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**Hundreds of New Orleans Hospitality Industry Members Unite to Celebrate**

**National Travel and Tourism Week**

*New Orleans hosts week of events declaring the importance of travel to the city’s economy*

**NEW ORLEANS** – (May 4, 2015) – Today, New Orleans kicked-off a week-long celebration of National Travel and Tourism Week. Hundreds of industry members rallied at the House of Blues for a New Orleans-style celebration including a brass band, aerial dancers and colorful Mardi Gras Indians. Stephen Perry, president and CEO of the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau, led the crowd and proclaimed the power of tourism to the local economy.

“Tourism is the lifeblood of the Crescent City and our biggest economic driver. Money generated from tourism supports vital city services, such as education, infrastructure improvements, safety and other services that improve the overall quality of life for the local community,” said Perry. “Because of the millions of visitors who travel to New Orleans, we can support the amenities and attractions of a city with a much bigger population, which all locals benefit from. Tourism fills the seats at our world-class restaurants and jazz clubs, and keeps attendance numbers high for our museums and hundreds of festivals. The tax dollars generated from tourism allows us to reinvest back into our community and build a brighter, stronger tomorrow as we march forward to the city’s 300th birthday in 2018.”

Following the rally, guests second-lined to the Sheraton New Orleans for a luncheon keynoted by Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne to tout the tourism industry and its record-setting economic impact on the state.

“For visitors, New Orleans is the gateway to Louisiana. Tourists spent more than $11 billion in our state last year resulting in $836 million in tax revenue,” Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne said. “Tourism and hospitality was Louisiana’s fastest growing job sector in 2014 with 223,000 Louisianians employed in the industry. I take this industry seriously because it creates jobs for our citizens and a steady income for Louisiana that residents don’t have to provide.”

New Orleans’ travel rally and luncheon are part of the U.S. Travel Association’s 32nd annual National Travel and Tourism Week, which communities across America celebrate each year to shine a light on what travel means to jobs, economic growth and personal well-being. Across the U.S. travel contributes:

* $2.1 trillion in economic output and $927.9 billion in direct travel-related spending in the U.S. by domestic and international travelers in 2014
* $141.5 billion generated in federal, state and local tax revenues in 2014
* 15 million American jobs—8 million direct tourism jobs and 7 million indirect and induced jobs—good jobs with good pay that cannot be outsourced

The local theme for this year’s National Travel and Tourism Week events is [NEW ORLEANS WILL](http://www.neworleanswill.com/), a tourism advocacy campaign facilitated by the New Orleans CVB to educate locals on the importance of the traveler economy. Travel and tourism is New Orleans’ largest industry employing a diverse workforce, from hotel and restaurant employees, to creative jobs in culinary, music, arts and entertainment. By the numbers, New Orleans tourism industry supports:

* $6.81 billion in visitor spending pumped directly into the local economy
* 80,000 direct and indirect jobs, the city’s largest industry workforce
* 9.52 million annual visitors

Other events planned for New Orleans’ week-long celebration include:

**Tuesday, May 5**

* **GiveNOLA Day – The New Orleans CVB has partnered with the Greater New Orleans Foundation to encourage the hospitality and tourism industry to participate in** [GiveNOLA Day](https://givenola.org/)**, a 24-hour, city-wide charitable giving event benefitting more than 500 New Orleans non-profits**
* Kongo Across the Watersat the New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) – Through a sponsorship by the New Orleans CVB, industry members will have free admission to the NOMA’s current exhibition, *Kongo Across the Waters*, which explores connections between the art and culture of the Kongo peoples of western Central Africa and African American art and culture in the United States

Wednesday, May 6

* YLC’s Wednesday at the Square – An opportunity for hospitality workers, visitors and the greater community to get out and enjoy the live, local music New Orleans is renowned for during YLC’s Wednesday at the Square, a weekly free concert series in the heart of Downtown

Thursday, May 7

* City Council resolution declaring the first week of May National Travel and Tourism Week in New Orleans to be presented in the Council Chambers
* Jazz in Armstrong Park – Close-out the week with another live concert, this time in the historic Treme neighborhood adjacent to the French Quarter

For more information on National Travel and Tourism Week events in New Orleans, visit [www.neworleanscvb.com/nttw2015](http://www.neworleanscvb.com/nttw2015/)

**The New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau** is a nationally accredited, 1,100-member destination marketing organization and the largest and most successful private economic development corporation in Louisiana. The CVB and its members influence thousands of decision-makers and millions of visitors to choose New Orleans through direct sales, marketing, public relations, branding and visitor services at our New Orleans headquarters and offices in Chicago, Louisville, KY, Washington, D.C. and six foreign countries. Consistently recognized as one of the top five CVBs in the country, the New Orleans CVB celebrates its 55th anniversary in 2015. For more information, please visit www.neworleanscvb.com; www.facebook.com/neworleans; www.twitter.com/neworleanscvb.

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