BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Brand USA announces three new members and the re-appointment of Marriott President & CEO Arne Sorenson to the board of directors

Washington, DC - November 30, 2015

The board of directors of Brand USA today announced the re-appointment by Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker of Marriott President & CEO Arne Sorenson, who currently serves as board chair, to its board of directors, as well as the appointment of three new board members. The newly appointed and reappointed members include:

- Arne Sorenson, President and CEO, Marriott International, Inc., who currently serves as the chair of the board (re-appointment)
- Kyle Edmiston, assistant secretary, Louisiana Office of Tourism (new appointment)
- Maryann Ferenc, owner & CEO, Mise en Place (new appointment) ? Rossi Ralenkotter, president & CEO, Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (new appointment)

Each appointment is effective Dec. 1, 2015 for a term of three years.

"Brand USA is fortunate to have a strong, diverse, and experienced board whose members represent broad sectors of business and the travel industry," said Christopher L. Thompson, president and CEO of Brand USA. "We thank Visit California President and CEO Caroline Beteta, Bloomberg Associates CEO George Fertitta, and Chef Roy Yamaguchi for their invaluable contributions to the board over the years. Their support as part of the original board of Brand USAhelped bring Brand USA into existence and whose leadership helped make Brand USA a strong, results-driven organization. As they complete their terms of service with us, we are fortunate to welcome three new members to the Brand USA board. We are confident they will provide effective leadership and governance along with new perspectives to Brand USA as we build upon the success of our first five years as the nation's destination marketing organization."

Kyle Edmiston, assistant secretary, Louisiana Office of Tourism, has served in his capacity since 2012. Prior to his current position, he served as President/CEO of the Ruston Lincoln CVB. He currently serves on the board of directors of the Southeast Tourism Society, U.S. Travel Association and is the Vice Chair of the Travel South USA Board of Directors. Additionally, he serves on the DMAI Destination Foundation Board of Trustees, the U.S. Travel Association Board executive committee, the U.S. Travel Association Project: Time Off Advisory Board, and is a member of the National Council of State Tourism Directors.

Mr. Edmiston previously served as president of the Louisiana Association of CVBs and Vice Chair of the Louisiana Travel Promotion Association. He has also served on the Brand USA Marketing Advisory Committee. He received his Certified Destination Management Executive distinction from DMAI in 2008 and was named as tourism's Rising Star by Southeast Tourism Society in 2010. During 2013, the Louisiana Office of Tourism received the Southeast Tourism Society state tourism office of the year, and the Louisiana Office of Tourism is only the second state to receive international accreditation from DMAI.

Maryann Ferenc, president and owner of Mise en Place, has spent her entire career in the hospitality industry. Maryann and her partner, James Beard award-winner Chef Marty Blitz made their mark in Tampa Bay, Florida, with the opening of Mise en Place, a hospitality group that began as a catering company in 1986. Since that time, Mise en Place has grown into an upscale urban restaurant in downtown Tampa and diverse operations that include in-house events; a full-service catering and event company; retail marketing, exclusive contracted events at the Tampa Museum of Art with an on-premise restaurant; a wine bar and bistro at the Tampa International Airport; and a wine bar and café at Amalie Arena, the home of the Tampa Bay Lightning.

A passion for hospitality and independent business led Ms. Ferenc to community roles as founder and board member of the Tampa Independent Business Alliance; board member and past chairperson of Visit Tampa Bay, Super Bowl Host Committee, Tampa Bay World Cup Soccer Bid Committee and RNC Host Committee. She was appointed to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce's Travel and Tourism Advisory Board in 2009 and is now serving a third term. In addition, she was appointed to the board of directors for Visit Florida in December 2011 with a term through June 2019 and currently serves as treasurer of the board.

Maryann's love of the industry goes beyond her own dining room to a variety of hunger relief efforts including Share our Strength, Feeding America, and Taste of the NFL. Community and business work have led to awards, such as Lou Groza Kick Hunger, Gonzmart Ambassador and TBBJ Businesswoman of the Year. She is active in the animal rescue community and lives with nine fabulous dogs.

