Record-Breaking Year For California's Tourism Economy

Thursday 14 May, 2015

Visit California, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting California on behalf of the state's tourism industry, announced today that 251 million people traveled in California in 2014, and total travel-related spending reached $117.5 billion. This spending supported more than 1 million jobs and generated $9.3 billion in state and local tax revenue, a significant boost compared to 2013. Today's announcement, which occurs as part of National Travel and Tourism Week, demonstrates the growing value of the tourism industry and why California must continue attracting visitors in an increasingly competitive global market in order to remain a top-of-mind travel destination.

"California's powerful tourism economy is great news for all Californians," said Visit California President and CEO Caroline Beteta. "This report shows that visitors who inject billions of dollars into our economy – in all corners of the state – lift businesses from every sector, create jobs and support local economies."

A report by Dean Runyan Associates, conducted on behalf of Visit California, shows the economic impacts of travel to and through California from 1992 to 2014. The report includes statewide and county-by-county information as well the economic benefits of leading tourism sectors such as hotels, rental cars and retail. The study shows that 53 out of California's 58 counties saw an increase in direct travel spending compared to 2013, including:

- **Fresno**: $1.37 billion in traveler spending, up from $1.36 billion
- **Los Angeles**: $25.03 billion, up from $24.17 billion
- **Monterey**: $2.57 billion, up from $2.47 billion
- **Sacramento**: $3.41 billion, up from $3.33 billion
- **San Diego**: $14.65 billion, up from $14.00 billion
- **San Francisco**: $13.83 billion, up from $13.08 billion
- **Santa Barbara**: $1.99 billion, up from $1.92 billion
- **Shasta County**: $410.6 million, up from $406.0 million

For the first time, the report calculated the secondary impact of income spent by industry businesses and employees, bringing total direct and indirect employment supported by the travel industry to more than 1.73 million employees who earned a total of $76.80 billion.

Visit California plays a leading role in the success of the industry by attracting potential travelers in domestic and top international markets to visit and explore the Golden State. The report found that Visit California's marketing efforts brought more than 4 million additional visitors to the state who spent approximately $8.1 billion while visiting California – a return on investment of $327 for each marketing dollar spent. To help California remain a premier travel destination, on May 22, a $116 million budget for fiscal year 2015-16 will be presented to Visit California's board. This is an 87 percent increase from the 2014/2015 budget based on the tourism industry's support of an increased assessment to fund marketing activities.

"There is a direct link between tourism and California's economic success," Beteta said. "There is no question that California's allure is one-of-a-kind. However, it must be marketed regularly to reach potential visitors across the United States and around the world."

Access the report "California Travel Impacts by County, 1992-2013, 2014 Preliminary State & Regional Estimates," and see a breakdown of all the numbers by county and region.

Visit California is a nonprofit organization with a mission to develop and maintain marketing programs – in partnership with the state's travel industry – that keep California top-of-mind as a premier travel destination. For more information about Visit California and for a free California Official State Visitor's Guide, go to www.VisitCalifornia.com. Follow Visit California on Twitter at @CTTCNews.

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