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INTERNATIONAL VISITORS LEAD TORONTO TO NEW TOURISM RECORDS

TORONTO (February 25, 2014) – Toronto’s tourism sector reached new records in 2013 by welcoming the highest number of overseas visitors and selling the most hotel room nights ever, Tourism Toronto announced today. Additionally, for the third year in a row Toronto saw an increase in overnight visitors from the U.S.

Tourism Toronto’s estimates for 2013 show that Toronto welcomed a total of 13.69 million* overnight visitors led by growth in international visitor arrivals. The 1.42 million visitors who arrived from overseas markets (all countries other than Canada and the U.S.) was the highest figure ever. A further 2.18 million Americans arrived in the destination for an overnight stay, marking a third straight year of growth from the vital U.S. market. The record number of hotel room nights sold was 9.22 million, up 2.8 per cent over 2012, and translated to 69.3 per cent hotel occupancy in 2013.

“The momentum of the past several years and continued repositioning of our product has propelled Toronto to another strong year,” said David Whitaker, President and CEO of Tourism Toronto. “Our growth strategy focuses on high-value visitors from major U.S. cities and key overseas markets such as the U.K., Germany, China, Japan and Brazil.”

While visitors from other parts of Canada remain the largest market for tourism in Toronto, international visitors tend to stay longer and spend more while here.

“In 2013, overseas visitors stayed in paid accommodations an average of 4.5 nights per trip,” said Terry Mundell, President of the Greater Toronto Hotel Association. “That represents over 1 billion in spending in the destination, and is a significant contributor to jobs throughout the region.”

Total visitor spending, including same-day trips, was \$6.54 billion in the Toronto region across a range of businesses and activities including accommodations, attractions, restaurants, taxis, retail and entertainment. The tourism and hospitality sector employs 315,000 people across the Toronto region in a wide range of businesses that rely on inbound tourism.

The U.K. remains Toronto’s largest overseas visitor market with 201,000 arrivals in 2013. China leads the new growth, increasing 15 per cent last year and 58 per cent since 2010, accounting for 181,000 visitors to the Toronto region in 2013.

Tourism Toronto estimates show that in 2013, Toronto saw a 1.7 per cent increase in overnight visitors from the U.S. over 2012 and a 9.7 per cent increase over 2010. In addition, the U.S. traveller profile continues to shift toward high-value urban dwellers that are likely to fly to Toronto, stay longer and spend more. Americans who flew to Toronto accounted for 61 per cent of total U.S. visitors in 2013, up from 51 per cent in 2009.

Toronto is the most-visited destination in Canada by fellow Canadians with 10.09 million overnight visits (and a further 25 million same-day visits) in 2013. These visits generated spending of \$2.31 billion in the destination.

Conventions and events

Conventions, meetings and events continue to provide solid, long-term business for the region. In 2013, Tourism Toronto and its partners booked 745 future meetings and conventions that will bring 406,000 attendees to Toronto, Mississauga and Brampton and generate 593,000 future hotel room nights. Of these meetings booked in 2013, 15 are considered "major meetings" with more than 1,100 attendees at multiple hotels and whose meetings will be based at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Some of the major wins for Toronto in 2013 for future years were the Canadian Federation for the Humanities & Social Sciences in 2017 (9,000 attendees), Alzheimer's Association in 2016 (6,000) and ACN in 2014 (2,000). Toronto also won the opportunity to host one of the most sought-after sporting events with the NBA All-Star Game choosing Toronto for 2016.

In 2013, Toronto hosted several significant events including the National Medical Association (6,500 attendance), Little Native Hockey League (6,000) and the Barbershop Harmony Society (11,000).

"Having prestigious, international events choose Toronto is a boost to our reputation as a major event destination," said David Whitaker. "The momentum of major events continues as we welcome World Pride this summer and the Pan Am / Parapan Am Games in 2015."

About Tourism Toronto

Tourism Toronto, Toronto's Convention and Visitors Association, is an industry association of more than 1,100 members established to sell and market the greater Toronto region as a remarkable destination for tourists, convention delegates and business travellers around the globe. Tourism Toronto operates in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the Greater Toronto Hotel Association. For more information please visit www.seetorontonow.com.

***Notes regarding statistics:** A recent methodological change by Statistics Canada has resulted in revised figures for domestic travellers that are not comparable with visitor estimates previously published by Tourism Toronto. All figures contained in this release should be cited to Tourism Toronto.

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