



## International Recognition Shines on Travel South

ATLANTA, GA – December 14, 2017 / Travel South USA (TSUSA) was awarded Most Improved Overseas Destination Marketing Organization by the National Tourism Awards in China. This recognition is given to a travel marketing organization that has significantly improved its effort to engage with the Chinese tour operator, travel agent and traveler.

Currently in its thirteenth year, these awards are considered the most influential awards in China's travel trade industry. More than 1,500 voters from more than 100 institutions in the People's Republic of China participate in the selection of the nominations and winners, including China's National Tourism Administration.

The National Tourism Awards, organized by National Tourism Magazine, considered one of the most important news publications in China, were held in Shanghai in late November. East West Marketing Corporation, Travel South USA's representative firm in China, accepted the award on Travel South's behalf.

"With the growing volume and demand from the China tour market, the southern regions tourism offerings perfectly satisfy the Chinese consumers' desire for unique, authentic, local culture of the true American lifestyle," said Daniel Shen, chairman and founder, East West Marketing Corp. "The South is tomorrow's destination for Chinese travelers to the U.S."

"Travel South USA has made a concerted effort to engage with the Chinese visitor on many levels," mentioned Wit Tuttell, Director, Visit North Carolina and chairman of Travel South USA, the Atlanta-based organization that markets the southern U.S. as a regional destination for both domestic and international visitors. "We put more resources into our Chinese-language social media channels; held more engagements with Chinese tour operators; and increased our quantity and quality of our website content. Also, our partnership with Brand USA, an organization dedicated to marketing the United States as a travel destination, has been invaluable to helping to spread the word about the wealth of culture available in the south. The award of Most Improved Overseas Destination Marketing Organization only fuels our desire to increase visitation to our varied region. It is so nice to see the hard work we've poured into this market come into fruition."

Delta Air Lines aims to launch an Atlanta-Shanghai non-stop flight in July 2018 which will increase the economic imprint of the Chinese visitor on Atlanta, Georgia and the South.

China will soon be the largest overseas market in terms of spending, surpassing expenditures from the U.K., Germany and Japan. In 2016, spending in the 12-state TSUSA region by the Chinese market is valued at \$674 million annually by approximately 346,000 visitors.

Other recipients of National Tourism Awards this year include Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board, Choose Chicago, Thomas Cook, Air New Zealand, Hawaii Tourism Authority and Royal Caribbean International.

As the authority list of China's tourism industry, the "National Tourism Award" has become the benchmark for China's tourism industry for 13 years, particularly for the outbound travel industry. The publication of the Annual List of Travel Media aims to encourage and honor tourism-related agencies that have made pronounced achievements and contributions to the growth and development of China's tourism industry during the past year.

### About Travel South USA

Travel South USA is America's oldest and largest regional travel promotion organization, formed in 1965. The long-standing regional collaboration of the state tourism offices of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia provides a foundation to positively position tourism as a vital and dynamic element in the region's economic development. Tourism ranks throughout the region as one of the top three industries, behind manufacturing and agriculture, and is responsible for \$133 billion in spending by visitors, generating 1.4 million direct jobs, \$30 billion in worker paychecks, and almost \$16 billion in state and local taxes. Visit [TravelSouthUSA.com](http://TravelSouthUSA.com) for consumer information and travel industry information, [TravelSouthUSA.org](http://TravelSouthUSA.org).

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