

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau Awards Tourism Asset Emergency
Grants to Eleven Local Businesses**

Grant supports local venues impacted by Covid-19 restrictions on large group gatherings and events

APPLETON, Wis. (March 4, 2021) – The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau (FCCVB) has awarded a total of \$225,000 to eleven Fox Cities businesses hardest hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Tourism Asset Emergency Grants are meant to help sustain local organizations that host and rely on large group events until these gatherings can safely return.

Tourism Asset Emergency Grant awardees include:

- Fox Cities Performing Arts Center
- Appleton Downtown Inc.
- Fox Valley Symphony
- Oktoberfest (Fox Cities Chamber)
- The Building for Kids
- Paper Discovery Center
- Bubolz Nature Preserve
- Attic Theater Inc.
- Friends of Grignon Mansion
- Bergstrom Mahler Museum of Glass
- Trout Museum of Art

"We are hopeful that recovery for the tourism industry in the Fox Cities will begin this year," said Pam Seidl, Executive Director of the FCCVB. "It is essential that we maintain our tourism assets that contribute to the quality of life and visitor experience in the Fox Cities during this time. If these assets fail, the tourism recovery will take longer, or may not happen at all."

Throughout the past year, tourism-generating large group and event venues' revenues and operations have been severely restricted due to protocols necessary to control the pandemic. The Fox Cities economy relies heavily on large group events and the facilities that host them to drive tourism to the Fox Cities. The grants are meant to help ensure these organizations have the necessary funding to recover.

Grant amounts were awarded based on demonstrated financial loss and ability to operate throughout the past year. In total, these venues and event organizers lost a combined revenue of \$7,626,467 due to the cancellation of 736 revenue generating events. Attendees lost from event cancellations and venue closures totaled 927,226.

“The financial support received from the Fox Cities Convention and Visitor's Bureau through the Tourism Asset Emergency grant program brought critical resources to our organization after a year without the majority of our annual revenue generating events. This crucial assistance provides sustainability to continue our mission to enhance Downtown Appleton as a vibrant and accessible destination for business, learning, living and leisure. We look forward to creating new opportunities to welcome downtown visitors, promote local businesses and attractions and advance the quality of life here in the Fox Cities,” said Jennifer Stephany, Executive Director of Appleton Downtown Inc.

While the goal of the grant is to offset short-term financial damage caused by the inability to host large events, places like the Fox Cities P.A.C. are also relying on the grant to help kickstart the preparation for 2021 events.

“In a typical year, we’d be welcoming nearly 200,000 people to share in the magical connection that occurs through the arts and generating nearly \$13 million in economic activity in the region. In what has been far from a typical year, we are so grateful for the Tourism Asset Emergency Grant Award from the Fox Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau. The funds received through this grant will assist the Center during this extended intermission and in preparation for reopening for ‘Act 2’,” said Fox Cities P.A.C. president Maria Van Laanen. “We are looking forward to inviting patrons back to their performing arts center later this year and getting back to what we love most – sharing exceptional live experiences that engage, educate and inspire through the arts.”

Since its inception, the FCCVB has awarded more than \$9.5 million in grants through its Tourism Development Grant program. The FCCVB realizes the importance of maintaining quality tourism assets in the Fox Cities and will continue to support local businesses throughout their rebuilding and recovery efforts.

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The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau strengthens the local economy by investing in and promoting our community. In the Fox Cities, which includes 19 communities, visitor spending totaled more than \$511 million in 2019. The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau estimates this direct spending supported more than 5,850 jobs and \$114 million in income for Fox Cities residents. www.foxcities.org