

News & Notes

TRAVEL • MANUFACTURER • RETAIL • ASSOCIATION • TRADE SHOW

TRAVEL

Travel, Tourism 'Central' to Job Creation



During the U.S. Travel Association's International Pow Wow Conference, U.S. Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Thomas J. Donohue spoke to a crowd of 5,000 international travel and tourism executives. In order to maximize the economic benefits of travel and tourism, Donohue recommends government, business and industry team up in order to achieve the following five goals:

- Be smart about implementing the Travel Promotion Act. According to Oxford Economics, a well-executed travel promotion program could attract 1.6 million new international visitors annually, creating approximately 40,000 American jobs and cutting the U.S. deficit by \$425 million.
- Mitigate the "hassle factor." Donohue called on the United States to improve visitors' first impression of America by improving security and screening procedures at U.S. airports.
- Dramatically improve our infrastructure. A major priority for the United States should be modernizing its domestic and international transportation systems.
- Keep America an attractive destination for business travelers and tourists by strengthening our commercial, cultural and natural environments. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "our leadership, our laws and our markets must spell opportunity in bold letters for the entire world to see."
- Remain constantly vigilant and be aggressive advocates for the travel industry. Rather than calling it "wasteful," Donohue called on politicians in Washington, D.C., to recognize business travel for its vast and valuable economic contributions.

USA TODAY Expands Travel. USATODAY.com

USA TODAY expanded its travel website, Travel.USATODAY.com to be a one-stop destination for travelers looking for expert travel planning information, news, tips, community and conversation. It inspires readers, guides them through the travel process and helps them travel better, smarter and cheaper.

The expanded site now includes: destination content on 295 locations around the world, enriched with maps, photos and tools to help readers plan their trips; a "Travel Tips" section with more than 4,000 savvy consumer tips and videos on a host of travel topics such as finding low fares and traveling with kids on a business trip; a destinations blog called "Dispatches" that features insider news, updates, mini trip reports and select photos from around the globe; as well as a "Deals" section featuring money-saving strategies and best offerings.



USA TODAY's new site keeps readers abreast of current travel alerts and deals

Get Real!

Real travel info, that is! Go to www.Gadling.com, a 100% reader-generated content site chock full of travel tips. From techy explorations to getting away on a budget, readers offer insights about every element of taking a trip. Submit your own wisdom or spend time perusing the info. Follow on Foursquare, Facebook and Twitter. However you check out www.Gadling.com, just make sure you do!

Stay in the Know on the Go

With Tripnewswire.com, you'll stay in the know, even when you're on the go. Organized in a simple-to-use, easy-to-read format, the website features the most recent travel warnings and alerts, contact info for 130 foreign embassies in Washington

as well as more than 200 U.S. embassies and consulates throughout the world. In addition, TripNewsWire.com lists more than 100 major foreign consulate offices in the U.S., 40+ Mexican consulates, the 19 regional U.S. passport offices, as well as links to local weather

in 75 countries. An exchange rate calculator is also included, as are links to CDC health and shot requirements and how to travel internationally with pets. You'll find a link to the FAA map of current airport delays, as well as articles on new travel rules and regulations. ■

Eagle Creek Rebrands in 2011



Eagle Creek is rebranding itself, with the help of Denver-based Factory Design Labs. The brand's five-year goal is to make Eagle Creek a household name synonymous with travel. Other exciting

changes taking place at Eagle Creek include new leadership and corporate headquarters, a state-of-the-art distribution center and common systems platform.

"Since its inception, Eagle Creek has proven itself by offering customers the most durable and functional systems for travel. Today, we're unleashing the brand's full potential," says president Michael Millenacker. "We believe travel has the ability to change people for the better. This motivates us to bring innovative approaches into every facet of our business including insightful products and interactive media to consumer touch points."

The new brand launched to the trade at the Summer 2010 Outdoor Retailer Show, and will launch to consumers during spring 2011. ■

High Sierra Partners with North Pole, LLC, Sponsors Teva Mountain Games

High Sierra Sport Company has joined forces with North Pole, LLC, to produce and distribute camping and outdoor recreation equipment under the High Sierra brand name. North Pole, LLC, established in 1979, is a global leader in outdoor living and recreational products.

