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**VISIT PHILADELPHIA® REPORTS A RECORD 2017 FOR LEISURE TOURISM  
& ANNOUNCES MARKETING PLANS FOR 2018**  
*Key Stories & Stats From The Annual Hospitality Event*

**PHILADELPHIA, January 24, 2018** – At the 9<sup>th</sup> annual New Year’s breakfast for VISIT PHILADELPHIA® today, the destination marketing organization (DMO) released record numbers for **hotel occupancy in 2017** in Center City Philadelphia. The tourism marketing organization also announced a strengthening of its focus on food, with plans to:

- launch a video series in partnership with *Bon Appétit*,
- bring the 2018 **James Beard Awards Nominations Announcement** to Philadelphia and
- create a dining-centric **Visit Philly Overnight Hotel Package** for spring.

In addition, VISIT PHILADELPHIA announced it has evolved its **With Love, Philadelphia XOXO®** campaign around the new **City of Brotherly Love** theme. The DMO is also readying to launch **Homesick Philly**, a visitor attraction campaign that aims to inspire former Philadelphians everywhere to come spend a weekend, a few days or longer in the place they are proud to call home.

**2017: A Record Year:**

Last year, Center City Philadelphia saw a 4.5% increase in hotel rooms; nevertheless, 2017’s hotel occupancy rates kept up—and increased to:

- **Record total occupancy – 78.2%**
- **Record leisure room nights – 1.1 million** (*projected*)
- **Record Saturday night room occupancy (average) – 90%**  
(*Source: Smith Travel Research and CBRE Hotels*)

Philadelphia enjoys three equally strong lodging segments. In 2017, as in years past, approximately one third of all Philadelphia hotel guests were leisure travelers; another third were convention/group travelers; the other third, transient business travelers. In 1997, when VISIT PHILADELPHIA began marketing the city as a leisure destination, leisure travelers accounted for just 14% of hotel room nights.

**African-American Marketing Initiative: We Got You:**

In September 2017, VISIT PHILADELPHIA launched *We Got You*, a documentary-style, five-episode travel video series hosted by Philly native Tarik “Black Thought” Trotter of The Roots. The series

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harnessed the latest in digital storytelling, casting some of the nation's most trendsetting influencers to show off the city's vibrant food, cultural, art, history, outdoors and shopping scenes. In four months, *We Got You* garnered more than 10 million views—and major national acclaim. In 2018, VISIT PHILADELPHIA will continue to leverage the success of *We Got You* with a whole new cast of influencers, delivering an even larger audience.

### **Advertising: City of Brotherly Love:**

VISIT PHILADELPHIA has refined its iconic *With Love, Philadelphia XOXO*® campaign for winter advertising. The organization's creative team developed the campaign around the meaning of the word Philadelphia itself: the **City of Brotherly Love**. In Philly and beyond, digital and permanent billboards, bus shelters and more, the bold ads play on "Brotherly Love" by inviting visitors to the "City of Brewery Love," "City of Legendary Love," "City of Foodie Love" and, certainly, the "City of Sisterly Love."

This new campaign launched in the fall of 2017, when the creative team was tasked with making Philadelphia stand out in its bid for Amazon's second headquarters. The idea: Put these compelling messages on 48 buses and trolleys in Seattle, within neighborhoods near Amazon's original headquarters. The goal: Attract attention.

### **Focus on Food:**

Food is a major marketing theme for VISIT PHILADELPHIA in 2018. The organization recognizes the power of dining—or, rather, traveling for a great meal—to motivate visits. According to *Bon Appétit*, 81% of leisure travelers travel for food. To this end, initiatives in the coming year include:

- The **2018 James Beard Awards Nominations Announcement** is the first event leading up to one of the most anticipated food events of the year. This year, the announcement will take place on March 14 in Philadelphia, home to three of last year's top James Beard Award Winners. VISIT PHILADELPHIA will be a producing partner for the event.
- VISIT PHILADELPHIA has entered into a partnership with top food magazine *Bon Appétit* to produce a luscious, **eating-around-town video series**, hosted by *Bon Appétit* Restaurant Editor Andrew Knowlton. The series is expected to launch this spring.

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- The spring edition of the **Visit Philly Overnight Hotel Package** will include much more fare for foodies. The package will be available March 5 through June 15, for one- and two-night stays at 45 participating hotels.

### **New Marketing Initiative: Homesick Philly:**

Launching later this year, **Homesick Philly** will tap into the deep connections and feelings of nostalgia people have for Philly. The initiative will focus on former residents' loyalty to and love for their neighborhoods, restaurants, bars, sports teams, culture and more. The concept comes from an initial survey of Visit Philly's 1.5 million social media fans and followers, many of whom once were lucky enough to live locally—and most of whom long for Philly realness. More details to come.

### **Major Happenings In 2018:**

The New Year's Breakfast also included presentations by organizations offering some of 2018's most exciting events and news. They included:

1. **Chemical Heritage Foundation Becomes Science History Institute**, February 1, 2018
2. **Philly Theatre Week**, February 8-18, 2018
3. **Leonard Bernstein: The Power of Music**, National Museum of American Jewish History, March 16-September 2, 2018
4. **African American History & Cultural Showcase**, Pennsylvania Convention Center, March 31-April 1, 2018
5. **TreeTop Quest**, West Fairmount Park, March-November 2018
6. **Sail Philadelphia**, Penn's Landing, May 24-28, 2018
7. **Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts (PIFA)**, May 31-June 10, 2018
8. **Juneteenth Music Festival & Parade**, June 22-23, 2018
9. **Cherry Street Pier Debut**, Penn's Landing, summer 2018
10. **The Bourse Reopening**, summer 2018
11. **Nuevofest**, Fringe Arts Building, July 15, 2018
12. **BMW Championship**, Aronimink Golf Club, September 4-9, 2018
13. **Comcast Technology Center Opening**, fall 2018
14. **Parkway 100 Celebration**, Benjamin Franklin Parkway, through October 26, 2018

VISIT PHILADELPHIA® is our name and our mission. As the region's official tourism marketing agency, we build Greater Philadelphia's image, drive visitation and boost the economy.

On Greater Philadelphia's official visitor website and blog, [visitphilly.com](http://visitphilly.com) and [uwishunu.com](http://uwishunu.com), visitors can explore things to do, upcoming events, themed itineraries and hotel packages. Compelling photography and videos, interactive maps and detailed visitor information make the sites effective trip-planning tools. Along with Visit Philly social media channels, the online platforms communicate directly with consumers. Travelers can also call and stop into the Independence Visitor Center for additional information and tickets.

*Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos of Greater Philadelphia, visit the photo gallery of [visitphilly.com/pressroom](http://visitphilly.com/pressroom).*