



CARIBBEAN
HOTEL & TOURISM
ASSOCIATION



• ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

• MARCH 20, 2014

• Presentation by

• Frank J. Comito

• Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association



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It's Great to be Back...

Started Association Management Career in St. Thomas in 1980 with St. Thomas-St. John Chamber of Commerce.

Worked on numerous tourism-related projects including:

- Bill 1411 – Establishing duty-free shopping
- WAPA (Wilbur 'Bill' LaMotta) and Crime Prevention Committees (Dick Doumeng)
- Youth Employment Programs
- Advocacy Campaign to Support Carambola Development
- Establishment of VITAAL (Virgin Islands Tourism Awareness and Advancement Link).



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Business

The Daily News, Monday, August 17, 1987

10

It's time for an established V.I. tourism policy

The headlines from Hawaii's newspapers a decade ago could easily be transmitted onto today's V.I. newspapers.

Concern about overdevelopment, traffic congestion, power outages and the need for greater participation in the economic process by the indigenous population plagued the Hawaiian community.

Exhausted after nearly 25 years of steady growth and development fueled primarily by tourism, Hawaii entered a period of reflection.

Public and private sector leaders began the long search for solutions to the same problem that plague us today — how to get the most out of tourism with the least negative impact.

Hawaii hasn't transformed into "the perfect tourism location" during the past decade, but it has made great progress. Tourism continues to grow, but in a planned and orderly fashion, and the

benefits are becoming more apparent throughout the population.

The changes can be pegged to the development of a state tourism policy and the implementation of a functional plan — a process that began in the late 1970s and continues today.

The plan establishes the key linkages between tourism and most aspects of community life — education, employment and training, agriculture, public works, historic and natural preservation, energy, health, transportation and recreation.

There is a growing feeling throughout the territory that time has come to establish a tourism policy for the Virgin Islands. Gov. Alexander Farrelly has expressed his intention to move in that direction and Sen. Holland Redfield has prepared a bill which would put the policy and a subsequent implementation plan in motion.

Just last week, Dr. David Edgell,



Business

Frank Comito

executive director for the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration and an international expert in tourism policy development, discussed this very topic with key government and private sector officials at a meeting sponsored by Eric Dawson, commissioner for the Department of Economic Development and Agriculture.

His comments were appropriate: "Too often jurisdictions create their own problems by not looking to the future ... The time is ripe for the Virgin Islands to look

at the broader ramifications of tourism and make it work more effectively for them."

In a community where nearly two-thirds of all economic activity is derived from tourism, a comprehensive tourism policy would strengthen the whole planning process. It should consist of broad goals that could provide the basis for planning.

Planners, government administrators and managers, and the community would then set about the task of developing and implementing plans relevant to the policy.

More important, the policy should emphasize the complicated and diverse nature of tourism and show that it impacts on more than hotels, restaurants, gift shops and taxis.

A policy and plan should demonstrate that this "people business" is in essence the "people's business" touching on all our lives.

Maximizing tourism's benefits to the territory — at little cost — is a challenge for our leaders. It won't just happen. It has to become an integral part of the policy and planning process and it must have the commitment of businesses, the government and community at large.

This week's Chamber of Commerce monthly membership meeting will feature Alan Smith, commissioner for the Department of Planning and Natural Resources. He will discuss his plans and goals for the department.

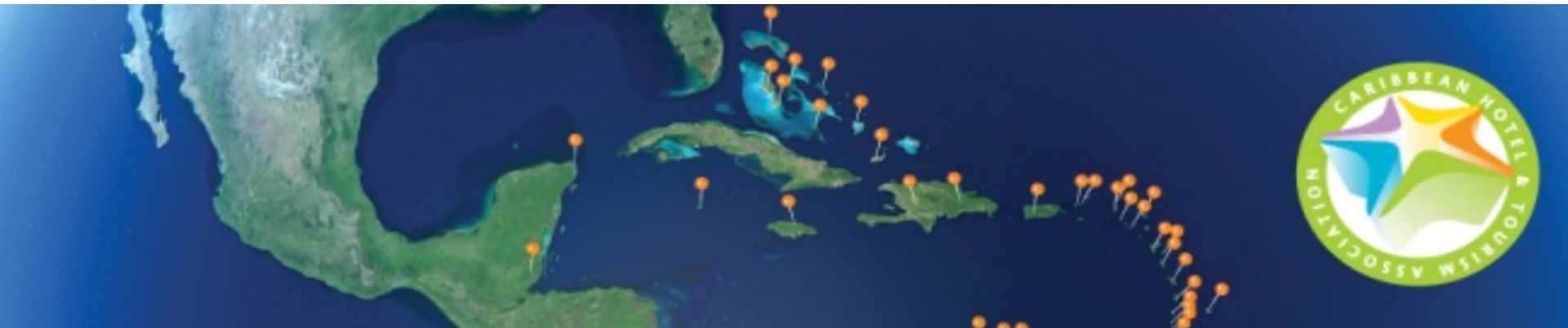
The meeting will be at 12:15 p.m. Wednesday at Queen's Quarter Hotel. For more information, call 773-1435.

