



**GREATER BOSTON
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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International Visitation to Boston Continues to Grow as New Air Service Takes Off

BOSTON, MA (April 2, 2014): The Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau (GBCVB) is forecasting record growth in overseas visitors to Boston and Cambridge over the next three years. This growth will be fueled by robust Brand USA Marketing initiatives, increased promotional funds from the Massachusetts State Legislature, a unique GBCVB and Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT) international marketing partnership and an aggressive and successful campaign by the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) to attract new international airline service to Boston's Logan International Airport.

International air travel to and from Logan Airport has been showing signs of steady growth since 2010. In 2013, it handled 4,545,799 international passengers, a 3.7% increase over 2012, which saw a 9.8% increase over 2011. The airport offers service from 35 key European locations, Asia, the Middle East and several other markets around the world. Recent additions include non-stop service from Dubai on Emirates, with Turkish Airlines adding a non-stop flight from Istanbul in May. In June, the Chinese airline Hainan Airlines, will be offering the first non-stop service from Beijing to Boston.

The recent increases in international air service will help to further improve international visitor numbers and the GBCVB will continue to focus sales and marketing efforts on the MICE markets to support these new routes. For three of the last five years, Boston & Cambridge has been named the top destination in the United States for International Association Meetings by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA). The economic impact of these international meetings to the Boston and Cambridge economies is in excess of \$60 million. For the last two years, Boston has been named Best Destination for MICE North America by *Business Destinations UK* magazine, and in 2012, the GBCVB was named Best Convention Bureau in North America for The Annual MICE Report Awards.

"The international meetings coming to Boston these days are hitting the sweet spot of our brand," said Patrick B. Moscaritolo, President & CEO of the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Boston is a magnet for meetings related to education, medical and life sciences, which are the kinds of industries that contribute to our local economy. The wealth of colleges and medical schools that we have here are huge resources for these meetings. And now it's easier than ever for international visitors to get here."

The GBCVB is launching a broad China initiative to help increase numbers from this important market. Inbound numbers from China to Boston have grown from 60,000 visitors in 2010 to 147,000 visitors in 2013. Additionally, Chinese market also represents 28% of the 46,000 plus international students attending college in the area.

This Boston CVB's China initiative includes a "be China ready" element, that is helping to educate GBCVB members on the market, as well as attendance at sales missions and events targeting Chinese tour operators, hosting familiarization trips, participating with MOTT in Brand USA's China initiative, launching targeted advertising in key publications and creating a board working committee on marketing to China, chaired by Sheraton Boston General Manager, Angela Vento. Committee members include representatives from the Cambridge Office for Tourism, MOTT, Harvard University, Mayor's Office of Arts, Tourism & Special Events, Legal Seafoods and other GBCVB companies. In addition, the GBCVB will be adding a dedicated Chinese specialist to the sales and marketing team to focus on growth from the Chinese market.

"We've seen a lot of encouraging signs that we're moving in the right direction," said Patrick B. Moscaritolo, President & CEO of the GBCVB. "Going forward, I expect Boston to build on its reputation as a great destination for all kinds of international travelers and to expand its presence in the minds of travelers from Asia, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and the rest of the world."

If there's one thing that's certain, it is that Boston's international business is growing stronger by the day and this growth is largely driven by the rapidly increasing international flights to Logan. For more information, go to <http://www.bostonusa.com>.