

# TOURISM ONCE AGAIN GROWING IN LOS ANGELES



The tourism sector in Orange County and the entire Los Angeles is booming once again. This is after it took a beating during the world economic downturn that began in 2008.

Don Skeoch, who is the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board Chief Marketing Officer, said that it was a very miserable time for Los Angeles and the entire USA as tourism numbers began dipping in 2008 and got worse in 2009.

According to the statistics by the CIC, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 34.4 million tourists visited Los Angeles in 2009. This was a 2 million drop from 2008. But between 2011 and 2012, tourist numbers started recovering.

Skeoch said that they **expect a record 43.2 million visitors this year, an increase of one million from 2013.** By 2020, the entire L.A. area will be expecting 50 million visitors annually.

Lillian Sears, who owns a café, the Coffee Corner, said that the recession made her scared as she had had to lay off three employees. "Instead of making 50 to 75 pastries every day, we only made 12," she said.

Despite being hit by a severe recession, Disneyland in Orange County had an increase in visitor numbers. Mary Niven, Vice President of Disneyland, attributes this to people not taking vacations in distant and far away locations. "Staycation" was coined around 2009 to refer to this kind of vacations.

**Disneyland was able to push forward with the expansion of its California Adventure Theme Park, a billion dollar expansion which was hugely funded by the increased visits.** Niven further says that its workforce has grown - the park employs more than 26,000 people and is the largest single site employer in Orange County.

According to Skeoch, the only challenge with the expected increase in tourism numbers is finding enough hotel rooms to accommodate the visitors.

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