14 in ’14 in Atlantic City, NJ: Milestones in a Rapidly Changing Destination

During a challenging period of transition, AC takes a moment to highlight achievements in 2014 including acclaimed events, millions of dollars in new construction, improved hotel occupancy and brighter earnings

ATLANTIC CITY, NJ (January 5, 2015) -- Atlantic City can point to successes in 2014 designed to help strengthen the destination for the future. The change began in early January 2014 with the inauguration of the new Republican Mayor Don Guardian winning in a city where Democrats outnumber Republicans nine to one. Since his swearing in, the mayor along with other elected officials, city and state leaders and the business community have stressed the importance of diversifying the city beyond its sole reliance on gaming and have noted that such significant change takes focus, effort and time.

In 2014, AC faced strong headwinds of negative news with four casino closings, leading to nearly 10,000 jobs lost. AC’s challenges stem from the nationwide expansion of gaming in nearby competitive markets.

In the past year, AC can point to numerous accomplishments from extraordinary city-wide events to significant construction and infrastructure investments to stronger hotel occupancy figures. Here are 14 of the biggest stories from 2014 that shouldn’t be missed:

1. **AC Events and Shows Attract Million-Plus** — Over a million people attended a concert, city-wide event or one of the many world-class acts in Atlantic City in 2014. The return of the Miss America Competition and Atlantic City Air Show, DO AC events, such as the Sand Sculpting World Cup, the Blake Shelton and Lady Antebellum free beach concerts, the Boardwalk Wine Promenade, and the DO AC Tree & Light Fest attracted new and repeating visitors. The economic impact of the beach concerts alone was estimated at $23 million.

2. **Nightlife Rides High** — In January, the Atlantic City Alliance (ACA) launched its DO AC Nightlife campaign with a 45-foot Nightclub on Wheels, which acted as a mobile marketing tool for AC in key markets, including New York, Philadelphia and North Jersey. This activation drew attention to this important and growing industry in AC, bursting with best-in-class bars, lounges, entertainers and DJs.

3. **New Eats and Treats** — An exciting dining scene is even better with the opening of high-profile restaurants, including Guy Fieri’s Chophouse and Buca di Beppo at Bally’s and Martorano’s at Harrah’s as well as dessert dreamland Borgata Baking Company. The Tropicana debuted Wet Willie’s; Wingcraft opened at the Tanger Outlets; Boardwalk Cupcake Company opened at Bally’s; and the Perfectly Innocent Amusement Company Bar and Restaurant on S. Tennessee Ave. quickly became a popular spot. ACA also hosted several “Eat Like A Local” tours for visiting journalists exposing them to the ethnic dining scene and eateries outside the casinos.

4. **Commercial Investments** — Big construction and expansion projects represent quite literally the changing face of AC. The Steel Pier embarked on a multi-phase/multi-year renovation project, including new rides and a dining/bar outlet in 2014 — funded by one of several commercial development grants from the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA). Of the $10

million CRDA grant to Steel Pier, $4 million was appropriated for a new observation wheel by July 2015. Meanwhile, other major commercial CRDA funded development projects are underway in AC:

- Tropicana Casino Resort's $35 million, four-phase façade renovation project, along with room renovations and a new fitness center, with expected completion December 2015.
- Harrah's Conference Center, a $126 million project expected to generate 138,000 incremental room nights, and more than 1,300 jobs in five years, with expected completion by September 2015.
- New construction at The Tanger Outlets/The Walk, including the Bass Pro Shops, set to open in 2015.
- A new conference center at Resorts Casino Hotel.

Additional commercial investments include a new buyer for The Pier Shops at Caesars, who intends to revamp it into an entertainment and shopping complex; Borgata's planned $13 million in renovations for 2015; and Stockton College's purchase of the former Showboat for a city campus.

