

COURIER

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INDUSTRY

Preparing for White House Conference

The National Tour Association is working hard to ensure the involvement of as many of its members as possible in this fall's White House Conference on Travel and Tourism, and to make certain that NTA viewpoints on a number of key issues are well represented.

The White House Conference on Travel and Tourism (WHCTT) will take place October 30-31 in Washington, D.C., and will be the first such conference to be focused entirely on a specific industry. Attaining this level of recognition before the Clinton administration and the Congress is considered a major accomplishment for the travel and tourism industry.

"I urge everyone to get involved," said Dottie Maitland, a former president of NTA and a member of a WHCTT committee on product development, one of the nine pre-set program areas. "This is not a token event. It is a serious conference that can make huge strides for our industry."

NTA members have been very visible at a number of state conferences held to select delegates to the WHCTT and to create position papers on various issues that will be presented at the national conference.

In July 1994, then-NTA President S. Burkett "Doc" Milner appointed one NTA member in each state to coordinate activities for the state conferences. In late summer 1994, NTA sent a plan of action to its membership on how to get involved in state conferences and how to campaign to be a national delegate.

NTA Position Paper

In January, NTA sent its members a

NTA encourages member involvement in October meeting that will focus on travel and tourism



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NTA's positions to the forefront, with the goal of ensuring national exposure during the WHCTT.

"Our members have not waited on the sidelines for elements of the conference to simply develop," said Jerry DiPietro, president of NTA. "We have tried to encourage members by providing them with the materials they need to be informed participants."

The position paper outlines five primary NTA issues:

National Park Service: The tourism industry views our national parks as a precious resource. NTA recognizes the responsibility of the National Park Service to protect the resource. NTA

percentage of all entry fees should be retained in all parks where collected, for: protection and preservation, development, operations, interpretation and acquisition.

National Park Service Access: Any limitation to national parks access should be established on a fair and

equitable basis among all forms of visitation and should not discriminate against groups or motor-coaches.

The National Park Service should view motorcoach transportation as a key element in resolving or controlling overcrowding and environmental issues.

Additional Access Infrastructure to Underutilized National Parks: To enhance visitation at underutilized parks and to decrease crowds at some of the more popular parks, it is in the National Park Service's best interests to implement marketing initiatives for promoting the unique qualities of the lesser known parks in conjunction with developing their infrastructure.

Unfair Competition: NTA's position on the issue of non-profits and unfair competition is straightforward and well established. Unfair competition as defined by NTA is when a tax-exempt organization sells goods and services on a frequent and ongoing basis, using its special privileges.

Travel and Tourism Taxation: In recent years, taxes on travel and tourism have increasingly become an excessive and disproportionate burden. NTA tour operators especially feel this burden because they are hit from all sides – not just from one industry-specific tax. Tour operators are faced with gasoline taxes, air and cruise taxes, hotel accom-