Showcasing quality and style innovation to the outdoor market, High Sierra Sport Company participated in the Vail Valley Foundation as a sponsor of the Teva Mountain Games. During the Games, High Sierra had a booth



displaying new products for the season and offered product giveaways and bag sales for consumers. In addition, fans had the opportunity to test and submit comments on new styles of bags. ■

Awards and More!

The Utah Valley Entrepreneurial Forum (UVEF) recently recognized the Top 25 fastest growing companies in Utah and Zoobies was ranked #15. And, *Creative Child Magazine* has awarded Zoobies with the 2010 Top Toy of the Year Award, the company's fourth award from the magazine in three years. Zoobie also added to its line of loveable cuddle-ables with Lyric the Lamb™, created through a partnership between Zoobies®, LLC and New Day Christian Distribution, for the Christian bookstores market. ■



Photos Pay-off with Pacsafe

Pacsafe wants travelers to show off their photography skills by capturing the amazing destinations they have visited with their Pacsafe bags. Each quarter, the company chooses the most inspiring photos of Pacsafe users and their bags in a unique, exotic, picturesque or famous travel destination and posts it on their website and Facebook page. The contest is easy to enter: email photos to photos@pacsafe.com, write "Do More Photography Competition" in the subject line, include first and last name, the location of the photo, and the Pacsafe product that's featured. Winners are selected by Pacsafe's head office staff and receive a Pacsafe product up to \$150 in value. ■

LDC Backs Antler's Global Growth

LDC, a leading mid-market private equity firm, backs the management buyout of Antler — the UK's number one luggage brand — for an undisclosed sum. The buyout is extremely positive for Antler USA. The new owners have funds to invest and the expertise of CEO David Benjamin will help to accelerate Antler's growth in the U.S. market.

Following the deal, the management team plans to consolidate the brand's leading position in the UK luggage market and accelerate sales in several major international markets. The business also plans to increase the marketing support for its portfolio of brands while continuing its investment in new product development. ■

Corwin Crowned Cruise Winner while Crew 8 Collection Aims for Efficiency

Marilyn Corwin of Northglenn, Colorado, won the Travelpro® Maxlite™ "Win a Free Cruise Trip to the Bahamas" Sweepstakes, sponsored by Travelpro luggage. The sweepstakes package includes: round-trip airfare for two to Miami, Florida, and a three-night/four-day Norwegian Cruise Line® Getaway. Corwin also received two Travelpro® Maxlite™ 22-inch Expandable Rollaboard® suitcases.

"I was thrilled when I won the cruise to the Bahamas, and the luggage was a great added bonus," says Marilyn. "The Travelpro luggage is very impressive, extremely lightweight with more storage than other carry-ons I have seen. I look forward to using it on the trip." ■

RBH Aims for Ten Best... Again!

Author of "The Ten Best of Everything: An Ultimate Guide for Travelers," Nathaniel Lande, is putting Ricardo Beverly Hills' luggage to the test.

"The features on the San Mateo look to be the best yet," says Lande. "Congratulations! Some serious thought has gone into this line."

Lande is currently testing the RBH San Mateo on two international trips to see if Ricardo makes the exclusive "Ten Best" list for a second time. ■

Fresh Leadership at KIVA Leads to Eco-Friendly Makeover

Magi Raible, new president of California-based KIVA Designs, is at the helm of an effort to re-brand the company, which already has a significant presence in the design and manufacturing of travel luggage and accessories. KIVA will bolster its brand with innovative taglines for each of its product groups and a revitalized graphic identity, which includes an earth-toned color palette and imagery. The branding reflects Raible's desire to declare the company's commitment to make environmentally-conscious decisions in every step of its design and manufacturing process.

The first product-specific changes resulting from the company's eco-initiative have been on KIVA-branded products and its Rick Steves' line of travel luggage and accessories. Both luggage groups will now be made out of 100 percent recycled content fabric. KIVA's new look and products can be seen on their website: www.kivadesigns.com. ■

Pump Up Your Training...to Grow!

The growth of a company is really the growth of its individuals. Organizations that offer their people career-long training are investing in the future, while improving their company and bottom line today.

- Consider training an essential part of your company. It means the difference between success and failure in the service industry, and more and more manufacturing companies are finding the competitive battle ground is becoming one of service.
- Remember the kindergarten principle: Make learning fun. People retain more when information is presented in a creative, interactive and interesting manner.
- Training must assume an attitude for effect, be technical and it must be on-going. Culture and attitude are as important to service as the skill is.
- Try offering programs on several general subjects, to all of your people, on a regular basis. It creates cohesiveness, consistency and fosters teamwork. Offer material that benefits the personal and professional lives of your people. You will be pleased with the results.
- A leadership skills program can be extremely valuable in preparing people to think on their feet.
- A leadership development program can be an excellent way to groom future leaders. It is similar to a medical residency program, in which a person spends a couple months of time in each department. The individuals, the departments and the company all benefit.
- Continually sharpen your technical training and be sure it's comprehensive enough to enable you to hire people with no experience in your particular field. This will broaden the scope of people you hire — a distinct human resource advantage.
- Offer a "conversion" training class to even the most experienced new hires. It ensures that they'll do business the way your company does, not the way their previous employers did business.
- Always provide training for your people for new products or methods you plan to employ in your company. This will eliminate the need to find new people to use these products and will go a long way to ensure that your people won't resist change as a result of fear.
- Try training by challenge. Your people will surprise themselves and you with what they are capable of doing when challenged. Provide a variety of new projects and employ new tools. People will develop new skills to rise to the challenges. ■

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Celebrating the Silver Years

Having opened its first retail location in 1985, Bagot Leather Goods, Luggage Plus (BLG) is celebrating its silver (that's 25 years!) anniversary in Kingston, Ontario. Company founders include the co-organizers of the LLHA (Ron Paquette) and the CLLDA (Guy Paquette), two major Canadian Travel Goods Associations. This year BLG was recognized as the RDEE (The National Francophone Economic Development Network) Francophone Enterprise of the Year in Ontario and also qualified for the RDEE national awards. ■



Tumi Program Lets You Customize with a Pop of Color

Beginning in September, Tumi introduces "Accent Your Alpha" at the retail level, a program that allows customers to adjust the look of their bag with the addition of colored components. Gone are the days of tying a ribbon on one's bag to differentiate it from the sea of black bags; customize it with color: red, magenta, silver, blue, green or brown. The accent color can be applied to these components: Colored Monogram Leather Patch; Colored Luggage Tag; Colored Add-A-Bag Hook; Protective Bag Guards; Zipper Pullers; and Colored Zippered Pouch. This special service can be applied to a variety of bags for travel and business within the Alpha collection and is another element of Tumi's personalization program that currently includes complimentary monogramming. All "accented" components will be applied to the bags directly at Tumi stores. Previously purchased Alpha bags can be "accented." The cost of this color enhancing service is \$50. For more information, visit www.tumi.com. ■



In green envy, the Mother Lode TLS Wheeled Duffel makes it easy to look good on the go.



eBags.com Hits the Mother Lode with "Year's Best Gear"

The eBags Mother Lode TLS Junior Wheeled Duffel is one of seven bags named among "The Year's Best Gear" for luggage in the *Outside* Buyer's Guide Summer 2010. *Outside* designated a crew of 10 gear testers, who were responsible for "busting the seams" and subjecting each bag to every imaginable (and unimaginable) manner of extreme travel torture. The bags triumphed rickety road trips throughout North America, overland treks in Thailand and even endured leaky long-boats on the Mekong River.

"Earning a spot in the *Outside* Buyer's Guide is like earning a Grammy Music Award or Academy Award in the travel goods industry," says Peter Cobb, senior vice president and co-founder of eBags.com.

