NEWS RELEASE

Brand USA confirms MegaFam 2016 routes in partnership with American Airlines and British Airways

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- 2016 MegaFam Finale to be held in California

Brand USA, the destination marketing organisation for the United States, in partnership with American Airlines and British Airways is pleased to announce confirmation of the USA MegaFam in May 2016, a multi-destination familiarisation tour for travel agents from the UK and Ireland.

The 2016 MegaFam will focus on the USA's great outdoors and each itinerary will visit a National Park as next year celebrates the centennial of the National Park Service. Visiting a total of 18 states, next year's MegaFam will also feature four states, including Alaska and Hawaii, which have not previously been visited on the UK/Ireland MegaFam. The brand new itineraries developed specifically for 2016 are:

- Pennsylvania – West Virginia – Virginia – Delaware – Maryland ?
- Florida – Georgia – South Carolina ?
- Colorado – New Mexico ?
- Nevada – Utah – Arizona ?
- Washington – Oregon ?
- Alaska ?
- Hawaii ?
- Finale: California

After exploring one of the seven itineraries, agents will fly into LAX for a finale event in California. Here, the agents will share their variety of experiences with the goal of educating other agents and enabling them to better sell the destinations upon return.

Agents can win a place on the MegaFam by booking American Airlines and British Airways flights to the United States. To qualify, agents will also be required to earn a number of specialist badges on the agent training site, www.USADiscoveryProgram.co.uk. Details of how agents can qualify to win a place on the 2016 MegaFam will be released by the end of the year, as will the exact dates.

This is the fourth year that the USA MegaFam will take place, with entry numbers and bookings made increasing year-on-year. In 2014, agents vying to win a place on the MegaFam booked over 12,000 flights to and within the USA, up from the previous year's 5,500 flights; in 2015 that figure jumped to over 22,000 passengers booked to travel during the entry period of January toearly April, significantly increasing the number of international tourists holidaying to the United States.

Christopher L. Thompson, President and CEO of Brand USA, said "The Brand USA MegaFam is now an established must-do event for agents across the UK and Ireland. The competition to win a much sought-after place on the fam increases year-on-year and we are delighted to be able to, once again, work with our valued partners at American Airlines and British Airways in developing another exciting set of routes. By working closely with destination partners we aim to showcase the very best each destination has to offer. Our goal is to supply travel agents with the knowledge and assurance they need in order to sell more of the USA as a holiday destination, and to ensure the United States is kept top of mind – with both agents and their customers."

David Thomas, Director of Sales UK & I, said: "As we mark the fifth anniversary of our Joint Business with British Airways, we are embarking on our fourth MegaFam trip together with Brand USA. This popular agents fam trip has contributed to an increase in interest in the U.S. as a destination (for the UK market) and we have responded with enhanced products and services, new departure cities, new destinations and more flat-beds than anyone else on the Atlantic. It is an exciting time for transatlantic travel."

Chris Rankin, British Airways, Head of Consumer Sales UK&I, said: “We’ve had a very successful three-year partnership with Brand USA, which has generated much greater agent’s awareness of the wide variety of destinations within the U.S. we fly to, including our new route to San Jose, which starts next year. The support from agents is vital to the MegaFam’s success and helped to boost and grow sales on our North America network. With over 46 flights a day to the USA with British Airways alone, we’re proud to be working once again with our American Airlines partners to continue this crucial sales drive and make the 2016 MegaFam incentive bigger than ever.”

Caroline Beteta, President and CEO of Visit California: “We’re hugely excited to welcome the Brand USA MegaFam to California. American Airlines and British Airways have long been strong partners of Visit California. With a fourth gateway to the state opening with British Airway’s new route into San Jose, 2016 is the perfect year to host the MegaFam finale. We look forward to welcoming top selling agents from the UK & Ireland to showcase some of the incredible experiences that our diverse state has to offer and highlight that California is more accessible than ever for their customers.”

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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.