



AIANTA
American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association

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National Native Tourism Organization Proclaims Travel and Tourism Week in Indian Country

*American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association and National Tourism Industry
Endorse Tourism's Economic Benefits during National Travel and Tourism Week*

Albuquerque, New Mexico (May 2, 2016) - Today, in recognition of National Travel and Tourism Week, the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) issued a proclamation, officially declaring May 1-7 as National Travel and Tourism Week in Indian Country. AIANTA Board President Sherry L. Rupert signed the proclamation during the Nevada Tribal Tourism Conference in Carson City, Nevada.

National Travel and Tourism Week is recognized throughout the country by industry leaders and professionals, celebrating the positive impacts travel and tourism have on the U.S. and its economy. AIANTA believes Indian Country should also recognize and celebrate the tremendous positive impacts tourism can have in rural and tribal communities across the country.

Overseas visitors to Indian Country contribute more per capita to the U.S. tourism economy than visitors to other destinations, and the number of international visitors to Indian Country has exploded since 2008. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, 1.65 million overseas visitors traveled to Indian Country in 2014 and spent \$7 billion.

In signing the proclamation, AIANTA hopes to raise awareness throughout the U.S. and the world of the importance of authentic, cultural tourism.

"Travel supports one in nine American jobs, including countless jobs throughout Indian Country," said Mrs. Rupert. "This week, we are celebrating what travel means to Native America—and we call on everyone—from elected officials to tribal members, to join us in acknowledging this invaluable industry, and support travel-friendly legislation that benefits travelers and Indian Country alike."

The Department of Commerce forecasts that arrivals and spending by overseas visitors to Indian Country will increase 30% and reach \$9.5 billion by 2020. Compared to the average traveler, overseas travelers who visit Indian Country stay longer, visit more states and cities, take more domestic flights, rent more cars, visit more national parks and monuments, and take in more art galleries, museums, and cultural sites.



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These figures are an important part of travel's economic importance nationwide. Travel is a \$2.1 trillion industry in the United States, with \$927.9 billion in direct travel-related spending in the U.S. by domestic and international visitors in 2014.

In addition to its benefits for local economies throughout Indian Country, travel and tourism can also have a positive effect on personal and cultural well-being for tribes and communities.

“Tourism can serve as a powerful tool for tribes and communities to share their own stories, in the way that they want them to be shared, truly perpetuating the traditions that are still thriving today,” said Camille Ferguson, AIANTA Executive Director. “By welcoming and educating visitors, tribes are able to share stories that they want others to know, while still maintaining the privacy and sanctity of certain aspects of their traditions.”

The proclamation can be found at www.AIANTA.org.

About AIANTA:

The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) is a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit association of American Indian tribes, tribal tourism, cultural and private sector representatives, representatives from the tourism industry, Federal, State and local governments, colleges and universities, and friends that was incorporated in 2002 to advance Indian Country tourism. The association is made up of representatives from six regions: Alaska, Eastern, Midwest, Pacific, Plains and the Southwest. AIANTA's mission is to define, introduce, grow and sustain American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian tourism that honors traditions and values.

The purpose of the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association is to provide our constituents with the voice and tools needed to advance tourism while helping tribes, tribal organizations and tribal members create infrastructure and capacity through technical assistance, training and educational resources. AIANTA serves as the liaison among Indian Country, governmental, educational and private entities for the development, growth, and sustenance of Indian Country tourism. By developing and implementing programs and facilitating economic development opportunities, the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association helps tribes build for their future while sustaining and strengthening their cultural legacy.

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