

International Tourism Grows And Domestic Visitors Stay Close To Home

Massachusetts Industry Sees Growth in Revenues, Strategic Marketing Investments Working

BOSTON - Wednesday, September 17, 2008 - Today, the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) released information detailing a surge in the state's tourism industry, a positive development for the state's economy. The growth in international and domestic visitors is due in part to a strategic international marketing campaign MOTT launched last year as well as rising gas prices and a softening national economy.

The number of international travelers to the Bay State in 2007 grew by 6% to 1.8 million from 1.7 million in 2006. Additionally, 20 million domestic tourists visited Massachusetts during 2007. Direct economic expenditures related to tourism in Massachusetts generated roughly \$15.1 billion in 2007, \$1.8 billion from international travelers (up 11%) and \$13.3 billion from domestic visitors (up 6%). Internationally, the positive trend continues in 2008.

"Travel and tourism continue to grow among international visitors to our marvelous state," said Governor Patrick. "Our team has been exceptionally effective at encouraging that growth, even during these tight budgetary times."

Domestically, the lodging industry performance in Massachusetts is far outpacing U.S. averages, suggesting travelers are staying closer to home. The rising price of gas combined with the recent national economic downturn has created a "drive market," with more people from in-state and out-of-state coming by car to explore the Bay State. In fact, through the first half of 2008, room demand in Massachusetts grew by 3%, even while U.S. averages experienced a slight decrease.

"Increased tourism drives revenue growth in industry sectors like lodging, retail, food services, entertainment and recreation, auto transportation, and travel planning," said Daniel O'Connell, Secretary of Housing and Economic Development. "The current global economy will continue to spur domestic and international tourism to Massachusetts making it an affordable and desired destination for its historical significance and natural beauty."

Abroad, the relative strength of the Euro has made the United States a popular destination for European tourists. The affordability and location of Logan International has attracted many of these visitors to the state. Last year, MOTT made strategic investments in marketing activities in eight key international markets. In each country, MOTT secured the services of public relations and marketing companies that represented Massachusetts at international trade shows, hosted trade missions and worked with US partners to create "familiarization" trips for foreign tour operators and travel writers. MOTT also made strategic investments by marketing Massachusetts in television and print media campaigns at home and in neighboring states.

"MOTT has invested wisely and taken advantage of our current economic conditions to create a positive return for Massachusetts," said Betsy Wall, Executive Director of MOTT. "It's exciting to know the impact of our efforts is not only generating increased revenues, but it is also helping to keep people in the tourism industry employed in the state."

The Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism serves as a leader in the tourism industry, bringing together the public and private sectors to promote Massachusetts as a leisure travel destination and to stimulate the Massachusetts economy by generating state and local tax revenues, creating jobs, and supporting the growth of travel related businesses. For more information about MOTT, please visit www.Massvacation.com.

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The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development is one of eight Secretariats that make up the Governors Cabinet. Under the leadership of Secretary Dan O'Connell, the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development oversees the following undersecretariates: the Departments of Business Development, Housing and Community Development, and Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation.