



AIANTA
American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association

Introducing America's First Nations to the World

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AIANTA Board Co-sponsors the Grassroots Congressional Travel Summit to Educate U.S. Lawmakers on Tribal Involvement in National Tourism Strategy
Delegation is in Washington D.C. May 8-10 during National Tourism Week

(Washington, D.C.) The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) is co-sponsoring the Grassroots Congressional Travel Summit, May 8-10, 2012, hosted by the National Travel Association (NTA), Southeast Tourism Society, and Destination Marketing Association International.

AIANTA President, Mary Jane Ferguson, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, AIANTA Treasurer, Sherry Rupert, Nevada Indian Commission and AIANTA Board Member, Rachel Moreno, Sitka Tribe of Alaska arrive at the Summit in the Nation's Capital this week to advocate for a tribal role in the White House's "National Travel and Tourism Strategy".

AIANTA leaders are taking advantage of The Grassroots Congressional Travel Summit to educate national tourism industry leaders and lawmakers about the development, expansion and promotion of tourism in tribal communities and create vibrant partnerships in the tourism industry.

The AIANTA team will meet with Senator Mark Begich (D-AK), Representative Jo Bonner (R- AL), Representative Sam Farr (D-CA) from California, who are the co-chairs of the U.S. Senate and Congressional Tourism Caucus before heading to the Department of the Interior for scheduled meetings with DOI official Gail Adams, Director of External and Intergovernmental Affairs to put the final touches on a tourism MOU with the agency.

The AIANTA delegation will also meet with Representative Mark Amodei (R-NV) and Senator Reid (D-NV), Senator Murkowski (R-AK) and Wendy Helgemo, on the staff of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

AIANTA President Mary Jane Ferguson stated that "the recent Presidential Executive Order on Tourism gives American Indian and Alaska Native tribes an opportunity to be included in all the discussions about the future of tourism in the U.S. Tribes have so



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much to contribute to our Nation's ability to draw tourists to this country and keep them for extended stays. We want to be at the U.S. tourism's decision-making table."

The three Board members will be explaining the significance of AIANTA's recommendations to the White House Travel and Tourism Task Force assigned to promote the President's Executive Order on Tourism. AIANTA recommendations include: 1) **involve tribes in policy formulation**; 2) **support public and tribal land tourism partnerships**; 3) **sustain Department of Commerce inbound inflight survey data collection** and restore funding for inbound survey questions on visitor interest in tribal destinations; 4) **support tribal initiatives in international trade** as government –to-government trade agreements; 5) **support the enforcement of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990**--an act created to combat counterfeit activity in the Indian arts and crafts market; and 6) **fight the repeal of the National Scenic Byways Program**, a key program in the economic vitality of many rural communities and regional highway corridors including many in Indian Country.

At the Summit, Brand USA--the public private partnership with the mission of promoting increased international travel to the United States--will present strategies to increase tourism both domestically and abroad to boost the national economy and create more jobs in the industry. U.S. Visa policy making, federal highway reauthorization goals, and public lands policy development will also be discussed.

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