

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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DUPAGE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU HOSTS ANNUAL MEETING

Executive Director calls on industry to come together to ensure future of DuPage visitor industry with a new tourism plan and the “650 Challenge”

OAK BROOK, IL — Larry Forssberg, Executive Director, Westmont Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau and Chairman of the Board, DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau and Beth Marchetti, Executive Director of the DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau (DuPage CVB) today welcomed 200 travel and tourism partners for the DuPage CVB’s Annual Meeting at The Oaks at Gibsons Bar & Steakhouse in Oak Brook. Both leaders shared results tied to new initiatives introduced within the last year, while also reinforcing the need to ensure the future of the DuPage visitor industry, an important sector of the DuPage economy. In response to competing destinations’ increase in efforts and investment, a new tourism plan was unveiled that outlines strategic initiatives to secure an additional \$650 million in new visitor spend for the DuPage economy by 2025.

Illinois has witnessed eight consecutive years of record tourism growth. But DuPage has been experiencing a downward trend in its share of those Illinois visitors. That loss in 2018 represented \$53 million that went to other Illinois destinations. Forssberg and Marchetti cautioned the group that without proactive measures DuPage cannot effectively compete and could result in this important economic sector being left behind.

Forssberg noted that DuPage is at a critical junction where it must match its competitors’ level of focus, efforts and investment. “Despite the complexities of what we face, we can create a stronger, better future. But we must face it head on. The path to doing so is through collaboration, a focus on sustainability and commitment to greater investment.”

The DuPage CVB has aggressively pursued research and industry expertise to review all potential opportunities for growth. Marchetti reiterated that recent initiatives and efforts are purely in support of people, jobs, community, and success for the entire DuPage region. “This past year has been significant for the DuPage CVB and our industry. We continue to push forward on major initiatives, with a focus on success for the entire region. We need to be bold and aggressive. And a new tourism plan – the 650 Challenge -- is how we get there.”

The DuPage CVB’s new tourism plan includes an enhanced promotional program that targets new audiences regionally and nationally, and a strategy to secure larger and high-quality meetings and conferences. Earlier this year the DuPage Sports Commission was launched to capitalize on one of the fastest growing sectors in the travel industry.

ABOUT THE DUPAGE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The DuPage Convention & Visitors Bureau (DCVB) is the official destination marketing organization for DuPage County, Illinois’ second largest County comprised of 38 communities. The DCVB works in partnership with community business and civic leaders to maximize travel and tourism opportunities which ultimately contribute to the economic vitality of the County and its residents. For more information, visit www.DiscoverDuPage.com.

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Four key areas of opportunity -- meeting incentives, sports tourism, demand generators and greater promotion of DuPage assets – anchor the new plan. Marchetti noted several immediate opportunities, including Frida Kahlo 2020, DuPage as the Road to the Olympics for USA Weightlifting Nationals 2020 and USBC Women’s Open in 2021.

“The time is now,” said Marchetti, calling on the industry to support the DuPage CVB’s vision and plan. Targeted initiatives to close the gap will ultimately result in an additional \$650 million in new visitor spend by 2025, more than one million new hotel room nights and an additional \$11.5 million in local taxes to support DuPage communities.

Jack Johnson, Chief Advocacy Officer with Destinations International, the global association for destination marketing organizations believes firmly in “community shared value.” He states, “In today’s globalized, networked world, every community must compete with every other community for their share of the world’s visibility, attention and respect. Every community must compete for their share of the world’s tourists, consumers and available talent. Every community must compete for their share of the world’s businesses, capital and investment. And, those communities who fail to compete will lose ground. They will be left behind.”

Earlier this year, the DuPage CVB received the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) certification by Destinations International. It was the only Illinois destination organization to receive the award at this year’s annual convention and was in company with highly distinguished destinations including: Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau; Destination Cleveland; Sedona Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau; Visit Buffalo Niagara; Hamilton County Tourism, Inc.; Visit San Antonio and others. The certification award is in recognition of the DuPage CVB’s commitment to industry excellence and meeting the industry standard for performance and accountability of a destination organization.

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