NEWS RELEASE | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

Contact: Hannah Toufas, Marketing & Communications Specialist
434.793.1753

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Visit SoSi earns international recognition for tourism initiatives

Visit SoSi, the regional tourism program for Danville and Pittsylvania County, has earned two International Economic Development Council Excellence (IEDC) Awards, recognizing efforts to showcase the region, strengthen local tourism advocacy, and connect residents and visitors with the experiences that make Southside Virginia unique.

The IEDC Excellence Awards celebrate impactful projects and initiatives from communities around the world across 26 categories. This year, Visit SoSi received recognition for two initiatives that are helping tell the story of the region and expand awareness of Danville and Pittsylvania County as a destination:

- **Gold Award, Digital Media:** Visit SoSi Fridays
- **Gold Award, Regional or Cross-Border Partnership:** I Am Tourism Ambassador Program

Visit SoSi Fridays is a weekly video series produced through a partnership between the Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism and River City TV. Hosted by Tourism Manager Lisa Meriwether and City of Danville Multimedia Manager Mark Aron, the series takes viewers across Danville and Pittsylvania County to discover the attractions, restaurants, events, outdoor recreation opportunities, and hidden gems that make the region worth exploring.

Launched in 2024, the I Am Tourism Ambassador Program trains residents and community stakeholders to become informed advocates for the Visit SoSi region. Created to build greater awareness of local tourism offerings and strengthen community pride, the program combines education, interactive itinerary-building, guided tours, and firsthand experiences. Participants are encouraged to see the community through a visitor's eyes, discover experiences they may not have known existed, and become champions who can share what makes Danville and Pittsylvania County a special place to visit.

"These awards reflect the work we are doing to tell Southside Virginia's story in ways that connect with both visitors and the people who call this region home," said Tourism Manager Lisa

Meriwether. “Some of our greatest tourism ambassadors are our own residents, and programs like Visit SoSi Fridays and I Am Tourism give them new ways to discover, experience, and share what makes Danville and Pittsylvania County special.”

The recognition builds on Visit SoSi’s efforts to position Danville and Pittsylvania County as a welcoming destination while using tourism as a tool to support local businesses, strengthen community pride, and encourage exploration throughout the region.

In addition to Visit SoSi’s two awards, the City of Danville received a Bronze Award in the Economic Equity and Inclusion category for Puertas Abiertas, an initiative connecting small, women-owned, minority-owned, and Hispanic businesses with resources, community partners, and networking opportunities.

The City of Danville was recognized during the 2026 IEDC Annual Conference in New Orleans, in October 2026. To learn more about the IEDC Excellence Awards, visit www.iedconline.org/pages/excellence-awards.



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About Visit SoSi

Southside Virginia is one of Virginia’s rising tourism success stories, earning recognition as the Commonwealth’s fastest-growing destination for visitor spending for two years in a row. Led by the Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism, Visit SoSi serves as the official destination marketing organization for the City of Danville and Pittsylvania County. Through innovative marketing, media outreach, partnerships, events, and visitor-focused experiences, Visit SoSi inspires travelers to discover everything the region has to offer while supporting local economic development. Learn more at www.VisitSoSi.com