Frank Comito is executive director of the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce.



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About CHTA



- Nearly 1,000 hotel and Allied Members
- A Federation of 32 National Hotel & Tourism Associations throughout the Region
- Represents Caribbean Tourism Interests Regionally /Globally
- Historically has been a major player in developing tourism in the Caribbean



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REPRESENTATION

Advocacy and Government Affairs

- **Knowledge Broker** – comparative info, best practices, position papers, expert testimony....
- **Change Agent** – i.e. recently – US Passport requirement; airline costs, visa liberation, UK Air Passenger Duty
- **Collaborator** – with national hotel associations, Caribbean Tourism Organization, World Travel and Tourism Council, Caribbean/Central American Action, etc.
- **Bully Pulpit** – Utilize appropriate public and private forums to advance industry views and value of tourism



GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

- **Caribbean Travel Marketplace** – Top regional deal-making and networking venue for buyers and suppliers; educational sessions from leading industry experts
- **Caribbean Travel Website**– Free listings for members on www.caribbeantravel.com, enables consumers to easily find what they are looking for in a Caribbean vacation. No transaction fees for conversions.
- **CHICOS Annual Investment Conference** – Bringing together prospective investors, developers, and financial institutions with existing and potential operators seeking to expand, rebrand, build or adopt a new business model.
- **Listings, Special Promotional Offers and Referrals** – To showcase properties, reach niche markets, present special value offers.



A PRIMARY KNOWLEDGE SOURCE

- **Benchmark Data** – Providing regional and national hotel and arrivals performance data
- **Trends** - Cutting-Edge, Research and Findings from National, Regional and Global Tourism Leaders. Shared at events, forums, on website, and through member communications
- **Communications** - Webinars, Seminars, Forums, E-Newsletters, Social Media, Events. Using multiple mediums for sharing and feedback
- **Member and Association Surveys** – Soliciting, analyzing and sharing primary information, best practices, etc.
- **Opportunity to Shape the CHTA Agenda** – Through surveys, committees, events and membership meetings



SAVINGS

- **CHIEF** – Through engaging sessions and networking opportunities, the Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum connects members with ideas, information and best practices aimed at helping members to make and save money
- **Member Discounts** – Providing exclusive travel rates and member-to-member discounts on products and services
- **Lowering Energy Costs** – Connecting you to information, policies, and resources
- **No-Cash Payment for CHTA Dues and Events** – Through CHTA's special room exchange arrangement with SkyAuction



IMPROVING...PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS

- **Hurricane Readiness** – Utilizing CHTA’s Hurricane Preparedness Manual and other resources to prepare, prevent and mitigate the impact of hurricanes and other natural disasters on your business
- **Insurance Policy Review** - Through allied member Smith Orloff, receive a complimentary review of your insurance policy and its protection levels in the event of a claim for hurricanes or other disaster
- **Sustainability Focus** – Connecting members to resources, training and credentialing opportunities through the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, a CHTA initiative, the Foundation for Environmental Education, the Blue Flag program and Green Globe program
- **Online Resources** – Drawing upon a wealth of tools and information available on CHTA’s website



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CHTA Areas of Focus



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EDUCATION FOUNDATION

BUILDING A QUALITY WORKFORCE

- CHTA's Education Foundation (CHTAEF) has been active since 1987
- Nearly \$2 million in scholarships awarded.
- Supporting Caribbean Students pursuing hospitality careers
- Easy for You to Make a Difference.



