

ARIZONA EXPERIENCES A RISE IN TOURISM



Since the downturn in 2009, Arizona has experienced an increase in tourism despite bad press over immigration policies.

An Oregon-based company named Runyan Associates estimated tourist spending in Arizona in 2010 to have reached \$17.7 billion. This may not be any financial miracle compared to a number of states yet is an increase of 7.9% on the previous year.

After the economic horrors of 2009 when Americans joined the rest of the world in stopping spending money on luxury items such as travel, **Arizona has enjoyed welcoming tourists back, both from the US and abroad.** This year, hotel and motel rates have increased by 5%, as they get closer to pre-recession levels.

The trouble with measuring the exact success of Arizonian tourism in recent years is that it is almost impossible to measure the effect the state's immigration policies have had on tourism. Due to arguments with one side screaming xenophobia and the other side referring to national safety, many tourists didn't come to Arizona in protest, especially those of Mexican or Caribbean origin. The amount of those who voted with their feet and refused to come at all will probably never be known and is open to estimation only.

Sports events may add extra fuel to the Arizona tourism push, as major games and tournaments never fail to bring dollar-spending crowds. The Super Bowl XLIX is set to be hosted in the state in 2015 with the UOP Stadium to host the national American football championships. Such events do not only bring in crowds on the day, yet also provide a great advert for the hosting town or country.

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