

U.S. reaching out to foreign travel market

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

Seeking to change travel trends of fewer foreigners visiting the United States, a public-private partnership launched Brand USA today, the nation's first tourism marketing campaign.

Led by Las Vegas resort executive Stephen Cloobek, the Corporation for Travel Promotion unveiled the campaign on a world stage with an event at London's British Academy of Film and Television Arts and a press conference at the four-day World Travel Market at London's ExCeL convention center.

The campaign is important to Las Vegas because the city wants to attract more international visitors.

Las Vegas is one of the U.S.'s most desired destinations for foreign visitors, not only because of its reputation as a world-class entertainment and gaming destination but because of its proximity to Grand Canyon National Park.

The Brand USA launch is the first step in developing a marketing and advertising campaign designed to convince foreign travelers to visit the United States. The first ads are expected to be aired in the spring.

The United States has been one of the few industrialized nations without a coordinated international tourism marketing message. In the past 10 years, the world travel market increased by 60 million people, yet visitation to the United States was flat. Experts estimate the United States lost a potential global market share of 78 million visitors over 10 years, at an estimated value of \$606 billion in spending.

The number of visitors from the United States' largest

overseas market, Great Britain, has declined since a record 4.7 million visited in 2000.

The competition is fierce from other countries marketing their attractions, led by Mexico, which annually spends \$173.8 million advertising the country. Other tourism budgets include Great Britain, \$160 million; Australia, \$107.6 million; and Turkey, \$98.6 million.

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