

# CTTC National Leadership

May through September 2009

## Program Description

On April 1, 2008, CTTC President and Chief Executive Officer Caroline Beteta began her term as the **National Chair of the U.S. Travel Association**. At the Spring 2009 U.S. Travel Board Meeting, she was unanimously re-appointed as Chair of this prestigious organization for a second year. **While other trade organizations are downsizing in the current environment, U.S. Travel is growing.**

U.S. Travel is the national, nonprofit organization representing all components of the \$740 billion travel industry, based in Washington, D.C. The mission of U.S. Travel is to promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the United States, while serving as an advocate of the travel industry within the U.S. government. The association's members, consisting of more than 1,800 travel industry peers and colleagues (**primarily consisting of CTTC's assessed business constituency**), annually elect the National Chairperson. The election of Caroline Beteta as National Chair serves as evidence of California's leadership role in the travel industry ranks.

## Target Audience

- Travel industry stakeholders and CTTC assessed businesses
- Local, state and federal government officials
- Members of the media and travel trade
- Consumers globally

## Objectives & Reach

U.S. Travel represents leaders from nearly all major travel-related companies, state travel and tourism offices, dozens of the top U.S. convention and visitors bureaus, and nearly all of the major travel associations. The organization serves as the leading advocate for increasing travel to and within the United States and provides its members with valuable research, events and marketing.



As California is the number one travel destination in the nation, policy and programming that benefits the U.S. will ultimately benefit the California tourism industry. With CTTC President and CEO Beteta participating as the National Chair of U.S. Travel, California is posed to plan, develop, and implement the policies and programs that help the industry. The National Chair Platform includes four key areas:

- 1) Expanding U.S. Travel's public affairs focus
- 2) Successfully launching DiscoverAmerica.com, the official travel and tourism Web site of the United States
- 3) Becoming the champion of travel and the traveler, while continuing to position travel and tourism as an economic engine for local, state and national economies.
- 4) Promote why travel matters.

## Results & Accomplishments

### OBJECTIVE ONE: Expand U.S. Travel's Public Affairs Focus

Building on the many successes achieved in 2008, including passage of the Travel Promotion Act (TPA) by the House, VWP expansion, and securing funding for several border security programs that also enhance ease of inbound international travel, U.S. Travel is working closely with its Policy Council to establish and carry out an equally aggressive advocacy program for 2009, including:

- Building and communicating the most compelling case possible as to why travel matters to individuals, businesses and policymakers.
- Firmly establishing travel and the travel community as an ally to President Obama on economic and diplomatic issues.
- Implementing policies to increase international inbound travel.
- Expanding U.S. Travel's domestic issue expertise and participation.
- Establishing the travel community as a greater political force in Washington through the launch of a Political Action Committee (PAC) and the creation of a corporate CEO roundtable.

### *Travel Promotion Act*

On September 9, the Senate took a major step toward strengthening the American economy and welcoming millions of new visitors to the United States. By a vote of 79 to 19, the Senate passed the **Travel Promotion Act** (TPA) and set the stage for a House vote on final passage of the much-needed legislation. This bipartisan bill would create a public-private partnership to promote the U.S. as a travel destination, modeled on CTTC.

### *Improving Entry to the U.S.*

On June 30, the government's authority to expand the **Visa Waiver Program** (VWP) expired, meaning the government cannot grant any additional countries VWP status. To put this in perspective, South Korea was only recently granted VWP status last year - and is expected to become one of California's largest-growing markets. U.S. Travel is urging the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to finalize a friendly and efficient biometric air exit program as quickly as possible or work with Congress to strengthen the existing biographic exit system as a legal alternative.

On August 11, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced that its international registered traveler program, known as **Global Entry**, was expanded from seven to 20 airports. U.S. Travel advocated for creation of the program and funding for its expansion to the top 20 U.S. airports for international arrivals.

### **OBJECTIVE TWO: Successfully Launch DiscoverAmerica.com**

**DiscoverAmerica.com** was developed through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Commerce, and reaches the top inbound markets to the U.S., which account for about 75% or 37 million international visitors to the U.S. each year. Initially launched in the U.K., Germany, Canada, Mexico and Japan, the site has now expanded to include France, South Korea, Australia, Brazil and China. Launch efforts have now turned to promotion through linking from government sites, i.e. embassies and consulates.

### **OBJECTIVE THREE: Become the Champion of Travel and the Traveler**

Being a **champion of the traveler** is in reality about looking through the eyes of the traveler and not our industry, public representatives or the media. Many of the tactics included in Objective One also address many of the hassles of travel. U.S. Travel's role is to develop relevant research and communications that speak directly to those controlling the fate of the industry.



## OBJECTIVE FOUR: Promote Why Travel Matters

Travel and tourism is the nation's second-largest services export industry, third-largest retail sales industry and one of America's largest employers. It is in fact the first, second or third-largest employer in 29 U.S. states. The U.S. travel industry received more than \$645 billion last year, including international passenger fares, from domestic and international travelers. U.S. Travel continues to emphasize the importance of travel and tourism regarding jobs, tax revenues and community income, especially in the current economic climate. U.S. Travel statistics are placed front and center in all press releases, talking points and presentations, constantly showing why tourism is important.

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