



Newport News Tourism
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Newport News Tourism Celebrates National Travel and Tourism Week, May 19-25

Tourism Appreciation Luncheon Held to Honor Award Winners

Newport News, VA, May 28, 2024 – The Newport News Tourism Professional of the Year Award and the Breakthrough Experiences Award were presented during the annual Newport News Tourism Appreciation Luncheon May 21 at the Newport News Marriott at City Center.

The luncheon was hosted by Newport News Tourism in celebration of National Travel and Tourism Week and included the presentation of two \$500 scholarships by the Newport News Hospitality Association.

The 2023 Gregory Cherry Tourism Professional of the Year Award was presented by City Manager Alan Archer to Enrique Linares. The honoree is the Kitchen Supervisor with Second Street Bistro in Newport News.

According to the nomination letter, Linares “exemplifies the qualities of a true tourism professional: dedication, innovation, leadership, and a genuine commitment to creating an unforgettable dining experience for guests. His contributions to culinary excellence over the past two decades are truly deserving of recognition.”

The Gregory Cherry Award is given annually to a hospitality industry employee who demonstrates superior customer service while also promoting travel and tourism in the city. It was named in memory of Greg Cherry, a former travel counselor at the Newport News Visitor Center and owner of the James A. Fields House, who died in 2007.

The Breakthrough Experiences Award, created last year, is presented to an attraction, restaurant, establishment, or entrepreneur who goes above and beyond to build new opportunities in Newport News. This year’s award was presented to Chef Kenny Sloane, owner of three Newport News restaurants and the soon-to-be opened Chef’s Market Food Hall & Butcher Shop, a 17,000 square-foot marketplace at Mariners Row and Merchants Walk in City Center.

As noted by City Manager Alan Archer when presenting the award, Sloane “isn’t just creating a dining destination — he’s crafting unforgettable breakthrough experiences for both visitors and residents alike with the opening of Chef’s Market Food Hall.”

The two \$500 scholarships given by the Newport News Hospitality Association (NNHA) were presented to Mia Goodrich, a soon-to-be graduate of Achievable Dream High School, and to Laila Patel, a graduating senior at Grafton High School.

In addition to the awards luncheon, a daylong Familiarization Tour of Newport News attractions was held May 23 for front-line personnel and local visitor center staff members, along with regional hospitality industry professionals. The following day, the East Coast Gateway Welcome Center held a “Thank the Visitor Day” to greet visitors and thank them for traveling. Earlier in the month, Norfolk International Airport held a similar event.

To engage with residents and highlight the places that make Newport News special, the Tourism Office created a crossword puzzle contest to test locals’ knowledge of the various cultural experiences available in the city. All correct entries will be placed in a random drawing to award two prize packages – each valued at more than \$1,000 – on June 7.

For additional information about National Travel and Tourism Week, contact Janie Tross, Newport News Visitor Center Manager, at 757-886-7777 or by e-mail at trossjm@nnva.gov.

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Photo #1: City Manager Alan Archer (l), former Vice Mayor Sandra Cherry (c), with Enrique Linares (r), the 2023 Gregory Cherry Tourism Professional of the Year.

Photo #2: Chef Kenny Sloane with his Breakthrough Experiences Award (l) and City Manager Alan Archer (r).

Photo #3: Scholarship winner Mia Goodrich (l) w/NNHA president Ivey Hawkins (r).

Photo #4: Scholarship winner Laila Patel (l) w/NNHA president Ivey Hawkins (r).