



## WAWA EXTENDS TITLE SPONSORSHIP OF WAWA WELCOME AMERICA THROUGH 2019

### *2019 Will Mark Wawa's 10th Anniversary as Title Sponsor of Philadelphia's Free July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration*

**PHILADELPHIA, PA (APRIL 13, 2016)** – Today Wawa announced their continued investment in *Wawa Welcome America* as the title sponsor through 2019 as part of a Wawa Day celebration – honoring the most important date in Wawa's history – the day Wawa opened its first convenience store in 1964. The extension through the year 2019 will mark the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Wawa's title sponsorship of Philadelphia's free July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration. In addition to being title sponsor since 2010, Wawa has been involved with the festival for many years including the very first Welcome America Festival, partnering with Welcome America, Inc., the non-profit organization that produces the festival on behalf of the City of Philadelphia.

The *Wawa Welcome America* festival is the nation's signature July 4th celebration in the birthplace of our nation. This multi-day, citywide festival features all FREE events such as America's largest free concert, some of the nation's largest fireworks displays, outdoor movie screenings, free museum days, neighborhood events and more. The 2017 *Wawa Welcome America* festival will run six days, Thursday, June 29 through Tuesday, July 4, 2017. This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Wawa Welcome America*.

This year also marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Wawa Welcome America's* signature kick-off event Wawa Hoagie Day. This special day is dedicated to honoring everyday heroes – the men and women who serve our country and our communities, and to celebrating Wawa's USO partnership. In addition, for the second time during *Wawa Welcome America*, The Wawa Foundation will present The Wawa Foundation Hero Award to a non-profit organization that is committed to serving the greater Philadelphia area by assisting others and building stronger communities through preserving our independence, protecting our safety and mentoring and inspiring our youth. More details about The Wawa Foundation Hero Award can be found at [www.TheWawaFoundation.org](http://www.TheWawaFoundation.org).

"Wawa's long-standing partnership with *Wawa Welcome America* allows us to offer an inclusive festival with free educational programming, wide-ranging entertainment, and commemorative events across the city," said **Mayor Jim F. Kenney**, Board Chairman, Welcome America, Inc. "*Wawa Welcome America* invites everyone to come together to celebrate our nation's Independence. Last year almost 40 events were all free; 44,000 local residents were able to attend one of our free museum days, and we honored Everyday Heroes making Philadelphia and the world a better place."

"We are delighted to extend our commitment as title sponsor of Welcome America for two more years, as this has been one of our most meaningful partnerships to date," said **Chris Gheysens, Wawa's President and CEO**. "We feel so honored to celebrate our history and independence as the title sponsor of our region's largest July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration and we appreciate the vision and commitment of the

Welcome America Board and leadership team and all of our Festival partners to continuing to make *Wawa Welcome America* even better.”

Concert headliners, festival information and details about 50 free events for 2017 will be announced in the coming weeks. Visit [www.WelcomeAmerica.com](http://www.WelcomeAmerica.com) to learn more, and join the conversation at:

- Facebook – [www.facebook.com/WawaWelcomeAmerica](http://www.facebook.com/WawaWelcomeAmerica)
- Twitter – [www.twitter.com/July4thPhilly](http://www.twitter.com/July4thPhilly)
- Instagram – [www.instagram.com/July4thPhilly](http://www.instagram.com/July4thPhilly)

#### **About Welcome America, Inc.**

Welcome America, Inc. is a 501c3, non-profit organization in public-private partnership with the City of Philadelphia. Welcome America, Inc.’s mission is to promote American history, education and Philadelphia. The organization seeks to enhance the resident and visitor experience through citywide events that provide an economic boost to the local economy.

#### **About Wawa, Inc.**

Wawa, Inc., a privately held company, began in 1803 as an iron foundry in New Jersey. Toward the end of the 19th Century, owner George Wood took an interest in dairy farming and the family began a small processing plant in Wawa, PA in 1902. The milk business was a huge success, due to its quality, cleanliness and “certified” process. As home delivery of milk declined in the early 1960’s, Grahame Wood, George’s grandson, opened the first Wawa Food Market in 1964 as an outlet for dairy products. Today, Wawa is your all day, every day stop for freshly made foods, beverages, coffee, fuel services, and surcharge-free ATMs.

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