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March 2, 2020

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bknapinski@foxcities.org**Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau highlights successful year for Fox Cities tourism***Local organizations, industry partners and economic impact recognized at region's annual tourism breakfast*

APPLETON, Wis. (March 2, 2020) – The Fox Cities Convention & Visitor Bureau (FCCVB) celebrated a successful year for Fox Cities tourism at its annual tourism breakfast on Feb. 28 at the Red Lion Hotel Paper Valley.

The event, attended by nearly 200 industry partners, hoteliers and local business leaders, highlighted the opening of the Community First Champion Center, provided updates about the new FCCVB brand campaign – the Fox Cities Originals, recognized notable organizations for their contributions in support of the FCCVB's mission and featured a keynote speech from national tourism speaker Joe Veneto, who spoke about curating original individualized travel experiences in the Fox Cities.

"2019 gave us many impactful stories to tell," FCCVB Executive Director Pam Seidl said. "... We thank the CVB's board of directors, committees and staff, along with our municipal, hotel and other tourism business partners for their contributions to our success this year."

The FCCVB hosted 160 sporting events, accounting for 19,385 room nights and \$6,280,740 in direct visitor spending in 2019. The FCCVB also supported 92 meeting and convention events, accounting for 17,083 room nights and \$4,370,663 in direct visitor spending in 2019. Additionally, the organization garnered more than a half million dollars in earned media coverage for the Fox Cities, provided visitor services to 77 groups and volunteered more than 262 hours in support of local events. The FCCVB also awarded \$675,000 in tourism development grant funds for projects and initiatives such as the completion of the Province Terrace Trail in Menasha and in support of the nationally touring *GUITAR: The Instrument that Rocked the World* exhibit at the History Museum at the Castle.

Final visitor spending numbers for 2019 in the Fox Cities are released in late spring; visitor spending totaled more than \$490 million the year prior – 2018.

At this year's tourism breakfast, special recognition was also given to the following people and organizations for their support in advancing the FCCVB mission in 2019:

- Red Lion Hotel Paper Valley and Fox Cities Exhibition Center (FCEC) staff for their work in hosting the organization's largest event, the National Holstein Convention, of 2019

"The flexible space at the FCEC allowed us to host a remarkable National Holstein Convention in 2019, but it was the staff from the Red Lion Hotel Paper Valley that really made it happen [...] Their service and attention to detail was spectacular," Seidl said in her speech recognizing the staff.

- Laura Wackershauser of the Wisconsin Holstein Association for her work in support of the National Holstein Convention

“We thank Laura Wackershauser, executive director of the Wisconsin Holstein Association, for all her work in making this conference a true signature event for the Fox Cities this year,” Seidl said when highlighting this event, which brought more than 1,200 attendees to the Fox Cities.

- Mendy Olson, Christina Steiner and Cassie Graper of Hands Up Wisconsin

“In July 2019, we hosted the National Deaf Evangelism Ministry Conference. This national event was attended by 525 people, generated 471 hotel room nights with an estimated economic impact of \$118,221,” Seidl said of Hands Up Wisconsin, which was the representative and local supporter of the conference.

- Town of Grand Chute Community Development Director Bob Buckingham for his contributions to the Community First Champion Center, the Midwest’s newest premier indoor sports complex

“Throughout the CFCC development, and continuing today, one individual has been the heart, soul, voice of reason and steward of the facility’s mission [...] Bob Buckingham has been everyone’s go-to person on the CFCC,” Seidl said.

The 2019 FCCVB Annual Report is available at [foxcities.org](https://www.foxcities.org) for more information about the year’s success and impact.

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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 \$490 million in 2018. The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau estimates this direct spending created more than 5,750 jobs and \$109 million in income for Fox Cities residents.