

Webinar panelists discuss cannabis tourism possibilities

If you legalize it, they will come, especially if they have somewhere to consume it.

That seemed to be the message last month at a virtual panel on cannabis tourism.

The free event was sponsored by the Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality and Tourism at the Stockton University School of Business, in partnership with the Greater Atlantic City Chamber and Stockton's cannabis studies program.

Panelists compared cannabis tourism to wine tourism. People want to visit where the plants are grown, much like a vineyard tour, with the expectation that the visitors will also want to taste and have a chance to purchase the product. Visitors also want an educational component to cannabis tours, just like with wineries, they said.

New Jersey legalized recreational use of marijuana in 2021.

In California, which legalized marijuana in 2016, work is underway to develop an appellation system similar to how wine regions are dedicated, said Brian Applegarth of the Cannabis Travel Association and a California marketing and events

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Boston's tourism campaign emphasizes the city's diverse heritage via accents

A national marketing campaign puts the accents of Boston front and center in a push designed and run by local entrepreneurs of color.

The effort highlights many accents — broadly construed.

Beyond the broad 'a's and dropped 'r's of stereotyped Boston speech, the campaign features "accents" as in the flourish of a chef's seasoning, the languages of a diverse population and the intellectual sass of a city famously built upon a hill.

The multimedia campaign was unveiled recently with hopes of attracting new visitors and convincing current residents to explore the city's diverse neighborhoods.

The Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau in collaboration with Collette Phillips Communications and Proverb Agency, is back with a second phase of the "All Inclusive Boston" campaign. The \$1.5 million push to reshape Boston's image as a city more welcoming and inclusive than widely perceived (Boston was ranked in 2017 as the most

unwelcoming city to Black people) will rely primarily on a national broadcast and digital media buy, supported locally by partner NBC-10.

A 30-second ad produced by Proverb, a minority-owned agency, shows various figures from Boston's human palette declaring with pride, "This is my Boston accent."

An Asian chef working over a grill, a bar patron hoisting a pint, and prominent Boston intellectual Ibram Kendi speaking softly in the iconic reading room of the Boston Public Library are a few of the characters accented in the upbeat video.

Martha Sheridan, CEO of the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau, said that the idea is definitely to take people off the traditional path. "It's about showcasing the diversity of our city, but it's also about attracting a more diverse visitor to Boston as well."

Last year the campaign drew 4,000 tourists to the city in spite of a major Covid surge, according to the Greater Boston CVB.

— *skift.com, baystatebanner.com*



Colorado Gov. Jared Polis

Colorado diverts lodging taxes to other uses

Up to 90% of county lodging taxes can now be used outside of tourism marketing, allowing counties to make capital expenditures, under a new law in Colorado.

Those marketing efforts aren't as necessary if the tourism industry is facing larger problems servicing the guests who are already here, said Gov. Jared Polis.

"If the tourism community, and the industry, needs housing, because they need workers to be able to

power the tourism industry, that should be an allowable use of funds too," Polis said. The new bill says 90% of the lodging tax funds can be used outside of tourism marketing, allowing counties to make capital expenditures out of their lodging tax coffers for housing and child care, or for facilitating and enhancing visitor experiences, which includes trail maintenance.

The bill had bipartisan support.

— *aspentimes.com*

Some see a chance for a windfall via well-managed cannabis tourism

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agency, one of four participants.

Cannabis tourism has been an increasing industry in California, Colorado and elsewhere. Some business leaders see a chance for New Jersey to cash in big, with millions of potential customers in New York City and Philadelphia just over the bridges.

"Right now, we have a lot of people who are preparing for all the opportunities that will come," said Rob Mejia, an author and adjunct faculty member with Stockton's cannabis studies minor.

He joined Jamie Hoffman, who runs a cannabis-infused edibles company in Seattle, and Susan Dupej of the Social Studies and Humanities Research Council of Canada on the panel. Canada legalized cannabis in 2018, the first G20 nation to legalize at the federal level.

The discussion was presented by the Cannabis & Hemp Research Initiative

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at Stockton. CHRIS provides cannabis and hemp education, research and resources for local and national markets.

Dupej discussed a Canadian program that allows cannabis growers to offer tours and sell directly to visitors, similar to vineyard and brewery tasting tours. She said some states in the U.S. are ahead of Canada in offering consumption lounges.

In most instances in which cannabis is legal, it cannot be smoked or consumed in public, and most hotels

and rental properties do not allow smoking. That means visitors who want to enjoy their legal weed may have few options.

In New Jersey, plans are to offer consumption lounges. Licensed cannabis sellers will be able to offer lounges, but only if the municipality opts in.

But according to Mejia, only nine communities out of more than 500 in New Jersey have said yes to such lounges. Atlantic City is one of them.

Other recommendations from the panel included making connections between cannabis companies and other tourist-centric services, so that visitors don't have to drive. Other possibilities included having restaurants offer infused dishes.

For now, New Jersey's restrictions on edibles remain strict and very limited, although indications are that could be eased once the market is up and functioning.

— *pressofatlanticcity.com*