BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Atlanta to Host the 2017 U.S. China Leadership Summit

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Brand USA Instrumental in Planning the September Meeting

WASHINGTON, DC – More than 250 high-ranking U.S. and Chinese tourism-industry leaders and government officials are expected to attend the 11th Annual U.S.-China Leadership Summit in Atlanta in September.

Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States, along with the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and the National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO) at the U.S. Department of Commerce jointly are planning the summit, which yearly alternates between the United States and China. The summit is scheduled for September 20-23.

The summit provides business sessions and network opportunities for U.S. and Chinese tourism officials to discuss issues impacting tourism, to strategize on best practices for marketing long-haul destinations and to receive industry updates regarding marketing, trade and government practices.

“The summit provides an excellent opportunity for Brand USA and our partners to enhance already productive relationships with tourism-industry leaders and government officials from China,” said Christopher L. Thompson, president and CEO of Brand USA. “The face-to-face dialogues are mutually beneficial to improve strategies for tourism marketing in the United States and China and increase travel between our respective countries.”

This year’s summit comes following the completion of the 2016 U.S.-China Tourism Year, which then-President Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping jointly designated in recognition of the closer cooperation and steady development of U.S. - China tourism. The initiative was aimed at increasing mutual travel trade through enhanced travel and tourism experiences, cultural understanding and appreciation of natural resources. During 2016, the tourism industries of both countries implemented a myriad of programs, including 1,000 U.S. visitors to the Great Wall, the exchange of visits of travel agents and tour operators and the opening of the Shanghai Disney Resort. Brand USA held its first mega familiarization tour from China, with 50 Chinese agents traveling to the U.S. for a firsthand view of travel destinations, allowing for them to better promote those destinations.

“China represents an incredibly strong growth opportunity for tourism to Atlanta,” said William Pate, president and chief executive officer of the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau. “The summit will provide a platform to showcase the growth of our destination and educate Chinese tourism officials about Atlanta’s world-class cultural, educational and retail offerings.”

According to most recent NTTO statistics, the United States welcomed nearly 2.6 million visitors in 2015 from China - becoming the fifth-largest international market in terms of visitation into the United States.

Current NTTO projections suggest by 2018, the United Kingdom and China will likely be the top-two overseas source markets. It is expected that double-digit increases in the number of Chinese arrivals each year will continue through 2020.

NTTO additionally reported that China was the single-largest source of international tourism spending in 2016. The Chinese market is the number one market in spending for their travel to and within the United States, totally $30.2 billion dollars in travel exports for 2015. On average, each Chinese traveler spends **$7,500** during each U.S. trip.

Brand USA is highly active in China with consumer marketing, robust travel trade outreach and cooperative marketing platforms. The consumer marketing is tailored entirely to the China market and features heavy digital and social presence across established and emerging Chinese channels. To reach the travel trade and travel media and collaborate with the U.S. embassy and consulates, Brand USA has established representation offices in Beijing, Chengdu, Guangzhou, and Shanghai. Many of the cooperative marketing programs that Brand USA offers to its partners in China make use of this impressive media and trade footprint.

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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.