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NEWS RELEASE

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New Research Study to Segment the Cultural/Heritage Traveler Market

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism (USCHT) Marketing Council, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Commerce, is developing the first segmentation study of U.S. cultural and heritage travelers. The study, conducted by Mandala Research & Consulting, will identify the broad range of cultural and heritage travel in the United States, profile the various segments of cultural travelers, and provide insight into their economic value to travel companies and destinations.

“Any information that helps destinations and travel companies understand and attract the cultural traveler better could go a long way in boosting tourism,” said Helen N. Marano, Director, Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, U.S. Department of Commerce. “Cultural and heritage tourism certainly spurs visitation to destinations all across the United States, which has a positive impact on the employment and economic health of those areas.”

Heritage Travel, Inc., a subsidiary of The National Trust for Historic Preservation, is a lead sponsor of the study.

"The National Trust for Historic Preservation has been a leader in heritage travel for nearly four decades," said John I. Williams, Jr., President and CEO of Heritage Travel, Inc. "Participating in this survey will allow us to assist communities and sites to develop cultural and heritage tourism strategies and tactics resulting in stronger visitation particularly during this challenging economic environment."

In addition to Heritage Travel, Inc., sponsors include the states of California, Virginia, and Florida, as well as the city of Cleveland, OH, and the Center for Socioeconomic Research & Education at Texas A&M University.

“This is a unique opportunity to fine-tune marketing and communications outreach to cultural travelers,” said Sheila Armstrong, Executive Director of the USCHT Marketing Council, the association that is launching the study. “The data from this study should be very helpful in effectively targeting limited marketing dollars to cultivate more visitations from this affluent and active travel segment.”

A range of sponsorship levels is available and for most levels, the benefits include adding questions to the survey and giving input on the survey’s design. Sponsorships will be available through May 10, 2009.

Mandala Research & Consulting, a nationally recognized firm specializing in travel and tourism, will have responsibility for fielding the research, as well as the methodological design, data analysis, and dissemination of the results.

The study is scheduled to begin in May 2009, with results available in June 2009. Data will be available to study sponsors at that time, with completed reports available for purchase by July 1, 2009.

For more information about the study or to receive a more detailed description of sponsorship benefits, please contact Laura Mandala at laura@mandalaresearch.com or 703.798.5452.

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