

A graphic of five yellow stars of varying sizes arranged in an arc, reminiscent of the flag of the People's Republic of China. The largest star is on the left, and four smaller stars are to its right, curving upwards and then downwards.

# **China Friendly**

## **Seminar & Workshop**

December 9, 2016  
Sheraton Boston Hotel

## **Opening Remarks**

**Patrick Moscaritolo, President & CEO**  
**Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau**

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## Opening Remarks

I would like to share a few thoughts with you about today's workshop and summarize what we at the Bureau have been doing with Francois Nivaud and our partners at MOTT and Brand USA to drive Chinese visitors to Boston, the region, and Massachusetts. Bottom line – today is all about what we as an industry need to do to take care of and serve our Chinese visitors. We have gone from 105,000 visitors in 2013 from China to a record number of 208,000 in 2015. That's a 98% growth in 3 years. Even more impressive is our track record over 9 years as we have gone from 31,000 Chinese visitors to 208,000; that's a 570% growth!

Now it's important to understand that this extraordinary growth didn't happen by accident. There are a number of factors driving it including: Massport's success in attracting nonstop service from China; the GBCVB and its partners such as MOTT & BrandUSA launching coordinated marketing initiatives; we have also seen remarkable growth in Chinese students at our colleges and universities; and the new 10-year visa policies that went into effect in 2014 for Chinese citizens looking to come to the US, which has clearly made it easier to travel to the US.

- In 2013, in response to rapid growth in Chinese visitation and to prepare for Hainan Airlines' direct service from Beijing, we formed a China-Friendly Marketing Committee under Angela Vento's leadership comprised of our member retailers, hotels, attractions and restaurants. Our committee also includes the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism; the Mayor's Office of Tourism, Sports and Entertainment; and we've also worked closely with Attract China.
- Since 2012 the Bureau has been attending tradeshows like Active America China to meet with Chinese tour operators to generate business and hotel bookings for our members. We regularly meet with more than 35 Chinese buyers at IPW to generate business for our members.
- We have also developed brochures, guides, and videos in Mandarin, as well as launched a Chinese website.

- We have a Weibo account which we use to run marketing campaigns connecting our members with the thousands of Chinese students in Boston and Cambridge. As a result, we have doubled our Weibo following over the past year.
- Boston is one of only 5 US cities to be accepted as a member in the Beijing based World Tourism City Federation.
- We produced 4 Mandarin destination videos in partnership with BrandUSA and here's a 30 second clip.

Now I'm sure you are all asking: So where do we go from here? The answer is that today the Bureau is launching a five-year plan and a goal of attracting 500,000 Chinese visitors to Boston by 2021.

Can we reach or exceed that goal? I think there's only one factor that could limit us or cause us to fall short of that target. What is that factor? Quite simply, it's whether we can deliver on the Boston and Massachusetts brand promise and provide Chinese visitors with top notch customer services and experiences during their stay. And here's why this is really so important – all our data shows that the number one information source for prospective Chinese travelers to Boston is personal recommendations from friends and family and reviews on social media. So today's visitors from China to Boston can be future salespeople for Boston. Bottom line is Boston can see more visitors and future bookings from China by simply taking extraordinary care of today's visitors from China. Here's another way to think about this: Potentially the 208,000 Chinese visitors we saw in 2015 can become future salespeople for Boston by telling their friends and colleagues what a terrific destination Boston is and what a great experience they had in Boston.

So that's what today is about. It's about starting on the journey to work together to create a comprehensive program that will turn Chinese visitors into a new sales force for Boston. Starting today, with the release of our China-Friendly Marketing Guide, we will be launching future initiatives with our partners including additional workshops and a Bureau Sales Mission to China in March 2017 with our member companies.