

Visit Stockton celebrates 40th Anniversary and record impact on Stockton's economy



Stockton, CA (June 19th, 2019) --- Visit Stockton celebrates 40 years of promoting travel and tourism for the city on June 27, 2019. This milestone is accompanied by reports of record financial impact on the local economy. According to a recent report by Dean Runyan and Associates, a research firm specializing in the travel and tourism sector, Stockton experienced record direct visitor spending in 2018. Last year visitors to Stockton, roughly one-third of which were day travelers, spent over \$338 million. A breakdown of that significant number includes \$99 million spent on dining, \$59 million on retail and \$44 million on arts, entertainment, and recreation. The direct visitor spending in 2018 also contributed nearly \$6.3 million to the general fund through local taxes.

Wes Rhea, CEO of Visit Stockton since 2005, states, "These numbers represent real dollars coming into our community. The funds help improve the quality of life for our residents by supporting local businesses, local jobs, and generating tax revenue. The more 'temporary taxpayers' we bring to our city to spend their money, the more our residents see the true public benefit of tourism."

Hotel rates and occupancy also experienced continued growth in Stockton in 2018 according to STR, Inc (formerly Smith Travel Research). Overall, hotel occupancy grew 2.7% to 69.2%, and hotel rates hit an all-time high average of \$89.84. "Visitors to Stockton continue to put demand on our hotel community, and this has led to continued growth in hotel rates, with some guests paying over \$200 a night during our peak visitation season," said Rhea. In total, visitors to Stockton spent over \$44 million on lodging last year with 37% of them staying in a Stockton hotel or similar paid accommodation.

Tourism spending in Stockton supports over 2,800 jobs in the Stockton community, with earnings of over \$100 million. Rhea added, "Visitors to Stockton provide a real opportunity for our city. We like to remind people that everyone who decides to move here, open a business here, or relocate here, is a visitor first. Continuing to grow our piece of the California tourism pie has huge potential for the city's future as well as its residents."

With city limits going largely unnoticed by travelers, Visit Stockton regularly markets assets outside Stockton. In 2018 this led to a successful acquisition of the responsibility to execute the San Joaquin County Exhibit at the California State Fair.

Since 1979 the role of what used to be called the Stockton/San Joaquin Convention and Visitors Bureau has evolved. Elevating the visibility of the city in order to recruit new businesses, investors, and residents has become a priority in destination marketing and development. In 2018 Visit Stockton produced the first Feast at the Fox farm to table dinner in Downtown Stockton. The locally sourced five-course meal, hosted in partnership with the City of Stockton, was a fundraiser for the San Joaquin Delta College Culinary Arts Program and has become a not-to-miss annual event for the city. In 2018 Visit Stockton hosted multiple sporting events throughout the city which brought in over \$3.2 million in economic impact to Stockton. The events included the Amgen Tour of California, the West Coast Conference Baseball Championships, the USA Water Polo Golden State Invitational, and the NCAA DI Men's Golf Regionals.

Contact:
Robyn F. Cheshire, CTA

Director of Marketing and Communications
209-636-4348 or robyn@visitstockton.org

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About Visit Stockton

Visit Stockton is the official destination marketing organization for Stockton, California. Founded in 1979 as a 501(c)6, non-profit corporation, its mission is to promote Stockton by increasing the awareness and enhancing the image of the city's diverse cultural, historical and recreational assets. Visit Stockton is dedicated to positively impacting the local economy through its programming and elevating civic pride, highlighting the Stockton community as a positive place to work and live. Major promotions and events created and executed by Visit Stockton include the Stockton Ambassador Program, Stockton Restaurant Week, Feast at the Fox – a farm to table dining experience on Main Street, the San Joaquin County exhibit at the California State Fair, Stockton Beer Week, Stockton Brew Fest, Stockton Arts Week, and the biennial Stockton Song Contest. Visit Stockton also created the Stockton Savings Pass, a free mobile coupon book for locals and visitors, which acts as free advertising opportunity for local businesses. Visit Stockton is funded in partnership with local hotel properties through the Stockton Tourism Business Improvement District. More information can be found at visitstockton.org.