Pennsylvania Tourism Trends
2012 Travel Year

PA Travel Industry Sees Record Levels in 2012
Leisure travel drove much of the increase in travel demand in 2012 at both the state and national levels. According to data from Smith Travel Research, Inc., Pennsylvania’s weekend hotel occupancy rate — a strong surrogate for leisure travel — rose by 4.5% compared to 2.7% for weekday occupancy (generally considered to reflect business travel). Nationally, the U.S. average for weekend hotel occupancy was up 3.7% compared to 2.1% for the weekday average.

Travel Industry By the Numbers
Pennsylvania’s 2012 results include the following direct travel indicators:

- More than 29.1 million hotel rooms sold — a new record high.
- Hotel occupancy averaged 61.5% — down slightly (from 61.7% 2011) as the 1.5% growth in room supply outpaced the 1.1% increase in room demand.
- Total hotel room revenues were up 4.7%, surpassing $3 billion for the first time ever.
- Domestic arrivals at Philadelphia International Airport were down for the fifth straight year (-2.1% in 2012), while international air arrivals reached a new record high.
- Welcome Center staff assisted 3.4 million travelers — a 24% increase from 2011 due in part to the reopening of two centers that had been closed for renovations.

Indirect indicators of Pennsylvania’s travel and tourism industry 2012 include the following:

- The number of unique visitors to visitPA.com, the state’s official tourism website, rose 41% to nearly 1.8 million in 2012.
- Employment in the state’s leisure & hospitality industry rose 2.1% in 2012 to a record high of 521,100 jobs.

Half of Pennsylvania’s major travel and tourism industry indicators showed increases from 2011.
PA 2012 Hotel Room Demand and Revenues At Record High

After several years of well-above-average increases, Pennsylvania’s hotel industry experienced a more sustainable rate of growth in 2012 following two years of exceptionally strong growth as the industry was rebounding from the recession’s steep downturn.

Strong Growth in Pennsylvania Welcome Center Traffic

Pennsylvania’s Welcome Center staff assisted more than 3.4 million travelers in 2012 — a 24% increase from 2011 and the highest level since 2006. Every center, with the exception of Susquehanna and York, experienced an increase in 2012.

Welcome Center staff placed nearly 7,600 hotel reservations worth more than $712,150 in 2012 — a 1% increase in the number of reservations and 3% increase in the total dollar value of reservations placed compared to 2011.

Domestic and International Passenger Air Arrivals

Pennsylvania welcomed 19.1 million domestic and international airline passengers at the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh International airports (the state’s two largest airports) in 2012.

**PHILADELPHIA International Airport**

12.9 million domestic passenger arrivals (2.1% ↓ from 2011)

**PITTSBURGH International Airport**

below 4 million domestic passenger arrivals (2.6% ↑ from 2011)

69.7 thousand domestic passenger arrivals (11% ↓ from 2011)
visitPA.com Hosts 1.8 million Visitors
Recognizing the internet is the dominant source for travel inspiration, research and planning, the Pennsylvania Tourism Office continues to devote the majority of its marketing resources to online media. The office promoted Pennsylvania on WeatherBug.com in 2012 and maintained a strong presence on several social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare and YouTube and established a presence on Pinterest for the first time.

• visitPA.com hosted close to 1.8 million unique visitors in 2012 — a 41% increase from 2011 — who viewed a total of 5.93 million pages (+17%).

800-VISIT-PA Call Volume Continues Downward Slide
The total number of calls to 800-VISIT-PA fell 30% to 5,720 in 2012. With the widespread adoption of smartphones, tablets and mobile technology, and the use of computers for travel planning, a steadily decreasing number of travelers are relying on the state’s toll-free tourism number for travel information.

• Pennsylvania’s Keystone Concierges (i.e. call center operators) responded to 2,780 inquiry calls in 2012 — a 37% decline from 2012.

Travel Industry Leading Job Recovery
The total number of leisure and hospitality jobs in Pennsylvania rose to a new, record-high 521,100 jobs in 2012, with a 2.1% growth rate that was three times the 0.7% increase in the state’s total of non-farm jobs. (It should be noted leisure and hospitality jobs are due to the spending of both travelers and local residents.)
Overview of U.S. Travel Trends

The U.S. travel and tourism industry continued its strong rebound from the 2008-2009 recession. For the second straight year, U.S. hotel room demand, revenues and room supply were at record-high levels.

- The strong and growing demand for travel- and tourism-related goods and services jobs led to a relatively strong increase in leisure and hospitality jobs in 2012, as businesses gained confidence in the continued strength and staying power of the travel industry’s recovery from the Great Recession.

2012 Sees Continued Strong Performance by U.S. Hotels

The U.S. hotel industry was clearly in growth mode in 2012 with room demand, room supply and room revenues all achieving new record highs. With a 4.2% increase, the average daily room rate grew to $106.10 — approaching its 2008 peak of $107.39.

U.S. Hosted Another Record Number of Overseas Visitors in 2012

Overseas arrivals to the U.S. continued to soar in 2012, reaching a record 29.8 million visitors (+6.7%).

- The strongest percentage increases in the number of visitors to the U.S. were from the Chinese market (+35%), followed by the South American countries of Columbia (+21%), Venezuela (+20%), Argentina (20%) and Brazil (+19%).
- Visitation to the U.S. from most western European nations was down in 2012 as consumers in those countries continued to struggle economically. The largest decrease in travelers in both numerical (-93,000) and percentage (-13%) terms was from Spain.

Leisure & Hospitality Industry Continues to Lead U.S. Jobs Recovery

The U.S. leisure & hospitality industry provided more than 13.7 million jobs to the U.S. economy in 2012 — a 2.9% increase from 2011 that far outpaced the 1.7% increase in total nonfarm jobs.

- Full-service and limited-service restaurants reached new record-high levels of employment in 2012 with growth rates of 3.0% and 4.1%, respectively — the highest growth rates of the various sectors in leisure and hospitality.
- Even though U.S. hotel room demand was at an all-time high in 2012, the U.S. accommodations sector has yet to fully recover all the jobs lost during the recession with 52,000 fewer jobs on average than in 2008.