

## **Hershey-Harrisburg Region Ranks #3 Among Top Minor League Markets in the U.S.**

*The region celebrates a national recognition for its thriving minor league sports scene, solidifying its reputation as a premier destination for sports enthusiasts.*

For Immediate Release

(Harrisburg, PA) -- The Hershey-Harrisburg region was ranked #3 in Sports Business Journal's biennial list of the best minor league sports markets in the country. The ranking is fueled by the stellar attendance at Hershey Bears and Harrisburg Senators games, as well as the continued success of the Harrisburg Heat (MASL) and the return of the Harrisburg Stampede (NAL) arena football team.

"We are proud to be ranked third in the country, and tops in Pennsylvania and the Mid-Atlantic. Our two iconic minor-league franchises, the Harrisburg Senators and Hershey Bears, continue to thrive and succeed on and off the field, and get great support from sports fans in the Hershey-Harrisburg region." says HHSE Executive Director, Gregg Cook. "Harrisburg Heat soccer and Stampede football round out our year-round menu of professional sports in Central PA."

The Hershey Bears just commenced their 87th season this month with hopes of winning their third straight AHL Calder Cup, a feat that has not been accomplished in 60 years. Since the 2018-2019 season, the Bears have filled over 84% of available seats in the GIANT Center, with an average attendance of over 9,400. This is near the top of the list across all of the AHL.

The Harrisburg Senators (AA- Washington Nationals) have averaged over 4,100 fans over the past two regular seasons. This number is up 30% from pre-pandemic numbers. In addition, the Senators' home field, FNB Field, is set to undergo a \$12 million renovation over the course of this offseason.

The Harrisburg Stampede returned in 2024, after playing five seasons in Harrisburg from 2009 to 2014. The Stampede will bring the excitement of arena football when their second season kicks off in April 2025.

Last but not least, the Harrisburg Heat have been a staple in the Hershey-Harrisburg region for the past 12 years, averaging nearly 2,000 fans per game during that span. The Heat have played in the MASL since the 2014-2015 season.

\* About Sports Business Journal

Sports Business Journal (SBJ) sits at the epicenter of the sports industry. SBJ provides the news, the networking and the data to equip the most powerful executives in sports business to make more informed decisions, deals and partnerships. SBJ's award-winning media content is delivered via multiple media platforms, unparalleled networking opportunities through its hallmark events and awards and market-leading data.

\*About Hershey Harrisburg Sports & Events Authority

HHSE is committed to promoting sports tourism and events initiatives in the Hershey Harrisburg Region, forging mutually beneficial partnerships with new and existing clients, supporting locally produced events to expand audiences, and driving economic development as it relates to sports and events tourism. HHSE is a division of Visit Hershey Harrisburg, which serves as the official non-profit partnership-based Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Dauphin County located in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

