

Nevada tourism officials map future; including 2022 Tahoe Olympics

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

Tourism is a complex machine and its numerous cogs – federal policymakers, state government leaders, convention and visitors bureaus, industry strategists and the airport – came together Wednesday to map out how they can team to lead Nevada out of its economic doldrums.

Several shareholders hold key individual pieces and shared their plans in presentations to about 300 people attending the 1 1/2-day Governor's Conference on Tourism that ended Wednesday at the Rio.

Among the plans:

- A definitive effort to attract the 2022 Winter Olympic Games to Northern Nevada. The state will team with California in 2013 to convince the U.S. Olympic Committee that the Lake Tahoe area would be the best place to host the games.
- The June 28 opening of a new 14-gate terminal at McCarran International Airport that will provide a new home for international flight arrivals and long-haul domestic flights.
- A new call to set aside regional rivalries and political differences to unite behind a strategy to use tourism to help diversify the state's economy.
- An effort to refurbish the Las Vegas Convention Center to bolster the city's grip on its place as the top convention and meetings destination in the country. Next year, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority will resurrect a makeover plan that was shelved when the recession hit.

- A single brand strategy to attract tourists to a diverse state that includes wide-open rural landscapes as well as entertainment and casinos, due for delivery in late May.
- Brand USA, the nation's first international marketing program, which will deliver its first ads to attract foreign tourists to the United States next year.

"The sessions have been super," said Claudia Vecchio, new director of the state's Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs. "It's great that we can have this much expertise together at one place."

Experts from near and far offered presentations on their roles to energize the industry.

Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki told attendees to put Friday, Feb. 11, 2022, at 7pm on their calendars – the lighting of the Olympic torch for the start of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Northern Nevada.

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