virginia posted an increase in tourism revenue last year. According to the U.S. Travel Association, tourism in Virginia generated \$23 billion in travel spending. Tourism also supported 223,000 jobs in the Commonwealth and \$1.6 billion in state and local taxes. The increase is largely attributed to Virginia's authentic, local travel experiences, diversity of tourism product, and the notable efforts of the destination marketing organizations and their leadership.

Tourism was again an important contributor to the local economy in 2015. Tourism revenue for Orange County reached \$45.2 million, a 0.2 percent change over 2014. Local tourism-supported jobs totaled 568, while local tourism-related taxes were \$1.3 million. All data was received by the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) from the U.S. Travel Association and is based on domestic visitor spending (travelers from within the United States) from trips taken 50 miles or more away from home.

"While our growth in 2015 was only steady, it remains evident that tourism continues to be a relevant and integral part of the Orange County economy," said Lee Frame, Chairman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors. He added, "This confirms the need for us to continue working with our businesses and partners to support the growth and expansion of the industries serving our visitors."

"Having a strong tourism industry is vital to job creation and economic growth in Virginia," said Governor McAuliffe. "Travelers are coming to Virginia from across the country and the globe to experience our world-class restaurants, wineries, craft breweries, music festivals, oyster farms, beaches, mountains, and more. Our rich history, scenic beauty, vibrant arts, and burgeoning culinary scene make Virginia a destination like none other. It's easy to see why travelers are eager to discover why Virginia is for Lovers."

"Tourism is one of Virginia's top five industries, and is an instant revenue generator for the Commonwealth," said Todd Haymore, Secretary of Commerce and Trade. "With \$23 billion in tourism revenues, 2015 was another record-breaking year for the Virginia tourism industry, thanks to the hard-working professionals across the state that help to showcase Virginia as a premier travel destination."

The Virginia Tourism Corporation is the state agency responsible for marketing Virginia to visitors and promoting the [Virginia is for Lovers](#) brand. *Virginia is for Lovers* is the longest-running state tourism slogan in the country. *Virginia is for Lovers* stands for love, pure and simple, and promotes the state as the ideal destination for loved ones to completely connect on a great vacation. *Virginia is for Lovers* was named one of the top 10 tourism marketing campaigns of all time by Forbes and was inducted into the National Advertising Walk of Fame in 2009.

The Orange County Tourism Department remains focused on increasing tourism revenues and visitation to the County for the benefit of its citizens and businesses. Through its presence at the Visitors

Center in the Orange Train Depot, website (www.visitorangevirginia.com), Facebook page (www.facebook.com/#!/VisitOrangeCountyVirginia), multiple publications, and partnerships with tourism entities in and around Orange County, the mission of Orange County Tourism continues to be to promote the County as a travel destination, thereby stimulating the local economy and enhancing the quality of life for citizens and visitors alike.

For more information or to inquire about volunteer opportunities, please contact Leigh Mawyer, Tourism Manager, at (540)-661-5328 or lmawyer@orangecountyva.gov.

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