



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Comprehensive Travel and Tourism Study of Gays and Lesbians Highlights Leisure Travel Insights

New national survey by Harris Interactive, Travel Industry Association, and Witeck-Combs Communications also includes consumer rankings on gay-friendly destinations

WASHINGTON, D.C. – December 6, 2006 – Nearly half of all gay men (48%) and lesbians (47%) surveyed in the U.S. say that a destination's gay-friendliness is important to them when making leisure travel choices. In fact, over one-quarter of gay men (27%) and lesbians (28%) say gay-friendliness is "extremely" or "very important" as a consideration in travel planning, according to a new national survey conducted by the Travel Industry Association (TIA) in partnership with Harris Interactive® and Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc. and released today at a news conference held in Washington, D.C.'s National Press Club.

"While we've known the importance of the GLBT travel market for some time, this study really underscores the tremendous economic potential of the market to the travel industry," said Laura Mandala, Vice President of Research for TIA. "This data will be invaluable as the industry increases its efforts to reach out to this historically underserved travel segment."

In addition, majorities of gay men (53%) and lesbians (69%) report that a place generally identified as safe and free from intimidation and threats – especially places "where they can hold their partner's hand in public" – is one of the top three ways they consider a destination as gay-friendly. Bob Witeck, CEO of Witeck-Combs Communications said, "Gay-friendliness is frequently mentioned as a litmus test for how GLBT travelers and consumers favor destinations, travel brands and services. We find they are not looking for special treatment, but, instead expecting consideration and equal respect given all customers."

Four out of ten gay men (40%) and lesbians (40%) also recognize a gay-friendly environment if the city or community "is known to be culturally welcoming and to support diversity and GLBT civil rights." Positive word of mouth is a key consideration for both gays and lesbians, and gay men (33%) and lesbians (18%) also cite "gay nightlife, gay clubs and bars" as one of their top three considerations for gay friendliness.

These are a few of the key highlights from the national survey commissioned by the Travel Industry Association in September. The online study was conducted in conjunction with Harris Interactive, a global leader in market research, along with the leading gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) strategic marketing and communications agency, Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc. This study is

considered first-of-its-kind because it closely examines the activities and preferences of GLBT travelers in contrast with heterosexual travelers.

The national online survey was conducted among 2,020 self-identified U.S. GLBT adult travelers (ages 21 and older) who have taken at least one leisure trip within the past 12 months and among 1,010 U.S. adults who self-identified as heterosexual and who also have taken at least one leisure trip in the past year. Both the GLBT and Heterosexual adults were randomly invited from among the overall Harris Interactive multimillion member online panel of respondents to participate in the survey.

Harris Interactive Vice President of Travel and Tourism Research Jim Quilty commented, "Contrasting GLBT activities and preferences with those of heterosexual travelers highlights marketing opportunities for destinations and companies who offer products and services to the GLBT community."

The GLBT respondents also were invited to state, from among given choices which U.S. and Canadian destinations, in their opinion, are gay-friendly.

The top 21 gay-friendly U.S. destinations named by the panelists (in order) include: San Francisco, CA (76%), Key West, FL (57%), New York, NY (51%), Fire Island, NY (48%), Provincetown, MA (46%), Los Angeles, CA (38%), Miami/South Beach, FL (37%), Las Vegas, NV (35%), New Orleans, LA (34%), Palm Springs/Palm Desert, CA (33%), Boston, MA (29%), Chicago, IL (29%), Fort Lauderdale/Wilton Manors, FL (29%), San Diego, CA (29%), Seattle/Bellevue, WA (27%), Washington, DC (23%), Honolulu, HI (22%), Palm Beach/West Palm/Boca Raton, FL (20%), Portland, OR (18%), Philadelphia, PA (17%), and Providence, RI (17%) and Rehoboth Beach, DE (17%) tied for twenty-first.

The top 10 gay-friendly Canadian destinations named by the U.S. respondents in the survey include: Montreal, QC (44%), Toronto, ON (39%), Vancouver, BC (38%), Quebec City, QB (20%), Victoria, BC (16%), Niagara Falls, ON (15%), Ottawa, ON (12%), Calgary, AB (9%), Halifax, NS (6%) and Prince Edward Island (6%).

