BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Presidential Announcement and Ninth Annual U.S. – China Tourism Leadership Summit Highlight a New Era of U.S.-Chinese Tourism

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President Obama and President Xi of China this week announced that the United States and China will undertake a year of deeper cooperation in the travel and tourism space under the U.S.-China Tourism Year. Led respectively by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), the Tourism Year is designed to effectively position the United States and China for increased trade in travel services.

The announcement comes on the heels of the 2015 U.S.-China Tourism Leadership Summit held in Los Angeles, California with nearly 200 U.S and Chinese tourism leaders from government and industry present. The Summit was a milestone event as it was the first time since the Summit's beginnings in 2007 that Brand USA – the destination-marketing organization for the United States – took the lead role in planning this year's events with the CNTA. Additionally, the industry welcomed the new Chairman of the CNTA, Chairman Li Jinzao. Li brought extensive experience in local and central government and is well respected in China for his open-mindedness and understanding of tourism.

This yearly tradition of gathering tourism leaders from both countries has shown a dedication to fostering greater cooperation and understanding of tourism industry relations between the United States and China.

"This Presidential announcement builds upon the momentum of Brand USA recently hosting the U.S. – China Tourism Leadership Summit and is an opportunity to highlight and expand our current marketing initiatives with the Chinese market," said Chris Thompson, President and CEO of Brand USA. "It's these joint efforts that make a difference in both our tourism industries and in turn, economies. We look forward to working with our partners in the Federal government, destinations and travel brands in optimizing our tourism marketing efforts with this important market."

"China is an important trading partner, and the Chinese market is critical to meeting the goals established in President Obama's National Travel and Tourism Strategy to welcome 100 million international visitors to the United States annually by 2021," said Kelly Craighead, Executive Director of the National Travel and Tourism Office at the U.S. Department of Commerce. "We've made great strides in expanding travel and tourism between our nations in recent years. Our collaboration and cooperation with the China National Tourism Administration and our partnership with Brand USA are vital to continuing this trend." ?

Brand USA officials project that China will become the top overseas market within the next three to five years. Following the agreement to extend the validity period of visas issued to each other's citizens, the U.S. State Department saw nearly a 50 percent increase in Chinese applications for U.S. nonimmigrant visas. In 2014, slightly more than two million Chinese visited the United States, marking a 20 percent jump over the previous year and making China the sixth-largest source market for international tourism to this country.

Tourism is the number one services export for the United States and in 2014 the United States experienced record visitation of 75 million visitors and record spend of nearly $221 billion.

A new study by Oxford Economics shows that for the second straight year Brand USA is accomplishing their mission in collaboration with over 500 partners. The study reveals that over the past two years, Brand USA generated more than two million incremental international visitors who spent $6.5 billion, which in turn created nearly $15 billion in total economic impact.

Brand USA's mission is to increase incremental international visitation, spend and market share to fuel the nation's economy and enhance the image of the USA worldwide. According to Brand USA's proprietary research, their efforts are already achieving results. Brand USA's consumer ads in China have moved the needle nearly 20 percent in increasing travelers' desire to visit the USA in the next 12 months and 10 percent in their overall appeal of the USA.

Brand USA has a number of marketing initiatives and programs available for partners to leverage in the China market. Current programs will be expanded and new opportunities developed to continue to promote enhanced travel facilitation from China to the United States throughout the U.S. - China Tourism Year.

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About Brand USA
Brand USA is the nation's destination marketing organization, dedicated to attracting legitimate international inbound travel to strengthen the U.S. economy, increase exports, create quality jobs, and promote community prosperity. By running data-driven campaigns and unifying messaging across industry and government, Brand USA positions the United States as a top global destination while providing current visa and entry information.

Over the past 13 years Brand USA has driven 11.3 million additional international visitors who spent $38.1 billion in the United States, leading to $82.9 billion in total economic impact and sustaining an average of more than 40,000 jobs each year. These efforts have generated nearly $11 billion in attributable tax receipts at the federal, state, and local levels.