2008 International Visitation and Spending Figures

August 2009

Program Description

California Tourism contracts with CIC Research, Inc. each year to purchase reports detailing Mexican, Canadian and overseas visitation to California. Because of the lag time required to collect and tabulate data, annual visitation estimates are released in or around August of the ensuing year. Data are published in a report titled "Overseas and Mexican Air Visitors to California" and posted on tourism.visitcalifornia.com/research. CIC also provides separate tables for total Mexican and Canadian air travel, and produces 20 individual country profiles that are also posted on the industry Web site.

Target Audience

Research results and reports are used by a broad audience including CTTC staff, assessed businesses and State of California policy makers, budget analysts, legislators and other stakeholders with responsibility for or interest in the investment of public and private sector funds for statewide tourism marketing, media and other private companies.

Objectives & Reach

The objective of this research is to determine annual estimations of visitor volumes and visitor spending from California's top international markets by August or September of the ensuing year. Data are used by CTTC staff for strategic planning related to international tourism marketing, and shared with industry members for their use in planning and marketing to international travelers. The data are also valuable for public relations purposes and for use by the travel trade. Because they are posted on the Web site, the numbers are available to all who inquire.

Results & Accomplishments

- Estimates for volume and spending for Mexican, Canadian and overseas visitors were provided in August 2009, within the contracted timeframe.
- Country profiles for 20 markets were produced and provided in early September 2009, within the contracted timeframe.
- Overseas visitation to California increased by 6% year over year, maintaining California's market share of the U.S. total at 21.7%.
- Spending by overseas visitors increased a disproportionate 23%, reflecting strong economies and favorable exchange rates prior to the fall financial crisis.
- Canadian travel increased by 7% year over year to 1.3 million visitors in 2008, maintaining California's market share.
- Mexican travel to California was down 9% amid high gas prices in the first half of the year and a weak peso. Still, Mexico sent 6.7 million visitors in 2008.

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