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Contact: Alexandra Hernandez
alex@culturalheritagesummit.com | 786-507-8500, ext. 905

**The 2nd Annual Synergy Summit for Cultural & Heritage Tourism Takes Place in
Greater Fort Lauderdale on May 9-11, 2019 During National Travel & Tourism Week
EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION ENDS MARCH 31**

***This Year's Theme is Cultural & Heritage Tourism as an Economic Driver for Fueling
Communities, Small Businesses and the Hospitality & Tourism Industry***

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL | March 18, 2019: The Cultural Heritage Alliance for Tourism, Inc. (CHAT) in partnership with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau (GFLCVB) will present the 2nd Annual Synergy Summit for Cultural & Heritage Tourism (CHAT Summit) scheduled for May 9-11, 2019 (during National Travel & Tourism Week) at the Signature Grand Conference Center located in Davie, FL. Early Bird Registration is \$199 and ends on March 31st; General Registration is \$299. Register today at www.culturalheritagesummit.com. The host hotel is the beautiful Riverside Hotel on Las Olas Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale and discounted rates for Summit attendees are available through April 9, 2019.

The two-day Summit is the place where more than 200 hospitality & tourism industry leaders, small businesses, cultural arts institutions and artists will gather to communicate and explore synergy for collaboration as well as form strategic partnerships that strengthens local tourism ecosystems. The Summit will showcase cultural & heritage tourism assets as exhibitors and cultural performances.

This year's Opening Plenary Keynote Speaker is Roger Dow, President & CEO, U.S. Travel Association discussing the role of his organization in supporting the growth of cultural & heritage tourism in the U.S. In addition, other national cultural heritage tourism heavy hitters speaking at the Summit include Cheryl Hargrove, President, HTC Partners, Cultural Heritage Tourism Consultant & author; Richard Peterson, President, U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism Marketing Council; and Laura Mandala, Mandala Research, who will present a snapshot of the African American Travel Market.

The Summit's goal is to connect tourism-related small businesses, attractions, local artists with hospitality, travel & tourism professionals. The Summit provides professional development for industry professionals to gain more knowledge and exposure about little known cultural & heritage assets and the rich culture & history of heritage neighborhoods and multicultural communities. Hospitality & Tourism leaders will learn how to leverage cultural heritage tourism (the fastest growing segment of the travel industry) to drive tourists and profits to their businesses. In addition, city planners & cultural agencies from municipalities and county governments will gain strategies to help plan their cultural & heritage tourism landscapes and programs to market and attract visitors to their destinations.

"Last year's inaugural Summit was an incredible display of partnerships, diversity and industry inclusiveness focused on creating broader engagement and opportunities for small businesses, local artists and attractions in their local tourism ecosystems. Building on the momentum of the 2018 Summit, our intent is to bring together individuals of diverse backgrounds and business interests, expand conversations about cultural & heritage tourism across the State of Florida and nationally, as well as educate attendees about how culture and history are key factors in revenue generation for destinations and small businesses," says Stephanie M. Jones, President & CEO of Cultural Heritage Alliance for Tourism, Inc. and Summit Producer.

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As demographics continue to change in Florida and across the nation, Summit participants will gather in an inviting environment where they will gain a broader understanding of cultural & heritage tourism. In addition, they will learn best practices and research to better cater to the interest of visitors traveling to their destinations seeking off the beaten path experiences offered through cultural & heritage tourism.

"This is an ideal time to present The Summit as an opportunity to help small businesses understand what tourism is about and the tremendous financial benefits that tourism can drive into their businesses as well as creating jobs for locals. The GFLCVB is excited about partnering with CHAT for a second year to present this unique platform that brings together tourism professionals with small businesses and attractions for exploring collaboration and business development opportunities in the tourism industry," says Albert Tucker, Vice President, Multicultural Business Development, Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB.

A dynamic line-up of local and regional speakers will lead panel conversations on tourism topics such as **The Buck Starts Here! A Chat with State Legislators Who Influence How & Where Tourism Dollars are Spent**. Confirmed panelists include State Representative Bobby DuBose, State Representative Barbara Watson and State Representative Dotie Joseph. The panel will be moderated by Stacy Ritter, President & CEO, Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The Summit will introduce several **Travel & Tourism Innovators: Changing the Game, Diversifying the Industry and Shifting Perspectives**. Summit attendees will hear from the first African American to open a hostel in the U.S. (Deidre Mathis); the first person to introduce food tourism to the Miami market (Grace Della); the youngest hoteliers to open a Bed & Breakfast in a heritage neighborhood (Akino West & Jamila Ross); and the man who has garnered a Facebook following of almost half a million Black world travelers (Reggie Cummings).

Other hot talk tourism topics include:

- Achieving Success & Sustainability in Cultural & Heritage Tourism
- Build It Right & They Will Come! How to Build International & National Audiences through Local Cultural Events
- Diversity & Disparity in the Hospitality & Tourism Industry
- The Story Keepers: How Cultural Institutions are Preserving the Plights & Prevails of Our People
- The Business of Funding & Marketing Cultural Tourism: Opportunities for the Creative Economy
- The Role & Importance of Multicultural Tourism to CVBs for Engaging Local Communities in the Industry

During both days of the Summit, the **Summit Expo featuring an Artists' Village** presented by ArtServe will showcase the works of some of South Florida's top artists. Local attractions and a variety of tourism-related businesses will exhibit.

On **Friday, May 10, 2019**, the **Best of the Best Tourism Power Players Awards Luncheon** will acknowledge and honor the Best of the Best in tourism including hotel concierges, tourism advocate, meeting planners, tour operators, artists, tour guides, travel agents, city/county cultural agencies and tourism-related businesses.

On, **Saturday, May 11, 2019**, Summit attendees will participate in a cultural heritage tour showcasing cultural assets and the rich history throughout the Greater Fort Lauderdale area.

For more information, please visit www.culturalheritagesummit.com or call 866-859-3930, ext. 905.