

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PRESS RELEASE:** Athens CVB hosted Georgia Department of Economic Development Resource Team Visit on November 29-30, 2017

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**ATHENS, GA**. (December 5, 2017) – The Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) hosted a product development resource team from the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) Tourism division on November 29-30, 2017. With efforts to further tourism product development within the state, GDEcD offers grant funding to communities that participate in the department’s Tourism Product Development Resource Team Program (TPDRTP) as a way to build product outlined in the resource team’s reports. The TPDRTP works to evaluate a community’s potential for tourism growth and development through innovative and unique experiences based on a community’s local culture and heritage. The recommendations and financial support provided through this funding program are designed to spur tourism development activities at the local level that maintain and create jobs, attract tourists, and enhance the visitor experience.

Through consultation with GDEcD, the team focused on music, as it is one of Athens’ most distinguishing features. The resource team met with key Athens tourism stakeholders – including venue managers, talent buyers, the Downtown Development Authority, Athens-Clarke County (ACC) Economic Development, Athensmade, hoteliers, festival planners, representatives from the University of Georgia and ACC Mayor & Commission – to hear thoughts on the current state of Athens as a music destination and what could be done to enhance it in the future.

 “We are excited to welcome this group of 12 experts and professionals who will visit 13 individual locations and meet with over 70 local Athenians who are participating as hosts, speakers, sponsors, or local expert attendees. This is an incredible opportunity for open exchange between locals and experts to assess what Athens does best and dream about what it could become in the future,” said CVB Director Chuck Jones. “Our work today will ensure that Athens continues to grow to be the best destination it can be.”

 “Georgia’s tourism industry continues to be one of the state’s leading industries with an economic impact of $60 billion,” said Kevin Langston, deputy commissioner for tourism at the GDEcD. “Tourism has a positive impact across the state, by spurring job creation, attracting investment and providing residents with an improved quality of life. The success of our industry relies on creation of new tourism product and the resource team grant helps activate these new developments.”

Following the visit to Athens, the resource team will develop recommendations and present those to the community in early 2018.

**NOTE TO EDITORS:**

Photo of resource team visit available [HERE](http://res.cloudinary.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1512506165/clients/athens/IMG_0138_fed55420-a1e1-4c48-92e8-ca8a56fb53d2.jpg).

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**About the Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau:**

The Athens Convention & Visitors Bureau is a proactive sales and marketing organization whose primary goal is to increase the economic impact of the hospitality and visitor industry by attracting individual visitors, group tours and meetings and conventions to Athens. Tourism WORKS for Athens, contributing $292.30 million in spending, 2,740 jobs and $20.17 million in local and state tax revenue in 2016.