5. **Residential Investments** — AC's new mayor Don Guardian has stressed the importance of residential investments in the city since he took office. Here are four projects in development:

   - **Boraie Mixed Use:** Groundbreaking is scheduled in 2015 for the initial phase of this 250 residential rental unit complex, featuring first-floor retail spaces, and 50 units set aside for workforce housing ($30 million in CRDA funding).
   - **Procida Rentals:** The CRDA donated the land for this 89 townhome-style rental unit development. Construction started July 2014 and leasing will start in 2015.
   - **BET Investments:** New construction broke ground April 2014 for 16,000 square feet of upscale retail along the Boardwalk. This site is adjacent to Boardwalk Hall and has potential for 10 brand new retail stores and restaurants.
   - **Breakers at AC:** This high-end project will feature 12 luxury, oceanfront residential townhomes along the Boardwalk and a future phase of 140 condo units.

6. **Meet AC** — A private non-profit sales organization with a sole focus on building the convention, meeting and group market for Atlantic City, Meet AC began operations on April 28, and is funded by the CRDA with an annual budget of $8 million. A $4 million ACA convention subsidy has helped Meet AC contract 60,000 room nights with 60,000 more potential new bookings.

7. **Historic Boardwalk Hall** — With new management in 2014 — Global Spectrum — Boardwalk Hall attracted more than 300,000 visitors over 56 events at the arena. Boardwalk Hall event attendees contributed significantly to the local Atlantic City economy while in town for the events as a survey indicated:

   - 62% of ticketholders ate in an Atlantic City restaurant
   - 43% of ticketholders stayed at an Atlantic City hotel

- 42% of ticketholders gambled at an Atlantic City casino
- 54% spent more than $100 on food, gaming, accommodations or retail
- 63% of ticketholders traveled from more than 50 miles away

More change is coming: In late summer, a commitment by the CRDA and top concert promoter Live Nation was forged to bring up to 10 “big name” acts to the Hall in 2015. Already announced for 2015: Fleetwood Mac, Linkin Park, Miranda Lambert, Marc Anthony, Charlie Wilson and Florida Georgia Line.

8. **Boutique Hotels** — Expanding our hotel product are new boutique hotels joining the Sheraton, Courtyard by Marriot and the Chelsea, and offering a chic and unique stay: The Baymont Inn and Suites Atlantic City Madison Hotel, the grand re-opening of the historic 24-story Claridge Hotel, and the newly renovated TRYP by Wyndham.

9. **Summer-long Entertainment on the Beach and Boardwalk** — Dubbed 2014's "Best Beach Boardwalk" by the Travel Channel, AC’s Boardwalk hosted more than 150 free live concerts and shows throughout the summer. The DO AC Summer-long Celebration of the world-famous Atlantic City Boardwalk offered free entertainment options, including beach concerts, the debut of the “Broadway on the Boardwalk” series, daily fitness classes, the Atlantic City Air Show, Chicken Bone Beach Jazz series and the Atlantic City Free Public Library International Series.

10. **Arts Openings and Events** — In its first full year, the Noyes Arts Garage of Stockton College became a full-fledged arts and retail space, kicking off events such as Second Tuesdays. In July, the Garden Pier re-opened for its 101st birthday celebration, as did its Atlantic City Arts Center and Atlantic City Historical Museum. In other developments, a new 27-panel, 675-foot long mural, called **"Journey,"** was completed on the façade of Boardwalk Hall’s West Hall. Meanwhile, the Waterfront AC Sculpture Walk in the Marina district took shape with the installation of dozens of sculptures.

11. **‘DO AC’ Ad Campaign, Year Three** — In April, the ACA launched another $20 million tourism campaign emphasizing summer events. A new $1 million fall 2014 ad campaign was launched for the important Philadelphia market featuring real visitors declaring why they love “their AC.” This campaign was designed to combat the negative perceptions from the casino closings. Visitors from Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York and Pittsburgh were included in the spots.

