



Convention and Visitors Bureau

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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ACVB Honors Heroes of Tourism - Travel Matters

ABILENE, Texas -- The Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau kicked off National Travel and Tourism Week with a luncheon in the SoDA District Courtyard Ballroom today honoring meeting and event hosts who brought business to the city during the past year.

The HOT Host Awards launch the weeklong celebration of the 36th National Travel and Tourism Week, May 5- May 11. The long-running tradition was launched by President Ronald Reagan and Congress in 1983 with the goal of educating leaders and the public about the industry's impact.

A Hero of Tourism is anyone who brings an event or meeting to Abilene that required 100 hotel room nights or more. This year's awards honored 69 people whose organizations brought 121 meetings and events to the city during the past 12 months. These meetings and events brought 56,786 visitors to the city and direct spending of \$20.8 million. Abilene hosted a total of 360 meetings during the past year, with an economic impact of \$26.6 million.

"Abilene would not enjoy the success it does without these HOT Hosts," said Nanci Liles, ACVB executive director. "Their work brought a third of the city's meetings and events and 78% of the direct impact this past year. They are one reason Abilene has a reputation as a hospitable community."

Meetings and events contribute to Abilene's \$455-million tourism industry, which supports more than 4000 jobs and contributed to \$12.9 million in local tax revenue in 2017, the most recent numbers announced by the state.

At the luncheon, the "Community Awareness Award" was presented to the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council for the creation of its "Storybook Capital of America" trademark announced in October 2018. The ACAC's photo-friendly arts brand has been a useful tool in ACVB marketing and has garnered positive publicity for Abilene across traditional media and the digital universe.

ACVB board member and volunteer Donna Long-Wolfer was presented the "Hats Off Award" for her tireless service as an ACVB volunteer. The HATS OFF recipient receives a custom hat from local artisan Damon Albus with 5D Hats and Leather.

The 2019 theme for National Travel & Tourism Week is "Travel Matters," and the ACVB will join Texas and the nation to showcase the many reasons travel benefits people and communities. Watch [Visit Abilene](#) on social media that week to see familiar faces show their support to the industry and its impact on the city.

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 produced more than \$12.9 million in local receipts in 2017 bringing happy people to 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.