FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 19, 2026



2700 Witch Hats Descend on Salem for Witch Hats on the Wharf Celebration

SALEM, MA — Witches arrived by broomstick, train, car, and foot on Saturday, October 17, for Salem's *Witch Hats on the Wharf*, a spirited gathering celebrating the city's 400th anniversary.

More than 2,700 people descended on Salem Maritime National Historical Park, turning the historic waterfront into a sea of pointed hats and black capes. Salem Mayor Dominick Pangallo welcomed the costumed crowd, who gathered for a commemorative aerial photograph and drone video capturing the magic of the occasion.

“On behalf of the City, I want to extend my thanks to everyone who turned out for this historic moment and all of the City staff and partners who helped make it possible! Not only did we set a record as part of Salem 400+, but this event also helped to raise funds for HAWC to support their work helping victims of domestic abuse. Hopefully, many of the thousands of visitors and locals who came to the wharf for the photo also took some time to enjoy the shops, restaurants, and sites on Salem’s remarkable waterfront!” said Salem’s Mayor Dominick Pangallo.

Destination Salem’s Executive Director, Ashley Judge, noted: "We counted every attendee visible in a high-resolution drone photo taken at the peak moment: 2,561 people. Allowing for those blocked from view by the fire ladder, trees, and the crowd itself, we estimate about 2,700 attendees, plus a few dogs in hats. And Assistant Director of Salem Main Streets, Elise Towle Snow, wore a Medusa hat with nine little hats on it, and we only counted her as one. For science."

Adding to the festivities, the MBTA and Keolis distributed witch hats to visitors arriving at Salem Station, helping set the stage for a spellbinding day.

The celebration was part of another bustling October weekend in Witch City, with visitors exploring Salem’s historic waterfront, shops, restaurants, museums, and attractions.

Donations are being accepted to support Healing Abuse Working for Change (HAWC) at https://hawcdv.org/ and you can learn more about Salem 400+ at https://salem400.org/.

Witches on the Wharf was hosted by the City of Salem, Salem Maritime National Historical Park and Destination Salem. Proceeds from the special-edition Salem 400+ witch hats sold by the City benefit Healing Abuse Working for Change (HAWC).

Photos and Drone Footage available HERE. Drone footage provided by SemperDrone and Sperling Interactive. Photos courtesy of Destination Salem.

About Salem Haunted Happenings
Salem Haunted Happenings began in 1982 as a weekend festival and has grown into a month-long celebration that draws visitors from around the world. Each October, the city welcomes families, couples, history buffs, and Halloween lovers for ghost tours, psychic readings, costume balls, haunted harbor cruises, and more. Salem’s modern Witch and Pagan communities also celebrate Samhain, sharing their traditions with locals and guests alike. As the Halloween Capital of the World, Salem

offers something for everyone. For complete information, visit HauntedHappenings.org.

About Destination Salem

As the official destination marketing organization for the City of Salem, Destination Salem promotes Salem as one of the world's most captivating destinations — a city where history, culture, and enchantment converge. Welcoming travelers from around the globe, Salem offers an authentic New England experience rich with American history, cultural discovery, exceptional dining, one-of-a-kind shopping, and year-round fun. For more information, visit Salem.org.

Photo credit: Witch Hats on the Wharf, Photo Credit Jay Reiss.jpg

For media inquiries:

Kristen Levesque
Kristen Levesque PR
207-329-3090
kristen@kristenlevesquepr.com

Ashley Judge
Executive Director
Destination Salem
ajudge@salem.org