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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**New Welcome Signs Invite Fall Visitors To New Hampshire!**

7.9 Million Visitors Expected to Spend \$1.07 Billion This Fall

Salem, NH – Nearly 8 million people from around the world will come to New Hampshire over the next three months to see the bright colors of fall and leave behind some green, according to state tourism officials. They will be greeted by new welcome signs unveiled by Gov. John Lynch and state tourism officials this morning. The new signs feature the updated tourism logo, state motto and “Welcome” in both French and English.

Lori Harnois, director of the Division of Travel and Tourism, said the state could be headed for a record fall season. “We are expecting about 7.9 million people to come here between now and the end of November and that would be about 2 percent higher than last year,” Harnois said. “More than spending time, these visitors will spend about \$1 billion, which is up by about 3 percent over last year.”

The Institute for New Hampshire Studies compiled the numbers, Harnois said, which are based on factors that include spending patterns, gas prices, weather and the previous year’s activity.

“This is the second busiest time of year in New Hampshire after summer,” she said. “Brilliant foliage, scenic drives, farm stands, pick-your-own apples, corn mazes and pumpkins make for a wonderful harvest experience.”

Fall has the largest number of visitors from outside of New England and the largest number of out-of-state visitors on group tours. Most of the visitors for the three fall months of September, October and November will be from New England, the Middle Atlantic States and Canada.

***Photo captions:**

NHSign1: New Hampshire Gov. John Lynch, left, joined by Department of Resources and Economic Development Commissioner George Bald and Department of Transportation Commissioner Christopher Clement, unveiled the new highway sign that will greet visitors to the Granite State.

NHSign2: The first of New Hampshire’s new highway signs that will greet visitors to the Granite

State was unveiled Monday morning at the Salem rest area by Gov. John Lynch; Commissioner George Bald of the Department of Resources and Economic Development; Director Lori Harnois of the Division of Travel and Tourism Development and Commissioner Christopher Clement of the Department of Transportation. The first sign was to be placed at the New Hampshire-Massachusetts border on Interstate 93 at 3 a.m. Tuesday.

Courtesy NHDTTD/Lorna Colquhoun.

ABOUT THE DIVISION OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The Division of Travel and Tourism Development, as part of the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development, works with the state's seven travel regions to increase visitation, travel and visitor expenditures in order to expand business activity and employment throughout the state. The division is responsible for domestic and international advertising and public relations, literature publication and distribution, www.visitnh.gov administration, grant administration and research to monitor and measure the impact of travel and tourism to the state. For more information about New Hampshire tourism, call 603-271-2665 or visit www.visitnh.gov.