

Opinion: Boosting U.S. tourism a good idea

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President Barack Obama got off to a bad start with Nevadans when, early in his administration, he told federal government agencies to avoid Las Vegas when scheduling meetings.

The president undoubtedly meant no slur on the Silver State. It was, rather, a ham-handed attempt to rein in spending by government bureaucrats – an idea that normally would be likely to find favor in Nevada – by warning members of his administration that meetings should be for work, not for playing golf or going to see Celine Dion.

But, by singling out one convention and meeting destination out of the many, the president was taking direct aim at a large segment of the Nevada economy based on an unfortunate stereotype – that the delights of Sin City would take the convention-going bureaucrats away from their business, all on the taxpayers' tab. And Nevadans didn't appreciate it.

On Thursday, President Obama began to make amends, not, regrettably by apologizing to Nevadans and urging government workers to return to Las Vegas – or, better yet, Reno – but by announcing a handful of much-needed initiatives to boost travel and tourism in the United States, and not incidentally to Nevada.

That we can appreciate.

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