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2015 WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS

On August 6th, 2015, the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) announced that Belize had been nominated in 4 categories of the prestigious **World Travel Awards for 2015**.

THE CATEGORIES WERE:

- **Mexico & Central America's Leading Beach Destination 2015, where Ambergris Caye and Placencia were both nominated**
- **Mexico & Central America's Leading Destination 2015: Ambergris Caye**
- **Mexico & Central America's Leading Nature Reserve 2015: Bladen Nature Reserve**
- **Mexico & Central America's leading Tourist Board 2015: Belize Tourism Board**

Nominees were selected during a six month period by the World Travel Awards advisory committee, which consists of more than 2,700 media titles and influential tourism figureheads. The short-list was then published and the global industry, as well as travel consumers, were asked to vote for whom they deemed were the best in each category.

Votes were limited to one per person, per category. The winner for each category was the one with the most votes. The deadline to cast votes was on August 17th. This year, the award ceremony took place in Bogota, Colombia.

The Heads of Tourism from all around Central America were present for the ceremony. The BTB is extremely proud and excited to announce that for the first time in the 22 years history of the World Travel Awards, Belize has won the two biggest Travel Oscars for the Continent.



Mexico & Central America's Leading Beach Destination 2015 is Placencia!
Mexico & Central America's Leading Destination 2015 is Ambergris Caye!

Mr. Einer Gomez, Vice Chairman of the BTB's Board of Directors, accompanied by his wife attended to accept the awards. When accepting the award for Leading Beach Destination, Mr. Gomez stated, *"In Belize, Placencia is locally known as 'barefoot perfect.' But we have more to credit than the golden sands and swaying palms for earning this award. We owe this honor to the countless stakeholders who work tirelessly to make Placencia a friendly, safe and entertaining place to visit."*

Mr. Gomez accepted the award for Leading Destination and stated, *"And most importantly, thank you to the people of Belize, and all the stakeholders, who commit themselves day-in-and-day-out to providing quality customer service, and for welcoming travelers into our country with open arms. Your hard work and dedication to sharing Belize with the world has clearly not gone unnoticed."*

The Belize Tourism Board would like to take this opportunity to congratulate everyone in Belize's Tourism Industry who have worked extremely hard to make these awards possible. It is the dedication of our Industry Partners that has put Belize in the forefront. There would not be a destination to promote if we did not have those who believe in the country and work tirelessly to ensure that guests are given the best experience possible. Congratulations to All! We look forward to the next year of tourism.



e-Newsletter



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A SUCCESSFUL DIGITAL MARKETING SUMMIT 2015!

On October 20th, 2015, the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) held what would be a hugely impactful "Digital Marketing Summit". As its vision for creating a highly nurturing environment for its Tourism Industry Partners that are eager to advance their Belize marketing efforts, the (9) esteemed panelists provided just that!

The Digital Marketing Summit 2015 took place at the Belize City Princess Ramada Hotel where around 140 attendees took part in an all-day event. The Summit included presentations on: Digital Content Strategies, Digital Content Creation, Travel Trade in Digital, Social Media Trends in Travel, Digital Brand Reputation, and the BTB Digital Marketing Opportunities. The day's event ended with a Networking-Social where guest panelists and attendees were able to mingle and enjoy further discussions on the presentations as it related to their individual efforts.

Panelists: Karen Brodie (Nikon Certified Photographer), Joshua Berman (National Geographic Travel Writer), Laurie Norton (Travel Blogger), Michael Chatfield (Creative Strategist), George Fiddler (Social Media Director at Olson), Scott Largay (Director of Marketing at Largay Travel), Taylor Cole (PR Director at Expedia), David Corke (Director of Travel Industry Relations at JG Black Book) and Alexis Tirado (Managing Editor at theFlama.com).

