



## **Governor's Conference on Tourism**

Tuesday, July 13, 2010  
Lowe's Ventana Canyon Resort  
Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

It's wonderful to see you all at such an important event here in beautiful Tucson.

This annual gathering of tourism leadership from across the state is testimony to the unity, professionalism and passion within your industry.

I love the theme of this year's conference, "Tuning Into Tourism"!

And ... believe me, I HAVE been tuned in.

Since I took the oath of office as Governor about 500 days ago, I have been working to lead the Arizona Comeback, and send a message to the world that Arizona is a premier place in which to locate, expand and grow, as we become more aggressive in attracting new industry and jobs to this State, and focused on helping our Arizona companies thrive.

Tourism is one of Arizona's most important economic drivers, and I fully appreciate the number of jobs that the industry creates AND supports throughout our state.

I also know that this past year has brought many challenges.

Since joining you last year for this conference, there have been many things that have impacted the tourism industry.

But, we have remained strong – and just maybe we have been made stronger by the challenges we have overcome, and those that are still in front of us.

We've all fought tough battles this past year and now, as we look forward, we must stand together and continue working to find solutions.

From the condition of the U.S. economy -- to the tough decisions with budget cuts – to the issue of boycotts related to SB1070 – we STILL face significant challenges.

It was because of these issues, that I asked the Arizona Office of Tourism to help bring together tourism leaders from across the state last May to discuss what my office could do to help the industry during these rough times.

The conversation was very candid and honest; the Tourism industry leaders talked with me about the impact of the boycotts and the threat on potential new conventions and meetings business coming to our state.

During that meeting, I asked Sherry Henry to work with those leaders to form a volunteer task force to bring me specific recommendations and ideas to address issues faced by the Tourism Industry.

I also asked Don Cardon, director of the Arizona Department of Commerce and Margie Emmermann, director of the Arizona-Mexico Commission, along with Eileen Klein, my Chief of Staff to participate in the Task Force discussions.

The Task Force was organized under an executive committee -- and it worked with great energy to develop a list of recommendations and ideas.

They provided me with a detailed report which I reviewed with my senior staff.

Those recommendations included ideas on research, public relations, grass roots outreach, advertising as well as meetings, conventions and association outreach.

The Task Force fully concurred that, despite the issue of boycotts or negative publicity ... the Tourism industry and business community must stay committed to the long-term “Brand” that is uniquely Arizona.

That existing Arizona “Brand” IS the reason people have always selected our state as a vacation destination and the reason businesses are attracted here as well.

The Task Force reaffirmed that Arizona’s “Brand” is proven and strong, and the focus needs to be on educating travelers about the realities and truths about SB1070 and clearing up misinformation and misunderstandings.

Two weeks ago, I told the task force that I concurred with their short-term findings.

I approved the use of \$250,000 of funding provided by the Arizona Department of Commerce to get their ideas moving forward.

The Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association stepped up and contributed another \$30,000 to further support these efforts.

As of today, steps have been taken to proactively address the short-term ideas that they outlined and I am happy to report the wheels are in motion.

Moreover, the Task Force made a long-term recommendation for development of a national and international campaign that could promote both tourism and economic development throughout the state.

As a follow up, I am directing the Executive Committee of the Task Force to meet and create the framework for this campaign---including options for sustainable funding in partnership with the private sector.

Furthermore, it is my plan to have that campaign managed by the Arizona Office of Tourism, in coordination with the Arizona-Mexico Commission, the new Arizona Commerce Authority and the Arizona Tourism Alliance.

It is my hope that the Executive Committee will develop a targeted national and international advertising and marketing campaign that tells the great story of Arizona Tourism and Economic Development throughout our state. Our Tourism Industry is critical to the future economic vitality of Arizona.

We know that tourism is a key component to the attraction and development of business and commerce throughout the state.

For that reason, Sherry Henry will be serving as part of the new Arizona Commerce Authority to ensure that the voice of the tourism industry is heard.

I created the new Commerce Authority by Executive Order recently, bringing in private sector leaders from across Arizona, from businesses both large and small, to build on our state's strengths and create the conditions for a successful statewide business environment.

I also applaud the great efforts of Arizona's Rural Communities and Native American Tourism partners for all they do to attract visitors to travel throughout our state!

From Yuma to Williams and from Chinle to Bisbee, our state offers an unmatched tourism experience for our visitors.

I thank you for all the remarkable efforts you make to build and sustain our tourism industry and I thank you for your hard work during very challenging times.

I wish you a successful conference -- and I am excited to see what new ideas, products and promotions come from this industry in the year ahead.

On behalf of all citizens of Arizona, keep up the good work in telling the story of how beautiful, diverse and dynamic our state is and what it offers to visitors from around the globe.

I will keep "Tuning into Tourism" -- because you all are producing great hits ... which improve the quality of life throughout our state!

I hope you have a successful conference.

God bless you, and God bless the great state of Arizona.

Thank you.