

Delaware

E C O N O M I C D E V E L O P M E N T O F F I C E



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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE

Delawareans Get Free Day to Visit the First State's Tourism Attractions

"Free to the First State" Celebrates National Tourism Week

Dover, Del. (April 25, 2008) – Visitor attractions in Delaware will open their doors, free of charge, to state residents on Saturday, May 17, 2008 when the popular "Free to the First State" program returns to celebrate the 25th annual National Tourism Week, to be held May 10-18. Promoted nationally by the Travel Industry Association of America, the event celebrates the value and scope of the nation's \$740 billion travel and tourism industry, and the economic and social contributions it brings to the state of Delaware.

This year's theme, "Discover Great American Traditions," encourages travel to American locales and highlights the role that tourism plays in discovering the icons of a destination.

"This is a special day for Delawareans to experience the great variety of attractions that make the First State a special place to live and visit," said Governor Ruth Ann Minner. "On May 17, I encourage all residents to take advantage of this fun and free opportunity."

The state of Delaware attracts more than 8 million visitors each year. Travelers to Delaware spent more than \$3.2 billion in 2006, according to Global Insight, Inc., supporting more than 30,200 direct full-time equivalency jobs and generating \$814 million in wages and salaries. Dollars spent by travelers produce a ripple effect, which is felt through every aspect of our community and beyond.

"The dollars spent by visitors have strengthened Delaware's economy by creating jobs and supporting local businesses from restaurants to retail stores," said Tim Morgan, Director of Tourism. "As we recognize National Tourism Week, it's important to not only thank our visitors for their patronage, but to also celebrate our residents. Delawareans, after all, are our best advocates for promoting Delaware as a premier visitor destination."

Forty-five attractions are participating in the program this year. For free admission to the participating tourism attractions, Delaware residents only need to show proof of residency, such as a driver's license, student ID or a military ID. Fees for tours or special exhibits may apply at some attractions.

The "Free to the First State" campaign is sponsored by the Delaware Tourism Office, the Greater Wilmington Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Kent County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Southern Delaware Tourism. For more information, go to www.visitdelaware.com.

Participating attractions include:

In New Castle County: Buena Vista, Delaware Art Museum, Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, Delaware Historical Society, Delaware Museum of Natural History, Delaware Sports Museum & Hall of Fame, Gardens at DE Center for Horticulture, Greenbank Mill and Philips Farm, Hagley Museum & Library, Historic Houses of Odessa, Iron Hill Museum, New Castle Court House Museum, Old Swedes Church & Hendrickson House Museum, Rockwood Park and the Winterthur Museum & Country Estate.

In Kent County: Air Mobility Command Museum, Biggs Museum of American Art, Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge, Delaware Agricultural Museum & Village, Delaware Archaeology Museum, Delaware Public Archives, Delaware State Police Museum, Delaware Visitor Center and Galleries, Dover Downs Hotel & Casino, First State Heritage Park at Dover, John Dickinson Plantation, Johnson Victrola Museum, Monster Racing Excitement, Museum of Small Town Life, Old State House and Parson Thorne Museum.

In Sussex County: Abbott's Mill Nature Center, DiscoverSea Shipwreck Museum, Elise Williams Doll Collection, Georgetown Train Station Museum, Lewes Historical Society Complex, Milford Museum, Nassau Valley Vineyards, Nutter Marvel Carriage Museum, Old Courthouse – Georgetown, Overfalls Lightship Museum, Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge, Seaford Historical Society Plantation & Museum, Treasures of the Sea Exhibit and the Zwaanendael Museum.

About Delaware Tourism Office

The Delaware Tourism Office, a division of the Delaware Economic Development Office, promotes tourism and economic growth in Delaware. The Office is dedicated to fulfilling the requests and needs of travelers by offering information and resources about Delaware activities, attractions and destinations. For more information, visit the official Delaware Tourism Web site at www.VisitDelaware.com or call toll-free (866) 284-7483.

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