



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***MEDIA ALERT***

**Visit Tri-Cities Celebrates “The Faces of Tourism”**

Tri-Cities, Wash. – More than 600 elected officials, community leaders and guests gathered at the Three Rivers Convention in Kennewick to celebrate “The Faces of Tourism” at Visit Tri-Cities’ Annual Meeting & Tourism Showcase on Monday, Nov. 13.

The program kicked off with a fast paced video featuring individuals who have contributed to the thriving tourism industry in the Tri-Cities. The Annual Meeting continued with the election of five new faces to the Visit Tri-Cities Board of Directors: Deborah Barnard, Co-Owner of Barnard Griffin Winery; Gloria Boyce, General Manager of Ben Franklin Transit; Brian Lubanski, General Manager of KAPP/KVEW TV; Brent Miles, President of the Tri-City Dust Devils; and Steve Simmons, Owner of CG Public House & Catering. The newly elected Board Members will provide guidance and leadership during their three-year terms.

Kris Watkins, President & CEO of Visit Tri-Cities, presented the state of the local tourism industry, highlighting visitor spending, increased hotel occupancies and important tourism infrastructure projects that will enhance the visitor experience and increase quality of life for local residents.

The Annual Meeting concluded with the awarding of two Visit Tri-Cities honors:

**Tourism Champion of the Year**

Dave Bryant was recognized as the 2017 Tourism Champion of the Year, Visit Tri-Cities’ most prestigious honor. Bryant served in the City of Richland’s Parks Department for 36 years. During his tenure, Bryant was instrumental in the development of many community infrastructure projects such as the Sacagawea Heritage Trail, the Horn Rapids Sports Complex, Badger Mountain Park and the John Dam Plaza and Hapo Community Stage. He also played an important part in securing the Washington Trails Conference, which took place in October 2016.

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Bryant was selected for the honor by demonstrating leadership, enhancing infrastructure and supporting the efforts of Visit Tri-Cities to elevate the region as a premier tourism destination.

### **Excellence in Service Award**

Red Mountain Trails, which offers guided horseback rides through Red Mountain vineyards, was recognized for providing outstanding customer service with the Excellence in Service award. Red Mountain Trails earned the honor by providing exemplary customer service and creating a memorable visitor experience for their customers.

Immediately following the Annual Meeting was the Tourism Showcase, which featured more than 50 tourism-related businesses and organizations.

For more information about Visit Tri-Cities and its programs, log on to [www.VisitTri-Cities.com](http://www.VisitTri-Cities.com).

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*Visit TRI-CITIES is a non-profit destination marketing organization which provides tourism-related marketing and management services for the cities of Kennewick, Pasco and Richland in southeastern Washington State.*