Digital Marketing Summit Survey – Synopsis:

As a measuring tool for this first ever summit, the BTB wanted to hear from the audiences on how it could improve on future Digital Marketing Summits! The feedback received was helpful in determining which areas were most impactful for those in attendance, which included: Digital Content Creation, Digital Brand Reputation, Social Media Trends and Digital Brand Reputation. Participants also requested the inclusion of: an Intermediate and Advance Level training for future Digital Marketing Summits, and SEO (Search Engine Optimization) which will be taken into consideration.

The Belize Tourism Board would like to take this time to once again thank everyone, especially our sponsors, who participated in making this effort a successful one and we look forward to improving on future Digital Marketing Summits.



FCCA/BTB 12TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY GIFT PROJECT

The Belize Tourism Board, in collaboration with the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA), hosted the annual Christmas party for 200 Belize City children. Twenty two (22) crew members arrived on the Norwegian Jade with Santa Clause and the Christmas gifts for all the children.

The children, ages one (1) to twelve (12), were selected from ten (10) schools in Belize City, which were recommended by the Belize City District Manager, Ministry of Education. This initiative is a part of FCCA giving back to the communities which are a part of their cruise stops. Every year, the FCCA gives toys to many children in the various locations they visit, including Belize.

The children were transported to the Fort Street Tourism Village by Challenge Enterprise Company Ltd. & Group of Companies. The party was hosted by the Fort Street Tourism Village. The children began the morning with face painting and entertainment by Ozzie the Clown, sponsored by H2O Tierra and Calypso Train Tours. They then enjoyed a nice lunch and musical entertainment. Gifts provided by FCCA were then handed out the each child by Santa Clause. The day concluded with all the children receiving a city tour, courtesy of Calypso Train Tours.

FCCA AND NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE XMAS PARTY

The Belize Tourism Board, Norwegian Cruise Line and Belize Island Holdings Ltd, in collaboration with the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association, hosted their Holiday Gift Christmas Project. It was the first of its kind in the Stann Creek District in relation to the Harvest Caye Project. The party catered to two hundred (200) children ages 1-12 years old and took place on 22nd December, 2015, at the Independence High School Auditorium, from 10:00 am – 1:30 pm.

The Christmas gifts arrived aboard the Norwegian Pearl cruise ship on 18th December and were transported by the Belize Tourism Board team to Independence Village. The children were entertained by Ozzie the clown with live music, a face painter, food, drinks and a Christmas gift. Transportation was provided from the school to and from the Auditorium for students and teachers.



WORLD STANDARDS DAY 2015

The BTB team joined the Belize Bureau of Standards in celebrating World Standards Day on October 14, 2015. An International Standard Day Expo was held at the Best Western Belize Biltmore Plaza Hotel and the BTB was able to share information and provide insight on minimum standards in the tourism industry via its booth at the expo. Students and the general public participated in small games related to minimum standards and gifts were given away at the booth. It was a perfect opportunity to sensitize students and the general public about minimum standards and regulations in the hotel and accommodation sector and upcoming scuba diving minimum standards that will soon be regulated in Belize.



VILLAGE ARTS AND CRAFT EXPO 2015

The Village Arts and Craft Expo is spearheaded with a focus on the rural areas across Belize which are located outside of the tourism belts. The intention of the Arts and Craft Expo is for the rural communities to market their crafts outside of their communities onto a larger audience. The village expo is geared to assist the artisans to develop their products and garner partnerships with different stakeholders, i.e. hoteliers, gift shop owners and craft wholesalers; and with these partnerships, the artisans are able to develop their craft and communities by providing them viable economic opportunities. This year's expo was held on October 3, 2015, and hosted a total of 120 artisans from 39 communities, each bringing along their hard work and creativity to showcase to the industry stakeholders and public. The BTB would like to thank all its sponsors: National Institute of Culture and History, Belize Telemedia Ltd, Belikin, Lamanai Eco Adventure and the Belize City Council.



