



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 14, 2021

Media Contact:

Lorna Romero Ferguson

Lorna@Elevatestrategiesaz.com

480.231.8930

Arizona Lodging and Tourism Association Applauds Governor Ducey's Visit Arizona Initiative

Phoenix, AZ— Today, Governor Ducey launched the **Visit Arizona Initiative**, a \$101.1M program to support destination marketing organizations, local community events, marketing support for domestic and international flights, and workforce development.

"The **Visit Arizona Initiative** will provide vital resources to the travel, tourism, and lodging industry as we continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic," **said Kim Sabow, President and CEO of the Arizona Lodging and Tourism Association.** "It has been a painful year for Arizona's hospitality industry. The sudden halt in travel Spring of 2020 during Arizona's peak season had a crushing impact on individuals, families, and businesses across the state."

"Arizona's tourism industry is the cornerstone of our economy, welcoming nearly 47 million visitors annually who spend \$25.6 billion dollars in the state," **Sabow continued.** "As COVID-19 numbers decline and mass vaccination efforts increase, the demand for local, national, and international travel grows each day. Comprehensive and strategic investments in statewide tourism promotion and workforce development will allow the industry to flourish and begin to recover. In addition, the initiative will provide much-needed resources to Destination Marketing Organizations to promote their local communities and unique attractions. These investments will better position Arizona to compete with destinations across the country who are vying for group and business travel which makes up the largest component of our industry revenues. We thank Governor Ducey for this significant investment and look forward to working with the Arizona Office of Tourism on this initiative."

"We are grateful to Gov. Ducey for investing in Arizona's travel industry, which historically has generated more than 10% of the state's general fund via the taxes paid by Arizona visitors," **said Brent DeRaad, President & CEO of Visit Tucson.** "The Visit Arizona Initiative will hasten the state's economic recovery by bringing back visitors and travel jobs to Tucson and other cities and regions throughout the state. We commend the Governor for his vision in investing in the recovery of travel, one of Arizona's top industries."

During the peak of the pandemic, Arizona's hospitality industry lost nearly 50% of jobs and \$10 billion in visitor spending during the first six months of 2020 alone. In response, the Arizona Lodging and Tourism Association launched several recovery efforts, including the AZSAFE+CLEAN Certification Initiative – an effort to rebuild and restore vital consumer confidence and increase awareness about the safety and cleanliness of businesses in response to COVID-19. Learn more: <https://azlta.com/azsafe/>

###

About AzLTA

The Arizona Lodging and Tourism Association (AzLTA) is the leading public policy advocate for Arizona's Lodging and Tourism Industry. Representing statewide hotels and resorts, tourism attractions, destination marketing organizations, sports teams, the arts, airlines, airports and related business partners, the AzLTA is focused on advocacy, collaboration and education in support of strengthening the industry in Arizona.