Rossi Ralenkotter, president/CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA), is responsible for marketing and branding Las Vegas and Southern Nevada as the world's most desirable destination for leisure and business travel. Under Mr. Ralenkotter's leadership, the LVCVA launched the most successful branding campaign in tourism history, which is best known for its oft-repeated tagline, "What happens here, stays here.™" It was selected the No. 1 campaign by the voting public and was inducted into the Madison Avenue Advertising Walk of Fame in 2011. The LVCVA owns and operates the Las Vegas Convention Center and Cashman Center. With Mr. Ralenkotter's oversight, Las Vegas remains the world's trade show capital, hosting 60 of the largest 250 trade shows.

Mr. Ralenkotter began his career at the LVCVA in 1973 as a research analyst. Prior to becoming president/CEO in 2004, he was the LVCVA executive vice president and senior vice president of marketing. Before joining the LVCVA, Mr. Ralenkotter worked for a local telephone company and served in the United States Air Force. Mr. Ralenkotter is a technical advisory committee member of NV Governor Brian Sandoval's Southern Nevada Tourism Infrastructure Committee. He also is the past Chair of the Board of Directors for the U.S. Travel Association. He has served as a delegate to the White House Conference on Tourism and as chair of the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board for the U.S. Department of Commerce where remains on the board. He is a member of the American Society of Travel Agents, Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI), the American Society of Association Executives and the Hotel Sales Marketing Association.

He was named "Employer of the Year" by the Employee Service Management Association in 2006, one of the "25 Most Influential People in the Meetings Industry" by Meeting News in 2005, and in 2004, he was selected "Co-Brand Marketer of the Year" by Brandweek magazine. In 2013, the International Association of Exhibitions and Events honored him with its "Pinnacle Award" in recognition of extraordinary achievement in the exhibitions and events management field. Additionally, he was inducted into both the U.S. Travel Association's "Hall of Leaders" and DMAI's "Hall of Fame" in 2014.

Mr. Ralenkotter was honored with UNLV's Distinguished Nevadan Award in 2009 and UNLV Alumni of the Year in 2008. He served as a First Lieutenant in the United States Air Force with the 468th Medical Service Flight. He is a member of the Las Vegas Ad Club, which inducted him into the Las Vegas Advertising Hall of Fame for lifetime marketing achievements. He also received Lifetime Achievement honors from the American Marketing Association and the Travel and Tourism Research Association.

"We are pleased that we will continue to benefit from Arne's leadership as a result of his re-appointment to the board," said Thompson. "Marriott is a leading global lodging company with more than 4,300 properties comprising 19 brands in 85 countries and territories, and Arne's lodging company leadership and vast international experience have been especially valuable as Brand USA continues its work to market the United States as the world's premier travel destination."

Since its establishment, Brand USA has demonstrated a positive impact on international visitation. In fact, according to studies by Oxford Economics, from 2013 through 2014, Brand USA's marketing initiatives have helped bring more than 2 million incremental visitors to the USA, benefitting the U.S. economy with nearly $15 billion in business sales; nearly $2 billion in federal, state and local taxes; and supporting, on average, 50,000 incremental jobs per year. In addition, the United States' share of total international travel increased from approximately 12% in 2011 to 13.5% in 2014 (and the USA'sshare of long-haul travel increased from 6.4% to 6.7%).

Members of the Brand USA board of directors are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce (after consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of State) and represent various regions of the United States, with members having expertise and experience in specific sectors of the travel and tourism industry. More information about the members of the Brand USA board of directors can be found at TheBrandUSA.com under "About Brand USA."

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Anne Madison, Chief Strategy and Communications Officer
Brand USA
301-385-8296
Amadison@thebrandusa.com

Felicia Farrar McLemore, APR, Sr. Director, Global Corporate Relations
Marriott International, Inc.
301-380-2702

Jacques Berry, Communications Director for Lt. Governor Dardenne
Louisiana Office of Tourism
225-342-8608
jberry@crt.la.gov

Erika Zimmerman, Customer Service Manager
Mise en Place
813-253-6473
zimmerman@miseonline.com

Cathy Tull, Senior Vice President of Marketing
Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority
702-892-0711
ctull@lvcva.com

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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.