

RED CARPET TREATMENT FOR US FOREIGN VISITORS



numbers.

Tourism accounted for a \$107.9 billion input into the American economy in 2006. The importance of tourism in the United States is not only financial, yet is similarly vital to the general reputation of the country. Therefore, the Americans working within the tourism industry have taken it upon themselves to make a bigger effort to ensure the satisfaction of foreign visitors and increase their

Their first target has been established as the Chinese market, seen as being the most rapidly growing tourism sector on the planet. Each year, Chinese tourists account for around 300.000 of the US foreign visiting population. They spend an average annual sum of \$1.5 billion. Part of the problem for Chinese tourists is the stringent visa application process and the fact of it being an expensive affair for the majority of Chinese families. However, the Americans hope to tie up a loosened visa policy with the Chinese authorities in order to make the trip to the States a lot easier for Chinese people.

Work within the States has begun not only to attract more foreigners, yet also to make sure that existing tourists are as satisfied with their stay as possible. There are now 'red jacket' employees at most major US airports, who have been handed the task of welcoming foreign arrivers. They have been charged with a similar task as the greeters in large supermarket chains, the difference being that they also have the duty of providing information about transport and accommodation. The recently introduced 'just ask the locals' campaign has been trying to encourage foreign visitors to not feel intimidated in the US, especially when arriving in such a vast metropolis as is New York City. Local famous celebrities have been employed to take part in advertisements and promotions as the Americans step up their foreign tourist campaigns.

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