



MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: March 8, 2018

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Wicomico County Council Accepts Private Sector Consumer Advertising Partnership Program Grant

Salisbury, MD – Wicomico County Council passed Resolution No. 23-2018, on Tuesday evening, authorizing the County Executive to accept a grant award from the Maryland Department of Commerce, acting through the Maryland Tourism Development Board, in an amount up to \$75,000. The Wicomico County Council authorized the County Executive to execute a grant agreement on behalf of Wicomico County, Maryland and Ms. Kristen Goller, Wicomico County's Tourism Manager.

Wicomico County, in partnership with the Town of Ocean City, Worcester County and the Ward Foundation, was awarded a Private Sector Consumer Advertising Partnership Program Grant through the Maryland Department of Commerce. This matching grant allows for \$75,000 in matching funds and would allow for the advertising and promotion of the 2018 National Folk Festival in out of market locations.

The main objective of this program is to drive overnight attendance to the 3-day National Folk Festival in Salisbury on Sept. 7-9. Advertising will run during summer 2018, with public relations commencing as early as fall 2017. Primary markets include Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York, PA (HLLY) and Philadelphia. Online advertising and promotions will extend to Baltimore and D.C. In addition, the marketing campaign will drive traffic to the festival's website to book overnight stays. All hotels within the partnering jurisdictions will be invited to participate in the event's housing service. The National Folk Festival is expected to draw an attendance of 60,000 – 80,000, require close to 2,500 room nights.

The National Folk Festival campaign will increase tourism tax revenues by bringing overnight and day trippers to Maryland's Eastern Shore (Town of Ocean City, Worcester and Wicomico County) for the National Folk Festival. Overnight visitors will increase the hotel tax received by the State and local jurisdictions. Festival attendance is free, leaving festivalgoers ample opportunity to purchase vendor food and wares as well as contribute to the economy by dining out, visiting area attractions, purchasing gas and other travel related items. In total, the National Folk Festival is expected to bring \$15 - \$30 million dollars in direct spending to the area.

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About the National Folk Festival

Since it was first presented in St. Louis in 1934, the National Folk Festival, the NCTA's flagship event, has celebrated the roots, richness and variety of American culture. Championed in its early years by Eleanor Roosevelt, it was the first event of national stature to present the arts of many nations, races, and languages on equal footing. It was also the first to present to the public musical forms such as the blues, Cajun music, a polka band, Tex-Mex *conjunto*, Peking Opera, and many others. Today, the National is an exuberant traveling festival, produced by the NCTA in partnership with communities around the country that embraces the diverse cultural expressions that define us as a people in the 21st century. <https://www.nationalfolkfestival.com/>