2015 TOURISM RECAP

In 2015, the overnight tourism industry experienced many firsts and record breaking numbers which lead to an overall growth of 6.2% or 19,900 over 2014. Despite an unsteady first and second quarter, Belize had seven straight months of arrival increases; whereby, the bulk of the increases occurred in the last four months. September to December of 2015 showed record improvements with overnight arrivals increasing every month in comparison to last year's figures. September had an increase of 19.3%, October 22.1%, November 33% and December 22.5% increase.

November's 33% increase is the largest ever recorded for this month, which rarely goes above a 10% increase. The month of December saw 39,977 overnight visitors to Belize, which is the first time in history that a month in overnight arrivals has approached 40,000.

The month of December has historically been a busy time of year for overnight tourist traffic into Belize. It officially marks the beginning of the tourism high season, as visitors from North America vacation in the Caribbean and Central America to escape the winter weather.

2015 also marked the beginning of South West and COPA Airlines' flights to Belize in October and December respectively, boosting overnight arrivals through the international airport. Since the first flight of Copa Airlines in December, South American visitors has increased 50.3% when compared to 2014. Airport arrivals accounted for majority of the overnight arrivals with around 75.02% of the overall overnight figure. The total increase in Airport Arrivals for 2015 was 7%. All these factors culminated in a strong increase in visitor traffic in the latter months of the year.

For 2015, there was a total of 957,975 Cruise Passenger Arrivals. This was a minor dip of -1% when compared to 2014. In the last quarter of 2015, October recorded a drop of 29.2%, but an increase in November of 9.2% (81,113 passengers) and in December of 1.6% (143,598 passengers). For 2015, there was only 1 call cancellation in the last quarter of the year amounting to a total of 3,070 less passengers arriving to Belize. Finally, in December, Belize received the newest Cruise line - the MSC Divina.

Americans continue to be our largest market for visitors, making up 63.1% of the overall arrivals. This is followed by Europeans at 12% and Canadians at 7%.

For more information about tourist arrivals statistics, please contact the Belize Tourism Board at 227-2420.



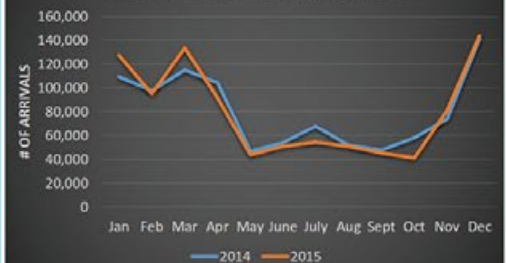
**Overnight Arrivals
2015**



**Airport Arrivals
2015**



Cruise Passenger Arrivals



BELIZE RECOGNIZED AS A LEADING DIGITAL MARKETING CARIBBEAN COUNTRY

The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) is ecstatic about the recognition by the Caribbean & Co. reports which ranked Belize's digital marketing efforts at number 4 in the Caribbean! This analysis and ranking was based on data such as: Page Authority ranking, Number of Inbound Links to Website Domain, Domain Authority, Number of Fans or followers on social media platforms (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Google Plus and Youtube).

While Belize remains one of the smaller countries with limited marketing flexibilities like its regional competitors, it is the online creativity and embracing of these online tools that Belize continues to climb atop the digital travel marketing arena!

Other countries ranking above Belize included: Aruba at #1, Bahamas at #2 and Jamaica at #3.

This validation comes on the heels of Belize's first ever Digital Marketing Summit 2015 where esteemed panelists in their field of digital marketing were invited to engage local stakeholders and partners on the best online practices.

It is a continued focus of the Belize online marketing efforts to always carve out new avenues for the optimization of its creative efforts and thus setting new goals for its online engagements!

This analysis as stated by the Caribbean & Co. was aimed at determining the countries most successful in their online marketing efforts.

ibbean360.com/news/aruba-tops-2015-digital-marketing-index-and-social-media-rankings-in-the-carib

News • Business • Opinion • Travel • Entertainment • Lifestyle • Sports • Weather •

including, but not limited to: Date Website Domain Created, Domain Authority, Page Authority, Number of Inbound Links to Website Domain, Number of social media fans/followers across the six major channels of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Google Plus and YouTube, as well as 3rd party rankings via Alexa and SimilarWeb.

