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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Eastern National CEO: We are committed to the pursuit of justice through our mission.**

**FORT WASHINGTON, PA — June 16, 2020—** The recent tragic events are top of mind for many in the Eastern National family. It's incredibly difficult for me to come to terms with the senseless death of George Floyd and of others before and, now, sadly, after him.

As I think about recent events and the EN mission, and as I listen to our staff and stakeholders, I realize the work we do every day is so important, and now more than ever. As an educational partner of the National Park Service and other public lands agencies, we have a unique role in telling the stories of America, both the good and the bad. These are stories of inspiration, of struggle, of celebration, and of pain. And as recent events have shown – they are unfinished stories.

Eastern National rejects discrimination of any kind. We value inclusivity and equal opportunities for all. We are fortunate to work in special places that have been protected to tell the evolving story of America. The story of each park is told through our stores, our educational products, and through our front-line teams, who do an incredible job engaging with visitors to help them understand the history and significance of our parks.

It's important to remember that these protected lands and the stories behind them can mean different things to different people. Some people turn to national parks as a place of respite during difficult times. Yet, because of the painful stories of the past, many feel uncomfortable in our parks – including black, indigenous, and people of color. The Eastern National team plays an important role in making everyone feel welcome. We take very seriously our responsibility to tell stories that help visitors better understand where we have been as a country, and what the future may hold. We believe that the work we do every day raises awareness and encourages change. That the work we do makes a difference.

The past few weeks have helped us to reflect on our values, as a company and as human beings. It's important to us to do our part to help eradicate racial injustice in this country, finally and forever. But we want to do it right. It won't happen overnight, it won't be easy, and it will require relentless follow-up. Today, we don't pretend to have the answers. But we vow to listen to our employees, visitors, and partners; to ensure that everyone at Eastern National feels their voices can be heard; to insist on having a culture of honesty, trust, and safe spaces to have difficult conversations; and to continue to devote our content channels to telling diverse stories of struggle and triumph, of amplifying the voices of those who should be heard.

As America begins to reopen its doors after COVID-19 and this spring's social unrest, corporations and the media may turn their focus elsewhere. We face a long road ourselves in recovering from the pandemic and safely reopening our educational stores this summer. But for Eastern National, this is not going away. We won't stop the conversation. We will hold ourselves accountable to being the type of company that our staff can be proud to work for – one they feel offers real opportunities for personal and professional growth.

These are everyone's lands and everyone's stories. I encourage you to take time to learn more about African American history. Our partners at the National Park Service offer a wealth of online [material](#) to learn about the places that honor and preserve African American heritage. Understanding the past can serve as prologue to learning how to become a better and more inclusive country in the future.

Join us in helping to elevate understanding and diversity at America's cherished historical, natural, and cultural places. Imagine looking back, soon, and saying: This time, we made a difference.

Kevin C. Kissling  
President & CEO

### **About Eastern National**

Eastern National, a 501(c)3 non-profit cooperating association, promotes the public's understanding and support of America's national parks and other public trust partners by providing quality educational experiences, products, and services. Since 1947, Eastern National has donated more than \$156 million to the National Park Service in the form of direct donations and grants that support vital educational and interpretive programs in America's national parks.

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