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## **Greater Newark Convention & Visitors Bureau and NJ TRANSIT to Hold Official Ribbon Cutting for Newark Penn Station's Interactive Visitor Center**

**Newark, NJ** (May 21, 2014) From the largest collection of cherry blossoms in the nation, to one of the country's highest grossing arena's, from Shaquille O'Neal's supersized cinema to the largest collection of Tibetan Art outside of southeast Asia - pro sports, fine arts, urban retail and outdoor adventure, it's all happening here in Newark. The Greater Newark Convention & Visitors Bureau (GNCVB) contracted Blue Focus Media to build a Tourism Assistance Portal (TAP) in Newark Penn Station that would allow visitors to explore Newark's attractions, find the perfect place to dine, catch a show, and help them set off on an urban adventure. The interactive system allows users to send important listings and deals directly to their mobile devices and acts as a virtual tour guide for the region. The digital visitor center combined with the GNCVB's award winning website provides travelers with unbeatable access to all that's happening.

The official ribbon for the Interactive Digital Welcome Center will take place on **Wednesday, May 28, at 11 a.m.**, at **Newark Penn Station, 1048 Raymond Blvd.**, located adjacent to the Bank of America ATMs.

This project was made possible by support from our partners, including: NJ TRANSIT, Newark Downtown District, Ironbound Business Improvement District, Verizon, Brick City Development Corporation and Ron Beit.

**Who Are We** The Greater Newark Convention and Visitor Bureau is the official destination marketing organization for the cities of Newark and Elizabeth, New Jersey. The GNCVB is committed to promoting and marketing the assets of the region, generating economic development and creating new jobs by increasing the length of stay at area hotels, increase per capita spending in the tourism sector, as well as attracting new events, meetings and conferences to the region.

The GNCVB is a private 501(c) (6) New Jersey non-profit corporation composed of tourism professionals and key industry leaders.

### **Funding:**

The GNCVB was the first Destination Marketing Organization in the state of New Jersey to establish a Tourism Improvement District, charging a small assessment on all overnight stays, with collected funds going to market and promote the destination.

### **Tourism Fast Facts:**

- The region generates \$339 million in state and local taxes.
- Newark currently sells a million room nights per year.
- Tourism supports 21,009 jobs in the tourism sector in Essex County, which is 10% of the county's workforce.
- In 2013, the GNCVB generated 62 new leads (average of 5 per month), 24 bookings, with over 12,700 room nights booked. Based on the average room rate of \$112.93 that resulted in \$1,434,000 in booked revenue for the region.

### **GNCVB History:**

The Greater Newark Convention and Visitors Bureau (GNCVB) began as an incubator program under the leadership of Brick City Development Corporation (BCDC) in 2008. They recognized that Newark stood to generate significant economic revenue for the city through tourism, by promoting the destination, increasing hotel occupancy, attracting meeting and conventions, and ultimately changing the national perception of the destination. BCDC engaged well-regarded Newark area organizations to help steer the tourism efforts, forming an advisory council, which undertook the mission of identifying a self-sustaining funding source. Today, the GNCVB is on track to realizing that goal, having secured a sustainable funding source that will fuel tourism promotion.

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