

**Importance of Local Tourism Marketing**

**Key Messages & Talking Points**

**January 2017**

**KEY MESSAGES**

* Florida’s tourism industry is a critical economic driver and job creator for the state.
* Record tourism numbers in Florida have generated significant revenue that the state has been able to reinvest in programs that benefit all Floridians.
* Tourism marketing efforts in Florida have a direct impact on the industry’s ability to sustain and grow tourism numbers.
* Reductions in tourism marketing funding will have a negative and immediate impact on local communities in Florida.

**GENERAL TALKING POINTS**

***Generating Revenue and Creating Jobs***

* In the last fiscal year, Florida’s tourism industry produced $183.5 billion in total economic impact to the state.
* Tourism-related spending generated $11.3 billion in tax revenue for state and local governments.
* Every 85 visitors to the State of Florida equates to one tourism job.
* Today, there are 1.4 million Floridians employed thanks to the tourism industry.
* And, these are not just low-wage jobs.
* Many of these are high-wage, high-skill jobs that span a variety of industry sectors, including real estate, business services and finance.
* In fact, two out of every five workers who start their careers in the travel industry go on to make more than $100,000 a year.
* They’re also not just big corporations, but small businesses – mom and pop shops and family-owned businesses that have been part of the fabric of our communities.
* These are Floridians, Florida families and Florida-based businesses that are pumping their wages and their company profits back into our state and local economies.

***Tourism Marketing Works***

* Over the past five years, we have seen incredible growth in Florida’s tourism industry.
* Visitor spending has increased and a record-breaking number of tourists have visited the state bringing more government revenue, more jobs and more opportunities for small businesses and local communities.
* This kind of growth doesn’t happen overnight and it doesn’t happen by accident.
* It is the direct result of tourism marketing efforts and investments in those efforts.
* The travel industry has become increasingly competitive.
* Having great beaches and world renowned theme parks just isn’t enough anymore.
* People want to go different places and try new things.
* At the same time, other destinations are aggressively marketing themselves catching the attention of travelers from all over the country and world.
* Only through local and state tourism promotion programs has Florida been able to maintain its status as a top destination.
* And, that has had a positive impact on all of the state’s tourism destinations and attractions – not just the well-known tourist meccas the defined the state’s tourism image decades ago.
* Hidden gems, places off the beaten path, historical sites and pieces of Old Florida – many of which are located in Florida’s smaller counties and more rural areas – have all benefitted from tourism promotion efforts.

***Negative Impacts of Reductions***

* Recent calls for reduced or no spending on tourism marketing programs will undoubtedly lead to a decline of tourism in Florida.
* A reduction of 5 percent less tourists would have a significant impact on Florida’s workforce and the revenue state and local governments have come to count on.
* If just 5 percent fewer tourists visit Florida next year, the state will lose $5 billion in visitor spending and more than $324 million in sales tax revenue that goes to local and state governments.
* That is particularly significant when the State of Florida is already facing a budget shortfall this year and we could be setting ourselves up for an even larger budget shortfall next fiscal year with revenues from tourism down.
* Hardworking Floridians will feel the effects, too.
* More than 70,000 people will lose their jobs costing them $2.5 billion in lost wages.
* Every household in Florida would have to be taxed an additional $1,535 a year to replace the lost state and local taxes generated from visitor activity.
* The impact on local communities will be severe and it will be immediate.
* Even a slight reduction in the number of visitors to an area could mean the difference between profit and loss for a small tourism-related business.
* Businesses will have to shutter their doors.
* Employees will be laid off.

***History as a Guide***

* This isn’t a cautionary tale.
* These same scenarios have played out before in other states.
* When Colorado cut its tourism marketing budget to zero in the early 1990s, its domestic market share plunged 30 percent.
* That translated to a loss of more than $2 billion in tourism revenue annually.
* It took Colorado more than 20 years to regain its market share and status as a premier destination.
* The States of Connecticut, Washington and Pennsylvania have each made decisions to shut down their tourisms offices or significantly slash tourism budgets and all have paid a heavy price.
* Rolling the dice with our tourism industry by not adequately investing in local and state tourism marketing programs is rolling the dice with the lives of hardworking Floridians who rely on this industry for their livelihoods.