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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CHARLOTTESVILLE AND ALBEMARLE COUNTY:  
A FESTIVE & FUN WONDERLAND TO VISIT IN EARLY WINTER**

The Charlottesville area is a wonderful choice for an early-winter getaway, with shopping options galore, special evening tours at Monticello and Highland, First Night Virginia and a performance at the Paramount Theater by Tony Bennett!

**Charlottesville, Va. (December 7, 2016)** – The Charlottesville Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau (CACVB) invites everyone to consider the Charlottesville, Virginia area for an extraordinary early-winter getaway. With lots of great shopping, winter events, and fantastic deals on area lodging and attractions, early winter makes for the perfect time to visit Charlottesville & Albemarle County.

December is an amazing time to rediscover history in an interesting and unique way, by taking a holiday evening tour at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello or James Monroe's Highland. Monticello's small-group house tours, which include the Dome Room, give guests an intimate look at how the holidays were celebrated in Jefferson's time. Guests will also have the rare opportunity to experience Monticello after dark. For more details, visit [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org). Additionally, James Monroe's Highland will be opening its doors to special evening tours on three dates in December, giving guests a unique glimpse into this presidential home. Visitors will be able to take part in cooking demonstrations on open hearths to create buttermilk pies, apple cakes, wine-soaked pears, and sweet potato pudding, all enjoyed by candlelight. Guests will then enjoy a guided visit of the Presidential guest house and museum spaces which will be decorated for the holidays. For more information, visit [www.highland.org](http://www.highland.org).

The year 2017 will start with a bang on the historic Downtown Mall as First Night Virginia celebrations take place. First Night Virginia is one of the oldest First Night events in the nation and is a terrific and family-friendly way to usher in the new year. Families and visitors will be treated to a plethora of entertainment acts, live music, face painting, and other artistic activities. For more information on this iconic New Year's Eve celebration, visit [www.firstnightva.org](http://www.firstnightva.org).

Located at the heart of Charlottesville's historic Downtown Mall, the Paramount Theater has several exciting and festive performances lined up for the holidays! The hilarious holiday classic *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation* will be shown on December 10 and a few days later, the legendary Tony Bennett (not the University of Virginia basketball coach) will take the stage on December 12. The following week, Moscow Ballet's *Great Russian Nutcracker* will take place on December 18 to get everybody in the holiday spirit. For more information on shows and performances taking place at the Paramount Theater, visit [www.theparamount.net](http://www.theparamount.net).

The holiday shopping season has arrived and there are plentiful options for picking the perfect holiday gift in Charlottesville & Albemarle County. The historic pedestrian Downtown Mall offers dozens of boutique shops and stores, selling a wide variety of locally-made products. The Holiday Market, an extension of the weekly City market, continues until December 17, 2016 on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. offering a variety of unique gifts, decorations, food, and crafts made by local farmers, artists or bakers. Finally, a trip to the Crozet Artisan Depot in Crozet will give shoppers a wide selection of arts and crafts made by local artisans from central Virginia. To learn more about the Crozet Artisan Depot, visit [www.crozetartisandepot.com](http://www.crozetartisandepot.com).

Even though the days are shorter and the weather is cooler in the winter months, it is still business as usual in Charlottesville & Albemarle County. Numerous area hotels and attractions offer discounted rates during this time of year as an incentive for tourists to visit the destination without all of the crowds often found during busier times of year. Many of these deals are offered in gift certificate form and make great holiday gift ideas. The Charlottesville area also features more than 30 wineries, breweries, and cideries, many of which have large roaring fireplaces, making for a perfect way to warm up on a cold winter day. For more information about special packages and offerings, go to [www.visitcharlottesville.org/packages](http://www.visitcharlottesville.org/packages).

**About the Charlottesville Albemarle Convention & Visitors Bureau (CACVB):**

In addition to serving as the global resource for marketing the tourism assets of [Charlottesville](#) and [Albemarle County](#), Virginia, through [www.visitcharlottesville.org](http://www.visitcharlottesville.org), the CACVB assists tour operators, meeting planners, reunions and other groups in planning visits to the destination. CACVB's mission is "to enhance the economic prosperity of City and County by promoting, selling and marketing the City of Charlottesville and County of Albemarle, as a destination, in pursuit of the meetings and tourism markets." CACVB operates the [Downtown Visitor Center \(610 E Main St\)](#) which is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and a second visitor center, the [Albemarle Tourism and Adventure Center](#) in downtown Crozet ([5791 Three Notch'd Rd](#)) at the historic train depot; it is open Wednesday - Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and Sunday Noon - 5:00 p.m. The CACVB also provides a touch-screen kiosk at Monticello's Thomas Jefferson Visitor Center. The official website of the CACVB is [www.visitcharlottesville.org](http://www.visitcharlottesville.org). In addition, the organization manages powerful social media channels; ExperienceCharlottesville on Facebook, @VisitCVille on Twitter, CVilleVA on Pinterest, and @CharlottesvilleVA on Instagram and Vimeo.

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