Tempe, Arizona
Media Kit

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tempe: unexpected fun in the heart of Phoenix

Tempe, Ariz. – Tempe, Ariz., a vibrant urban oasis in the heart of Metropolitan Phoenix, exudes its own personality, separate and apart from its neighboring cities. Refreshingly offbeat, this college town, home to Arizona State University (ASU), one of the largest universities in the country, welcomes couples, families, singles, and its beloved college crowd to enjoy the spirited lifestyle. Show up in jeans and a t-shirt, bike shorts or business attire, and you'll feel like you fit right in.

Easily accessible via four freeways and METRO light rail, Tempe is also just 10 minutes from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. When visitors arrive, they find unexpected fun—most of it in one concentrated area downtown and near the university: lively special events on weekends, Broadway shows and other arts and culture, water recreation, Sonoran Desert hikes and trails, affordable shopping, globally influenced dining experiences, an energetic nightlife, and sunshiny days—more than 330 of them each year.

Crowds line up for one of the longest-standing, juried arts festivals in the state, Tempe Festival of the Arts. It happens both in the spring and fall, attracting people from all over the Southwest and beyond. Oktoberfest at Tempe Town Lake, the Circle K New Year's Eve Block Party on Mill Avenue, and P.F. Chang's Rock 'n' Roll Arizona Marathon and ½ Marathon are among the many other special events that draw a wide audience and present a taste of Tempe's welcoming vibe and hospitable spirit. To sample more of the city's lively special events, you can attend an ASU football game at Sun Devil Stadium or a spring training game at Tempe Diablo Stadium.

Broadway shows offer the best example of Tempe's cultural arts flair. They take place at one of the finest theaters in the state, ASU Gammage, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright himself. ASU also houses more than 20 free museums and galleries, showcasing everything from contemporary art to science to historic collections. Equally special is the multi-use Tempe Center for the Arts. With its art gallery, theaters, gift shop and meeting space, this venue is a scenic destination that overlooks Tempe Town Lake.

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In fact, only a progressive town like Tempe would think to build a lake in its city center. Surrounded by condos, business complexes, an artistic pedestrian bridge, a popular park, a light rail bridge and marina, Tempe Town Lake is the site of daily water recreation. Joggers run through the park. Families picnic in the grass. Couples play on stand-up paddle boards or share a boat ride at the location of many of the city's outdoor events.

Downtown Tempe's Mill Avenue District is even a great place for a hike up iconic "A" Mountain. Part of the Sonoran Desert right in Tempe's backyard, this is a popular jaunt for ASU students who whitewash the "A" on the side of the mountain each year. Visitors may also enjoy biking through town on the city's 175 miles of bike trails or to nearby Papago Park, home of The Phoenix Zoo, Desert Botanical Garden and Arizona Historical Society Museum, where you can learn about the area's original settlers, the Hohokam.

Affordable shopping, internationally inspired dining options and nightlife entertainment top off the list of unexpected attractions in Tempe. Within walking distance from downtown hotels, visitors might stroll pedestrian-friendly Downtown Tempe to explore more than 100 hip, inventive, even bohemian, shops, restaurants, taverns and nightclubs, a few that host live and local bands, helping to launch national music careers. Other major entertainment and shopping hubs within the city include Tempe Marketplace, known for great shopping at local and nationally-known retailers and live music on Friday and Saturday evenings. Arizona Mills features a mile of outlets, shops and entertainment venues, such as SEA LIFE Arizona Aquarium. IKEA, the Swedish home furnishings warehouse, is a destination of its own.

Tempe is known for its breweries and locally-owned eateries. You can find award-winning craft beer, Irish pub grub, Ethiopian food you can eat with your hands, Mediterranean- and Southwestern-style cuisine, vegetarian spots and much more that help make Tempe refreshingly unique.

For more information, please contact the Tempe Tourism Office at 800-283-6734 for a free visitor's guide or visit www.tempetourism.com.

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Hip, Hot and Cool Describe Tempe's Cultural Climate

Tempe, Ariz. -- Tempe is defined by its youthful vitality and its artistic expression, ever present at Arizona State University (ASU) and in Downtown Tempe. Funky local bands, award-winning local theater, literary events, blockbuster Broadway productions, comedy shows and contemporary dance companies are all part of Tempe's arts and cultural scene. All of Tempe's events can be found at www.tempetourism.com.

Both in Downtown Tempe's Mill Avenue and throughout Tempe, the strains of local and national musical acts beckon patrons into a variety of clubs, coffeehouses and eateries. Tempe's musical legacy dates back decades, from the river bottom roadhouses, where Waylon Jennings's brand of country music was so popular in the 60s and 70s, to the hip sounds emanating from today's local hot spots. Tempe's music venues have served as the spring board for nationally known groups like the Gin Blossoms, Jimmy Eat World and The Format.

