



Prepared for New Hampshire
Division of Travel of Tourism
Development

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According to eMarketer, a total of 22.2 million U.S. adults have cut the cord on cable or satellite TV service by the end of 2017.

Brand USA, the country's national destination marketing organization, is turning to smart televisions and streaming to get an edge on declining international tourism in the past year.

BUDGET BATTLES



Struggle continues over tourism dollars

FLORIDA

Gov. Rick Scott and the state tourism-marketing agency continue to push lawmakers to boost marketing dollars to \$100 million next year, a figure well above what the House and Senate have budgeted for Visit Florida.

The House of Representatives wants to keep it at \$76 million -- matching its current budget -- and the Senate wants to cut it to \$50 million.

But Scott links his proposed increase to \$100 million with attracting more tourists, which he correlates to more employment opportunities in the service-industry rich state.

Scott also said the additional funding would provide more of a buffer if the state is hit by another hurricane such as Irma, which clobbered the state in September.

"We just went through a devastating

hurricane season. We've got to continue to market our state," Scott told reporters.

The state has seen annual visitor counts grow from 87.3 million in 2011 to more than 112 million last year, an increase that funding proponents attributed to lawmakers boosting Visit Florida money from \$35 million in 2011 to \$76 million.

House Speaker Richard Corcoran, a Land O' Lakes Republican who has challenged past spending by the tourism agency, has argued that people are driven to travel more by their personal finances than by state marketing.

Lawmakers have until March 9 to reach an agreement on the state budget, including Visit Florida funding, for the new fiscal year.

Sources: theledger.com, travelweekly.com

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Struggle continues to maintain state tourism department budgets

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WASHINGTON

Seven years after budget cuts forced the closure of Washington's tourism office, the state Senate has unanimously approved a bill creating a new tourism marketing program.

President and CEO of Yakima Valley Tourism John Cooper said he was delighted by passage of the bill, which now heads to the House for possible action.

"We're just glad we're getting somewhere," Cooper said.

Washington has been without a coordinated tourism marketing program since 2011, when financial pressures resulted in the closure of its tourism office.

Under Senate Bill 5251, 0.2 percent of the retail sales tax collected by lodging facilities, car rentals and restaurants would fund state tourism marketing efforts.

The sales tax collection would provide a maximum of \$1.5 million in funding during the 2019 fiscal year and then \$3 million during the biennium, the state's two-year

budget cycle.

With a required private match from local tourism organizations, the state could have up to \$9 million per biennium for tourism marketing efforts.

Washington remains the only state without a coordinated tourism program. A nonprofit organization, the Washington Tourism Alliance, formed shortly after the office's closure, but has only had enough funding for a tourism guide and a website, www.experiencewa.com.

The alliance has worked on getting state tourism program legislation passed for several years.

Source: Yakimaherald.com

WEST VIRGINIA

More than 200 tourism industry representatives gathered at the state Capitol on Monday for Tourism Day at the Legislature, advocating for the industry and meeting with Gov. Jim Justice and legislative leaders.

While the Capitol's Rotunda was full of volunteers and tourism displays from around the state, the message from legislative leaders was not as tourism focused: There is only so much money available, and teachers

and corrections officers, along with the tourism industry and others, all have needs.

Gov. Justice, speaking to a group of tourism leaders, said he will fight to keep the

\$20 million for West Virginia tourism advertising he placed in the budget, but he urged the tourism officials to meet with their legislators, make their case, and build legislative support for the proposal. The \$20 million figure represents a \$14 million increase over 2017.

Tourism officials said travelers spend just over \$4 billion a year in West Virginia, which is equivalent to roughly \$11.3 million per day. Research shows that every dollar the state spends on tourism advertising generates \$8 in state and local taxes.

There is also a halo effect from tourism advertising, documented in a recent study which showed that after seeing a tourism ad, perceptions of West Virginia improved dramatically.

The annual tourism event is designed to raise awareness of the significant economic impact of tourism in West Virginia.

Source: newsandsentinel.com



State helps Alabama town capitalize on fishing fame, selfie craze

Local and state officials in Alabama hope a 12-foot tall replica of a largemouth bass will reel in tourists, as well as honor a native son.

The town of Eufaula has long laid claim to the title of “Big Bass Capital of the World.” Now, the town of 13,000 in southeast Alabama has the big bass to prove it.

The replica bass was dedicated recently in downtown Eufaula, where Mayor Jack Tibbs expects it to become a social media magnet for locals and tourists.

With a grant from the Alabama Tourism Department, the bass replica was built in nearby Dothan. Tourism also erected a historic marker nearby to celebrate the life

of Tom Mann and his contribution to bass fishing around the world.

Tibbs said the final size of the fish replica, which is 5 feet wide, was deliberately chosen.

“We didn’t want it too big,” Tibbs said. “We wanted people not to have to move too far back to get the fish and people in the picture. It’s the perfect size to take a picture, and you can see who’s in the picture.”

When it came to naming the big bass, the City of Eufaula held a contest. Tibbs said more than 40 names were submitted, and the winner was Manny in honor of Mann, Eufaula’s most famous fisherman.

Source: yellowhammernews.com



Eufaula Mayor Jack Tibbs (not pictured) hopes the bass becomes a social media magnet.

Brand USA joins rush to provide content on streaming platforms



Brand USA drew inspiration from Netflix on how that company delivers content.

After one of the worst years for international tourism to the United States in the past decade, Brand USA, the country’s national destination marketing organization, is turning to smart televisions and streaming to get an edge.

Brand USA is launching its GoUSA TV channel on smart TV platforms, or those with Internet connections, that stream programming through Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV and Roku in various markets in North America, Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

The smart TV channel, which had a soft launch in November in some markets, will feature episodic video content about outdoor activities, road trips, food, and events throughout the United States.

Many travelers are cord-cutting and

ending relationships with cable providers because of the popularity of streaming services like Netflix and Hulu and buying smart TVs to stream these services and other channels.

GoUSA can be viewed by any traveler in some of the country’s largest visitors’ markets such as Canada, the UK, and Germany, but Millennial travelers remain a key audience for Brand USA, said Tom Garzilli, chief marketing officer of Brand USA.

China, one of the largest overseas markets for the U.S. and the world’s largest outbound travel market, isn’t part of the initial GoUSA rollout, but Brand USA plans to launch the channel in China later this year or in 2019.

Source: Skift