



CITY OF WACO

Waco Convention & Visitors Bureau

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WACO RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS “MUSIC FRIENDLY” DESIGNATION FROM TEXAS MUSIC OFFICE

Waco, TX (July 14, 2020) – Waco is now officially a “Music Friendly” destination, a certification granted by the Texas Music Office. The Texas Music Office is part of the Office of the Governor’s Economic Development and Tourism Division.

A grassroots local group began pursuing the designation about a year ago. The working group – Katie Selman of Keep Waco Loud, Lindsay Liepman of Channel 25, Fiona Bond of Creative Waco, and Todd Bertka, Director of the Waco Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) – worked hard to earn the designation, and many people attended open meetings over a period of several months. The planning culminated in a workshop in August 2019, chaired by Brendon Anthony, director of the Texas Music Office. Attendees, representing various styles of music, gathered at Brotherwell Brewing ready to participate to win this designation for Waco.

Leaders at the workshop included the Music Association of Central Texas, Baylor and MCC music programs, Waco Symphony Association, Central Texas Jazz Society, and dozens of musicians, studios, and venues representing every musical genre. All expressed their enthusiasm for, and commitment to, working together to make Waco a community that supports and promotes its professional musicians and rich musical heritage. It was the largest workshop of its kind in Texas, with well over 100 attending.

The designation involves administering and maintaining the Texas Music Office online listings of Waco/McLennan County area musicians, studios, and others involved in the music business. This work will be done by the staff of the Waco Convention & Visitors Bureau. These listings will be located at <https://wacoheartoftexas.com/music>.

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The designation brings much to Waco. It establishes a public reputation for Waco as a community that not only has a growing and thriving music scene but as a community that promotes what we have here. It connects Waco with the Texas Music Office (TMO) and the programming and initiatives they have that can benefit our community.

What we do in Waco will be amplified through the TMO's social media, website and channels. It allows us to work more closely with other Music Friendly Communities to see what is working there and allows us to be innovative leaders in how we cultivate and support our music community. It also improves communication between City Council/City of Waco with the music community as we are now more easily identifiable through the music census.

Waco now has a trifecta of special designations awarded by the State of Texas: the Waco Downtown Cultural District, Film Friendly Community, and now Music Friendly. These designations are a powerful signal that Waco wants to attract activity in these sectors, and that Waco supports those important parts of the Waco economy. Waco's "Music Friendly" designation is yet another reason that makes Waco an amazing destination for travelers and for local citizens to enjoy.

"Music Friendly Communities certified by the Texas Music Office are serious about developing local music industry growth," said Todd Bertka of the CVB. "A strong music industry creates jobs and also generates unique experiences for both visitors and locals."

Fiona Bond, Director of Creative Waco, added, "This designation helps us support and promote musicians from classical to contemporary – especially at this time when the performing arts have been badly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Waco has a huge amount of talent and we are confident that this designation will help amplify our musical talent and help move the industry forward."

Waco Mayor, Kyle Deaver, will officially accept the Music Friendly certificate in a Zoom ceremony at 1 p.m. on July 30, 2020. The ceremony will be streamed live on wccc.tv/live. The media is invited to request the Zoom link if they would like to stream the ceremony as well.

The Waco Convention & Visitors Bureau is a department of the City of Waco.

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