



For Immediate Release
September 14, 2018

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ORANGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA TOURISM REVENUE REACHED 48.77 MILLION IN 2017

-All of Virginia localities saw increased tourism revenue while Virginia reached \$25 billion-

Orange, Virginia - Data released by the United States Travel Association (USTA) reveals that all regions in Virginia posted an increase in tourism revenue last year.

According to the US Travel Association, tourism in Virginia generated \$25 billion in travel spending. Tourism also supported 232,000 jobs in the Commonwealth and \$1.73 billion in state and local taxes. The increase is largely attributed to Virginia's tourism development all around the state, including: new hotels, restaurants, agritourism, craft breweries, wineries, distilleries, cideries, sports, outdoor recreation, festivals and events, music venues, wedding venues, meeting and convention venues, attractions and so much more. Virginia's changing tourism product makes the Commonwealth a destination for authentic travel experiences and thriving communities.

Tourism was again an important contributor to the local economy in 2017. Tourism revenue for Orange County reached **\$48.77 million**, a **0.9 percent** change over 2016. Local tourism-supported jobs totaled **601** while local tourism-related taxes were **\$1,439,295 million**. All data was received by the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) from US 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.

Lori Landes-Carter, Tourism Manager for Orange County offered, "The Orange County tourism industry is seeing smooth, steady growth for the last three years. Our tourism businesses are working hard to give our visitors a memorable experience while they visit our area. In 2017, the food and beverage service industry grew in the county adding some new culinary and beverage options for our visitors to enjoy which helps boost the state and local tax revenues. Our accommodations are still seeing growth as a wedding destination which keeps our Inns and Hotels very busy most months out of the year. These industries are very important to our tourism health because, according to Virginia Tourism Industry data, food/beverage service and accommodations are the leading revenue generators of the tourism industry for the state. The County has many exciting projects to come in 2018. With all of our tourism partners working together I feel confident we will see more steady growth in all segments of the industry for 2018."

Furthermore, James K. White, Chairman of the Orange Board of Supervisors added, "I think the strength of our tourism industry is the range of choices that includes historical (Montpelier to Civil War), agritourism (wineries to farm experiences), recreational (horseback riding to sky diving), events (Montpelier Hunt Races to weddings), and of course the relaxing getaway to enjoy a classic bed and breakfast and the scenery." Mr. White noted, "Every tax dollar of revenue generated by tourism is a dollar we do not have to tax the homes of our citizens, it is in fact a dollar-for-dollar substitution."

"Virginia's tourism industry is an important diversifier for our economy as it continues to grow and flourish in multiple regions of our Commonwealth," said Governor Northam. "Travelers are coming to Virginia from across the country and the globe to experience our rich historic attractions, unmatched outdoor recreation offerings, eight oyster regions, world-class food and craft beverages, beautiful landscapes, and exciting arts and culture. These visitors are spending millions of dollars a day, injecting

critical funds back into our community coffers and helping to make Virginia the best place to live, work, and raise a family.”

“Our tourism industry is an important and vital component of economic growth and job creation in Virginia,” said Brian Ball, Secretary of Commerce and Trade. “As the tourism sector continues to grow and new product is developed, our communities across the state become even more dynamic and vibrant. Tourism is fortifying towns and cities across the Commonwealth, engaging and unifying our communities, and making it easy to for travelers to discover for themselves why Virginia is for Lovers.”

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 will celebrate 50 years next year** 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.

Plan your next vacation in Virginia. Visit www.virginia.org to discover why Virginia is for Lovers.

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.

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