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New Jersey Comeback Continues with Increased Tourist Visits and Near Record Level of Visitor Expenditures for 2011

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Hanson Commission Tourism Report Details Reorganization of NJSEA to Strengthen and Maximize Tourism Promotion in the Garden State

Trenton, NJ - New Jersey's tourism industry is on the rebound with tourists spending \$38 billion on their visits to the Garden State in 2011, according to figures released today at the New Jersey Conference on Tourism. The new visitor expenditures are just shy of the all-time high of \$39.5 billion reached in 2007 and are a 7 percent increase over 2010 figures, further indicating that the New Jersey Comeback is taking hold in vital sectors of the state economy.

"This report is great economic news for New Jersey and another indication that the New Jersey Comeback has begun," said Governor Chris Christie. "These results give us a solid foundation to build upon as we move forward with a common sense and comprehensive plan to strengthen our tourism promotion activities. Along with our efforts to revitalize and invest in Atlantic City, the steps we have taken will have a positive and lasting impact on economic growth for New Jersey over the long run."

In 2011, domestic visits to New Jersey jumped 14.6 percent, representing an increase in domestic trip volume from roughly 68 million visitors in 2010 to 80 million visitors in 2011. Out-of-state visitors, which drive New Jersey tourism revenue, accounted for 64 percent of all tourism revenue, followed by resident/in-state (25 percent), and international visitors (9 percent).

Equally important, tourism-related employment began to recover in 2011, directly supporting 312,000 jobs and \$9.56

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billion in wages and salaries last year. When combined with indirect and induced jobs, the total climbs to 486,000, or nearly 10 percent of all New Jersey jobs.

"Tourism is a critical economic engine for New Jersey," said Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno. "It is an industry that continues to contribute significantly to the health of our communities by creating jobs and tax revenue. Clearly, 2011 was a good year for New Jersey's tourism industry. By working together, we can build on last year's success and strengthen our reputation as a premier travel destination."

Strengthening New Jersey's Tourism Efforts with a New Role for the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority

Governor Christie today also endorsed the recommendations of the New Jersey Gaming, Sports and Entertainment Advisory Commission to strengthen the state's tourism promotion efforts. The recommendations, detailed in a report released today, outlined a series of common sense and aggressive reforms to streamline and centralize the state's patchwork of entities responsible for tourism promotion and advance and better promote New Jersey's tourism industry.

The report calls for a reinvigorated and consolidated structure of all current government tourism promotion activities or operations under a realigned New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority (NJSEA) dedicated to advancing New Jersey tourism, entertainment and sports. These recommendations acknowledge the significance of this industry to New Jersey's economy by elevating the promotion of travel and tourism to a similar level of importance as other economic development efforts initiated by the Christie Administration, such as drawing businesses to New Jersey and retaining those that are already here.

"Today, our ability to effectively promote New Jersey as the premier tourism destination it is remains held back by a scattered and sprawling patchwork of programs and activities inside and outside of state government," said Governor Christie. "By consolidating these operations under the umbrella of the NJSEA, we are taking an aggressive and common sense approach that recognizes and prioritizes the important role of tourism promotion in our economy. Not only will this model mirror successes seen in other states and New York City, it will streamline and simplify tourism entities for visitors, save money for taxpayers, and provide a foundation to strengthen the tourism industry in a strategic and long-term way."

The report, "Elements of a Plan for the Creation of a Structure to Better Promote Tourism in the State of New Jersey," builds on the reorganization plan outlined by Governor Christie in his Fiscal Year 2013 Budget proposal to better coordinate efforts to promote New Jersey as a tourism destination.

The Christie Administration has placed a strong focus on economic development and job creation in the state, improving marketing and outreach efforts to attract businesses to New Jersey, while also successfully attracting premier sports and entertainment events to the state. Under the Christie Administration, New Jersey has successfully pursued and secured itself as the host of Grand Prix Auto Racing, WWE's WrestleMania, the U.S. Special Olympics

and the Super Bowl – all in the next 24 months.

Going further with these efforts, the NJSEA will operate statewide as the lead agency to facilitate and attract major sports and entertainment events, overcoming the challenges posed by a disjointed organization structure for the state's tourism-related activities. Its main focus will no longer be on building venues or facility management, but on coordinating economic development and promotional efforts related to tourism, entertainment and sports.

The new NJSEA will be relocated from the Department of Community Affairs to the Department of State, where it will work in close collaboration with the Business Action Center and the Office of Foreign Investment and Protocol. Also proposed is the relocation of the Division of Travel and Tourism and the New Jersey Motion Picture and Television Commission to the NJSEA.

The Advisory Commission's Key Recommendations are as follows:

- New Jersey Should Create A Structure Dedicated To Advancing New Jersey Tourism Statewide And Serves As Part Of An Overall Economic Development And Job Creation Plan For The State.
 - The tourism structure should be housed in the Department of State, under the leadership of the Lt. Governor, to operate alongside New Jersey's other substantial economic development and growth efforts.
 - The tourism structure should work closely with, and in some cases be integrated with, the work of agencies within the Department of State dedicated to advancing the economic development plan. These would include The Partnership for Action and The Business Action Center.
- Current Government Activities And Operations Related To Tourism Should Be Consolidated Under The Umbrella Of The New Jersey Sports And Exposition Authority (NJSEA).
 - The NJSEA should be given oversight responsibility for all other state agencies related to tourism. These would include the Division of Travel and Tourism and the Motion Picture and Television Commission.
 - NJSEA should be relocated from "in but not of" the Department of Community Affairs to "in but not of" the Department of State.
 - To properly relate the NJSEA to the Department of State, the Lt. Governor, in her role as Secretary of State, should serve on the NJSEA Board of Directors.
- In Its Role As Lead Agency For Marketing New Jersey Tourism, The NJSEA Should Conduct A Comprehensive Audit Of Assets Existing In The State Than Can Contribute To Promoting Tourism.
 - This audit should include an assessment of the relationship among the state's assets in terms of proximity, interrelated interest and accessibility by way of both public and private transportation.
- The NJSEA Should Establish A Formal Relationship With Other Independent Government Operations With A Tourism Mission, Including The New Jersey Hall Of Fame.
 - The relationship between the NJSEA and the New Jersey Hall of Fame should initially take the form of the Hall of Fame serving in an advisory capacity to the NJSEA, with the understanding that the Hall of Fame will provide advice, support, and cooperation in the state's tourist marketing efforts.
 - NJSEA should also make a vigorous effort to establish collaboration among private tourist marketing operations and between those operations and the NJSEA, through conversations with leaders of such operations as well as

stakeholders associated with such operations.

- NJSEA should promote the image of “one-stop shopping” for those seeking tourist information and assistance or wishing to host an event.
- NJSEA Should Identify Of The Stakeholders With An Interest In New Jersey Tourism With The Aim Of Both Consolidating Event Planning And Establishing Sources Of Revenue To Support Its Work

Elements of a Plan for the Creation of a Structure to Better Promote Tourism in the State of New Jersey

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