BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Record-Breaking 12th China – U.S. Tourism Leadership Summit in Hangzhou, China, Underscores the Industry's Impact on the Two Largest Economies in the World; Highlights Culture and Tourism

Hangzhou, China - September 10, 2018

Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States, joined the newly formed Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, to host the 12th annual China – U.S. Tourism Leadership Summit in Hangzhou, China, on September 9-10. The more than 70 U.S. delegates set a new high for a China-hosted summit; they were joined by nearly 100 Chinese delegates, underscoring the importance of this annual event to both nations.

Summit participants included top-level executives and officials at state, provincial, and city level destination marketing organizations, association heads, tour operators and online travel agents, attractions, transportation companies, and more. High-level government officials in attendance were Sean Stein, the Consul General at the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai; Louisiana Lieutenant Governor William "Billy" Nungesser, who oversees the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism; Li Jinzao, Vice Minister of the Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism; Wang Wenxu, Vice Governor of Zhejiang Province; and Xu Liyi, Mayor of Hangzhou.

Panel discussions and presentations centered on best practices in marketing, travel and tourism trends, and current issues impacting the industry. The theme of "culture and tourism" resonated throughout the event. Brand USA representatives talked about the importance of inspiring travelers through storytelling, the forward-thinking screen-strategy the organization has launched, and how music plays a key role in both.

"Brand USA is excited to introduce our music platform to industry and government leadership in China," said Christopher L. Thompson, president and CEO of Brand USA. "The highest profile part of that platform is our latest giant-screen film, "America's Musical Journey," which highlights American culture through music. We're sharing best practices and learnings through the marketing of culture and tourism, while gaining the same from our Chinese colleagues."

Importance of the China market

According to most recent NTTO statistics, the United States welcomed nearly 3 million visitors in 2016 from China – a 15 percent increase over 2015. China is the fifth-largest international market in terms of visitation into the United States, and the Chinese market is the number one market in spending for their travel to and within the United States, totaling $33 billion dollars in travel exports for 2016. Travel and tourism exports account for 61 percent of all U.S. services exports to China – injecting nearly $91 million a day into the U.S. economy.

Brand USA has several China-specific consumer marketing campaigns, robust travel trade outreach programs, 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. Given the importance of the market, Brand USA has created a dedicated Chinese website, GoUSA.cn. In addition, to assist in reaching the travel trade and travel media and to effectively collaborate with the U.S. embassy and consulates, Brand USA has established representation offices in Beijing, Chengdu, Guangzhou, and Shanghai.

2019 U.S. – China Tourism Leadership Summit

During the summit, Thompson announced that Seattle, Washington, was selected as the host city for the 2019 U.S. – China Tourism Leadership Summit in September 2019. Following the announcement representatives of Hanghzou, China, and Seattle, Washington, signed a memorandum of understanding for tourism cooperation. Seattle was one of several U.S. locations that participated in Brand USA's competitive bidding process to select the 2019 host city.

“This leadership summit allows us to showcase Seattle and the Puget Sound region to some 200 leading travel and tourism executives from both China and across the U.S. It also provides Visit Seattle and our partners a compelling opportunity to showcase the best of what our region offers and position Seattle as a must-visit destination for the lucrative China market,” said President and CEO of Visit Seattle Tom Norwalk.

“Brand USA looks forward to the Summit’s return to the USA in 2019, and we know Seattle will offer one big welcome to the U.S. and China government officials and travel and tourism industry leaders who attend,” said Thompson.

According to Visit Seattle, China became the city’s top overseas inbound visitor market in 2010, when visitation from the market grew 133 percent as compared to the previous year. And, in the next five years, the number of visitors from China to Seattle is expected to grow to more than 300,000.

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About U.S. - China Tourism Leadership Summit

Established in 2007 by the U.S. Travel Association, the U.S.-China Tourism Leadership Summit provides a platform for discussion between U.S. and Chinese tourism industry leaders and government officials from the two countries. In 2014, U.S. Travel officially transitioned the Summit to Brand USA as the nation’s official cooperative destination marketing organization. The Summit is now jointly produced by Brand USA and Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People’s Republic of China and it alternates between the United States and China each year.

About Visit Seattle

Visit Seattle has served as the official destination marketing organization (DMO) for Seattle and King County for more than 50 years. A 501(c) 6 organization, Visit Seattle enhances the economic prosperity of the region through global destination branding along with competitive programs and campaigns in leisure travel marketing, convention sales, and overseas tourism development. Nearly 40 million annual visitors spend $7 billion in the city and county each year. The economic power of travel and tourism generates 74,000 Seattle area jobs and contributes $718 million in annual state and local tax revenue. Visit VisitSeattle.org.

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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.