

Restaurant Week in A.C. Cut Short, but Will Bring People Back to the City

For immediate release

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Galloway, N.J. – Restaurant Week 2020 in Atlantic City was cut short by statewide COVID-19 restrictions. However, a report released today by the Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality & Tourism School of Business at Stockton University shows visitors would come back for the event in 2021.

Restaurant Week, scheduled to run from March 8-13 with some restaurants extending through March 20, ended March 16 due to the statewide Executive Order that closed restaurants.

The Restaurant Week report was commissioned by the New Jersey Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) and Atlantic City Restaurant Week Committee.

“Atlantic City Restaurant Week continues to have a positive economic impact in the region and is a successful visitation driver for the destination,” said CRDA Director of Communications & Marketing Larry Sieg. “This data shows a growing draw from outside our local market, which increases overnight stays and allows us to build momentum year over year.

As in previous years, patrons of Atlantic City's annual Restaurant Week were surveyed regarding their personal characteristics and experience of the event. Survey responses were collected over the course of one week, March 8–13, and 212 responses were collected via an online survey.

Key findings include:

- Seven of 10 Restaurant Week attendees were returning patrons
- 38% of first-time patrons heard about Restaurant Week from the Restaurant Week Website, 29% from Friends/Relatives.
- Eight out of 10 Restaurant Week attendees said the event factored into their decision to visit Atlantic City.
- 68% of all Restaurant Week patrons were 41 or older, one-third were between the ages of 21 and 40.
- 24% of Restaurant Week patrons traveled more than 50 miles to attend 83% of patrons were from New Jersey, 7% from Pennsylvania and 4% from New York

- Among Restaurant Week patrons who were not residents of Atlantic City, 3 out of 10 said they were staying in the Atlantic City area overnight.
- 57% of respondents rated Restaurant Week 5 out of 5 for value.
- 87% of 2020 patrons said they would return in 2021.

“Restaurant Week is popular among locals, but these results indicate that it also drives visitation to Atlantic City,” said Jane Bokunewicz, coordinator of LIGHT. “With almost a quarter of respondents traveling more than 50 miles and 30% of non-residents staying overnight, this is clearly an event that could continue to increase visitation in a relatively slow time of year.”

Due to the shortened event, it is not possible to completely compare this year’s report to previous years. Based on the limited responses, patrons who responded to the 2020 survey had visited more restaurants than comparative samples in 2019 and 2018, traveled in slightly larger groups than in previous years and spent an average \$101.02 per restaurant visit, more than 2019 (\$95.36) and 2018 (\$94.28).

Restaurant spending is also just one facet of the economic activity generated by Restaurant Week every year. Visitors may come to Atlantic City for Restaurant Week, but according to the survey they also gamble, shop and take advantage of all the resort's other amenities. The Restaurant Committee's efforts to promote the event also have the added benefit of promoting Atlantic City as a year-round destination for fine dining.

The full report can be viewed at stockton.edu/LIGHT and njcrda.com

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Contact:

Diane D’Amico

Director of News and Media Relations

Galloway, N.J. 08205

Diane.D’Amico@stockton.edu

609-652-4593

609-412-8069

stockton.edu/media