



Omaha Metropolitan Area  
**TOURISM AWARDS**

3 COUNTIES · 2 STATES · 1 DESTINATION

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**Metro Area Celebrates the Best in Tourism**  
*Eight Local Residents Receive Top Awards*

**OMAHA, NE. April 24, 2017** – More than 18,000 employees work in the tourism industry in the Omaha metropolitan area. Today the best of the best were honored for their outstanding customer service.

“A total of 90 employees and volunteers from local attractions, hotels, restaurants, and retail shops were nominated,” said Linda Revis, director of tourism for Sarpy County. “Only an elite eight received top honors and were presented an award during the inaugural OMA Tourism Awards.”

Among the winners were nominees like David Geyer, security supervisor for Hilton Omaha, who helped support Hilton Worldwide’s initiative to hire more local veterans. Also honored today was Daniel Stout, kitchen manager for Uncle Buck’s Grill. Stout started as a line order cook and today leads a regionally recognized restaurant team. Peggy Woltman, another OMA Tourism Award recipient, was honored because of her volunteer work with the Papillion Community Foundation. Woltman helped Papillion Days grow into one of the top festivals in the country.

Visit Omaha, Sarpy County Tourism and the Council Bluffs Convention and Visitors Bureau partnered to present the Omaha Metropolitan Area (OMA) Tourism Awards. The awards celebrate front line employees and volunteers who go above and beyond to make the Omaha metro area a great tourism destination.

“Our goal with these awards is to highlight the enormous contribution tourism and tourism employees make to the metro area,” said Mark Eckman, executive director of the Council Bluffs Convention and Visitors Bureau. “We may be three counties in two states, but we are one destination focused on growing our local economy through tourism.”

Tourism in the Omaha metro is big business. More than 15 million people from all over the world visit the metro area annually, and those visitors spend more than \$1.5 billion in metro area hotels, restaurants, attractions and retail shops. Visitor spending generates more than \$165 million in local taxes for Douglas, Sarpy and Pottawattamie counties.

“Think of tourism as tax relief,” said Keith Backsen, executive director for Visit Omaha. “When visitors spend their money in our communities, they help to support our way of life.”

Winners in each category were chosen by an independent group of judges representing each county. The award ceremony was held at the Institute for the Culinary Arts on the Fort Omaha campus of Metro Omaha Community College. More than 270 people attended. For a complete list of the winners go to [www.OMATourismAwards.com](http://www.OMATourismAwards.com).

Photos Attached

Photo 1: From Left to Right

Pictured: Linda Austin, Carl Overfield, Diane Hileman, Peggy Woltman, Chris Waltermire, Daniel Stout

Not pictured: Lindey Ussery, David Geyer

Photo 2: 2017 Omaha Metro Area Tourism Awards

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