Tourism *is* Economic Development

Linda DiMario
Vice President, Economic Development & Tourism
Irvine Chamber of Commerce, Irvine, CA.
Las Vegas Gets It!
What’s it take to “get it”? 

- Don’t assume. 
- See tourism through the prism of economic development. 
- Think and talk about tourism as an economic driver.
Rule #1

DON’T ASSUME.
Don’t assume.

• That people KNOW what tourism is.
KNOW what tourism is.

- Anyone visiting from more than 50 miles outside city limits.
  - Shoppers
  - Entertainment seekers
  - Business people
  - Vacationers/Weekend getaways
  - Convention/meeting attendees
  - Incentive winners
  - Sports events/tournaments
  - Medical/Education/International
Don’t assume.

• That people KNOW that tourism reflects many sectors.
Learn the sectors.

- Transportation
- Hotels/Motels/B&Bs
- Rentals/Rent by Owner
- Meeting Places/Convention Centers
- Attractions – Natural/Man-made
- Entertainment
- Retail Centers
- Restaurants
- Support Services
Don’t assume.

• That people KNOW that tourism is part of your economic eco-system.
Learn about your tourism drivers.

• What attracts out-of-town visitors to your area?
  • Cheyenne Bottoms
  • Corvette Museum
  • South by Southwest
  • Civil War battlefields
  • Ocean, lake, mountains, desert, river
  • Six Flags
  • Seasons
  • Super Bowl
  • South Coast Plaza
  • Sports
Rule #2

SEE TOURISM THROUGH THE PRISM OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.
See tourism through the prism of economic development.

• If you don’t, who will?
  • You are the architect of your economic development.
  • You are the trusted source.
  • You are the champion.
See tourism through the prism of economic development.

- Tourism serves a valuable role in economic development.
  - It is a catalyst.
  - It is a demand solution.
  - It is essential to site selection.
Rule #3

THINK AND TALK ABOUT TOURISM AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER.
It’s math.

• 1 + 1 = 2
• Thriving weekday hotel occupancy + thriving businesses = $$$
• Strong corporate meeting business + thriving businesses = $$$
• Hotels + destination marketing = incremental visitors
It’s good business.

• Successful business attraction work = more overnight business travel
• Effective business retention work = more overnight business travel
• International outreach/FDI = more visits and investment
It's real.

• Express tourism in real terms: $$$
  • Day visitor spending
  • Direct overnight spending
  • Economic impact
  • Jobs
  • Brand
It’s got roots and branches.

- Who supplies the food and beverage?
- Who cleans the hotel pools, spas and hot tubs?
- Who insures the tourism businesses?
- Who provides the appliances, linen, furniture, software, flowers, paper goods?
- What utilities do they depend upon?
- Who provides building and equipment maintenance?
Final thoughts...

• Everyone has tourism in their community!
• Towns, cities, rural, suburban – everyone is a destination for someone.
• It is either a driver in the economy or part of an economic development eco-system.