

Opinion: Smart move for rural Nev. to market to gays-lesbians

By Rick Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

Listening to Mya Lake Reyes, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority's director of diversity marketing and an expert on the LGBT travel market, talk about her compelling visual in her presentation about how to attract more gay and lesbian customers to a destination.

In the slide is a picture of six \$100 bills.

"This is what's important to you," Reyes told her audience. "When you look at these hundreds, you don't know whether they came from a black man, an Asian woman or a gay traveler. The important thing to you is that you get it. It all spends the same way, no matter who gave it to you."

With travelers being far more protective of their hard-earned cash these days, making money has become a bigger challenge for the tourism industry. While things have been tough in Las Vegas, imagine how much harder it is in places like Gabbs, Pioche and Austin where they don't have iconic magnets like the fountains at Bellagio and Celine Dion down the block.

That's one of the reasons I was fascinated that Reyes' presentation, "Straight Talk on the Gay Market," was scheduled at the Nevada Commission on Tourism's recent Rural Roundup in Mesquite.

How would marketing to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders play in rural Nevada? Wouldn't it be like in Star Trek when matter and antimatter come into contact with each other and the universe explodes?

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