Once your musical appetite is satisfied, your palette is next. The most culturally diverse of the cities in the metropolitan area, Tempe offers an astonishing range of tasty cuisines from Thailand to Mexico to Ethiopia. Tempe's family owned eateries, upscale al fresco dining and familiar American cuisine are sure to please even the most discriminating tastes. Many of these international restaurants are located near the ASU Tempe Campus and along the METRO light rail line.

Theatre enthusiasts are never short of options in Tempe. ASU Gammage is home to the annual DESERT SCHOOLS® Broadway Across America – Arizona series, and the BEYOND Series, featuring nationally touring dance, theatre and musical performances. The Stray Cat Theatre, voted the Best Alternative Theater by azcentral.com, has found a permanent home at the original Tempe Performing Arts Center at 132 E. 6th Street in Downtown Tempe. Decidedly off the beaten path, Stray Cat aggressively seeks out and showcases the most vital contemporary material.

The Tempe Center for the Arts (TCA), located on the south bank of Tempe Town Lake, opened in September 2007. The 88,000-square-foot facility features a 600-seat theater and a 200-seat studio theatre. Users of the facility include the Tempe Symphony Orchestra, Childsplay and Desert Dance Theatre. Childsplay, the critically acclaimed theatre company for children and adults, offers a full season of productions that range from hilariously funny to thought provoking. The TCA also houses a gallery with rotating, themed exhibitions, a regularly scheduled open mic night and the LakeShore Jazz Series.

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The visual arts also reflect Tempe's penchant for the present. According to "Art in America" magazine, the ASU Art Museum is "the single most impressive venue in the state for contemporary art." One of more than 20 free museums and galleries at ASU, the ASU Art Museum features revolving exhibits of contemporary art and also boasts an impressive permanent collection of 19th and 20th century American art.

The beautiful ASU Tempe Campus is further accentuated by an extensive public art collection, which can be enjoyed by taking a self-guided walking tour. From Depression-era murals to contemporary sculpture, ASU's public art reflects the rich historic traditions of ASU and Arizona, as well as recent expressions by nationally renowned artists.

Contemporary architecture, such as the inverted pyramid that is Tempe City Hall, the birthday cake-like appearance of ASU Gammage designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and the ASU Art Museum at the Nelson Fine Arts Center, designed by Antoine Predock, illustrate Tempe's affinity for unusual and beautiful architecture. Tempe's love of great design is apparent throughout the city, but some of the most remarkable are located along or just off Mill Avenue and on the ASU campus.

The most recent addition to ASU's enviable public art collection is James Turrell's new Skyspace: "Air Apparent." The public can easily access this space, designed as an artistic interpretation of Native American Hohokam shade ramadas and pit houses. Once inside, the open ceiling of the Skyspace provides a framework for sky viewing, which is especially dramatic during sunrise and sunset. Turrell designed light fixtures at the top of the structure that change from one vibrant color to another.

Tempe's energetic presence has inspired numerous annual festivals. One of the best ways to enjoy local culture and incomparable sunshine is to visit major events, such as the spring and fall Tempe Festival of the Arts and the raucous Oktoberfest at Tempe Town Lake. To learn more about Tempe, please call 480-894-8158 or visit us at www.tempetourism.com.

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Think Tempe First for Family Fun

Tempe, Ariz. – Looking for a fun-filled vacation getaway for the whole family? Look no further than Tempe, Ariz. Boating on Tempe Town Lake, SEA LIFE Arizona Aquarium, wave pools, desert hikes and creating your own ice cream treat…these are just a few of the choices for fun in Tempe. Visit www.TempeTourism.com for family-friendly itinerary ideas.

Active families are attracted to Tempe Beach Park and Tempe Town Lake, a recreational haven located adjacent to Downtown Tempe, the Tempe Center for the Arts and Arizona State University. Explore the 5 miles of pathways around the lake on foot or on a rented bicycle from the Bicycle Cellar. Or, rent kayaks, pedal boats or other watercraft from Tempe Boat Rentals. From May through September each year, families are drawn to Splash Playground at Tempe Beach Park, a free water park that teaches how a drop of rain falls from the sky and ends up either in the ocean or becomes part of the city water supply.

The Tempe Center for the Arts (TCA) is located on the shore of Tempe Town Lake. Childsplay, Arizona's professional theatre company for young audiences, is the primary resident company at TCA. Childsplay offers a series of productions annually – perfect for parents who want to be entertained while introducing their children to theatre.

