

Creating Thousands of Jobs In The Tourism Industry

By Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg

This past week, New Yorkers received a couple of great holiday gifts. They came in the form of two significant agreements that will create thousands of new jobs in one of our city's most important industries: tourism.

The first agreement is an innovative partnership between the City and The History Channel that will help publicize and preserve New York's rich heritage. Under the agreement, the cable network will air \$15 million worth of commercials about New York, provide \$3.5 million to support tourism and the restoration of historic monuments and sites around town, and support public education about the city's history.

It's all part of our aggressive effort to market the city as the country's premier tourist destination. By bringing New York's great history to the world, we hope the world will come here to experience and enjoy New York for themselves.

Now, if you watch The History Channel, you might have learned that many of the most important landmarks in our city were initiated during times of struggle. Whether it was the creation of Central Park at the dawn of the Civil War, or the construction of the Empire State Building during the Great Depression, New York has a tradition of tackling big projects at times when others would have stepped back.

Once again, we can add to that tradition: Last Tuesday, the State Legislature approved a \$1.4 billion expansion of the Jacob Javits Convention Center. This expansion, nearly two decades in the making, will finally put our city's convention industry on level terms with the rest of the country. For far too long, we've missed the opportunity to host some of the biggest and most lucrative trade shows and business meetings because we just don't have the capacity. That's about to change.

Expanding the Javits Center will provide space for conventions nearly twice the size it can currently hold, as well as create more than 5,000 jobs in the construction industry, and about 10,000 permanent new jobs. These new jobs will help generate more than \$50 million in City and State tax revenue each year. And that means more money for essential City services, like schools and public safety.

Both of these agreements announced this week give a major boost to New York's tourism industry – in many ways, the backbone of our economy: Every year, nearly 40 million visitors bring close to \$24 billion in business activity to our city, and support more than a quarter-million jobs in hotels, restaurants, and other businesses. These jobs are extremely important to us – particularly to many new immigrants who are just starting up the economic ladder.

So, as we approach the height of the Holiday Season, New Yorkers should feel especially optimistic that, as great as our history is, New York's best days are still ahead.

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