

WCTC Reports Record-Breaking Year for DC's \$5.2 Billion Travel & Tourism Sector

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Convention Sales Team Books More than One Million Hotel Room Nights, Washington.org Generates Nearly 6 Million Unique Visits in FY 2007

The Washington, DC Convention & Tourism Corporation (WCTC), the official destination marketing organization for the District of Columbia, posted the strongest performance figures in its history as it closed the fiscal year September 30, 2007. WCTC is a private, not-for-profit organization of nearly 1,000 businesses that is responsible for generating economic development for the city through tourism and meetings.

"Travel and tourism is a \$5.24 billion business for the District and WCTC is a powerful force in creating and facilitating new meetings and leisure business for this city every single day," said Dan Mesches, current chairman of WCTC and President and CEO of Star Restaurant Group.

Meeting & Convention Performance

During its fiscal year, WCTC staff booked meetings into the Walter E. Washington Convention Center and throughout the city that will generate more than 1.2 million hotel room nights representing \$1.1 billion in direct spending by attendees. Combined with prior years' efforts, WCTC has racked up more than 3.6 million room nights for future years representing \$2.4 billion in direct spending. Of that, nearly 2.8 million room nights will be generated by meetings and conventions booked into the convention center from 2008 through 2023.

In 2008, 18 citywide conventions will take place at the convention center, including lucrative meetings for the American Psychiatric Association, American College of Physicians and the National Black MBA Association.

For the important summer months, when hotel occupancy reaches some of its lowest points, WCTC booked the DC-based National Education Association, which will attract 17,000 attendees who will spend \$19.3 million in the city over the July 4 holiday. Also in July, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority will celebrate its 100th anniversary with its Biennial Boule, this show will draw 10,000 sorority sisters consuming more than 31,000 hotel room nights. WCTC successfully lured a major corporate meeting, the GE Healthcare 2008 User Summit, which will generate 13,000 room nights and \$3.9 million in delegate spending in August. DC's own AARP will celebrate its 50th anniversary at the convention center in September with its annual membership event, drawing an estimated 25,000 members.

Leisure/Consumer Marketing Performance

According to LiveStats web tracking service, WCTC increased visitation to DC's official tourism website, Washington.org, by 20% - generating nearly 6 million unique visits. More than 16,000 hotel rooms were booked as part of travel packages on the website, packages booked on Washington.org alone generated nearly \$9.6 million in spending throughout the city on hotels, restaurants, entertainment, transportation and shopping. WCTC visitor services staff personally assisted more than 150,000 visitors by phone and email, providing them insider tips, visitor guides, maps and recommendations.

Based on findings from an independent study conducted by Strategic Marketing & Research Inc., WCTC's \$550,000 summer consumer marketing campaign attracted 453,457 incremental visitors that spent \$98.5 million in the District and left \$5 million in taxes specifically to the District government. For every dollar invested in the marketing effort, WCTC returned \$9.07 in tax revenue for the District of Columbia.

WCTC generated domestic media coverage worth nearly \$12 million in advertising equivalency (if WCTC would have had to buy the space). In the United Kingdom and Germany, Washington, DC received \$5.8 million in editorial coverage. WCTC's staff hosted 112 journalists and provided information for 700 stories/articles, proactively pitching story ideas about Washington, DC's hospitality green efforts, revitalized neighborhoods, restaurant scene and new product development throughout the city.

WCTC's tourism sales efforts spanned 30 countries and included dozens of domestic travel trade shows for markets such as student and motor coach travel. These efforts garnered 67,452 hotel room nights throughout the destination and nearly 230 leads for group business for restaurants, tour guides, attractions and transportation companies.

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