

Chinese National Tourism Administration Approves NTA China Inbound Program Proposal

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The Chinese National Tourism Administration has approved the National Tour Association's China Inbound Program proposal. NTA took a leading role in facilitating China inbound leisure travel and submitted its proposal to the Department of Commerce and CNTA in December. NTA will provide the CNTA with a list of tour operators qualified to organize and conduct leisure group travel from China to the United States.

NTA's Chinese Inbound Program will assist NTA tour operators in working with Chinese travel agencies to organize and market group leisure tours to the United States.

'NTA was an obvious choice to take a leadership role in facilitating inbound tourism to the U.S. from China,' said NTA President Lisa Simon, CTP. 'As the premier packaged travel association, NTA is uniquely positioned to administer this important program for U.S. tour operators. With our long history of tour operator education, industry self-regulation through stringent membership requirements and complaint disposition process, NTA is the most qualified organization to aid in facilitating Chinese inbound travel.'

In December, the United States and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding that provides the necessary framework to permit Chinese group leisure travel to the U.S. In addition, U.S. travel destinations will be able to market their brands in China.

The MOU called for a list of U.S. tour operators to be created that have agreed to certain criteria when dealing with Chinese leisure groups. NTA will create and maintain the approved tour operator list. NTA members in good standing, who also have agreed to additional China-related criteria, will be on the initial list presented to the CNTA. The tenets of the MOU will begin to be implemented upon CNTA's receipt of the approved tour operator list.

'With the signing of the MOU, there are expected to be nearly 600,000 Chinese travelers to the United States by 2011. This represents a huge opportunity to many of our U.S. tour operators, destinations and suppliers,' said Simon. 'NTA has always been the authority on North American packaged travel and over the years we worked to expand our reach into the international arena. We have done this to facilitate both inbound and outbound packaged travel and to give our membership every opportunity to thrive.'

Tour operators interested in reaching out to the Chinese market that are not currently members of NTA should contact NTA Director of Membership Development Chris Horsley at christina.horsley@NTAstaff.com. NTA will continue to bring educational opportunities to its members on the Chinese market through research, seminar sessions and communications tools such as Courier magazine.

The National Tour Association has a global membership of tourism professionals involved in the growth and development of the packaged travel industry. Its membership includes 600 tour operator companies - group, independent, inbound and outbound - and the destinations and suppliers that partner with them. The association is committed to providing business results and information to its members, while offering a collaborative, caring environment in which to build relationships.

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