Based on proprietary weighting of the data, a digital marketing ranking for 35 Caribbean destinations follows:

- 1 Aruba
- 2 Bahamas
- 3 Jamaica
- 4 Belize
- 5 Curaçao
- 6 Dominican Republic
- 7 Puerto Rico
- 8 Bermuda
- 9 Martinique
- 10 Barbados
- 11 Turks & Caicos Islands
- 12 Cayman Islands
- 13 British Virgin Islands
- 14 United States Virgin Islands
- 15 Trinidad & Tobago
- 16 Grenada
- 17 St Kitts
- 18 Nevis
- 19 Guadeloupe
- dominica

BELIZE STARTS THE #SmallCountrySunday DISCUSSIONS

In another digital quick-win, the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) launched a successful #SmallCountrySunday initiative in November! With its play on the highly anticipated "Black Friday" Belize introduced its own anticipated event by inviting potential visitors to use the hashtag #SmallCountrySunday for a chance to WIN a FREE trip to Belize!

The success, however, was in the online discussions such as the #TravelPics chat who hosted a "Small Country" theme; other digital exposures on Belize and in-turn #SmallCountrySunday were notable!

A few of the international media coverages included:

- Smarter Travel (UVP: 3,196,975)
- About.com Travel (UVP: 32,476,279)
- Travel Pulse (UVP: 159,207)
- ETB Travel News (UVP: 25,737)
- Frequent Flier (UVP: 30,368)

The initiative generated:

- 9 international media placements
- 35 million media impressions
- 46,000 video views
- 5.4 million social media impressions

Making it one of the BTB's most successful digital marketing efforts for 2015!



NFL KICKERS WINS TRIP TO BELIZE

The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) launched a PR initiative targeting NFL kickers that were missing field goals. As part of the Quick Win Idea, we reached out to Ian Gaynair (Defender of Belize National Team) to do a video kicking some balls from 33 yards out stating these players just need to relax. He then extended an invitation to the next player to miss a field goal to come relax in Belize.

This sparked the interest of many social media outlets and journalist eager to see who would be the winning kicker. The campaign was launched October 8th, 2015 and after some anticipation the "lucky" winner was Matt Bryant from the Atlanta Falcons.

A few of the International media coverages included:

Game Day First TV Broadcast

NFL Network (Audience: 118,301)

The next NFL kicker to miss an extra point wins a trip to Belize

Extra Mustard: Sports Illustrated (UVPM: 20,608,032)

The Tourism Board of Belize has a solution to the NFL's kicker problem
For The Win: USA Today (UVPM: 14,202,325)

The Belize Tourism Board Has a Very Chill Offer for Struggling NFL Kickers
GQ (UVPM: 3,321,316)

Morning Buzz: Philadelphia Sports News

NBC Philadelphia; ran on TV twice and online (UVPM: 1,631,290; Audience: 4,400,000)

Belize Offers a Free, Relaxing Vacation to Next Stressed-Out NFL Kicker to Miss

AdWeek (UVPM: 4,625,159)

VIDEO: Next NFL kicker to miss field goal invited to practice and chill in Belize
The Score (UVPM: 1,617,957)

In all, this story generated 28 media placements, 78.4+ million media impressions, 20K+ video views and 3.8+ million social media impressions. The numbers reflect the success of the campaign and the buzz it created from one of the world's top sporting events.

NFL
MMQB
NBAF
CAMPUS
NBA
NCAAB
MLB
NHL
SOCCER
GOLF
MORE
EXTRA MUSTARD
SWIM
FEATURES

No matter how your kid says it broke, we'll replace it.

fire Kids Edition \$99.99 amazon

LEARN MORE

EXTRA MUSTARD

The next NFL kicker to miss an extra point wins a trip to Belize

Photo: Doug G. Smith/Getty Images

TRAVEL & TRADE SHOWS

CATA EUROPEAN ROADSHOW

The Central American Tourism Agency (CATA) hosted its first post WTM (World Travel Mart) European Roadshow in November. The roadshow took place on November 5th, 6th and 9th in Paris, Amsterdam and Milan, respectively. To continue building on marketing efforts for the European market, the BTB participated in the roadshow and attended the Amsterdam and Milan segments. Approximately ninety (90) tour operators, travel agents and press were in attendance.

