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PHILADELPHIA REGION SETS A RECORD IN 2019 WITH 46 MILLION VISITORS
Devastating Loss In 2020 As A Result Of COVID-19 Forces Industry To Focus On Recovery

PHILADELPHIA, September 10, 2020 – The City of Philadelphia, in partnership with VISIT PHILADELPHIA® and the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau (PHLCVB), today announced that a record **46 million people visited the five-county Greater Philadelphia region in 2019**, marking the 10th consecutive year of growth. An increase in overnight visitation contributed to additional tourism industry records: **\$7.64 billion in direct visitor spending**, which **directly supported 105,460 jobs** across various industries. Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) also contributed to the industry's growth, reporting an all-time high of **33.02 million airplane passengers** in 2019.

While 2019 was another milestone year for Greater Philadelphia tourism, 2020 brought with it a different kind of milestone: COVID-19 and its sudden and devastating impact on the industry in terms of visitation, hotel occupancy, spending, revenue, taxes and jobs.

Impact Of COVID-19:

Prior to COVID-19, 2020 started off strong and was looking to be another record-setting year, but by April, travel had come to an abrupt halt, and Tourism Economics predicts it will take until 2023-2024 to fully recover. Here's a look at the impact:

- **Travel & Tourism Jobs:** 70,300 of the industry's 188,000 employees (37%) out of work through June 2020
- **Lost Leisure Hotel Room Nights:** 320,000 hotel room nights, a 72% decline year over year (March through July 2020)
- **Lost Group Room Nights:** 509,000 group rooms lost, a 92% decline year over year (March through July 2020)
- **Lost Travel From Canada & Mexico:** 424,000 visits, a 73% decline from 2019 (2020 annual forecast from Tourism Economics)
- **Lost Overseas Travel:** 562,000 visits, an 80% decline from 2019 (2020 annual forecast from Tourism Economics)
- **Lost Economic Impact:** Estimated \$4.1 billion lost in economic impact (March through July 2020)

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“Throughout my career, I have been a champion of the tourism industry. Hospitality has been one of the region’s largest and fastest growing employment sectors,” said Mayor Jim Kenney. “Our COVID-19 economic recovery is underway, and our administration is working with industry leaders to bring back visitors and jobs and to restore the \$342 million in tax dollars that the industry generates for the city’s budget each year. It will be a long road to recovery, but Philadelphia is positioned to come back even stronger than before.”

Kenney continued, “Our city has been working with VISIT PHILADELPHIA, PHLCVB, Philadelphia International Airport, the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority, regional convention and visitors bureaus and other organizations on a coordinated response. It includes the reopening of hotels, attractions, restaurants and other small businesses; **a tourism marketing campaign**; a health pledge; and clean and safe messaging.”

For a full breakdown of the 2019 visitation and economic impact numbers, go to visitphilly.com/research.

For information about the PHL Health Pledge, go to discoverphl.com/phl-health-pledge.

Sources: Econsult Solutions, Inc., STR, Tourism Economics

About VISIT PHILADELPHIA:

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 and 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.

About PHLCVB:

The Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau (PHLCVB) is the official tourism promotion agency for the City of Philadelphia globally. The PHLCVB creates positive economic impact across the Philadelphia region, driving job growth, and promoting the health and vibrancy of our hospitality industry by marketing the destination and the Pennsylvania Convention Center, and attracting overnight visitors. Our work engages our local community, as well as culturally and ethnically diverse regional, national and international convention, sporting events and tourism customers.

About Philadelphia International Airport:

Philadelphia International Airport is owned and operated by the City of Philadelphia. The Airport is a self-sustaining entity that operates without the use of local tax dollars. It is one of the largest economic engines in Pennsylvania, generating an estimated \$16.8 billion in spending annually and supporting more than 106,800 full-time jobs for the 11-county Philadelphia MSA.

Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos and high-definition B-roll of Greater Philadelphia, visit the Photos & Video section of visitphilly.com/mediacenter.