

**RALEIGH, N.C.** — The International Bluegrass Music Association, the Nashville-based nonprofit professional organization for the global bluegrass community, and its Raleigh partners — the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau, PineCone: The Piedmont Council of Traditional Music, and the Raleigh Convention Center — announced today that the World of Bluegrass events will remain in Raleigh through 2021. World of Bluegrass, a gathering that consists of a business conference, showcases, awards show, and the largest urban bluegrass festival in the world, has steadily grown in scope, bringing in nearly \$49 million in direct visitor spending to the greater Raleigh area, and drawing more than 856,000 attendees since moving from Nashville to the City of Oaks in 2013. World of Bluegrass is the largest annual event held in Raleigh.

“We couldn’t be more excited to announce our agreement to hold IBMA’s World of Bluegrass in Raleigh through 2021. As we renew our amazing partnership with the City, we find new ways to celebrate bluegrass music we didn’t know were possible until being embraced by this community,” said Paul Schiminger, IBMA’s executive director. “World of Bluegrass is our genre’s biggest annual event, where we help our professionals connect and learn, where we shine a bright light on our best, and where we share our great music with so many new and lifelong fans! Our deepest gratitude goes out to the City of Raleigh, Mayor McFarlane, the City Council, the Local Organizing Committee and PineCone, along with Wake County and its Commission, and to the people of Raleigh for the exuberant welcome we have received here.”

“Most business conventions are insular events, but IBMA works with the Local Organizing Committee to engage the public in many parts of World of Bluegrass, including the Bluegrass Ramble showcases, Awards programs, Music Expo, and of course the Wide Open Bluegrass festival. They also work with us and other community partners to put bluegrass bands in Wake County Public Schools, RDU airport, and other venues throughout the region,” said William Lewis, executive director of the Raleigh-based non-profit PineCone, co-chair of the Local Organizing Committee, and IBMA Board Member. “And the community has embraced IBMA and bluegrass and looks forward to the whole week of events each year, no doubt contributing to Raleigh’s growing reputation as a leading live music destination here in the Southeast. Thousands of visitors from all over the world come to Raleigh for this event and take home lasting memories from their experiences here each year. IBMA members call World of Bluegrass a “homecoming,” and we’re glad they all consider Raleigh a second home.”

Speakers at the World of Bluegrass press conference were Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane, Schiminger and IBMA Board Chair Joe Mullins. World of Bluegrass 2018 will take place September 25-29.

#### **About World of Bluegrass and the Wide Open Festival:**

IBMA’s World of Bluegrass is a five-day annual bluegrass music homecoming that encompasses four events: the IBMA Business Conference, September 25-27; the Bluegrass Ramble, an innovative series of showcases, taking place September 25-27 in downtown Raleigh and at the Raleigh Convention Center; the 29th Annual International Bluegrass Music Awards, scheduled for Thursday evening, September 27; and Wide Open Bluegrass, September 28-29, a two-day festival. The ticketed Wide Open Main Stage features the best of the best in bluegrass today, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the Bluegrass Trust Fund, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that assists bluegrass professionals during financial emergencies. The free Wide Open StreetFest brings bluegrass into the community and introduces the music to thousands of new fans every year.

As in years past, events during World of Bluegrass will take place at the Raleigh Convention Center,

the Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts, the Red Hat Amphitheater and at various venues in town. The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Raleigh) reported that last year's World of Bluegrass events generated \$11.7 million in direct visitor spending for that region, with total attendance for the week's activities estimated to be a record-breaking 221,000 people. Over 220 acts performed throughout the entire week of World of Bluegrass.

Those wishing to purchase Wide Open Bluegrass Main Stage tickets (which takes place at Red Hat Amphitheater), Bluegrass Ramble Showcase passes, IBMA Business Conference registration, IBMA Award Show tickets and hotel reservations should go to IBMA's World of Bluegrass website, [www.WorldofBluegrass.org](http://www.WorldofBluegrass.org). Single day general admission for the ticketed portion of the Wide Open Bluegrass festival starts as low as \$50. A three-day Bluegrass Ramble pass available for \$75. Additional details and pricing information are available at the website.

#### **About IBMA:**

IBMA — the International Bluegrass Music Association — is the nonprofit professional organization for the global bluegrass music community. The organization's nine-year run in Raleigh is the product of their successful partnership with The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau, The Raleigh Convention Center, PineCone — The Piedmont Council of Traditional Music, the City of Raleigh and a local organizing committee.

#### **About PineCone:**

PineCone is a year-round source for roots music fans in the Triangle region of North Carolina, a state with deep roots in the tradition of making music. North Carolina is home to some of the finest singers, songwriters, musicians, and luthiers in the world. Ballad singing, blues, bluegrass, gospel, and old-time string band music are just some examples of the folk music traditions passed down through generations that remain prominent in our communities today. Founded in 1984, PineCone, the Piedmont Council of Traditional Music, is a non-profit organization that presents more than 200 programs annually, including more than 30 concerts, youth programs, participatory jams and sessions, and a weekly radio show. Since 2013, PineCone has also been the producer of PNC presents Wide Open Bluegrass, the festival component of the International Bluegrass Music Association's World of Bluegrass. [pinecone.org](http://pinecone.org)

#### **About Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau:**

The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Raleigh), as the official destination marketing organization of Raleigh and Wake County, accelerates sustainable economic growth and development by increasing visitor and convention business. Raleigh, N.C./Wake County welcomes more than 15 million visitors annually whose spending tops \$2.4 billion. The hospitality and tourism industry employs more than 63,000 people in Wake County which accounts for roughly 10% of the local workforce. [VisitRaleigh.com](http://VisitRaleigh.com).

#### **About the Raleigh Convention Center**

A three-time winner of ConventionSouth's Readers' Choice Award, the Raleigh Convention Center is a bustling hub for the culture, commerce and technologies that make the Triangle one of the country's most admired regions. The modern, 500,000 sq ft, LEED Silver-certified facility includes a soaring street level lobby, an elegant, easily partitioned ballroom, a 150,000 sq ft exhibit hall and a 4,100 sq ft mezzanine as well as cutting edge tech amenities and award-winning culinary delights. Convention center staff also operates the nearby Red Hat Amphitheater and Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts, which can also be part of an event experience. For more information visit [raleighconvention.com](http://raleighconvention.com).

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<https://media.visitnc.com/IBMA-Raleigh-Partners-Announce-World-of-Bluegrass-Extension>