



## Visit Winston-Salem Receives Board Approval of 2021-2022 Budget

**WINSTON-SALEM, NC** (June 16, 2021) – Today the Forsyth County Tourism Development Authority (FCTDA) board unanimously approved Visit Winston-Salem’s \$4 million annual budget and its strategic marketing and sales plan for fiscal year 2021-2022.

“Visit Winston-Salem’s budget, like many of our hospitality colleagues, was dealt a significant economic blow due to COVID-19. We went from experiencing our strongest stretch of economic growth and executing our largest budget in 2020 to a 52 percent budget reduction,” said Richard Geiger, president of Visit Winston-Salem. “As the vaccines rolled out in the first quarter of 2021, Winston-Salem’s hotel occupancy has consistently seen an uptick, so while this newly approved budget is still 25 percent below the pre-pandemic budget, we are optimistic the travel industry recovery will continue,”” added Geiger.

The 2021-2022 marketing and sales plan focuses on print, digital advertising, public relations, and promotions to support Visit Winston-Salem’s consumer campaign “Wait Lifted, Spirits Lifted” geared to attract the pandemic-fatigued travelers who have a pent-up demand to travel. “Timing is always key in marketing, but now more than ever it’s critical for Winston-Salem to be boldly marketed in an integrated and strategic way,” said Geiger. The new plan includes a calendar full of key trade and appointment shows to leverage strong partnerships with meeting planners, and sports organizers. Creation and implementation of marketing campaigns to support the refresh of the additional meeting space for the Benton Convention Center and RISE, the new indoor, multi-use sports complex in Bermuda Run are also key components to the 2021-2022 plan.

The annual budget includes funding for up to \$200,000 from the Visit Winston-Salem Convention & Sports Support (CSS) initiative. CSS dollars are allocated to qualified organizations to offset costs such as convention center/facility rentals, convention shuttles and parking, as well as bid fees to pursue sporting events and tournaments. The groups receiving CSS funds are expected to generate more than 37,500 hotel room nights with an estimated economic impact of \$33 million, returning \$167 to the Winston-Salem’s economy for every dollar invested.

Additionally, the Board agreed the Arts & Events Marketing Assistance (AEMA) program will be postponed for the 2021-2022 budget allowing the funds to be invested in a more saturated marketing buy for advertising, promotional opportunities, and enhanced public relations efforts.

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### **About Visit Winston-Salem** ([www.VisitWinstonSalem.com](http://www.VisitWinstonSalem.com))

Visit Winston-Salem is the official sales and marketing agency for the Winston-Salem and Forsyth County tourism industry. A sophisticated meeting destination, Winston-Salem is conveniently and strategically located at the epicenter of North Carolina’s Piedmont Triad region. It is easily accessible by car via Interstate 40, Business Interstate 40, Interstate 77, Interstate 85 and U.S. Highway 52. Scheduled air service is available through Piedmont Triad International Airport, just 20 minutes east of Winston-Salem.

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