EAST & WEST COAST FAMILIARIZATION TRIP

The BTB, along with JG Black Book of Travel, organized a Familiarization trip for top East & West Coast wholesalers from the U.S. The trip, held November 16th – 20th, was designed to give the agents first-hand experience and knowledge of Belize's unique tourism product offerings. The group consisted of the top 6 selling travel agents from the East Coast (3) and the West Coast (3).

These types of trips will enable the wholesalers to expand their Belize portfolio and provide networking opportunities that will allow them to strengthen their relationships with our local industry partners.

TRAVEL AGENT SPECIALIST TRAINING

The BTB, in collaboration with JG Black Book of Travel hosted a Travel Agent Specialist Training in Houston on November 17, 2015. The training allowed us the opportunity to educate agents about our destination, so they are able to sell it to their clients more easily and effectively. After the completion of the training, forty (40) agents left with a very good understanding of the activities and accommodation options to offer their clients. They also left knowing how to create the perfect Belize experience for their clients.

TAIPEI INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL FAIR

The BTB exhibited at the Taipei International Travel Fair held November 6 – 7, 2015, in Taipei, Taiwan. The Fair was held at the Taipei World Trade Center and attracted thousands of visitors. The BTB had the opportunity to impart knowledge of our destination to hundreds of visitors at the booth by conducting games, which drew a steady audience as visitors came to participate just for the fun of it. They were tested on their knowledge of the destination and had the opportunity to win small prizes such as Marie sharp pepper, key chains, pens, pins, etc.

During the event, the BTB reps also conducted a media interview with China Post, which was published on their magazine site. Also, the BTB attended a presentation hosted by Travellers Magazine. Questions were answered by the BTB representatives regarding travels to Belize.



Copyright BTB 2015



"USA Travel Agents Fam Trip"

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Belize Specialist Training



Taipei International Travel Fair 2015

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES INAUGURAL FLIGHT TO BELIZE

Southwest airlines landed their first 737 aircraft in Belize City on October 15, at 3:00 pm at the Philip S.W. Goldson International airport, and departed at 4:00 pm. The celebration kicked off at Houston Hobby International concourse with a news event. Travelers enjoyed trivia, giveaways and complimentary beverages on-board this flight to kick off their vacation.

Upon arrival, the Belize Tourism Board staff welcomed travelers with water arch salute, gift bags, music and complimentary Beer of Belize, Belikin.

The official inauguration ceremony commenced at 2:40 pm and speakers included The Honorable Manuel Heredia Jr., Minister of Tourism in Belize, the Honorable Carlos Moreno, US Ambassador of Belize and Mr. James Ashworth, Managing Director of Customer Support and Services of Southwest Airlines, Mr. Jorge Espat, Managing Director of the Belize Airport Concession Co., and hosted by Ms. Karen Pike, Director of Marketing for BTB.

Hon. Manuel Heredia Jr stated "As the North American travelers continue to dominate our market, this partnership comes at an opportune time. Lower airfares, higher interconnectivity, and a relentless appeal for customer service excellence is what we welcome today to our shores. I am convinced that Southwest Airlines will certainly attract more travelers to our beautiful country. Already, the buzz is afoot. In September alone, Belize experienced a 19.9 percent increase in arrivals here at the PGIA, showing the continued strength of Belize's tourism equity and competitiveness."

"Belize City marks our ninety-sixth destination and brings our second Central American nation onto our route map," said James Ashworth, Southwest Airlines Managing Director of Customer Support and Services. "We're proud to bring our low fares, no bag fees and no change fees to the Customers traveling to and from Belize."

