



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Tourism Leader Optimistic About Summer Travel Season**

*Discover Newport's Evan Smith says all indicators point to a strong travel season.*

Newport (R.I.) May 21, 2018 – According to the American Automobile Association (AAA), more than 41.5 million Americans will travel this upcoming holiday weekend, nearly five percent more than last year and the most since 2005. (The Memorial Day holiday travel period is defined as Thursday, May 24 to Monday, May 28.) In New England alone, nearly 1.9 million residents are expected to travel – 1.7 million of them by car, despite the highest gas prices since 2014. AAA estimates 36.6 million people will drive to their destinations while 3.1 million will travel by air.

“As a strong drive market, we keep a watchful eye on the consumer confidence index and external factors that can impact spending decisions, including gas prices and weather,” said Evan Smith, president and CEO of Discover Newport. “At the same time, weddings and multi-day ticketed events like the Tennis Hall of Fame Open, the 50<sup>th</sup> annual Newport Music Festival and the already sold-out Newport Folk Festival are just some examples of local happenings that continue to bring a substantial number of visitors to our destination, rain or shine. We’re optimistic that with Mother Nature’s cooperation and Newport’s reputation as an authentic, one-of-a-kind destination, it will be a successful and exceptional summer travel season.”

Smith says summer is arguably the best time to enjoy the spoils of the great outdoors in Newport and its surrounding coastal communities. “Newport is a recreational paradise and now is the time to enjoy boating, sport fishing, kayaking, surfing, stand-up paddleboarding, hiking, cycling, golfing, tennis and so much more,” he said. “With our miles of coastline and ample green spaces, it’s time to get outside and recreate. We invite you to take some well-earned time to relax, unwind and plan your next getaway or vacation in our destination.”

To schedule an interview with Evan Smith in advance of Memorial Day weekend, please contact him directly at 401-845-9113 or esmith@discovernewport.org.

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