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PRESS RELEASE

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IFEA World joins the U.S. Travel Association in Applauding National Strategy to Boost Travel and Tourism

WASHINGTON, DC – In a first for the United States, President Barack Obama on January 19th [announced](#) a national strategy on travel and tourism to boost travel in the United States. The U.S. travel industry is a cornerstone of the U.S. economy, representing 1.8 trillion in economic output and supporting 14 million American jobs.

“The encouragement of travel to and between all countries, including steps to create a real and perceptual welcome mat for visitors - from the planning phase through to the lasting memories created as a result - is critically important to improving economies, creating jobs, and bringing the people of the world closer together,” said Steven Wood Schmader, CFEE, President & CEO of the International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA World). “The festivals and events niche of the tourism industry that we represent, globally, join our professional peers in applauding and supporting every strategy, policy and program that serves to lower barriers to safe travel and brings new opportunities to both visitors and host.”

According to a [White House statement](#), the President’s announcement calls for a national strategy to make the United States the world’s top travel and tourism destination, as part of a comprehensive effort to spur job creation. The number of travelers from emerging economies with growing middle classes - such as China, Brazil, and India - is projected to grow by 135%, 274% and 50% respectively by 2016 when compared to 2010.

President Obama will also sign an Executive Order and charge several government agencies to take part in efforts and new initiatives to significantly increase travel. Some of the initiatives include: a new pilot program and rule change for visa processing in China and Brazil, a final rule to expand and make the Global Entry program permanent, appoint new members to the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, and the Nomination of Taiwan to the Visa Waiver Program.

“This is the first time our country has had a national strategy and set goals for the amount of visitors we want to welcome to our country. The timing of the President’s announcement could not be better. Travel is an essential industry for our nation and a bipartisan issue that can unite our country and rally us forward. Not only will this increase traffic to America’s wonderful destinations and attractions, but nearly half of the travelers will come to attend conferences and tradeshow,” said Roger Dow, president and CEO for the U.S. Travel Association. “The president has put forward his vision and the travel industry is ready to heed the call. U.S. Travel looks forward to working with the Administration to improve America’s economy and create more American jobs.”

The International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA World) has partnered with the U.S. Travel Association to increase travel to and within the United States. Among U.S. Travel’s objectives for 2012 will be for the U.S. government to pursue concrete actions to [increase international travel](#), business travel, participation in meetings and conventions and leisure travel throughout America. Policies U.S. Travel will champion include expansion of the Visa Waiver Program to Brazil, Argentina and Chile; further improvements to our entry process for international guests; streamlining the TSA experience for trusted travelers; and [building an aviation system](#) that encourages greater air travel.

[Click here](#) for more travel industry facts.

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