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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 25, 2019

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HELPFUL LINKS:

<http://www.kcactf6.org/>

<http://web.kennedy-center.org/education/kcactf/regionalfestivals>

ACVB News: <http://www.abilenevisitors.com/Press-Releases>

College students bring drama to Kennedy Center Theater Festival

ABILENE, Texas – The Abilene Convention Center is center stage this week as hundreds of college students hit town Sunday to participate in the Region 6 Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, which runs through Thursday.

It's the first year for Abilene to host the five-day festival, bringing 860 university theatre students and instructors from all over Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico and Oklahoma together for a chance to network, share knowledge and hone their crafts.

The Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau won the bid to host the event for two years and expects the creative guests to spend more than \$825,000 during their stay.

Regional Chair Mark Burnett, a theatre professor at nearby Angelo State University, says he's happy the nationally affiliated festival is being staged in his neck of the woods.

"I think sharing our part of West Texas is always a positive experience," Burnett said. "I also want to give a shout-out to the ACVB for their help, as well as the local university instructors at McMurry, Abilene Christian University and Hardin-Simmons."

The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival is a national organization that celebrates the educational and creative process of university and college theatre, and this regional festival is one of several throughout the nation. Students can showcase their best stagecraft work at the design and technology expo, and new to the festival this year is a technology lighting lab, sure to enlighten students about industry advances.

Located in the T & P Depot landmark downtown, the Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau leverages local hotel tax into economic development. The ACVB's tourism professionals harness the latest travel trends, research and strategies to bring group and leisure visitors to Abilene. Travelers to the Abilene MSA brought \$455 million into the economy, money spent by happy people who stay in local hotels, shop, dine, and enjoy sports, arts and attractions. Established as an affiliate of the Abilene Chamber of Commerce in 1970, the bureau has improved the quality of life and enhanced the Abilene visitor experience for nearly 50 years.