12. **LGBT AC** — The multi-day LGBT celebration SandBlast moved to Atlantic City from Asbury Park this summer for the first time. In July, Mayor Guardian dedicated the beach across from the re-opened Claridge as a LGBT-friendly beach — with a rainbow flag ceremonially placed at its Boardwalk entranceway. Meanwhile in September the StandOut Expo focused on LGBT-friendly businesses in the county and the Miss’d America Pageant made its grand return in September.

13. **Earnings for Operating Casinos & Occupancy Rates Rise** — There were four casino closings in 2014 resulting in nearly 10,000 jobs lost reflecting a nationwide gaming market experiencing significant change. On the other side of the story, the remaining casino operators showed a more positive third quarter, with profits up 7.2% compared to November 2013 (NJ DGE). Atlantic City Casino hotels’

occupancy rate increased 1.8 percentage points to 81.5% for the nine months ended September 2014 (NJ DGE). This past summer, casino hotel and spas reported approximately 95% occupancy and, according to Smith Travel Research, Atlantic City saw an increase in occupancy and average daily rate this summer compared to last year.

14. **Sports**— Athletes from the world over noticed a destination in transition thanks to new top-notch sporting events. The global long-distance triathlon Challenge series made its AC debut in June, which, along with the return of the Atlantic City Marathon, top-tier boxing events — including Hopkins-Kovalev on November 18 — a city-wide fishing contest with more than $1 million in prizes, a pro volleyball tournament and AHL hockey at Boardwalk Hall, put an emphasis on engaging a large number of participants and spectators.

ATLANTIC CITY 2014 HIGHLIGHTS BY THE NUMBERS

$1 Billion: The Atlantic City Tourism District is poised to attract more than $1 billion of investment in its first five years. To date, the Tourism District has attracted and completed more than $778 million in projects, with another $475 million in process.

1 million: The ACA has supported many citywide events, including beach concerts, Miss America and the Challenge Triathlon, drawing one million incremental visitors.

25 Million: Annually, the number of visitors to Atlantic City.

160,000: Estimated two-day total of people on the beach for the free Blake Shelton (July 30) and Lady Antebellum (August 3) concerts.

$34 million: Cost to build the highly anticipated 86,000 square-foot Bass Pro Shops retail destination, set to open at the Tanger Outlets in 2015.

500 tons: Amount of sand used in the 2014 DO AC Sand Sculpting World Cup, held June 19-July 4.

600,000: The number of people who have experienced the 3D Light & Sound Shows, which debuted in 2012 and play nightly after dusk on Boardwalk Hall's facade with three different shows in rotation.

29: The number of new street-lights installed in the first phase of the long-awaited Pacific Avenue Paving Project, sponsored by the CRDA, which began in June and includes lighting improvements, installation of empty conduit for future signalization control, ADA improvements at each pedestrian crossing, and milling and repaving a 2-mile stretch of Pacific Avenue, from Albany to New Hampshire avenues expected to be completed in 2015.

535: The number of credentialed media who came to AC (which doesn't include media who came on their own to the destination).

About Atlantic City

From sandals to stilettos and foie gras to funnel cakes, Atlantic City offers something for everyone. Enjoy world-class entertainment, dining, shopping, gaming, relaxing on the beach and strolling the historic Boardwalk in the city created to escape the city. For more information visit www.doatlanticcity.com or:

- Facebook – www.facebook.com/DOAtlanticCity
- Twitter – www.twitter.com/VisitAC
- YouTube – www.YouTube.com/DOAC
- Foursquare – www.foursquare.com/VisitAC
- Instagram – www.instagram.com/DOAC
- Pinterest – www.pinterest.com/DOAtlanticCity
- Twitter for Media Only – www.twitter.com/VisitACpress

For destination photos and videos please visit www.doatlanticcity.com/media where dozens of new assets are available for download.

The Atlantic City Alliance was established in 2011 as a private, not-for-profit corporation whose primary mission is to develop and implement a full-scale, broad-based, multi-year marketing program for Atlantic City.

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