



## **Destiny USA concludes 2018 with increased tourism results**

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Syracuse, NY Destiny USA, one of the states's largest shopping, dining, and entertainment destinations, visited by 26 million guests annually, ended the year with another gain in group travel visitation. With an 8% increase in motorcoach arrivals over the prior year, the travel destination continues to draw tourists from all over the world. Passenger counts increased as well, with an increase of 9% in ridership over 2017's numbers. International guests came from 30 countries, spanning five continents, experiencing Destiny USA.

"Our worldwide marketing efforts continue to produce a great return on investment," said Rose Hapanowich, director of Travel and Tourism.

The property hosted, in all, travelers from 30 additional countries beyond the USA throughout 2018. They included Australia, Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, mainland China, Dominican Republic, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Suriname, Taiwan and Thailand.

Since the rebranding of Destiny USA in 2012, significant resources have been dedicated to promote the property through both domestic and international trade show outreach to create awareness of the product. Results continue to be impressive, bringing substantial additional spending into the Central New York area. Throughout the year representatives of Destiny USA attended numerous trade shows, sales missions, summits and conferences with the goal of strengthening relationships with established colleagues and introducing the product and area to new operators throughout the world with the goal of encouraging future visitation from both emerging and mature markets.

"More and more tour operators are recognizing the power of all that Destiny USA has to offer, combined with our accessible location, and are utilizing us as both a destination and an important segment of their Northeastern itineraries," said Hapanowich.

Destiny USA added 16 new tenants to the property throughout 2018, diversifying its offerings to attract new visitors while keeping it fresh for returning guests. The addition of an on-site hotel Embassy Suites by Hilton at Destiny USA in late 2017, which offers exclusive special deals at Destiny USA for overnight guests along with package delivery service to the hotel has been well received. Since opening, the hotel has hosted guests from all 50 states and several countries. In addition to attracting group travelers, families and business people, Embassy Suites also serves as the official hotel of Syracuse Athletics and the Syracuse Mets.

“Our group travel guests appreciate the convenience of upstate New York’s best shopping, dining and entertainment at Destiny USA being just steps away from the hotel,” said Josh Morey, general manager of Embassy Suites. “They definitely take advantage of the savings benefit presented by the Destiny USA Shop & Save Pass they receive upon check-in and enjoy the freedom from the burden of carrying multiple packages from the Shop & Drop purchase delivery service.”

The I Love New York Central New York Welcome Center inside of Destiny USA was added in late 2017. It has proven to be a hit with both domestic and international travelers; offering Destiny USA guests the opportunity to learn more about the surrounding area and even purchase locally produced foods and gifts from its Taste New York shop. It is managed by Visit Syracuse and is New York State’s only welcome center located within an enclosed multi-use attraction (the others are stand-alone facilities).

“We applaud the Destiny USA team on their efforts to continue to attract new visitors to the region,” said Danny Liedka, president of Visit Syracuse. “We have a common goal to increase visitation to our destination and these numbers show that they are great tourism partners as well as assets to the community we live in.”

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