



State of Arizona

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Arizona Tourism Leaders Release Recommendations

Suggestions Inclusive of Tourism and Business Development Issues

PHOENIX - Governor Jan Brewer today announced the release of recommendations compiled by a volunteer committee of tourism leaders from around the state formed to recommend ways in which to enhance Arizona's tourism industry and overall economic development.

In May, Governor Brewer met with statewide tourism and business leaders to discuss the current status of the Arizona tourism industry as well as economic development issues. Arizona's tourism industry has been challenged by many of today's current issues, such as the condition of the national economy, the negative perception of hosting business meetings or conventions at resorts, and the threat of destructive and thoughtless boycotts.

"We want to do all we can to protect our hard working families in the tourism industry and make sure Arizona's real story as a welcoming, one-of-a-kind travel destination is resonating," said Governor Brewer. "Despite threats by some to Arizonans because of misinformation about immigration law enforcement, I am confident that Arizona's reputation and brand remains strong and that the truth is prevailing."

The tourism leaders are comprised of members from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT), the Arizona Department of Commerce (ADOC), the Arizona Mexico Commission (AMC), as well as the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association (AzHLA), the Arizona Tourism Alliance (ATA) and other statewide business leaders.

Charged with gathering information, having discussions and evaluating ideas to address industry issues, the leaders met in subgroups dealing with targeted subjects that included research, advertising & marketing, public relations, grass roots communications, and corporate group travel. ADOC committed \$250,000 and AzHLA committed \$30,000 for resources that the task force could consider while evaluating recommendations.

Underscoring the importance of tourism as an economic development tool, next steps from the tourism leaders centered on supporting the popular Arizona brand that tourism officials currently use to promote the attributes of Arizona as a location to visit, work and live. Other steps include creating a proactive communication plan to clarify facts and misconceptions about SB1070 for travelers to Arizona and to consider long-term national and international marketing, advertising and public relations efforts that would further the existing Arizona brand by promoting the assets of the state with a focus on tourism, business and economic vitality.

Implementation of these components will be managed under the direction of the Arizona Office of Tourism, the Arizona Department of Commerce, the Arizona Mexico Commission and the Arizona Tourism Alliance in collaboration with statewide businesses and tourism leadership.

“The importance of the tourism industry to Arizona’s future growth cannot be stressed enough,” said Sherry Henry, director of the Arizona Office of Tourism. “The Grand Canyon State has long attracted visitors because of our geographic and cultural diversity and these visitors have a tremendous impact on the economic growth and development of our state.”

According to Don Cardon, director of the Arizona Department of Commerce, the task force determined that the messages of the state’s tourism growth and overall business development run parallel and support the quality of life enjoyed by all Arizona citizens.

“Arizona’s tourism industry is a vital component of our state’s economic development,” said Don Cardon. “The state’s business development leaders and tourism industry leaders will be working together at the direction of Governor Brewer to create a long-term solution to the issues that we face going forward.”

As one of Arizona’s important economic generators, tourism provides a significant economic impact to the state. In 2008, tourism was Arizona’s number one export industry, fueling the economy with more than 37 million visitors last year spending over \$18 billion. Business development and attraction is a key component of Arizona’s economy and the tourism industry is a driving force in establishing the “quality of life” message and amenities that are necessary to make Arizona an attractive place to work, live and visit.

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Task Force Recommendations

Below are the recommendations of the Governor's Tourism and Economic Development Task Force:

General Findings

- The task force concurred that Arizona's "brand" is strong and successful. The "brand" enhances statewide assets and compliments the promotional efforts conducted by statewide tourism entities that market Arizona an extremely desirable place for visitors and business.
- To implement the following recommendations, it is suggested that a tactical approach be managed under the direction of the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT), the Arizona Department of Commerce, the Arizona-Mexico Commission and the Arizona Tourism Alliance in collaboration with statewide business and tourism leaders.

Action Plan

Short-Term Tactics:

Advertising

Timeline

- **Extend AOT "ValueAZ" in-state travel campaign** **Immediate**

The task force agreed to support AOT's in-state summer travel deals campaign ValueAZ.com. AOT, in partnership with the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association and other statewide industry partners, has launched its summer campaign. The campaign will showcase summer travel opportunities and deals found throughout Arizona in addition to promoting the economic value of travel throughout the state.

Public Relations

Timeline

- **Develop printed and digital SB1070 Fact sheet** **Immediate**

The task force recommends that a printed and digital SB1070 fact sheet be developed to clarify facts and misconceptions.

- **Contract with public relations firm** **Immediate**

The task force recommends contracting with a qualified public relations firm to help manage the existing dialogue and clarify the facts regarding SB 1070 to key target audiences. This could include editorials and interviews in key markets throughout the U.S. such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, Chicago, New York and Washington D.C., as well as Mexico and other select international markets.

The initial focus would provide facts that inform potential visitors/meeting planners and the general public that Arizona is a safe and welcoming destination; change the tone of the dialogue to reflect the true implications and tangible effects that boycotts have on the lives and families of the most vulnerable tourism employees.

- **Grass Roots Communication**

Immediate

The task force recommends creating a statewide (and beyond as feasible) organized program designed to disseminate the facts through various tourism and business conduits, i.e. Certified Ambassador Programs (Maricopa County), statewide community outreach programs, newsletters and email blasts. Additionally, the task force recommends public appearances by key government and industry leaders on television, radio and other media opportunities that would complement the grass roots program as well as be connected to the suggested PR efforts. Any grass roots campaigns, such as “letter writing”, editorials or direct contact, would also be included in these activities.

- **Corporate, Association and Group Meetings Outreach**

Immediate

The task force recommends assisting the tourism (i.e. corporate, association and group meetings) segment which is being most significantly impacted. The recommended program would be an extended and expanded version of a similar program initiated by Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau, which would invite key meeting planners, their respective board members, and other designated group booking decision makers to Arizona for personal dialogue, tours and a personal interaction with the Governor. The intent is to embellish the relationships on a one-on-one basis.

Included in this program would be an educational component of the facts in major industry publications through editorials and PR related articles, especially in the key trade publications and markets, as well as the locations of the larger associations.

- **Research**

Immediate

The task force recommends engaging a local research company to begin preliminary evaluation of the potential loss of business based on SB1070. Initially, this would be an internal document for the industry to be shared with the Governor's office and industry leaders.

Long-Term Tactics:

- The long-term recommendation is for the State of Arizona to consider a national and international marketing, advertising and public relations effort that would further the existing Arizona "brand" by promoting the assets of the state with a focus on tourism, business and economic vitality.