

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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Gov. Whitman Unveils Re-Design of Tourism Slogan New Jersey & You...Perfect Together and Tourism Master Plan

Gov. Whitman also noted that in 1997, travel expenditures totaled \$25.5 billion, up from \$24 billion in 1996. More than 620,000 full-time jobs were supported by the tourism industry in 1997 -- an increase of more than 39,000 jobs from the year before. The 623,000 includes 400,000 direct and 223,000 indirect jobs.

"While New Jersey's tourism industry is growing and its contribution to our strong economy is important, I am establishing this ten-year vision to guarantee that travel and tourism continues to thrive and expand, and New Jersey remains a top tourism destination," said Gov. Whitman. "It also makes good business sense to return now to the state theme of New Jersey & You...Perfect Together, since it is still widely recognized and promotes so well our scenic, recreational, historic and cultural treasures."

Gov. Whitman joined Commerce Commissioner Gualberto "Gil" Medina, State Tourism Director Linda Mysliwy Conlin and the New Jersey travel industry at this year's tourism conference, Celebrating our Success...Realizing the Possibilities. The annual event attracted hundreds of industry professionals for three days of informative seminars and meetings. It was held this year at the Brunswick Hilton and Towers in East Brunswick.

"This year's impressive tourism growth underscores our efforts in making sure that the industry remains an economic powerhouse. Tourism has done an outstanding job in contributing to what was in 1997 a milestone year for New Jersey's economy," said Commissioner Medina. "Moreover, it improves our image with residents and visitors, as well as with businesses seeking to relocate or expand in New Jersey."

According to the research, conducted for the New Jersey Department of Commerce's Division of Travel and Tourism by Longwoods International of Toronto, overnight trips rose by nine percent to 40.8 million in 1997 from 37.3 million in 1996. Tourism expenditures from overnight trips also increased, rising to \$15.45 billion in 1997 from \$14.67 billion in 1996.

"We're continuing to reach our objectives of attracting visitors who stay longer and spend more in our state by showcasing the rich diversity of our travel experience, which spans from Cape May to the Skylands," said Tourism Director Linda Mysliwy Conlin. "Our success story would not be as positive without our marketing partners in the public and private sectors."

Also released at the conference by Gov. Whitman was the Tourism Master Plan, which was co-sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Commerce's Division of Travel and Tourism and Prosperity New Jersey (a public-private partnership created by Gov. Whitman to improve New Jersey's economy). Its mission, said Commissioner Medina, is "to establish a ten-year plan for improving the ability of the tourism industry to contribute to the quality of life, prosperity and economic well-being of New Jersey residents."

In a decade, the Tourism Master Plan seeks a vision for New Jersey tourism in which the sector is recognized as a vital component of the state's economy and New Jersey is known as a destination with diverse attractions. Also, residents will be knowledgeable and proud ambassadors, and tourism will continue to be a transformational component of the state's urban and rural development strategies.

Included in the Tourism Master Plan are 39 strategies for growing New Jersey's tourism industry, such as leveraging the state's presence to international markets, developing cultural and historic sites into tourism destinations, and creating ecotourism and rural tourism opportunities.

As Tourism Industry Advisory Committee Chairman and Vice President of Continental Airlines, Dave Barger supports the blueprint for New Jersey's tourism growth in the next decade, and said: "With Continental Airlines' continued commitment to New Jersey at Newark International Airport, I am dedicated to growing the state's tourism industry as outlined in the Tourism Master Plan. A public-private partnership to advance the state's quality of life benefits everyone, from the lives of our 9,000 employees at Newark Airport to our company's financial objectives."

And the Division's new advertising campaign for the state theme of New Jersey & You...Perfect Together and the spring/summer program follow key recommendations of the Tourism Master Plan.

Indeed, the return to the New Jersey & You...Perfect Together theme supports the Tourism Master Plan because of its strong appeal and ability to generate pride and excitement among New Jersey residents, according to Conlin. As the Tourism Master Plan outlines, New Jersey residents are the state's best tourism ambassadors.

In addition, the new advertising program focuses on other key strategies of the Tourism Master Plan, such as maintaining and expanding New Jersey's core tourism markets (Greater Metropolitan New York, New Jersey and Greater Philadelphia) and increasing tourism during the shoulder season. It also protects New Jersey's base from other competing destinations who have increased their advertising in the state.

The 1998 Governor's Conference on Tourism was jointly sponsored by the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism and New Jersey Travel Industry Association (NJTIA).

And Debra Waxman, President of NJTIA and Director of Marketing for the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, also agreed with the growth vision for New Jersey's tourism industry in the Tourism Master Plan. "With the Paper Mill Playhouse's investment in New Jersey, a healthy tourism industry and strong public-private partnerships are critical to our organization's success like everyone else," said Waxman.