BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Interface Tourism France Partners with Hills Balfour to Represent Brand USA's Interests in France, Belgium, and Luxembourg

Paris, France - January 17, 2018

Brand USA, the destination marketing organisation for the United States, has appointed travel representation and PR consultancy Hills Balfour to act as its agency of record across Europe. Following an in-depth review process initiated by Brand USA in September 2017, Hills Balfour will represent Brand USA's travel trade interests in France, Benelux, Italy, Spain, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, in addition to its established responsibilities representing Brand USA in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Hills Balfour will work with Brand USA in Europe to position the United States as a premier travel destination in order to increase visitation, spend and market share for the United States. As part of this effort, Hills Balfour will work collaboratively with its sister agencies on the continent to ensure that all in-market activity represents Brand USA in ways that support its strategies and mission and protects the organisation's integrity and brand.

In France, Belgium and Luxembourg, Hills Balfour will partner with Interface Tourism France to support Brand USA's mission and tell the amazing stories of unique and exceptional travel experiences available in the USA. Hills Balfour will also partner with Interface Tourism Group in Italy and Spain. In Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands, Hills Balfour will partner with Lieb Management who will focus on promoting the United States to the German-speaking and Dutch markets.

"Europe represents the largest overseas travel region to the United States and we are confident that Hills Balfour's European expertise in travel marketing will help us reach and welcome even more visitors from Europe in the years to come," says Christopher L. Thompson, Brand USA President and CEO. "We look forward to extending our footprint with Hills Balfour in order to build upon our strong presence and relationships in-market to promote travel to the United States to, through, and beyond the gateways."

Amanda Hills, Hills Balfour CEO, says "The United States offers travellers some of the most diverse travel experiences of any destination in the world and I am extremely proud that Hills Balfour has been selected to represent Brand USA's interests across Europe. Hills Balfour works with the best in the business and we are excited to have the opportunity, in partnership with our sister agencies across Europe, to continue to support Brand USA's mission. As market leaders on the continent, our innovative approach to travel marketing will help enhance the image of the USA in Europe and bring a wealth of new opportunities to partners."

Gaël De Porte du Theil, President and Founder of Interface Tourism Group, adds "It is an honor for Interface Tourism Group to represent an organisation like Brand USA. With a multi-market presence, Interface Tourism Group is committed to using all of its resources to best promote the United States in the European markets it will manage. It is a great accomplishment for our agencies to be in charge of promoting the entirety of this rich country, especially since U.S. destinations have been part of Interface Tourism France's history since its creation. Our team will have the opportunity to use their experience, their knowledge of the destination, their professionalism and their energy to fill their new missions with inventiveness."

Hills Balfour's Samuel Hancock will act as European Strategic Director within the agency. As an extension of the Brand USA team, Samuel will be responsible for the development and execution of a pan-European strategy focused on driving visitation and revenue to the United States. The role will ensure that a strategic plan for effectuating Brand USA's goals in market are developed and successfully implemented. During his seven years at Hills Balfour, Samuel has spearheaded the marketing efforts for a number of U.S. destination clients, including Choose Chicago, Fort Worth Convention & Visitors Bureau, Discover The Palm Beaches, Visit Dallas, and Visit North Carolina.

Samuel will be supported by Interface Tourism France's Julie Geoffroy, Brand USA's Strategic Director dedicated to the development of the French, Belgium and Luxembourg markets. Julie will joined by William Mondello, Account Manager. Julie has been a member of Interface Tourism France's team for more than 12 years and has represented a variety of clients, leading her to be a multi-skilled talent across travel trade, marketing, PR, event management and business development. William has previously represented Santa Monica

Travel & Tourism, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel and was in charge of the French website of Discover Los Angeles. His digital, marketing, innovation and video expertise was developed through an extensive experience in BNP Paribas Group, the City of Paris, and personal endeavors.

Europe represents the largest world region for overseas* arrivals to the United States. In 2016, 14.7 million visitors from Europe came to the USA, 39.2% of the total share.

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS: *Overseas includes all countries except Canada and Mexico.

ABOUT BRAND USA:

Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States, was established by the Travel Promotion Act as the nation's first public-private partnership to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and to communicate U.S. travel policies and procedures to worldwide travelers. The organization's mission is to increase international visitation to the USA in order to fuel the U.S. economy and enhance the image of the United States worldwide. Formed as the Corporation for Travel Promotion in 2010, the public-private entity began operations in May 2011 and does business as Brand USA. According to studies by Oxford Economics, over the past four years Brand USA's marketing initiatives have helped welcome 4.3 million incremental visitors to the USA, benefiting the U.S. economy with nearly $30 billion in total economic impact, which has supported, on average, 51,000 incremental jobs a year.

Brand USA first established international representation in the United Kingdom and Ireland in March 2012.

For industry or partner information about Brand USA, visit TheBrandUSA.com. For information about exceptional and unexpected travel experiences in the United States, please visit Brand USA's consumer website VisitTheUSA.com (global).

ABOUT HILLS BALFOUR:

Hills Balfour is a leading integrated public relations and representation consultancy offering a wide range of services from media relations to consumer marketing to social media. Current U.S. destination clients include Brand USA, Arizona Office of Tourism, Discover The Palm Beaches, Fort Worth Convention & Visitors Bureau, Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, Hawai`i Tourism Europe, Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, Nevada Commission on Tourism, NYC & Company, Santa Monica Travel & Tourism, Scottsdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, Puerto Rico Tourism Company and Visit Dallas. To read more about Hills Balfour, please visit HillsBalfour.com.

ABOUT INTERFACE TOURISM:

Interface Tourism is a marketing, PR and representation agency working exclusively in the travel and tourism sector. From offices in Spain, France and Italy, Interface Tourism works with many destinations and leading tourism industry brands including airlines, DMCs, or hotels both as an ongoing full representation and on a project basis. With a team of 50 experts, Interface Tourism develops and executes strategies according to its customers' needs in B2B and B2C marketing, PR or social media. Supporting its offices in Paris, Milan and Madrid, the agency also has a strong affiliate network of close partners in all European markets. To read more about Interface Tourism, please visit InterfaceTourismGroup.com.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Hills Balfour
Mark McCulloch
Communications Director
+44 (0)207.593.1715 office
+44 (0)787.297.0320 mobile
MarkM@HillsBalfour.com

Brand USA
Anne Madison
Chief Strategy & Communications Officer
+1 202.536.2086 office
+1 202.695.5351 mobile
AMadison@TheBrandUSA.com

###

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.