The Launch of the inaugural flight from Houston provides a great opportunity for more travelers to enjoy the many experiences Belize has to offer such as the Garifuna culture, pristine beaches, and breathe taking Barrier Reef.

The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) welcomes Southwest Airlines as our newest industry partner in Belize and is excited for the many new developments this partnership will bring.

#TravelBelize #SouthwestHeart



COPA AIRLINES INAUGURAL FLIGHT TO BELIZE

On December 8, 2015, Copa Airlines made its long awaited inaugural flight to Belize, its 7th destination in Central America. Flight 281 arrived at 12:49 P.M via Hub de la Americas Panama City, Panama carrying a total of 92 passengers. The flight kicked off in Panama with a team of news media from different countries in South America to cover the historic event. The flight was greeted by a water salute, and passengers were welcomed with entertainment from Laru Beya Boys and Travellers Rum cocktails.

Said Pedro Heilbron, Executive President for Copa Airlines stated: "For COPA Airlines this is a very proud moment for us to begin operations in this new destination with which we consolidate our leadership in the region, flying to all the countries in Central America and in this fortifying the connection that Hub de Las Americas in Panama City offers." "With our flight to Belize we expect to amplify the opportunities of development in the business and tourism sectors in this city, while improving in an important manner the connectivity of the country to Latin America."

The official inauguration ceremony commenced at 1:15pm in the departure lounge. The guest speakers included The Honourable Manuel Heredia Jr., Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Ambassador Marta Irene Boza, Ambassador of Panama in Belize, Mr. Adolfo Sen, Director of Sales Copa Airlines; and Mr. Jorge Espat, Managing Director of Belize Airport Concession and Co.

The arrival of COPA to Belize marks an important landmark as it will establish a connection to the South American market and beyond via the Hub de Las Americas in Panama City. The flight is scheduled twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays Departing Panama at 11:29 A.M, arriving at 12:52 P.M.

The departure flights are scheduled on the same days leaving Belize City at 2:17 P.M. and arriving in Panama at 5:34 P.M, flights are scheduled to last approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes each way. With the addition of Belize COPA now has a flights to a total of 74 destinations in 31 countries in The Caribbean, North, and Central & South America.

At the inaugural ceremony Hon. Manuel Heredia Jr., Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, stated: "Though our strongest market remains North America, we see the need to expand our reach southward, as a part of the long term strategy towards diversification, as charted in our National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan. As a result, COPA and Belize have partnered and have committed to investing the essential time and resources needed to develop an invaluable relationship, which will serve as the catalyst for attracting South American tourists to Belize, and in turn result in the expansion of Belize's tourism industry."



BELIZE WELCOMES MSC DIVINA

BELIZE CITY, Belize, December 31, 2015 – Today, Belize welcomed the inaugural call for a new cruise line. MSC Cruises had its first call today, with the MSC Divina landing in Belizean waters at approximately 8:00 am. The ship left from its home port in Falmouth, Jamaica on Monday, December 28th, making its way through Georgetown, Grand Cayman and Cozumel, Mexico, before arriving in Belize City, Belize.

MSC Cruises is a division of the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC). It officially began operating in the cruise business in 1988. Between 2004 – 2014, MSC Cruises grew by 800 per cent, being today's market leading cruise company in the Mediterranean. They offer a wide range of itineraries in Northern Europe, the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean, Cuba and Antilles, South America, South Africa, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Oman. In 2008, they were the first cruise company in the world to be awarded the coveted "6 Golden Pearls" for outstanding standards in environmental protection, health and safety.

Director of Destination Planning and Cruise, Valdemar Andrade, commented "We welcome the new European cruise line, MSC Cruises, in their inaugural call to Belize.

We are happy to have them as a new cruise line partner for our destination and we invite to discover how to be. The MSC calls are a part of initial calls to explore what the destination has to offer. The BTB and the Belize Cruise Port are working with them to increase calls subsequent to these. We certainly see the cruise industry remaining robust and well above 300 calls for the year at the Belize City Port. In 2016, there will also be an additional line calling as well."