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BUILDING A QUALITY WORKFORCE

- **Culinary Development** - Since its inception over 2,000 chefs have participated in training and culinary competitions provided through CHTA's Taste of the Caribbean annual event. Countless others have participated in national training and competitive programs to prepare for Taste of the Caribbean
- **Training Support** - materials, templates, comparative wage data available to National Hotel Associations for members
- **Small Hotels Manual** – an operational primer to guide hotels
- **Hcareers Recruitment Service** – Available to members at a discount



NATIONAL HOTEL & TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS

With its Strategic Partner ARDA, CHTA supports the National Hotel Associations through:

- **Leadership Development** – offered 2-3 times annually, hotel association executives are provided with tools, and share challenges and best practices
- **Information Exchange** – polling associations throughout the region for data, policies, best practices and other useful comparative information
- **Feedback to CHTA** – the national associations are CHTA's added link to the ground, providing feedback on important matters affecting the industry



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Key CHTA Events

TASTE *of the* CARIBBEAN

A SHOWCASE OF CARIBBEAN CUISINE

JUNE 12-14, 2015



HYATT REGENCY
MIAMI



- Dates: June 12 – 14, Miami, FL
- A celebration of the culinary arts of the Caribbean.
- Developing the professional skills of aspiring and established chefs
- Showcasing to the public and region the ‘Tastes of The Islands’



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Key CHTA Events



- Dates: October 2-4, 2015
- Location: El Conquistador Waldorf Astoria Resort, Puerto Rico
- Two days of value-packed fun and engaging exchange sessions focused on helping businesses to make money, save money and become more relevant and efficient.



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Key CHTA Events



chicos 2015

HVS Caribbean Hotel Investment Conference
and Operations Summit

- Dates: November 12-13, 2015
- Location: Ritz Carlton, San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Regional Investment Conference by HVS, CTO and CHTA that provides attendees with the opportunity to significantly expand their network while learning the most important trends that can impact their investment decisions.



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Key CHTA Events

CARIBBEAN TRAVEL MARKETPLACE

ALL TOURISM • ALL CARIBBEAN • ALL BUSINESS

Atlantis Paradise Island
The Bahamas

- Dates: : January 21-23, 2016
- Location: Atlantis Paradise Island, The Bahamas
- the Caribbean's largest and most important marketing event, where tourism suppliers have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with wholesalers from around the world selling Caribbean vacation travel over the course of two days of business meetings.



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2014 WAS GENERALLY A GOOD YEAR FOR THE USVI AND THE REGION

- **Regional Arrivals Up 5.3%** (Source: CTO)
- **USVI Arrivals Up 3.9%** (Source: CTO)
- **Regional Occupancy Up 1.5%** (Source: STR)
- **USVI Occupancy Up 5.1 %** (Source: STR)
- **Regional RevPar Up 8%** (Source: STR)
- **USVI RevPar Up 5.1%** (Source: STR)

Initial Indications are that 2015 Will be a Better Year



USVI CHALLENGES ARE SIMILAR TO REGIONAL ISSUES

- Price Competitiveness
- High Cost of Doing Business Driven Primarily by Utility Costs
- High Cost of Access – airlift cost and frequency
- Rising Taxes
- Overall Quality of the Vacation Experience



THE GOOD NEWS FOR USVI...IMAGE IS STRONG

Perception of Caribbean Destinations: based upon consumer research conducted in 2012 by MMGY for the Nassau-Paradise Island Promotion Board.

CONSUMER QUESTION:

Overall, what is your image
of each of the following as a vacation destination?

*If you have not visited the destination, please provide your opinion
based on what you have heard or think about the destination.*

