



Syracuse Convention & Visitors Bureau
A Division of the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce
572 South Salina Street, Syracuse, NY 13202
(315) 470-1910 • Fax: (315) 471-8545
www.VisitSyracuse.org

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Contact: Danica Bryant
Syracuse Convention & Visitors Bureau
315 470 1903
DBryant@VisitSyracuse.org
VisitSyracuse.org/READY

SYRACUSE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU RELEASES 2008 DESTINATION IMAGE MARKETING CAMPAIGN ROI RESULTS

Research Findings Show 2008 Campaign Was a Success

Onondaga County Executive pleased with results - Campaign more than paid for itself in the tax revenues generated for the treasuries that help support the Bureau's efforts

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK, February 6, 2009— Today, the Syracuse Convention & Visitors Bureau (SCVB) released the results of the **Syracuse Advertising Return on Investment (ROI) and Image Study** conducted by an international research firm. The results measure the effectiveness of the SCVB's 2008 integrated destination image marketing campaign aimed at bringing visitors to Syracuse during the campaign period, and increasing intentions to visit the region in the future.

Beginning in March 2008, the SCVB invested approximately \$357,000 into a variety of targeted marketing, advertising, and public relations initiatives in Ottawa, ON; Scranton/Wilkes-Barres, PA; and Albany, NY, in an attempt to build image awareness of Syracuse as a destination for business and leisure travelers alike.

To determine if the financial investment was beneficial to Onondaga County, the SCVB hired one of the top research firms in the tourism business to evaluate the destination marketing campaign's return on investment.

"We chose Longwoods International to conduct the return on investment study due to the firm's reputation for its conservative estimates, reliable methodologies and strategic insights," said SCVB President, David Holder.

According to Longwoods International, based out of Toronto, Ontario, the SCVB's overall campaign was extremely effective for a first-year image building campaign.

Michael Erdman, Longwoods International senior vice president, presented the findings of the SCVB's return on investment study as an independent perspective at today's Tourism Legislative Reception held at the Sheraton Syracuse University Hotel & Conference Center.

"The Syracuse CVB's marketing program produced positive return on investment in both travel spending (\$11.67 in new visitor spending for each ad dollar invested) and tax dollars generated (\$1.36 made in new tax revenues per ad dollar invested)," said Erdman. "The campaign clearly created positive shifts in most image and awareness factors measured and made major strides in pushing key motivator items."

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The ROI study showed that the variety of advertisements used by the SCVB had a very favorable impact on people's impressions of Syracuse in almost every single specific area measured. Some of the areas that had the strongest improvements were also areas that are most critical to driving destination interest. Those categories include: excitement, suitability for families and adults, an abundance of things to see and do, popularity, and a worry-free atmosphere.

"We here in Onondaga County know how much we have to offer in terms of quality of life, recreation and excellent attractions," said Onondaga County Executive, Joanie Mahoney. "I applaud the SCVB for making other communities aware of this as well. Congratulations on the good news that the campaign has been effective. We will see the results of this investment long into the future."

According to Longwoods International, the campaign also had an extremely positive effect on planned travel to Syracuse. Ad exposure almost tripled intent to visit Syracuse from 22% among those who recalled no advertising to 64% among those who were exposed to the ad. Results showed that visitors' plans to visit Syracuse are mostly short term, with 71% of trips planned for the immediate future and most of the remainder planned for the 2009 spring and summer seasons.

As a direct result of the marketing campaign, 36,000 additional trips were taken to Syracuse that otherwise wouldn't have occurred.

"When we apply per capita spending amounts to the number of trips generated by the advertising, we estimate that the 2008 campaign created \$4,200,000 in additional visitor spending, which in turn generated \$485,000 in incremental taxes (sales and hotel taxes) paid by those visitors," said Holder.

Taking into account the amount of money spent on advertising in 2008, this translates into \$11.67 in incremental visitor spending for each ad dollar spent, and \$1.36 in tax revenues per ad dollar.

"The campaign more than paid for itself in the tax revenues generated for the treasuries that help support the Bureau's efforts," said Erdman.

"The results are good and certainly confirm what many of us felt deep in our hearts," said Holder. "Our story here in this area is a great one, but not enough people are telling it!"

With 2009 well underway, the SCVB plans to continue to actively pursue the same three target markets to build image awareness and drive visitation to Syracuse. The research shows that the campaign was successful, but leaves much room for continued saturation in all three target markets.

Details on the study can be found at VisitSyracuse.org/READY.

For more information, contact Communications Manager, Danica Bryant at 315-470-1903.

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About the Syracuse Convention & Visitors Bureau

The mission of the Syracuse Convention & Visitors Bureau is to strengthen the positive awareness of the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County as a convention and visitor destination, to increase revenues and stimulate economic development and growth for the community. For more information, visit www.VisitSyracuse.org.