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**INDEPENDENCE HALL, LIBERTY BELL CENTER TO REOPEN FRIDAY–SUNDAY
DURING FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PARTIAL SHUTDOWN**
VISIT PHILADELPHIA® Funds Reopening Of Iconic Historic Sites, December 28-30, 2018

PHILADELPHIA, December 27, 2018 – Visitors to Philadelphia, the United States’ birthplace, over the long holiday weekend will be able to tour Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell Center, despite the partial federal government shutdown. Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney, VISIT PHILADELPHIA® President and CEO Jeff Guaracino and Superintendent of Independence National Historical Park (INHP) Cynthia MacLeod announced today that Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell Center will reopen Friday, December 28 through Sunday, December 30, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with National Park Service rangers onsite to provide interpretation. No tickets will be required.

The week between Christmas and New Year’s Day is a busy time of the year for INHP. The Independence Visitor Center, operated independently of INHP, expects between 70,000 and 100,000 visitors between Christmas and New Year’s Day. An estimated 25,000 visitors typically visit Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell Center over the long weekend (Friday through Sunday) before the New Year. Since the partial federal government shutdown began on December 22, 2018, visitors have been not been able to tour Independence Hall, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, or the Liberty Bell Center. City and tourism officials felt it was important to keep these iconic historic sites open.

VISIT PHILADELPHIA is donating approximately \$32,000 to the National Park Service to cover the costs to keep Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell Center open for the three days. Tourism is an important part of Philadelphia’s economy. In 2017, [43.3 million people visited](#) the Philadelphia region, generating a total of \$11.5 billion—or \$31.5 million per day—in economic impact. (*Source: Econsult Solutions, Inc.*) VISIT PHILADELPHIA announced the sites’ reopening through an integrated marketing push that includes public relations outreach, social media posts, coverage on its websites and advertisements on billboards and bus shelters.

The following historic sites and attractions on or around Independence Mall are not impacted by the partial federal government shutdown and will remain open through the holiday weekend and beyond:

- Independence Visitor Center
- African American Museum in Philadelphia

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- Betsy Ross House
- Christ Church
- Franklin Square
- Independence Seaport Museum
- Museum of the American Revolution
- National Constitution Center
- National Liberty Museum
- National Museum of American Jewish History

Valley Forge National Historical Park has also reopened through December 31, with the Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board funding the reopening of the visitor center (9 a.m.-5 p.m.), and the Encampment Store's operators funding its opening. Park gates are opening and closing according to their regular schedule to give visitors access to park grounds, roads and trails.

Follow the hashtag **#OpeninPHL** on Twitter for news from the attractions. Go to visitphilly.com for additional visitor information.

Official quotes:

Jim Kenney, Mayor of Philadelphia

“While the federal government’s partial shutdown continues to negatively impact services nationwide, I’m pleased that VISIT PHILADELPHIA is making it possible for people to continue to enjoy some of our city’s most historic landmarks. These sites represent the democratic ideals that our country was founded on, and I encourage residents and visitors to use this as an opportunity to reflect on our past and our future.”

Jeff Guaracino, President & CEO, VISIT PHILADELPHIA

“Leisure tourism to Philadelphia is a big part of our regional economy, and thousands of visitors want to see our iconic historic sites. We felt that it was important during this very busy holiday week to make Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell Center available to our visitors and residents.”

Cynthia MacLeod, Superintendent, Independence National Historical Park

“The National Park Service appreciates our partners in the tourism sector who have donated funds to open the Liberty Bell Center and Independence Hall.”

James Cuorato, President & CEO, Independence Visitor Center Corporation

“The Independence Visitor Center Corporation is thrilled that Philadelphia’s two most iconic attractions will be open during this busy weekend. The Visitor Center will offer extended hours this weekend and will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. to provide visitors with all of the information they need to fully enjoy their time in Philadelphia.”

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VISIT PHILADELPHIA® is our name and our mission. As the region's official tourism marketing agency, we build Greater Philadelphia's image, drive visitation and boost the economy.

On Greater Philadelphia's official visitor website and blog, visitphilly.com and uwishunu.com, visitors can explore things to do, upcoming events, themed itineraries and hotel packages. Compelling photography and videos, interactive maps and detailed visitor information make the sites effective trip-planning tools. Along with Visit Philly social media channels, the online platforms communicate directly with consumers. Travelers can also call and stop into the Independence Visitor Center for additional information and tickets.

Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos and high-definition B-roll of Greater Philadelphia, visit the Photos & Video section of visitphilly.com/mediacenter.