

Vegas ad aimed at gay travelers getting national attention

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

A Las Vegas ad campaign unveiled in June got a second wind after a national publication called attention to the city's bid to attract gay and lesbian travelers, a lucrative market.

The *Huffington Post* ran a story about the "sizzling" Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority campaign. Several other media outlets followed.

The ads depict a conservative-looking heterosexual couple standing among a group of same-sex couples, with a tagline that reads, "Everyone's welcome ... even straight people." Another similarly tagged ad uses the imagery of a station wagon parked among sports cars in a valet line.

The ads first ran in LGBT-specific magazines *Curve*, *Instinct*, *Passport*, *Metrosource* and *Out*.

The *Post* reported that photos of the campaign are making the rounds on online sites BuzzFeed, Towleroad and New Now Next, among others.

The LVCVA has worked for seven years to attract the gay market to Southern Nevada. Same-sex partners generally have higher travel budgets and spend more freely than their straight counterparts. The LVCVA even has a staffer dedicated to diversity marketing, which includes efforts to attract gay travelers.

In 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 10 percent of the nation's population is gay. At the time, there were 15 million gay adults in the United States, with a median age of

45. They had buying power of \$690 million, and their average household income was \$82,000 a year. About 35 percent made more than \$100,000 a year.

Sixty-four percent are college graduates, compared with the national average of 29 percent, and 85 percent take annual vacations, compared with 64 percent of their straight counterparts.

Surveys have found that Las Vegas is one of the best cities at marketing to gay travelers. The International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association perennially ranks Las Vegas among the top five domestic markets for gay travelers. The city competes with New York, San Francisco and Key West, Fla., for the top spot.