BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Marriott, Disney, and Best Western Make Multimillion Dollar “Investment in Job Creation and Economic Growth for America”

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Brand USA Marketiing Budget to Grow by $21 Million

Washington, DC – (Feb. 3, 2012) Brand USA, the national marketing entity charged with promoting the U.S. to international travelers, announced today that Marriott International, the Walt Disney Company and Best Western International have each committed to investing $1 million in cash – along with in-kind commitments. The contributions are especially significant because in FY2012 the federal government will match private sector contributions 2-1, which means these investments will yield $21 million in new funds for Brand USA’s growing marketing budget.

"We are incredibly proud and grateful that these three iconic brands have chosen to invest at such a significant level in Brand USA," said CEO Jim Evans. "Recently President Obama called for a national travel and tourism strategy to attract more international visitors, and Brand USA is a major pillar of that. This is more than an investment in a marketing program – it is an investment in job creation and economic growth for hundreds of visitor destinations across America."

The announcement follows dozens of financial commitments that have been received to date from other businesses, destinations and even individuals across the country. “We are well on our way to reaching and exceeding our target of $100 million in FY12," said Evans. "Brand USA already has great momentum, which will ensure a strong budget for the global marketing campaign we are preparing to launch in April."

Announcing Marriott’s support of Brand USA, Chairman and CEO Bill Marriott said: "We are proud to make an investment in Brand USA because we know that the more people learn about America, the more they want to visit. And the more they travel here, the more cultural barriers between people fall and jobs are created that power this country’s economic engine. I'm thrilled to see this great initiative take shape and applaud President Obama’s leadership. Go Brand USA!"

"Disney has a long-standing history of supporting efforts to increase international tourism to the United States so we’re honored to continue our partnership with Brand USA to bring more international visitors to our shores," added Tom Staggs, chairman of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts. "The work being done by Brand USA will not only help bolster our economy and create jobs but also make our nation the destination of choice for millions of travelers around the globe."

"America’s destinations are totally unique, and we have a history of welcoming all cultures," stated David Kong, President and CEO of Best Western International. "Best Western is delighted to be part of Brand USA’s founding partnership to help enhance the United States’ appeal as a top destination for international visitors and to amplify our nation’s message of welcome to the world."

The investments will be used to fund advertising, new media marketing, in-country representation, international trade show presence and other forms of marketing to international travelers. The funding also will be used to build sustaining programs such as sponsorship and cooperative marketing opportunities that will ensure a long-term source of revenue for Brand USA. After FY12, the private sector is required by law to fund at least 50 percent of the overall budget for the marketing entity.

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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.