

UPDATE

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City of Little Rock Welcomes Miss Arkansas Scholarship Pageant

Little Rock, Ark. (August 31, 2016) – The Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau (LRCVB) and the City of Little Rock are thrilled to welcome the Miss Arkansas Scholarship Pageant to their new home in the Robinson Center.

"We are thrilled to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Miss Arkansas Pageant in our new home, Little Rock and the newly renovated Robinson Center where the 80th Miss Arkansas will be crowned on June 17, 2017," said Jessie Ward Bennett, Miss Arkansas Pageant Executive Director. "We look forward to developing a long-term relationship with Little Rock and Central Arkansas. We want the Little Rock metropolitan area to become a part of our annual festivities and celebrate Miss Arkansas year-round."

As Arkansas's capital city and cultural core, Little Rock is home to a myriad of attractions, including the iconic Robinson Center, the pageant's new home. This 1939 historic landmark is closing in on a 28-month, \$70-million-dollar renovation and expansion. The integrity of the exterior has been preserved, while the interior will boast a new state-of-the-art performance hall, and a new conference center addition with an outdoor terrace overlooking the scenic Arkansas River.

"As Little Rock becomes the host of this popular annual event, LRCVB looks to forge a long-lasting partnership with pageant representatives as we plan to showcase the city to its contestants, and their family and friends," said LRCVB President & CEO, Gretchen Hall. "In the coming days, Robinson Center will soon be a world-class facility, and that has helped attract this world-class event," she added.

"We are thrilled to have this opportunity to host the Miss Arkansas Pageant," said Little Rock Mayor, Mark Stodola. "This organization represents the very best of our state. As a nationwide leader in educational scholarships, it is a testament to the commitment and investment in our

future leaders,” he added. “I’m confident these women will embrace our city and all we have to offer.”

"We are extremely grateful for the long tenure in which the Miss Arkansas Pageant was held in Hot Springs. Multiple generations of Arkansans have collectively seen fifty-eight women crowned Miss Arkansas in Hot Springs, two of whom subsequently became Miss America," said Bennett. "As one of those fifty-eight women, I have a special place in my heart for the Hot Springs-based organization that provided unbelievable opportunities to me. However, we have been faced with tighter restrictions for the past few years with regard to the Miss America competition. We had to move the pageant to an early to mid-June timeframe, and scheduling conflicts prevented us from remaining in Hot Springs," she added.

The 2017 Miss Arkansas Pageant will be held at Robinson Center in June. The adjoining Doubletree Hotel, going through its own multi-million-dollar renovation, will serve as the host hotel for contestants and pageant officials. The LRCVB is already working to develop a week-long plan of engaging experiences for contestants during their stay.

Additional Information:

Miss Arkansas Scholarship Foundation - The Miss Arkansas Scholarship Foundation is a *volunteer-staffed*, registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and the sole fundraising entity for the Miss Arkansas Pageant. For decades, the Pageant has maintained a tradition of empowering young women to achieve their personal and professional goals while providing a forum in which to express their opinions, talents and intelligence.

LRCVB Mission - The Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau (LRCVB) is the official destination marketing organization of Little Rock. LRCVB is charged with improving the quality of life and the local economy by bringing visitors, meetings, conventions and events to the city; and serving customers, visitors and delegates with courtesy, knowledge and skill.

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