

# Nevada defends tourism slogan

By Richard N. Velotta

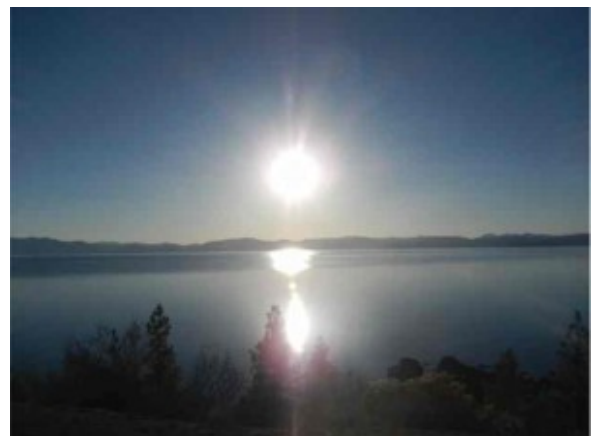
The director of the state Tourism Commission said that while many critics have pounced on Nevada's new tagline, she's confident the slogan will be embraced by residents and help attract tourists and businesses to the state.

Gov. Brian Sandoval unveiled "Nevada: A World Within. A State Apart" Tuesday.

"People are saying they like what the brand says about Nevada, and, for the most part, they're saying, 'Let's give this the time it requires to really take a strong foothold and to grow,'" tourism executive Claudia Vecchio said.

Vecchio said she anticipated some criticism.

"There will always be detractors," she said. "The moment you start a brand process, you know there are going to be people who don't like it or for whatever reason think it's not the right direction. We expect that. I hope we'll be able to convince people through the way we execute it that it's worth considering and it will become a brand that really does signify what Nevada is all about and drive business."



Nevada is trying to embrace

all segments of the Silver State. Photo/LTN file

In addition to the slogan, the state created a new tourism website and mobile application. Budget Travel praised the site last week.

“TravelNevada.com sets a new standard for state tourism sites and will certainly enjoy the sincerest form of flattery in the coming months and years as other states learn to package their travel and hospitality assets in beautiful and engaging new ways,” magazine editors wrote. “Visitors can assemble their own vacations, learn about destinations and share their findings via social media. The site also puts an emphasis on accessing partner sites for additional information, travel deals and even trip booking.”

Critics, however, ripped both the slogan and the cost of developing the brand and campaign.

The state paid \$218,000 of a \$250,000 two-year contract to Seattle-based GreenRubino, the first firm hired to research and develop a tag line for the state. That was in 2011.

The company failed to deliver a slogan the Tourism Commission liked.

Then New York-based Berson-Marsteller was hired to rebuild the state’s website, develop a mobile app and do public relations for the tourism campaign as part of a two-year, \$3.2 million deal.

Berson-Marsteller decided to develop its own tag line, Vecchio said. The result was “A World Within. A State Apart.”

“Their contract was to do public relations, the website and new creative materials,” Vecchio said. “It was a fully integrated marketing program. And they said, ‘Because we’re committed to this state, we will do the branding also.’”

Television ads featuring the new tag line will begin airing Monday in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Phoenix. The ads include a soundtrack from Las Vegas rock band the Killers singing "Don't Fence Me In" by Cole Porter.

The state budgeted \$2.4 million for commercials during its summer campaign and \$1.5 million for commercials during its winter campaign. The money comes from room tax paid by tourists.

Vecchio said she expects the marketing plan will have a high return on investment. State officials estimate Nevada generates at least \$20 in tax revenue for every dollar it spends on marketing and advertising.

"Everything we do, we do to drive business, and we drive investment back into the state," she said. "This brand is something that we believe is going to only help to increase that return on investment."

Vecchio said she hopes to learn from the criticism but isn't going to let it dampen her enthusiasm for the project.

"I think it's such an opportunity to celebrate the potential," she said. "Instead of attacking, we'll look forward to something that has a possibility to take the state to new heights of success."