



ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES NEW TOURISM WORKFORCE INITIATIVE FOR STUDENTS

*Program to educate students about the great opportunities available in one of Orange County's
biggest economic drivers*

IRVINE, Calif. (October 8, 2019) – The Orange County Visitors Association (OCVA) today announced that it will launch the “Orange County Tourism Workforce Initiative” in January 2020, a new program created to educate, engage and excite local high school and community college students about career opportunities in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Tourism is a dynamic economic driver in Orange County, generating \$21.3 billion dollars in total economic benefits and sustaining more than 179,000 jobs in 2017. Past and projected growth in the tourism industry, combined with the overall strength of the Orange County economy and very low unemployment, has made growing the tourism workforce an important and challenging priority.

“OCVA’s new initiative is a welcome strategy that will benefit both our students and the tourism industry that is so critical to Orange County’s economic vitality,” said Lisa Bartlett, Chairwoman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors. “I am delighted that the County of Orange is partnering with OCVA in this initiative and look forward to the positive outreach to be achieved, especially with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act youth.”

The centerpiece of the initiative is a wrapped bus that will travel to high schools and community college campuses throughout Orange County starting in January 2020 and extending through December 2020. During campus visits, current industry professionals will share their unique educational backgrounds and compelling career path stories. Participating schools will be provided with resources that can be used to connect students to employers and employment development programs.

“With more than 50 million visitors last year – and more forecasted over the next five years – Orange County’s tourism employers are seeking employees who want full-time, part-time or flexible schedules to accommodate education, family or other priorities and who possess a wide range of interests, skills and experience,” said Jay Burress, President & CEO of Visit Anaheim and Chairman of the Orange County Visitors Association. “There is no better time to build a bridge between tourism businesses in need of motivated and forward-thinking employees and local high school and community college students who seek rewarding employment and, ultimately, successful careers.”

OCVA will deliver the Tourism Workforce Initiative in collaboration with a number of partners each of which recognizes the importance of educating Orange County’s young people about the employment opportunities provided by the tourism and hospitality industry and offering helpful resources as they pursue their own unique career paths.

Current initiative partners include: Visit Anaheim, Anaheim Resort Transportation, Best VIP Chauffeured Worldwide, the California State University System, County of Orange/Orange County Community Resources (WIOA Youth Program), Knott’s Berry Farm, OC Fair & Event Center, Travel Costa Mesa, Visit Huntington Beach, Visit Newport Beach, the Disneyland Resort and Irvine Retail Properties.

“So many of us know first-hand the tremendous opportunities for growth in this industry. While we may have started our careers as lifeguards, golf range attendants and security personnel, we were able to build meaningful and rewarding careers as President & CEO of the US Travel Association (Roger Dow), President & CEO of Visit Anaheim (Jay Burress) and former President of Marriott International (Ed Fuller),” remarked Ed Fuller, President & CEO of the Orange County Visitors Association. “OCVA is launching this initiative to help Orange County students learn about and gain the tools to pursue rewarding careers in tourism and hospitality.”

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About the Orange County Visitors Association

As the county's leading advocate for tourism for nearly 20 years, the Orange County Visitors Association is the only visitor organization that promotes *all* of The OC. Comprised of every Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) in Orange County, as well as attractions, hotels, restaurants, retail establishments and service providers, OCVA is fortunate to represent an endlessly appealing destination – one that is versatile enough to tap into an enormous regional market of 20+ million people and a growing number of global travelers looking for their own unforgettable California experience. For more information about OCVA, please visit: www.visittheoc.com.

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