For those seeking adventure, try a scenic hike at Papago Park, just north of Tempe Town Lake, or South Mountain Park/Preserve, the nation's largest municipal park. The well-marked trails feature excellent examples of desert plants and wildlife. Another favorite way to explore the desert is by horseback, jeep tour or hot air balloon. Learn how to rock climb indoors at Phoenix Rock Gym, or take a road trip to the Apache Trail, Sedona or the Grand Canyon.

The Phoenix Zoo in Papago Park has been voted one of the nation's top 5 zoos for kids. The whole family will enjoy getting up close and personal to the animals at unfenced exhibits such as Monkey Village, Wallaby Walkabout and Harmony Farm.

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During the summer, Big Surf and Golfland/Sunsplash are the coolest places to be. Big Surf, America's original water park, offers activities for the entire family. Kids and adults alike will love thrilling speed slides like Hurricane Falls and the little ones can splash around at Captain Cooks Landing. At Golfland/Sunsplash, families can play video games or laser tag in King Ben's Castle, play miniature golf, ride bumper boats, splash in multiple waterslides and pools, coast down the Endless River and more.

The newest addition to Tempe is Main Event Entertainment, a large family entertainment center. Main Event features bowling lanes, laser tag, a gravity ropes course, billiards and shuffleboard tables, more than 125 interactive games and a lots of food and beverage options.

Tempe is a great spot for shopping, dining and entertainment. Arizona Mills is home to over 175 retailers, restaurants and theaters. To refuel after a day of shopping and sightseeing, families can choose from a picnic lunch, delicious pizza, Mexican food, or an entertaining meal at Rainforest Café. GameWorks at Arizona Mills features the newest virtual-reality games and classic arcade favorites. Feel like you're a part of the action at the exhilarating Harkins IMAX Theatre Arizona Mills. Also located at Arizona Mills, SEA LIFE Arizona Aquarium is built specifically for kids. SEA LIFE transports visitors into the amazing ocean world with more than 5,000 sea creatures.

The red brick sidewalks Downtown Tempe are filled with more than 100 unique shops, restaurants and cafes. From pizza to burgers to more sophisticated fare, you'll find it all along Downtown Tempe's Mill Avenue. After dinner, you'll want to save room for a handmade Mexican ice cream treat at Paletas Betty.

Tempe Marketplace, the newest shopping district in Tempe, is thriving with 1.3 million square feet of shopping, dining and entertainment. In addition to shopping, the main attraction, Tempe Marketplace offers live music every week on Friday and Saturday evenings in "The District", a pedestrian-friendly gathering place. The District is also home to the Splash Pad, the perfect place for little ones to cool off and have fun. Tempe Marketplace also offers a great variety of dining options to thrill even the pickiest toddlers.

Tempe is a quick METRO light rail ride away from the Children's Museum of Phoenix and the Arizona Science Center. The Arizona Museum for Youth, which focuses on artistic expression, is also located minutes from Tempe's center.

Tempe is home to plenty of hotels to suit everyone, from family-friendly and budget conscious properties to upscale resorts. Arizona hotels are known for their sparkling pools, which make the perfect backdrop to enjoy one of our 330 days of sunshine each year. Located in the heart of the Phoenix Metropolitan area, Tempe is just minutes away from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and is also easily accessible by car or METRO light rail. For a free visitor's guide, please call 800-283-6734 or visit www.TempeTourism.com.

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Think Tempe First for Sports and Outdoor Fun

Tempe, Ariz. – Sports enthusiasts, from casual spectators to athletes seeking new challenges, will find themselves in the middle of the action in Tempe, Arizona.

Tempe combines the conveniences of a city with the adventure of outdoor recreation. The city boasts an enviable climate, with at least 330 days of sunshine a year, making it easy to actively enjoy the outdoors.

One of the most unique features in Tempe is Tempe Town Lake, a 220-acre urban oasis, located just north of the Arizona State University Tempe Campus and Downtown Tempe. Tempe Town Lake is a favorite spot for boating, kayaking, fishing and rowing. Visitors can rent pedal boats, paddle boards, kayaks, pontoon boats and more from Tempe Boat Rentals. Crew teams from universities around the country have used the lake for practice, and it is also home to the Tempe Junior Crew and Rio Salado Rowing Club. Tempe has hosted several rowing events each year including the Desert Sprints Regatta and Hot Head Regatta.

