



Press Release

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AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION NAMES AMELIA EARHART FESTIVAL ONE OF NORTH AMERICA'S 100 BEST EVENTS FOR 2014 Event is a Ticket to Fun and to Critical Group Tourism Dollars

(Atchison, Kansas, September 6, 2013) - The American Bus Association (ABA) announced today that the Amelia Earhart Festival, to be held on July 18-19, 2014, has been designated as one of the Top 100 Events in North America for 2014 by an experienced expert tourism industry selection committee. Inclusion in the Top 100 list, published as a supplement to the September/October issue of *Destinations* magazine, indicates that Amelia Earhart Festival offers excellent entertainment value to both tour groups and individual travelers from around the world, according to ABA.

With the release of the American Bus Association's 2014 Top 100 Events in North America, ABA celebrates 32 years of the program. What began as a way for motorcoach operators to incorporate new product into their itineraries has grown to one of the most sought-after lists by travel professionals, motorcoach operators and the general public. "The attractiveness of the Amelia Earhart Festival as a don't-miss entertainment value is only part of why its selection this year is such a distinction for the Amelia Earhart Festival," said Peter J. Pantuso, CTIS, ABA's president and CEO.

"The real news here is that Amelia Earhart Festival has been recognized as a potential magnet for tourism dollars, at a time when reenergizing domestic tourism is so important to our spirit and our economy. The honor gives Atchison, KS an important boost in visibility among professional tour planners." According to studies completed by researchers at The George Washington University and Dunham and Associates, one overnight visit by a motorcoach group can leave from US \$5,000 to more than US \$11,000 in a local destination's economy. Those dollars are spent on lodging, meals, admissions, fees, shopping, souvenirs, services and local taxes. "Motorcoach groups spend more and stay longer," Pantuso said. "That's why Amelia Earhart Festival is truly a local economic asset. There is no better way to jump-start tourism than to attract motorcoach groups to a great event and convince them to extend their stay."

"We're very excited for the designation as one of the top events of 2014! The Amelia Earhart Festival has something for everyone, so we think that helps us be an attractive selection. We work very hard to entice groups to include Atchison because we realize the impact they have on our economy. This designation is a great tool as we market Atchison for the Amelia Earhart Festival as well as our many other events," said Jacque Pregont, President of the Atchison Area Chamber of Commerce.

"We market extensively on a regional basis, but to be able to reach out more to a national audience is tremendous! We're excited about more bus tours attending the Amelia Earhart Festival so we can share her story, but also the many other stories of our heritage.

ABA's 2014 Top 100 Events Selection Committee selected Amelia Earhart Festival from hundreds of event nominations submitted by ABA members. Judges considered the event's broad appeal, its accessibility to motorcoaches and skill at handling large groups, and a variety of other relevant criteria.

The Top 100 Events list is available online at <http://www.buses.org/News-Publications/Top-100>

The mission of the Atchison Area Chamber of Commerce is to focus on the quality of life, attraction, growth and retention of jobs and businesses in Atchison County. Established in 1919, the Chamber continues to be the leading business organization of the community. With the support of over 300 member investors, the Chamber delivers programs and services that make our community a better place to live, work, raise a family and visit.

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For more information about the Atchison Area Chamber of Commerce and our exciting attractions and events, please call Jacque Pregont at 913-367-2427 or 800-234-1854, or e-mail Jacque at president@atchisonkansas.net.