The eBags Mother Lode TLS Wheeled Duffel Collection ranges in price from \$190-\$250, comes in four colors (blue yonder, green envy, sinful red and pitch black) and is available in three different sizes, equipped for adventures ranging from an overnight business trip to a three-week journey across the European countryside. ■

Sweet 17 Celebration

Strong profits and a steady customer base after 17 years in business are cause for celebration at Changes in Latitude, a store that carries a wide variety of travel necessities, including backpacks, luggage, guidebooks, maps, and a number of accessories like shoulder bags, electrical adapters and toiletry kits. Adventure slideshow presentations each Tuesday night bring about 100 people to the store for lectures on different areas of the world.

Owner Cindy McClelland, an avid traveler, founded the store after a year-long, worldwide adventure in the early '90s and says, "After 17 years, I can say that we still follow the same mission I started with — to make preparation for adventure travel convenient and to provide valuable information and service to customers." ■

Travel + Shopping: Life is Good

Macy's has launched a dedicated website — VisitMacyUSA.com — to expand the company's outreach to domestic and international travelers, making it easier to access information on Macy's Visitor Services programs. The interactive site offers details in eight languages on the services and programs available at Macy's for travelers, including group programs that can be designed to cater to any group size or interest. Plus, one of Macy's most popular tourist attractions — Macy's 10% Visitors Savings Pass — is available as a downloadable voucher that can be redeemed at any Macy's store nationwide. As part of the tourism-focused site, Macy's joined with Kiwi Collection to offer visitors a comprehensive hotel search and booking engine. This feature will provide visitors with a more experiential and comprehensive on-line experience, enabling them to have immediate and direct access to luxury properties and a best-rate guarantee across key Macy's flagship destinations. ■



Summer Luggage, Gift & Travel Goods Show

130 companies showcased their merchandise for NLDA members and other buyers from department stores, big box retail chains, Internet retailers and independent specialty stores in the gift, travel goods and hospitality industries at the 7th annual Summer Luggage, Gift & Travel Goods Show. The NLDA thanks everyone who exhibited and attended for their continued support of the show. Mark your calendars for the 8th annual Summer Luggage, Gift & Travel Goods Show, which will be held in Chicago at the Navy Pier June 23-24, 2011.

Jim and Cheryl Fairchild of The Globetrotter look at SubUrban and Eeko Chic accessories.



NLDA Summer Convention

NLDA recently held its annual summer convention at the Hotel InterContinental. Along with meeting to discuss new products and services, members enjoyed nightly social gatherings, including a dinner cruise along the Chicago River. John Mori, NLDA president (Mori Luggage & Gifts, Atlanta Georgia), led the membership at its summer General Membership Meeting emphasizing everyone's enthusiasm for joining together as one independent retail trade association. Members are upbeat about sales thus far and are looking forward to strong months during the remaining fiscal year.



Maggie and Joe Greco of Village Luggage & Gifts enjoy the NLDA dinner cruise along the Chicago River.



John Mori of Mori Luggage & Gifts, Atlanta Georgia (president of NLDA) captures his family (wife Ann, kids Rankin and John, parents Betty and Jean) enjoying the city of Chicago after the NLDA Convention ends.



Stephen and Susan Silver of Silver of Westport are working with Dave Gruver at Jen USA — BJX. Gene Nicholas and Cheryl Hughes of Nicholas Luggage & Gifts are checking out the camera sling in the background.



George Tranchina of Rapp's Luggage & Gifts, Joe Norton and Shane Lewis of Norton Luggage: Elephant Trunk are placing orders with Mark and Keri Bedol at Bedol Water Clocks.



Bobby Williams and Michael Kraus show the Edwards Luggage principals Marty and Laura Reininger, Leslie Ebert and Randy MacKenzie their new line of wallets at R. Madison.



Phil Wein of Irv's Luggage Warehouse and Emporium Luggage is talking with Andrew Hamilton about Antler Luggage.



John Ebb and Dave Dungan of Brett's Luggage & Gifts discuss business with Jen Austin at Victorinox.



Robert Wolf of Wagner's and Susan Silver of Silver of Westport check out Min Chiu's new iPad holders at Cathayana.