

Commerce Secretary Inaugurates New U.S. Travel and Tourism Board

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U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez announced the new leaders and members of the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board at its inaugural meeting May 21st in Washington.

'U.S. travel and tourism-related industries annually contribute more than \$1.3 trillion to the U.S. economy, helping to support more than 8.6 million American jobs,' said Gutierrez. 'Last year, the United States set new records for total arrivals and spending, welcoming 56 million international travelers who contributed \$122 billion to the U.S. economy. The U.S. Travel and Tourism Board provides support for this valuable and global industry by advising the Department of Commerce on key issues.'

The advisory board is comprised of 15 senior U.S. travel and tourism industry executives from across the United States. The selected members represent a bipartisan cross-section of the industry.

Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Carlson Companies, will serve as Chairman of the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. William DeCota, Director of Aviation at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, will serve as the Vice Chair. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff will continue to serve as ex-officio members of the board.

The U.S. travel and tourism industry is the largest services sector exporter in the U.S. economy, supporting more than 8 million travel-related jobs in the United States. In 2007, the United States experienced a 10 percent increase in total international arrivals.

International visitors spent a record \$11.6 billion in the United States in February, a 26 percent increase from February 2007. Spending by international travelers while in the United States, including travel receipts and passenger fares, is defined as a U.S. export. Exports are a critical component to the U.S. economy, fueling economic growth and job creation.

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