Mr. Elad Aharon, General Manager of the Fort Street Tourism Village, commented "Belize Cruise Port (FSTV) is thrilled to host the first in MSC Cruises' Fantasia Class, the Divina, in our magical destination. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with MSC and we are looking forward to support their growth in Belize."

The MSC Divina has a capacity of 3,502. We look forward to this continued partnership for Belize.



BTB REACHES OUT TO STEVE HARVEY TO HOST COSTA MAYA PAGEANT

In another creative PR initiative the Belize Tourism Board reached out to comedian Steve Harvey following his mishap at the Miss Universe pageant. As part of a quick win idea, the BTB offered Steve Harvey a chance to come down to Belize and host the next Costa Maya pageant in San Pedro. This generated quite a buzz and had journalist and social media outlets alike interested in the campaign which was launched on December 20th, 2015.

A few international media coverages included:

- Yahoo! News (26,761,161)
- The Daily Mail (UVP: 25,384,326)
- Examiner (UVP: 18,371,429)
- NY Daily News (UVP: 11,872,000)
- Yahoo! TV (UVP: 8,998,910)
- BET Online (UVP: 4,776,275)
- Jezebel (UVP: 4,444,478)

This generated a total of 118.8 million current media impressions. The story also had 24,208 Facebook shares. Many interesting comments were generated such as "Never planned on going to Belize until now," "Well played BTB," and "That's what I call a world class organization." The retweets and likes exceeded 500, making it one of the most-engaging BTB tweets of all-time.

Belize Tourism Board
@belizevacation

Follow

Dear @IAMSteveHarvey, we all make mistakes. You handled yours with class. Would you host our next pageant? @CostaMayaFest #MissUniverse2015

RETWEETS

11

LIKES

34

1:53 PM · 21 Dec 2015



BTB AWARDS 9 SCHOLARSHIPS

On November 13, the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) awarded nine (9) students with scholarships for Tourism Programs. The scholarships are as follows:

Three (3) two-years tuition scholarships for an Associates in Tourism at one of the Junior Colleges in Belize offering a Tourism Program, awarded to:

1. Giselle Rodriguez
2. Amina Cal
3. Monique Tucker

Three (3) two-years tuition scholarships for a Bachelor Degree in Tourism Management at the University of Belize, awarded to:

1. Jewel Williams
2. Alexander Cal
3. Gariesha Teck

One (1) "Jean Shaw Tourism Scholarship," which is a full scholarship covering two-years for a Bachelor Degree in Tourism Management at the University of Belize

1. Delmi Carillo

The Jean Shaw Tourism Scholarship was established in memory of the late Jean Ursilla Shaw, a renowned female, tourism pioneer, who played an integral part in the development of Belize's tourism industry in her lifetime. The scholarship is to support the development of qualified Belizean females pursuing a career in tourism.

Two (2) \$10,000 scholarships for a Culinary Program, awarded to

1. Natalia Silva
2. Angel Rodriguez

The handing over of the scholarships was held at the BTB office, where the nine successful candidates were presented with their official packages for the scholarships.

The recipients were selected based on a score sheet, which measured various factors such as grades/GPA, work and community service experience, essay describing their career goals/aspirations and their achievements/awards. Those with the highest scores were then reviewed thoroughly and the top candidates were selected.

Director of Tourism, Karen Bevans, commented, "These scholarships are provided to build capacity in the rapidly growing Tourism Industry, and to offer our youths the opportunity to aim higher and dream bigger in charting their career path. Tourism is one of Belize's largest Industries and the demand for trained human resources is growing. The BTB, by way of these scholarships, is doing its part to expand the human resource pool in the Industry and ensure that Belizeans are prepared to take on more roles as needed to continue to increase tourism in Belize".

