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*champions for business*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Tourism spending up in Princeton Region & Mercer County for sixth year in a row**

**Princeton, NJ – March 4, 2016** –Tourism expenditures in Mercer County were \$1.260 billion in 2015, a 4.7 percent increase from 2014 and an all-time high, according to “The Economic Impact of Tourism in New Jersey,” report released today at the New Jersey Conference on Tourism in Atlantic City, NJ.

State and local tourism-related tax receipts for Mercer County increased by 4.2 percent to \$160.5 million, or 3.4 percent of the state wide figure in 2015. Tourism employment in Mercer County grew by 4.6 percent to 12,503 positions in 2015. The total employment impact was 22,840, or 8.4 percent of the county’s employment in 2015, an increase from 22,631 in 2014.

“It is exciting to see the impacts of the Princeton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau’s efforts,” said Patience Purdy, chair of Princeton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau. “We look forward to sustained growth for Mercer County and the Princeton region as we continue to promote its many assets.”

The Princeton Region welcomes more than 2 million visitors annually and includes the municipalities of Cranbury, East Windsor, Ewing, Hamilton, Hightstown, Borough of Hopewell, Hopewell Township, Village of Kingston (part of Franklin Township), Lawrence, Montgomery, Pennington, Plainsboro, Princeton, Robbinsville, Rocky Hill, South Brunswick, Trenton and West Windsor.

“The numbers prove that Mercer County’s draw as a destination continues to grow. Our partnerships with our chambers of commerce and our tourism bureaus have greatly raised our profile,” added Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes. “The Mercer region’s strong transportation network, including the rejuvenated Trenton-Mercer Airport, increases opportunities for visitors to appreciate our beautiful and historic county, and we welcome all to discover Mercer County.”

In 2015, total tourism demand in the State of New Jersey grew to \$43.4 billion, a 3.3% increase. The tourism industry directly supports 318,330 jobs in New Jersey and sustains more than 512,000 jobs including indirect and induced impacts. These jobs represent 9.9 percent of total employment or 1-in-10 jobs in New Jersey.

According to the study released today, in the absence of the state and local taxes generated by tourism, each New Jersey household would need to pay \$1,490 to maintain current governmental revenues.

“The Princeton Mercer Region is an international destination with many visitors from across the globe coming to enjoy our rich education, arts and history assets. As the official destination marketing organization for the

Princeton Mercer Region we actively pursue foreign and domestic travelers through advertisement and trade show activities,” said Peter Crowley, President & CEO of the Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce. “We work hand-in-hand with the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism to position our destination as an intriguing option for visitors. Our rich history, international name recognition, location equidistant between New York and Philadelphia with affordable, first rate accommodations are all key factors in our success.”

The full report can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/state/pdf/2015-nj-economic-impact.pdf>.

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**The Princeton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau** is a destination marketing organization that creates strategic alliances in an effort to drive tourism and increase economic growth and impact for the Princeton Mercer Region and is a program of the Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce. The Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization committed to promoting business growth within the Princeton Region and surrounding areas. With a network of over 1,200 members and associations representing 250,000 employees and billions of dollars in annual revenue, the Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce is proud to be the fastest growing Chamber in Central New Jersey, with its core membership primarily focused in the five central New Jersey counties, in addition to serving members as far away as New York, Philadelphia and Canada. More information about the Chamber can be found at [www.princetonchamber.org](http://www.princetonchamber.org).