BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Tourism Officials Highlight a New Era of U.S.-Chinese Tourism at Ninth Annual U.S. – China Tourism Leadership Summit in Los Angeles

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Participants discussed marketing strategies and focused on expanding cooperation in the tourism industry

The 2015 U.S.-China Tourism Leadership Summit was a milestone event as it was the first time since the Summit's beginnings in 2007, Brand USA – the destination-marketing organization for the United States – took the lead role in planning this year's events with the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). Additionally, the industry welcomed the new Chairman of the CNTA, Chairman Li Jinzao. Li brought extensive experience in local and central government and is revered for his open-mindedness, pragmatism, knowledge, and profound understanding of tourism.

This yearly tradition of gathering tourism leaders from both countries has shown a dedication to fostering greater cooperation and understanding between the U.S. and China. In 2014, slightly more than 2 million Chinese visited the U.S., which signifies a 20 percent jump over the previous year and makes China the fourth-largest source market for international tourism to the U.S. Brand USA officials project that China will become the No. 1 market within three years.

"Meetings like the U.S. – China Tourism Leadership Summit are paramount in mutually beneficial strategies of joint marketing between our two nations and coming to agreements that benefit both parties," stated Chris Thompson, President and CEO of Brand USA. "After the agreement to extend the visa validity of visas issued to each other's citizens, the U.S. State Department saw nearly a 50 percent increase in Chinese applications for U.S. nonimmigrant visas. It's these joint efforts that make a difference in both our tourism industries and in turn, economies."

The 2015 Summit also featured the concurrent annual meeting of the tourism working group of the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT). The JCCT is a government-to-government forum to address bilateral trade issues between the United States and China, and the tourism working group is led by the National Travel and Tourism Office at the U.S. Department of Commerce and CNTA. The group addressed several key policy issues related to the flow of travelers between the two countries.

"China is an important trading partner, and the Chinese market is critical to meeting the goals established in President Obama's National Travel and Tourism Strategy to welcome 100 million international visitors to the United States annually by 2021," said Kelly Craighead, Executive Director of the National Travel and Tourism Office at the U.S. Department of Commerce. "We've made great strides in expanding travel and tourism between our nations in recent years. Our collaboration and cooperation with the China National Tourism Administration and our partnership with Brand USA are vital to continuing this trend." ?

This year's Summit has started the next chapter of the relationship between the U.S. and Chinese tourism industries. Industry officials shared updates on the current states of tourism, highlighted new and exciting regions to promote, heard strategies from both sides on how to attract each other to the prospective markets, and most of all, China and the United States solidified the bond, commitment and respect it has to and for each other.

The U.S.-China Tourism Leadership Summit will return to the United States in 2017 when Atlanta, Georgia will host the event in partnership with Brand USA and the China National Tourism Administration.

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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.