

NTA Encouraged by Obama's Open Mind on U.S. Travel Marketing

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The National Tour Association said today that it is encouraged by Senator Barak Obama's comments to the Orlando Sentinel that he is open to travel marketing if it can be demonstratively proven that it produces measurable results.

'We accept Senator Obama's invitation to prove the effectiveness of travel marketing by the U. S. government,' said NTA Chairman and CEO Bob Hoelscher, CTP. 'We look forward to partnering with him to increase the economic impact, job creation, and favorable international balance of trade payments by documenting results, which other nations have already seen and embraced.'

Many examples already exist that prove the value in a focused tourism advertising and branding campaign. In 2004, the United States created a \$6 million promotional campaign, with the goal of creating increased visitation from Great Britain. Research from Longwoods International indicated more than 360,000 additional British travelers came to the U.S. because of this campaign. These travelers spent \$481 million while in the U.S. and brought in more than \$79.9 million in federal and local taxes.

Research conducted by the Travel Industry Association indicates that a federal campaign to increase visitation to the United States by 10 million visits annually would:

Add \$12 billion per year to American economy

Generate 151,000 new jobs

Generate \$2 billion in federal, state and local tax revenues

'Just imagine the results that a consistent marketing and branding campaign could achieve,' said Hoelscher. 'Travel and tourism brings more than \$699.8 billion to the U.S. economy and employs 17 million Americans. Yet, the U.S. is the only major industrialized country that does not have a strong tourism presence within the national government. As a result of this inattention, we are losing international travel market share and perpetuating an unwelcoming attitude toward international travelers.'

Because of the current economy and value of the dollar, the United States should be an attractive international destination. NTA stresses that America must capitalize on this opportunity to welcome overseas guests. Beyond the economic gains, travel has the power to change the perception of America and Americans worldwide.

NTA applauds Senator Obama for his consideration on this vitally important issue, and the association stands ready to assist Senator Obama, as well as current and future administrations, see the value of tourism.

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