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Mayor's message: Providence named America's favorite city

November 13, 2014 - Rhode Island

Providence, Rhode Island has another reason to celebrate: this past month it was named the number 1 America's Favorite City by Travel & Leisure Magazine - this is the first time this designation has ever been awarded, and the residents, visitors and businesses who live, work or visit here will agree.

I was proud to share this exciting announcement with local officials - Martha Sheridan, president and CEO of the Providence Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau; Lynn McCormack, director of Providence Arts, Culture & Tourism; James Bennett, executive director of the Providence Office of Economic Development, and others from the business, arts and creative communities. Each of these individuals works in the trenches daily helping to bring rightful attention to our capital city.

By any measure, this award is a great honor for those who live, work and study in our city. The award - voted on by so many people across the country - is testimony to all that we do right, every single day. Our quality of life, our world-class institutions, our quirkiness and independent nature, our fine cuisine, architecture and art, and so much more have earned us this distinction. And to be named first among so many world-class cities is truly an honor each person in Providence and Rhode Island can take pride in.

For business executives, the quality of life is always paramount in any decision on expansion or relocation - so it matters to us in development of commerce, as well as our proud and thriving \$190 million a year creative economy.

The rankings

Travel & Leisure narrowed their rankings to 38 cities nationwide from more than 1,200, in dozens of categories including those in culture, shopping, quality of life, people, food and drink and more. Providence was rated first overall by readers of the widely-read monthly magazine, and ranked second, third, fourth and fifth in a number of other categories.

"So many people are passionate about this city and have been working together for more than a decade to move Providence forward," said Sheridan. "What is interesting to note is the variety of categories in which we excelled - from culinary to arts, architecture to geeks. It shows Providence has a rich and diverse civic life and - most importantly - is a fun place to hang out."

We know beyond anecdote, this ranking is true based upon city data that shows growing interest in our city. Increased hotel occupancy rates, hotel tax revenues and increased convention bookings all support the magazine's findings.

According to Travel & Leisure, "This year's overall America's Favorite Cities winner has a bit of everything: great food, an exciting bar scene and endless curb appeal." Providence was named America's Favorite city followed by: (2) Houston, (3) Kansas City, (4) Minneapolis/St. Paul and (5) Los Angeles. These are cities we are proud to stand with and salute as well.

More than 50,000 votes were cast, rating over 1,200 destinations in up to 67 categories. The final

results reflect a subset of the survey data for 38 cities, based on votes cast during June and July of this year.

Other awards we won include:

- * Best Overall City
- * Best City for Bakeries
- * Best City for Diners
- * Geekiest City in America
- * #2 for Notable Restaurants
- * #2 for Gay-Friendly Vacations
- * #2 for Food Trucks
- * #2 for Pizza
- * #2 for Sandwiches
- * #2 for Being Hip/Cool
- * #2 for Hamburgers
- * #2 for Art Scene
- * #3 for Galleries
- * #3 for Cocktail Bars
- * #3 for Brunch
- * #3 for Coffee
- * #4 for Intelligence
- * #4 for Quirkiness
- * #4 for Wine
- * #5 for Theatre
- * #5 for Architecture
- * #5 for Most Attractive People
- * #5 for Bars
- * #5 for Girlfriend Getaway