The new study also disclosed that gay men, whether traveling alone or in groups, tend to spend more on trips than lesbians and heterosexuals, as well as for air fare and car rentals. On their most recent trip, traveling alone, gay men on average reported that they spent nearly a third more on their total trip expenses (\$800 on average) than did heterosexuals traveling alone (\$540 on average). When gay men reported their last trip traveling as a group, the average spending of their entire party was \$3,070, which was more than reported by heterosexual groups (\$2,870) or lesbians traveling together (\$2,740).

In addition to the lead partners, this comprehensive research also was sponsored in part by the Albuquerque Convention & Visitors Bureau, American Association of Nude Recreation, Atlanta

Convention and Visitors Bureau, Expedia.com, Florida Keys & Key West (Monroe County Tourist Development Council), Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation, Harrah's, Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority, LA Inc., The LA Convention and Visitors Bureau, Logo, New Orleans Tourism Marketing Group, VISIT FLORIDA and Washington Convention and Visitors Bureau.

For information on purchasing the survey, interested parties should contact Valerie Hutchinson, TIA, 202-218-3630 or vhutchinson@tia.org.

About the Survey

Harris Interactive® conducted the national online survey within the United States between September 12 and 21 2006. The survey was conducted among 2,020 self-identified U.S. GLBT adult travelers (ages 21 and older) who have taken at least one leisure trip within the past 12 months. In addition, another 1,010 U.S. heterosexual adult travelers (ages 21 and older) were surveyed. Both populations were drawn from the Harris Interactive multimillion member panel of online respondents.

Both a nationally stratified random sample and a GLBT over sample were drawn. The random sample was first weighted for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region, and income to be nationally projectable. It was also used to develop a profile of the GLBT population that was used to weight the GLBT over sample to be nationally projectable. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

With pure probability samples, with 100 percent response rates, it is possible to calculate the probability that the sampling error (but not other sources of error) is not greater than some number. With a pure probability sample of 3,030 one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the overall results would have a sampling error of +/-2 percentage points. Sampling error for the sub-sample of 2,020 GLBT adults would be +/-2 percentage points, and for the sub-sample of 1,010 Heterosexuals would be +/-3 percentage points. Sampling error for results from sub-samples would be higher and would vary. However that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

About Travel Industry Association

TIA (www.TIA.org) is the national, non-profit organization representing all sectors of the \$703 billion travel industry. TIA's mission is to promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the United States. TIA is a highly respected leader in domestic travel economic and marketing research, providing the aggregate statistical dimension that gives the industry meaning and impact among policy makers in government, business, education and the news media. TIA's research measures the economic significance of the travel and tourism industry at national, state, and local levels; defines the size, characteristics, and growth of existing and emerging travel markets; and provides qualitative trend analysis and quantitative forecasts of future travel activity and its impact.

About Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc.

Witeck-Combs Communications, Inc. (www.witeckcombs.com) is the nation's premier strategic marketing communications firm, specializing in reaching the gay and lesbian consumer market. Bob Witeck and Wes Combs' new book, *Business Inside Out*, (Kaplan 2006), offers unique fourteen years' corporate insights about gay and lesbian consumers and the business lessons learned to reach this marketplace. In April 2003, American Demographics magazine identified Bob Witeck and Wes Combs as two of 25

experts over the last 25 years who have made significant contributions to the fields of demographics, market research, media and trend-spotting for their path-breaking work.

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is the 12th largest and fastest-growing market research firm in the world. The company provides research-driven insights and strategic advice to help its clients make more confident decisions which lead to measurable and enduring improvements in performance. Harris Interactive is widely known for *The Harris Poll*, one of the longest running, independent opinion polls and for pioneering online market research methods. The company has built what it believes to be the world's largest panel of survey respondents, the Harris Poll Online. Harris Interactive serves clients worldwide through its United States, Europe and Asia offices, its wholly-owned subsidiary Novatris in France and through a global network of independent market research firms. The service bureau, HISB, provides its market research industry clients with mixed-mode data collection, panel development services as well as syndicated and tracking research consultation. More information about Harris Interactive may be obtained at www.harrisinteractive.com.

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