Tempe has more than 175 miles of dedicated and well-connected bikeways, providing easy access to the picturesque ASU campus, Tempe Town Lake, Papago Park, Downtown Tempe, Kiwanis Park or any one of the historic neighborhoods. Bicycles are available for rent at The Bicycle Cellar, located at the Tempe Transportation Center.

From flat paths to desert trails, runners have plenty of options to keep them in shape. Beautiful desert vistas can be explored by jogging through Papago Park on 13 miles of scenic, mountain trails. Runners and hikers also enjoy climbing “A” Mountain, located in the heart of downtown at Third Street and Mill Avenue. The quick ascent provides a bird’s eye view of Tempe. Just south of the city, you’ll never tire of the endlessly beautiful, and sometimes challenging, hiking and mountain biking trails at South Mountain Park and Preserve, the largest municipal park in the U.S. The banks of Tempe Town Lake are encircled by five miles of trails for running, biking, in-line skating and bicycling. Runners can also go the distance at the Joe Selleh Track at Sun Angel Stadium at ASU, or along the numerous trails and canal paths throughout the city.

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Tempe is the home of the TicketCity Cactus Bowl at Sun Devil Stadium, Arizona State University athletics, Angels Spring Training, and several triathlons and other sporting events.

Each year in January, the finish lines for the P.F. Chang's Rock 'n' Roll Arizona Marathon and ½ Marathon are in Tempe. The race attracts more than 20,000 runners, who enjoy the flat, fast course which travels through Phoenix, Scottsdale and Tempe.

Ironman Arizona provides an even greater challenge in November each year. This grueling, yet inspiring competition features a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a complete 26.2 mile marathon. All transitions and the finish line are in Tempe Beach Park.

Making a quick trip to Arizona for golf is easy when your destination is the ASU Karsten Golf Course. Challenge is inherent with rolling hills and partially hidden greens, guarded by bunkers or water. Successful touring professionals like Phil Mickelson have honed their skills on the fairways and greens of this classic Pete Dye, Scottish links course. The course is also home to a PING Learning Center, so golfers of all levels can learn to perfect their skills. ASU Karsten is a remarkable golfing experience for players at every level, offering a selection of six tees, ranging from 4,760 yards from the forward tees to 7,058 yards from the championship tees.

Whether you're an experienced rock climber, or you just want to get started, Phoenix Rock Gym is the perfect place to test your skills and learn new ones. The Phoenix Rock Gym is Arizona's largest indoor climbing center, with 30-foot climbing walls and a friendly, knowledgeable staff. See the desert in a new way with 360 Adventures, a local company that provides expert guides for desert activities such as hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing and canyoneering.

For more information about ways to stay active during a trip to Tempe, please call 800-283-6734 or visit www.TempeTourism.com

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TEMPE FACT SHEET

MAYOR Mark Mitchell

AREA 39.62 square miles

ELEVATION 1,163.8 feet – from downtown Tempe

WEATHER 330 days of sunshine each year; average temperature is 85.3 degrees

MAJOR ACCESS ROADS Interstate 10, Interstate 60, Loop 202 and Loop 101

LOCATION Bordered by Phoenix, Scottsdale Mesa and Chandler.

PROXIMITY Ten minutes from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport

HISTORY Founded in 1871 by Charles Trumbull Hayden. Hayden homesteaded in 1870 and built a store, flourmill, warehouses, blacksmith shops and a ferry.

LIVING IN TEMPE Population: 161,000+; median age: 28

HOTEL ROOMS Tempe boasts 44 hotels featuring 5,304 hotel rooms

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY Located adjacent to Downtown Tempe, ASU is one of the largest public universities in the U.S.

CORPORATE WHO'S WHO in Tempe: Chase, Edward Jones, Go Daddy, Insight, KPMG, Monster, Smith Barney and Wells Fargo

ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS Find shopping, dining and entertainment galore in Tempe. Downtown Tempe offers more than 100 shops, restaurants and bars in an eclectic oasis of culture, lifestyle, and commerce. Arizona Mills features more than 175 retailers and entertainment venues, including Last Call from Neiman Marcus, Off 5th Sak's Fifth Avenue Outlet, GameWorks and SEA LIFE Arizona Aquarium. Tempe Marketplace is thriving with 1.3 million square feet of shopping, dining and entertainment. In addition to shopping, Tempe Marketplace offers live music every week on Friday and Saturday evenings in "The District", a pedestrian-friendly gathering place.

TEMPE TOWN LAKE Set adjacent to Downtown Tempe, the Arizona State University Tempe Campus and Papago Park, Tempe Town Lake embodies a unique vision for the future of the Valley. Tempe Town Lake is a regional and national destination, welcoming millions each year.

