

NEW GRAND CANYON ATTRACTION CAUSES A STIR



The Grand Canyon is noted for its size and its amazing scenery. Now, there is a new talking point - the recently opened Skywalk, a \$40 million glass construction which provides a birds-eye view over the canyon. The new attraction offers visitors the chance to look down on the Colorado River from a height almost twice that of the world's tallest buildings and gives a 720° perspective of the area around. To ensure that visitors feel safe and secure, the observation bridge is secured by huge steel ramps built into the rock on the western side of the canyon so that it does not sway at all.

The Skywalk was opened in March and has been met with mixed reaction. One obvious plus point is that, unlike helicopter and light aircraft tours, the bridge cause absolutely no harm to the environment whatsoever. Furthermore, with the entrance fee having being set at \$75 per head, the revenue raised will be significant. In fact, although the construction was funded by a Las Vegas businessman, it was basically masterminded by the Coloradan Hualapai tribe, and as a result, their financial problems ought to be eased. The bridge is located within the Indian Territory of the canyon and not in the national park area.

On the negative side, the argument has been put forward that, along with the earlier proposed cable-car route across the canyon, the glass bridge detracts from the grandeur of one of the world's great natural wonders. Many are worried that the Grand Canyon could turn into a theme park, something nature lovers would hate to see. It has been suggested that one can enjoy the beauty of the canyon much more in the national park area and for much less money. However, like it or not, skywalking over the Grand Canyon is now an extremely popular activity in the State of Arizona.

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