

NEWS



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A Buck A Stay, Franchise Fees Raise Millions for National Parks

Washington, DC (February 14, 2013) - Guest donations of just one dollar a stay at America's iconic national park lodges and other overnight facilities generated nearly \$1 million in 2012 for priority park programs and projects, according to the companies operating these accommodations. And these same companies also added nearly \$100 million to the budget of the National Park Service (NPS) through franchise fees and other payments in 2012.

These revenues are especially important as the NPS contemplates ways to continue to protect the natural, cultural and historic assets of nearly 400 special places across the nation and provide quality, memorable experiences for those making nearly 300 million visits to those sites. NPS efforts are hampered by budgets that have been essentially flat for four years and now face actual reductions in the face of efforts by the Administration and the Congress to reduce federal deficits. Each park has now developed a plan for cutting spending by 5% this year, and those cuts are likely to impact visitor services in the summer of 2013.

"The American public strongly supports continued federal appropriations for our national parks. Our survey of the public in June 2012 proved that this support is bipartisan and cuts across all demographic groupings of Americans," said Derrick Crandall, Counselor for the National Park Hospitality Association. "We believe that we can help convert this support into sustainable, supplementary resources at work in our parks by making it easy for park visitors to make contributions and by providing services that they want during their stays which generate additional payments to the NPS by concessioners."

According to Crandall, an expanded Guest Donation Program that reaches park visitors as they buy food and transportation services can help to increase donations to a goal of \$10 million annually by 2016. And changes in existing concessioner operations in the parks, such as longer hours at the Statue of Liberty and increased non-peak visitation, can significantly boost franchise and other fees which are directly available to park operations.

Guest Donation Program and concessioner operations changes will be among the topics discussed at an important session hosted by NPHA, the Bipartisan Policy Center and the National Parks Conservation Association on March 19 in Washington, a Bridgebuilder Session to consider Sustainable and Supplementary Funding for America's National Parks. The program will include a remarkable group of American political and business community leaders, including: Hon. Dan Glickman; Hon. Dirk Kempthorne; Hon. Jim Oberstar; Hon. Rodney Slater (tentative); Jeremy Jacobs, Jr., Principal, Delaware North Companies; Hon. Christie Todd Whitman; Hon. Lynn Scarlett; Gary Kiedaisch, Chairman, Igloo; Geoff Garin, President, Peter Hart Research Associates; and Whit Ayres, President, North Star Opinion Research.

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For details on current Guest Donation Program contributions on a park-by-park basis, see <http://parkpartners.org/NPHA-Guest-Donations.html>. For information on the March 19 Bridgebuilder session, see <http://parkpartners.org/Bridgebuilder-Sustainable-Funding-for-Parks.html>.

The National Park Hospitality Association (NPHA) is the national trade association of the businesses that provide lodging, food services, gifts and souvenirs, equipment rentals, transportation and other visitor services in the National Park System. Concessioners have played an important role in creating lasting national park memories for more than 125 years. Concessioners operate in more than 100 national park units with combined sales exceeding \$1 billion annually and \$70 million+ in franchise fees paid to the National Park Service. The in-park concessioner workforce of some 25,000 persons assists visitors an estimated 100 million times annually.

Information on national park concessioners is at www.parkpartners.org.

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