



TOUR OPERATOR SURVEY REVEALS HIGH INTEREST IN CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Fifty percent of members responding to a recent survey conducted by the U.S. Tour Operators Association – an organization numbering 150 of the top companies packaging travel worldwide-- have adopted a policy regarding charitable giving.

Seventy percent of responding USTOA companies with charitable giving policies said they contribute to a specific charity, while nearly one quarter have established their own foundation. Eighteen percent said they donate a percentage of sales to a particular charity, while 6% encourage their clients to give to a suggested charity.

Examples include companies such as Insight Vacations, which donates to environmental causes, and Holland America Tours, which participates in “On Deck for the Cure,” one of several Susan G. Koman fund-raising activities for breast cancer awareness. Another USTOA member company, Tauck World Discovery has been widely recognized for its extensive employee and guest volunteer days which help to restore sites in national parks and monuments around the country. Other USTOA member companies are involved in local community efforts.

Aware of the need to protect and preserve areas around the world for future generations, USTOA founded the Travelers Conservation Foundation in 1999. As the charitable arm of USTOA the foundation identified cultural, historical and environmental sites in need of conservation, preservation or restoration throughout the world, and provided funding either through USTOA-member and public contributions, or through philanthropic partnerships and matching grants. TCF proved so successful that it substantially expanded and now operates as its own entity, known as Tourism Cares. In addition to awarding grants to tourism-related organizations to encourage conservation and preservation efforts Tourism Cares contributes to scholarships in tourism studies for worthy college students.

According to Bob Whitley, USTOA president, “As tour operators and responsible members of the business community, it is in our best interest to help preserve and improve our world, and to make the world a better place to both live in and to visit.”

The USTOA survey was based on a representative sampling of forty members.

About USTOA

USTOA's Active Members have met the travel industry's most stringent requirements including participation in the Travelers Assistance Program, which among other things, requires each Active Member Company to set aside \$1 million to protect travelers payments in case the company goes out of business. For more information visit www.ustoa.com or phone 1-800 GO-USTOA (1-800-468-7862).

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