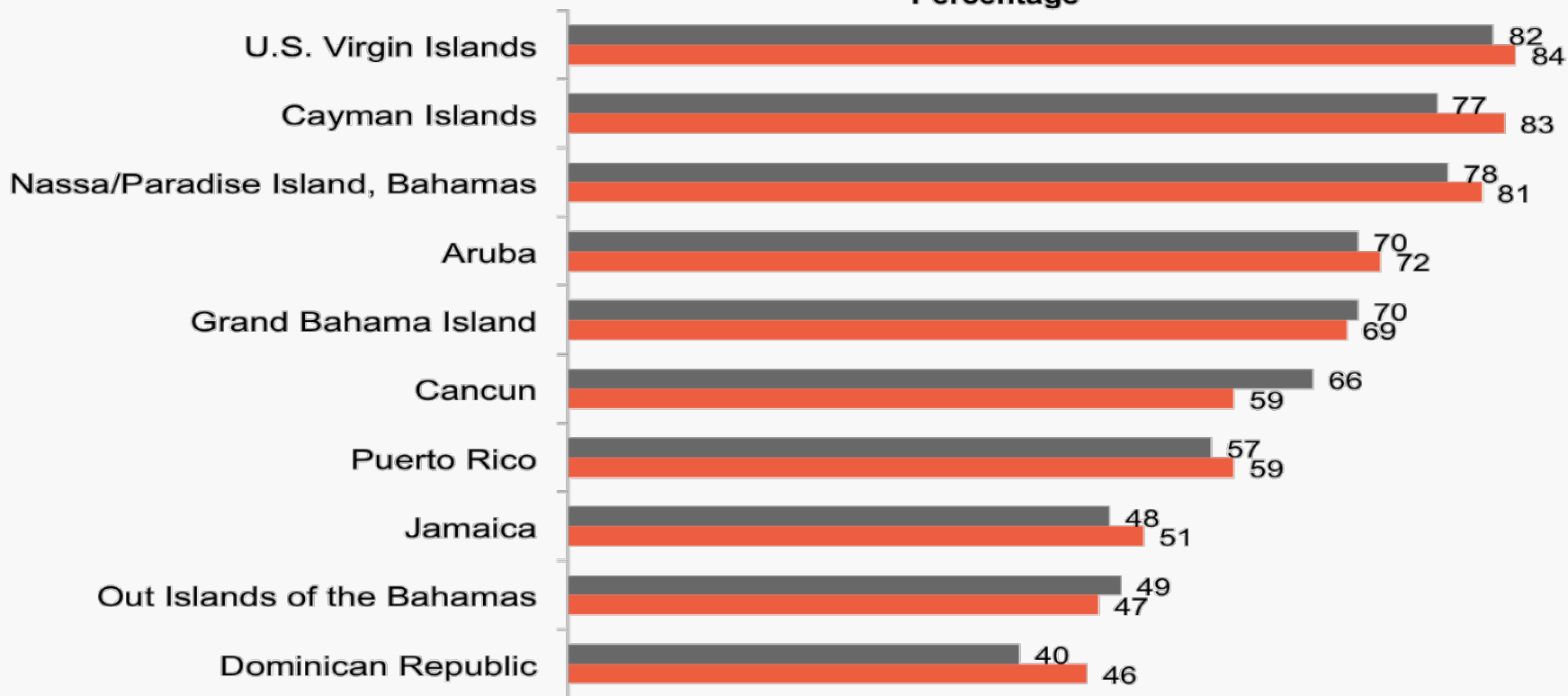


Industry Opportunities

Image of Destination*

■ 2007 ■ 2012

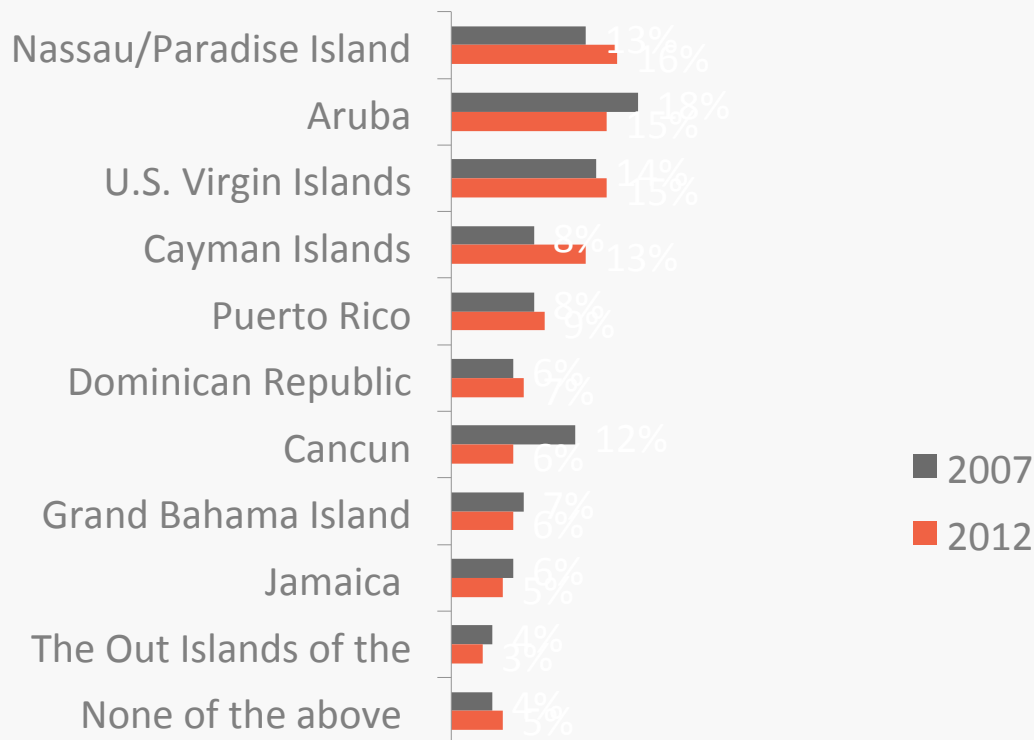
Percentage





MOST PREFERRED VACATION DESTINATION

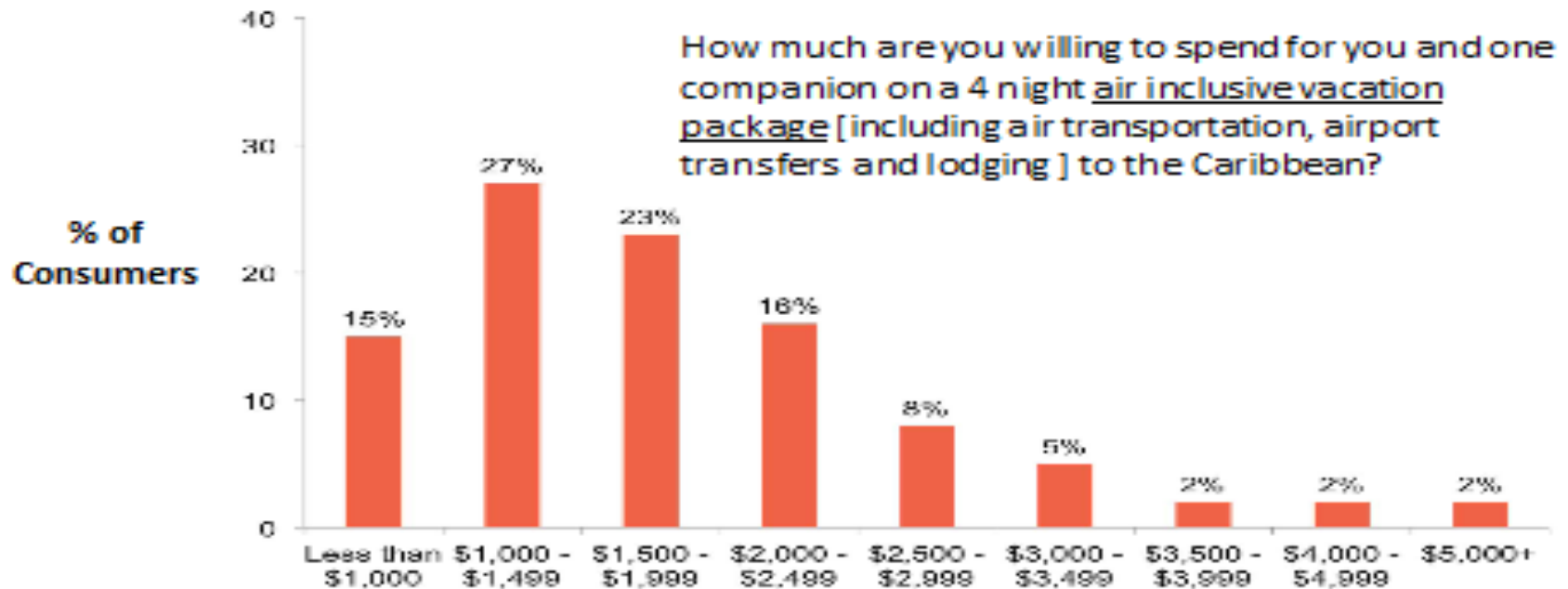
Based upon
consumer research
conducted in 2012
by MMGY, during
the next 2 years for
the Nassau-Paradise
Island Promotion
Board.





PRICE COMPETITIVENESS

Price is a Significant and Quantifiable Variable in a Destination's Competitiveness....
Market Share a Destination Can Draw On





WE MUST IMPROVE OUR COMPETITIVENESS...

To improve competitiveness and address issues of cost, access, taxation, visitor experience, product and human resource development:

- **Collaboration and Partnerships are Essential**
 - Private Sector (CHTA, National Hotel Associations) must take the lead
 - Building Coalitions with Other Stakeholders Adds Leverage
- **Advocacy Must Be Driven by Facts, Not Emotions**
 - Impact of Policies, Inefficiencies and Deficiencies Must Demonstrate Effect on: Industry Revenue, Business Viability, Jobs and Tax Revenue



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Looking Ahead



- **The Outlook for Tourism is Bright but Challenges Abound**
- **National Hotel and Tourism Associations and CHTA are Change Agents**
- **Associations Must Play an Even Greater Role in Protecting and Developing our Industry**
- **Collaboration is Key**



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Thank You



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