NEWS RELEASE

Brand USA Announces New Board Members and Leadership, Welcomes Elliott Ferguson as Chair

December 11, 2024

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 12, 2024) – Brand USA, the nation's destination marketing organization, today announced its new leadership and members who will make up its 2025 board of directors. Elliott Ferguson, chief executive officer of Destination DC, will serve as board chair for a one-year term. Ferguson was first appointed to the board in 2022 and most recently served as Treasurer. In addition to Ferguson serving as Chair, he will lead alongside Vice Chair Lauren Bailey, Treasurer Kristen Esposito, and Secretary Allen Orr.

Brand USA is also pleased to announce the appointment of two new directors: Danny Hughes, president, Americas, Hilton (representing Hotel Accommodations); and Gus Antorcha, president, Princess Cruises (representing Land or Sea Transportation). Additionally, Ferguson, Bailey and past-chair Todd Davidson were all re-appointed to serve second three-year terms.

The 11-member board is appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce in consultation with the U.S. Secretaries of State and Homeland Security. Each director represents a travel and tourism industry sector and can serve a maximum of two consecutive three-year terms.

"Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo has selected five outstanding industry leaders to join the Board of Directors and help guide Brand USA as it markets the United States as the premier travel and tourism destination around the world," said Alex Lasry, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism, U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration. "We look forward to continuing our close collaboration with Brand USA to advance the goals of the National Travel and Tourism Strategy and bring more international visitors to the United States to drive economic growth and support jobs across the country."

The new board appointments come as Brand USA sets its sights on achieving the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Travel and Tourism Strategy goal of welcoming 90 million visitors by 2027, which it expects to do one year ahead of schedule, in 2026.

"My priorities align with Brand USA's mission to welcome the world to the U.S. and generate incremental economic development," said Ferguson. "We want the global community to know that the U.S. is welcoming, and we're prioritizing all things tied to making travel safe and easy for visitors to come here. I will work with the amazing team at Brand USA to focus on growth opportunities tied to international meetings, the recovery of the Asia market and areas of the world that haven't been as emphasized. The diversity of our marketing is important from a competitive standpoint as we aim to reflect the U.S. as a welcoming destination with broad appeal."

The newly appointed [and re-appointed] members include:

- **Reappointment: Todd Davidson**, chief executive officer, Travel Oregon (State Tourism)

- **Reappointment: Elliott Ferguson**, president & chief executive officer, Destination DC (City Convention and Visitors' Bureau)
- **Reappointment: Lauren Bailey**, chief executive officer and co-founder, Upward Projects (Restaurant)
- **New Appointment: Danny Hughes**, president, Americas, Hilton (Hotel accommodations)
- **New Appointment: Gus Antorcha***, president, Princess Cruises (Land or Sea Transportation)
    - *Gus is a one-year interim appointment to fill Don Moore's remaining term.*

"As we shift from international visitation recovery to growth and new records, we are privileged to work alongside this talented board including the new slate of officers and directors led by Board Chair Elliott Ferguson to help advance the vital work of promoting the U.S. to global travel audiences while positively impacting our nation's economy and at the same time, bolstering jobs," said Fred Dixon, President and CEO of Brand USA.

The complete list of the 2025 Brand USA Board of Directors can be found here and also includes Allen Orr, Founder, Orr Immigration Law Firm; Kirsten Esposito, Principal, Esposito Global Partners; Mike Mangeot, Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Tourism; Tim Mapes, Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, Delta Air Lines; Hari Nair, Global SVP & General Manager, Hotels.com (Expedia Group); and Stephanie Young, President, Disney Vacation Club, Adventures & Expeditions, and Disney Institute for Disney Experiences.

Brand USA extends its gratitude to departing board members Don Moore and Mark Hoplamazian for their outstanding service and dedication. Their leadership has been instrumental in advancing our mission and their contributions will leave a lasting impact on our efforts to promote the U.S. as a premier travel destination.

For more information about Brand USA's board of directors, please visit thebrandusa.com/about/directors.

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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.

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