

January 19, 2012 – IATAN congratulates Olga Ramudo, President and CEO of Express Travel, an IATAN Accredited Travel Agency since June 1980, for her recent appointment to the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. Press release transcript from the [U.S. Travel and Tourism Industries](#) follows:

**January 19, 2012**

## **Coinciding with Presidential Visit, Secretary Bryson Welcomes New Travel and Tourism Advisory Board Members**

### ***Following Presidential Announcement of National Travel and Tourism Strategy Bryson to Swear in 32 Newly Appointed Members***

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CONTACT OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
202-482-4883

Today U.S. Secretary of Commerce John Bryson will conduct a swearing in ceremony and meet with the 32 newly appointed members of the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB). Secretary Bryson's discussion with the Board will follow the President's announcement of a National Travel & Tourism Strategy and corresponding Executive Order. The Board, first created in 2003 by then Commerce Secretary Donald Evans, plays a key role in terms of providing stakeholder feedback on such strategy.

"This Board represents the eyes and ears of our nation's travel and tourism industry and I am committed to working with each of the esteemed members to bring more visitors to the United States," Bryson said. "I look forward to putting ideas into action, and to helping bolster job creation in this critical economic sector, which already supports more than 7.5 million jobs throughout the country."

Travel and tourism is a \$1.1 trillion sector of the U.S. economy or nearly three percent of Gross Domestic Product. Critical to the nation's overall economic health, the travel and tourism industry is one of the top employers for more than half of the U.S. states and territories. The U.S. travel and tourism industry is on pace for a record-setting year. Through November 2011, international visitors spent an estimated \$139.4 billion on U.S. travel and tourism-related goods and services year to date, an increase of 13 percent compared to the same period in 2010. The United States recorded a \$38.4 billion trade surplus for travel and tourism through November 2011.

The previous Board delivered significant policy recommendations regarding travel facilitation, travel promotion, and data and research, some of which played a role in today's Executive Order announcement. For example, the previous Board made important recommendations regarding visa facilitation, which have been incorporated into the President's strategy.

The Board consists of up to 32 members that advise the Secretary of Commerce on government policies and programs that affect the U.S. travel and tourism industry, offers counsel on current and emerging issues, and provides a forum for discussing and proposing solutions to industry-related problems. Members represent companies and organizations in the travel and tourism industry from a broad range of products and services, company sizes and geographic locations. More than half of the newly appointed members are serving for the first time as advisors on the Board.

The full list of Board members is available on the [Travel and Tourism Advisory Board website](#).