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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor's Office Releases Latest Abilene Travel Impact Report

ABILENE, TX – The Office of the Governor, Economic Development & Tourism, today released the preliminary data for Texas Travel Impacts by Metro Area, and Abilene's earnings not only grew across all categories, but outperformed impressive overall growth in the state of Texas.

Dean Runyan & Associates reports this good news: Abilene tax revenue collected from travelers during 2017 increased 12 percent to \$12.9 million., up from \$11.5 million in 2016. These gains were fueled by spending on automobile and air travel, as well as lodging and dining.

"This growth demonstrates the important relationship between group and leisure travelers to local profits," said Nanci Liles, Executive Director of the ACVB. "Travelers support our small businesses, fabulous airport, our favorite restaurants, cultural attractions and other infrastructure."

The data show direct spending by travelers contributed \$455 million to the Abilene economy, a hefty 9.3 percent increase. Tourism to Abilene supplied \$27.9 million to state of Texas tax coffers, an increase of 8 percent over the previous year.

The impact report shows slight growth in the number of people employed by tourism in Abilene – 4,000, an increase of 70 jobs. More than half of those jobs are in the hotel and restaurant industry.

"Travel spending affects everyone, even if you work in another industry," Liles said. "Without spending from out-of-town guests, each person in Taylor County would pay \$690 more annually in taxes to maintain our current level of services."

The Governor's Office will release final Texas Travel Impact numbers in July.

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.