



For Immediate Release

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American Pyrotechnics Association Predicts Independence Day to Ignite a Summer of Recovery for the Shuttered Professional Fireworks Entertainment Industry

Bethesda, MD, June 24, 2021 – The professional fireworks entertainment industry was essentially shutdown when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the nation last year. Of the 16,000 Independence Day fireworks displays that typically occur annually nationwide in cities and towns, only a scant few occurred in 2020, according to the American Pyrotechnics Association (APA). During the past 16 months, the 150 small family businesses, many of which are multi-generational, that comprise the American professional fireworks entertainment industry, fought for survival while states, counties and municipalities assessed when communities could relax COVID restrictions and reopen for business.

“With the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines and the ease of pandemic restrictions across most of the nation, Americans are beginning to resume their pre-pandemic lives and are ready to celebrate. As such, it appears that this will not only be a summer of freedom from the pandemic but also a summer of recovery for the shuttered professional fireworks entertainment industry, beginning with Independence Day celebrations,” said APA Executive Director, Julie L. Heckman.

As America gets ready to celebrate her 245th birthday, approximately 70% of the Independence Day celebrations nationwide are scheduled to return and many of those fireworks displays will be bigger and better than pre-pandemic levels. “Communities are ready to celebrate not just their pride and patriotism but also their independence from the virus,” added Heckman.

Nashville will host the largest live Independence Day event in the country on July 4. *Let Freedom Sing! Music City July 4th*. Showcasing the biggest fireworks display in the City’s history, live music from Nashville Symphony, Country Superstar Brad Paisley and more. Everyone involved in the planning and execution of these large-scale live events is excited to be back to work and optimistic that Independence Day is just the beginning for their businesses to begin to recover from an extremely long hiatus and period of financial hardship.

“We couldn’t be more thrilled to be back in Nashville and supporting this massive live event and lighting up the stages and sites downtown in this exciting celebration of our great nation,” said Michael T. Strickland, Chair and Founder, Bandit Lites, Inc. “It’s always an honor to provide our lighting expertise to any live event or concert in America, but this year we are especially grateful to be part of the largest live Independence Day celebration, marking a major turn in not only how the pandemic impacted our business operations but for all the shuttered venues and stages that have struggled to hang on without any work for such a long period of time. We owe a debt of gratitude to Senators Marsha Blackburn and Bill Hagerty for their strong leadership and advocacy to help not only live entertainment businesses in Tennessee but across the country in supporting congressional COVID relief aid including additional Paycheck Protection Program funding and Save Our Stages grants. They truly understand and appreciate the importance of live entertainment, the millions of jobs at stake, and preserving the venues that host these events for the public,” added Strickland.

Lansden Hill, President and CEO of Pyro Shows of Tennessee, who has produced the Nashville Fourth of July fireworks display for the past 34 years, said he is especially honored to produce Nashville’s first post-pandemic fireworks display. “Nashville is very special to me and represents a city that truly cares about showcasing the best entertainment that *Music City* can offer. For my team at Pyro Shows, we are ecstatic to be back to work, and we

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plan to deliver a fireworks display that is not only bigger and better than in the past, but like no other. We've all had such a difficult year – questioning whether our business would survive - and we are excited to help Nashville, my home state of Tennessee, and all of America celebrate being on the other side of this pandemic,” said Hill.

“Nashville is bracing for a record-breaking crowd this July 4th,” said Butch Spyridon, President and CEO, Nashville Convention and Visitors Corp. “Tourism is one of Nashville’s largest industries and this is our biggest annual one-day event, so it holds great significance after having to cancel last year. We’re thrilled to be able to welcome everyone back for a long-awaited celebration of both our country and city with a fun, family friendly, entertainment-packed night,” Spyridon added.

Like Nashville, Independence Day community celebrations across the nation are planned for this Fourth of July from Southern California to the Mid-Western States of Missouri, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Ohio, to the Eastern States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Rhode Island, New York, and Connecticut. America will be celebrating by waving Old Glory and once again gathering for large community events bringing much needed work to the professional fireworks entertainment industry and a sense of normalcy to communities large and small.

With the return of these Independence Day celebrations, the small family businesses comprising the professional fireworks entertainment industry are expelling a huge sigh of relief after the lengthy pandemic shutdown and extreme loss of income. According to James Souza, President and CEO of Pyro Spectaculars, a six-generation family business in Rialto, CA, his company is rebounding and operating at about 50% of its annual revenue and 75% of revenue for its Fourth of July events. “God Bless America! We’re back! 2020 is gone, and in the rearview mirror,” said Souza.

Stephen Vitale, President and CEO of Pyrotecnico, a fifth-generation family business in New Castle, PA, also reported that his business is finally on a path to recovery. “It’s been an incredibly challenging year for the fireworks entertainment industry and the entire country. We’re happy to get back to work and help communities across our nation come together again to celebrate,” said Vitale.

About the American Pyrotechnics Association

The APA is the leading safety and trade association of the fireworks industry representing manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers, suppliers, and professional display companies. Founding in 1948, APA’s mission is to encourage safety in the design and use of all types of fireworks, to provide industry information and support to its members, and to promote responsible regulation of the fireworks industry. Additional information about the fireworks industry can be found on APA’s website at <http://www.americanpyro.com>

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