



News Release

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Convention and Visitors Bureau Explains *Why Tourism Matters* New Campaign Kicks Off Local Celebrations for the 25th Annual National Tourism Week, May 10-18

SEATTLE – Seattle’s Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCVB) today launched a new public education campaign targeted to residents of Seattle and King County. *Why Tourism Matters* will convey the importance of tourism by way of advertising, online content, public relations and cooperative communications with hotels, airlines, cruise lines, cultural institutions, professional sports organizations and other private and public sector organizations which benefit from the nearly \$5 billion that tourists spend in the county each year.

The slogan *Why Tourism Matters*, which is owned by SCVB, is the centerpiece of a campaign that will appear around the city and county beginning today. Ads in local publications will profile local tourism industry professionals, or tourism ambassadors, who work on the industry’s frontlines.

The web site www.whytourismmatters.com will also be live today, providing economic impact and other data on the tourism industry, as well as tourism resources and profiles of tourism industry professionals. The site will showcase the stories and observations of a wide range of local professionals, from fish market vendors to hotel turndown attendants, banquet captains, tour boat captains, arts performers and presidents of popular visitor attractions.

“We have one message but many messengers,” said Don Welsh, SCVB President & CEO. “Tourism matters to us all – every citizen, every business, every industry. Tourism contributes ten percent of all retail sales in the county, nearly \$5 billion. Tourism generates \$425 million in state and local taxes and supports 62,000 jobs.”

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Despite year-over-year growth, many industry leaders have a growing sense that tourism does not command appropriate attention and the necessary funding in the city, county and state. "Future tourism success cannot be assumed," said Welsh. "Tourism will continue to be a growth industry only if we invest in its growth."

The *Why Tourism Matters* campaign launch is one day prior to the start of the 25th annual National Tourism Week, May 10-18. Designated by Congress and established by presidential proclamation in 1983, the national event celebrates the value and scope of the nation's \$740 billion travel and tourism industry, as well as its social and cultural contributions. The U.S. travel industry directly employs 7.5 million people, generates payroll of \$178 billion and tax revenues of about \$110 billion. The Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), which sponsors National Tourism Week, ranks travel fifth among 20 major private industry sectors. Visitors to the U.S. spent more here than U.S. residents traveling abroad, creating a positive balance of trade of \$8.3 billion for the national economy.

Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau is a non-profit economic development agency responsible for competitively marketing Seattle as a destination for meeting and convention groups and leisure travelers. Direct visitor spending benefits hotels, retailers, restaurants, attractions, transportation services and other businesses, and supports jobs in throughout the city and county.

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