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HOSPITALITY LEADERS SHARE PLANS TO FUEL THE PHILADELPHIA REGION'S TOURISM INDUSTRY RECOVERY THIS SUMMER, *Regional Industry Welcomes Turning Point For Tourism*

PHILADELPHIA, May 5, 2021 – Today, during the U.S. Travel Association's National Travel and Tourism Week, Greater Philadelphia's tourism and hospitality industry leaders, including Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney, gathered to share summer initiatives designed to aid in the industry's economic recovery in the wake of COVID-19. Among the announcements: a new Center City hotel forecast that shows hotel demand pacing ahead of initial 2021 forecasts, the latest national research around consumer travel intent, the debut of VISIT PHILADELPHIA's new TV spot, part of its \$2 million [summer marketing campaign](#), and more.

For more than a year now, industry leaders have been collaborating to develop strategies and plans for the recovery of Greater Philadelphia's tourism and hospitality sector. That strategy includes a sustained and coordinated marketing effort from regional tourism partners this summer, along with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion to help drive the comeback.

IMPROVING CENTER CITY HOTEL DEMAND & FORECAST:

Demand: Business at Center City hotels continues to pick up, but there is still a ways to go to reach pre-pandemic occupancy levels. In March, Center City hotel demand increased 50% over February — that's 44% above forecast — for a total of 115,000 rooms sold. Year to date, demand is pacing 33% ahead of forecast, but still 64% below 2019 levels. When looking at the leisure market specifically, demand increased 26% over February — 32% above forecast — for a total of 53,000 rooms sold. Year to date, leisure demand is pacing 60% ahead of forecast, but still 43% below 2019 levels. And Saturday night occupancies have averaged nearly 60% on recent weekends.

2021 Forecast: According to Tourism Economics' latest forecast, an economic recovery is underway, propelled by increased vaccine distribution, an improving economy, warmer weather and sustained marketing to the leisure segment. As a result, hotel demand is expected to improve significantly from 2020 with occupancy forecasted to reach 38.7% in 2021, recovering to nearly half of 2019 levels. Average Daily Rate (\$166) and Revenue per Available Room (\$64) are expected to reach 82% and 42% of 2019 levels respectively. As it has after past slowdowns, domestic leisure travel is set to drive the majority of demand through the summer. (Sources: STR and Tourism Economics)

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NATIONAL CONSUMER TRAVEL INTENT SURVEYS: MORE PEOPLE TO TRAVEL:

When They'll Travel: According to a survey Destination Analysts released on April 26, 2021, 72% of American travelers will take a vacation between Memorial Day and Labor Day, with an average of 1.7 trips planned.

How Much They'll Travel: 25% say they plan to travel more this summer than normal, 44% say they plan to travel the same, and 31% say less.

Planning: Only 36% say their first summer trip is well-developed already, while 44% have not made any major reservations yet.

Where They'll Go & How They'll Get There: 70% of respondents plan to head out of state. While cars are still the preferred method of transportation, 34% plan to travel by plane. (Source: Destination Analysts)

Memorial Day Weekend Travel Intent: According to a national Russell Research survey commissioned by VISIT PHILADELPHIA, 25% of Americans have definitive travel plans for Memorial Day weekend.

- Of those without definitive plans, 27% haven't made a decision yet, 25% don't feel comfortable traveling yet due to the pandemic, and 23% cite personal financial reasons.
- Of those who don't have plans, almost a quarter (22%) say they will not travel, but another 40% would consider driving less than two hours to their destination. (Source: Russell Research)

IMPROVING HOSPITALITY JOB NUMBERS:

Greater Philadelphia: Through March 2021, Greater Philadelphia is still down 56,700 tourism and hospitality jobs, representing a 31% decrease since February 2020. However, 11,500 jobs have been added so far this year after employment hit a second low point in December.

Philadelphia County: Through March 2021, Philadelphia County is still down 32,800 tourism and hospitality jobs, representing a 44% decrease since February 2020. However, 4,200 jobs have been added so far this year after employment hit a second low point in December. Tourism and hospitality jobs account for 40% of all jobs lost in Philadelphia County since February 2020. (Source: BLS)

PACK LIGHT. PLAN BIG. FOR PHILLY. TELEVISION SPOT:

VISIT PHILADELPHIA today debuted its first TV commercial since the pandemic began. Part of its **"Pack Light. Plan Big. For Philly."** marketing campaign, which launched this spring, the spot aims to drive day and overnight visitation. The ad — in 30-, 15- and 6-second form — will run through summer on NBC10 and Telemundo and on social media. Shot by Philadelphia-based Neighborhood Film, the commercial asks, "Who are these people?" It shows off visitors who have found Philadelphia, enjoying its great attractions and restaurants, along with its ease, low-key vibe and welcoming nature — attributes that make it stand out from other major cities.

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MANY REASONS TO VISIT GREATER PHILADELPHIA THIS SUMMER:

Greater Philadelphia has a big summer planned for visitors eager to safely explore once again. As the warm-weather season nears and COVID-19 restrictions continue to lift, the region is ready to welcome visitors back as it debuts long-awaited new and renovated museums, unveils inspired exhibits, celebrates the return of beloved annual events and opens brand new hotels that have been in the pipeline for years.

Those looking to connect and reconnect with loved ones after a long hiatus from travel can tour the brand-new **Faith and Liberty Discovery Center**, which debuted just steps away from Independence National Historical Park's Liberty Bell Center and Independence Hall on May 1, 2021; explore the **PHS Philadelphia Flower Show** outdoors for the first time in its 192-year history; celebrate the nation's birthday in its birthplace during the annual **Wawa Welcome America** Fourth of July festival; and enjoy performances by country music's biggest and up-and-coming stars during the **Citadel Country Spirit USA** music festival. Find a comprehensive look at Greater Philadelphia's summer happenings [here](#).

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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. 6th & Market Streets, (800) 537-7676

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