



For Immediate Release
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US TOUR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION CALLS ON AMERICANS TO TRAVEL
"It's America's Turn to Travel"

The U.S. Tour Operators Association has embarked on a public relations campaign to encourage Americans to travel. "We're telling people that, despite the recession, Americans have a unique opportunity to travel this year," says USTOA President Bob Whitley.

The campaign, titled, "It's America's Turn to Travel," is based on five key messages:

- The stronger U.S. dollar makes traveling to many other countries much more attractive.
- An abundance of good deals means that both domestic and foreign travel is more affordable.
- International travel has become accessible to more Americans as greater numbers of U.S. citizens obtain passports under new homeland security requirements. More than 74 million Americans now have passports according to the U.S. Postal Service, and 27 countries have no visa requirements for U.S. citizens.
- Tourism plays a vital role in economic recovery by stimulating both the domestic travel industry and the world travel market.
- There is a renewed spirit of openness and enthusiasm for the U.S. around the globe, in the wake of President Obama's recent successful meetings with world leaders. USTOA is asking Americans to capitalize on this by traveling and becoming individual ambassadors of good will.

USTOA kicked off its P.R. campaign by posting an open letter on USTOA's web site (www.ustoa.com). The letter, titled, "It's America's Turn to Travel," states that this year may be one of the best to travel overseas and encourages Americans to take advantage of the opportunities to visit foreign destinations as individual ambassadors of American good will. The association has also developed and distributed editorials to newspapers and encouraged its members to submit these editorials to their local papers.

A second aspect of the campaign centers on savings. "Through our public relations agency, Kundell Communications, we commissioned a consumer survey which found that, not surprisingly, affordability is the number one factor in planning a vacation. We then surveyed the USTOA membership for examples of savings on tours and package arrangements this year compared to last year, and found that many tours and packages cost an average 20% less than last year," notes Whitley. The association is leveraging these findings through a series of nationwide radio interviews and news releases.

"Encouraging Americans to travel, especially abroad, is crucial for our industry. Since USTOA's founding more than 35 years ago, we have advocated open borders and freedom of travel between countries," Whitley said. "We continue to endorse the lifting of travel restrictions wherever possible, and we strongly encourage Americans to use their freedom to travel in order to promote understanding between nations. We also encourage the travel agent community to use our five key points as sales messages to help promote travel and build business."

USTOA numbers 150 of the top brands packaging tours and travel arrangements throughout the world. The association's member companies have met the travel industry's highest standards, including participation in the association's Traveler Assistance Program, which among other things protects consumer payments up to \$1 million in case the company goes out of business.

For more information on USTOA and for a list of its member companies visit: www.USTOA.com, or www.USTOA.travel.

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