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OUTDOOR RECREATION Recreational opportunities abound with 50 parks, including Papago Park with over 13 miles of hiking and biking trails and Tempe Beach Park, offering 25 acres of recreation space. Tempe has more than 175 miles of dedicated bikeways.

ARTS AND CULTURE Explore Tempe's arts and culture scene. ASU Gammage is among the largest university-based presenters of performing arts in the world and was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. The ASU Art Museum was cited in "Art in America" as "the single most impressive venue for contemporary art in Arizona." ASU features a variety of free museums and galleries. The Tempe Center for the Arts is a state-of-the art facility providing visual and performing arts experiences to the community.

SPORTS AND RECREATION Arizona Diamondbacks, Arizona Cardinals, Phoenix Suns, Phoenix Coyotes, Arizona State University Sun Devils and Cactus League Spring Training in March (Angels play at Tempe Diablo Stadium)

SISTER CITIES Skopje, Macedonia (1971); Regensburg, Germany (1976); Lower Hutt, New Zealand (1981); Zhenjiang, China (1989); Timbuktu, Mali (1991); Beaulieu sur Mer, France (1997); Carlow, Ireland (1998); Cuenca, Ecuador (2008); Cusco, Peru (2012)

Tempe's History

Following the establishment of Fort McDowell on the eastern edge of central Arizona's Salt River Valley in 1865, enterprising farmers moved into the area. They dug out the irrigation canals left by the prehistoric Hohokam people and built new ones to carry Salt River water to their fields. Valley farms soon supplied food to Arizona's military posts and mining towns.

The first settlers to move to the Tempe area, south of the Salt River and east of Phoenix, were Hispanic families from southern Arizona. They helped construct the first two irrigation canals, the Kirkland-McKinney Ditch and the San Francisco Canal, and started small farms to the east and west of a large butte (Tempe Butte). In 1872, some of these Mexican settlers founded a town called San Pablo east of Tempe Butte.

Another settlement, known as Hayden's Ferry, developed west of Tempe Butte. Charles Trumbull Hayden, owner of a mercantile and freighting business in Tucson, homesteaded this location in 1870. Within a few years, he had built a store and flourmill, warehouses and blacksmith shops, and a ferry. This community became the trade center for the south side of the Salt River Valley.

Both settlements grew quickly and soon formed one community. The town was named Tempe in 1879. "Lord" Darrell Duppa, an Englishman who helped establish Phoenix, is credited with suggesting the name. The sight of the butte and the wide river, and the nearby expanse of green fields, reminded him of the Vale of Tempe in ancient Greece.

As more farmers came to settle in the Valley and started raising alfalfa and grains for feeding livestock, the Tempe Irrigating Canal Company provided all of necessary water. With a network of canals that extended several miles south of the river, irrigation water was carried to more than 20,000 acres of prime farmland. Crops of wheat, barley, and oats ensured a steady business for the Hayden Mill. The milled flour was hauled to forts and other settlements throughout the territory. By the 1890s, some farmers started growing new cash crops such as dates and citrus fruits.

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In 1885, the Arizona legislature selected Tempe as the site for the Territorial Normal School, which trained teachers for Arizona's schools. Soon, other changes in Tempe promoted the development of the small farming community. The Maricopa and Phoenix Railroad, built in 1887, crossed the Salt River at Tempe, linking the town to the nation's growing transportation system. The Tempe Land and Improvement Company was formed to sell lots in the booming town. Tempe became one of the most important business and shipping centers for the surrounding agricultural area.

The completion of Roosevelt Dam in 1911 guaranteed enough water to meet the growing needs of Valley farmers. On his way to dedicate the dam, former President Theodore Roosevelt applauded the accomplishments of the people of central Arizona and predicted that their towns would grow to become prosperous cities. Less than a year later, Arizona became the 48th state, and the Salt River Valley was well on its way to becoming the new population center of the Southwest.

Tempe was a small agricultural community through most of its history. After World War II, Tempe began growing at a rapid rate as veterans and others moved to the city. The last of the local farms quickly disappeared. Through annexation, the city reached its current boundaries by 1974. Tempe had grown into a modern city. The town's small teachers college had also grown, and in 1958, the institution became Arizona State University.

Tempe's commercial center along Mill Avenue declined during these years. Prompted by Tempe's centennial in 1971, Mill Avenue was revitalized into an entertainment and shopping district that attracts people from throughout the Valley. Today, Tempe is well known nationally as the home of the Buffalo Wild Wings Bowl and Arizona State University. It is the seventh largest city in Arizona, with a strong modern economy based on commerce, tourism, and electronics manufacturing.

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Note: Information provided by the Tempe History Museum