For more information on the scholarships, please contact Xanierre Velasquez at xvelasquez@travelbelize.org

TOUR GUIDE EXCELLENCE INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

On Thursday, October 22nd, fifty (50) tour guides from Belize City began a training program entitled "Tour Guide Excellence International Certification Program." The four-day program will give the tour guides an internationally recognized certification.

This program is the first in a series of Cruise Guide Specialization Training, through a partnership between the Belize Tourism Board and the Aquila Center for Cruise Excellence,

Aquila is a renowned Canadian tour operator and trainer based in Saint John, New Brunswick, with over 30 years of experience in the travel industry, and 25 years of providing Shore Excellence to cruise lines and their passengers. The Tour Guide Excellence Program is an FCCA-endorsed, international certification program designed specifically to train tour guides in the cruise industry around the world, with an aim to establish a standard for tour guides within the cruise industry. Recognizing that tour guides are the single most important factor in creating the best guest experience, this program will give 50 current tour guides the opportunity to achieve international certification in recognition of their qualifications and level of excellence. The primary objective of this program is for participants to learn exactly what makes an excellent tour guide and the skills to turn that knowledge into a practical reality when guiding cruise shore excursions. This program is endorsed by the FCCA and promoted by the major cruise lines.



JICA VOLUNTEERS HELPS CAYE CAULKER WITH TOURISM PLANNING

Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development of Caye Caulker

National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan for Belize 2030 (NSTMP) states the general direction of future development of Caye Caulker as follows; "By 2030 Caye Caulker continues to offer a low-key charm along with attractive beaches and a cultural offering. It caters to a mainly nature based niche product, along with nautical, sun and beach on a second order." The key word for Caye Caulker is "low-key". It indicates the life style of "go slow" with a casual atmosphere and comparatively inexpensive tourism related facilities. These will continuously be a key point for tourism promotion of Caye Caulker. The study on "Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development of Caye Caulker" started in March 2015. Taking into account the NSTMP as prerequisite for the study, the following three Project Design Matrices were proposed based on the interview survey, a SWOT analysis and a discussion with the Local Tourism Committee in Caye Caulker.

PDM1: Project of Pedestrian Promenade Improvement in the South Side

PDM2: Caye Caulker Tourism Management Project

PDM3: Project of Caye Caulker Capacity development in the Tourism Sector

The highest priority should be put on the PDM1 in terms of urgency. The outline of the PDM1 is as follows;

PROJECT GOAL:

A network of pedestrian paths and streets is restructured and popular tourist sites including beaches and mini parks become more attractive relaxation zones for visitors and the local people.

Expected outputs:

1. Pedestrian paths and streets harmoniously networked through brick pavement, installation of street furniture, street lights, flowerbeds, garbage boxes, public toilets and changing rooms for visitors
2. Drainage channel/culvert along streets are installed
3. Pavement of street for cargo trucks is done around Back Bridge (Calle del Sol and Avenida Mangle)
4. A management plan of pedestrian paths and streets



Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Civil Aviation



ACTION PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF CAYE CAULKER



September, 2015

Dr. Mamoru Osada
JICA Senior Volunteer
Belize Tourism Board

RENOVATION OF COLUMBUS PARK IN SAN IGNACIO TOWN

Through the Destination Gateway Project, the BTB has invested in the San Ignacio Downtown Rejuvenation Project which aimed to enhance the tourism product in the municipality. With the Hawksworth repainted earlier this year, the BTB and Town Council worked in renovating the Columbus Park. To highlight the rich Mayan history in the western region, the Columbus Park was fitted with 4 Mayan Arches which replaced the Greek columns. Each Mayan arch represents a different architectural design used at the different Mayan sites.



CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING

Tour Guide Courses currently ongoing and expected to finish this month and early January:

1. BTIA - Orange Walk
2. Caye Caulker
3. Sacred Heart Junior College
4. Cayo CET Group A
5. Cayo CET Group B
6. ITVET
7. Monkey River
8. Monkey Bay

New courses starting in December:

- At Dangriga being offered by the BTIA Dangriga Chapter.
- At Placencia being offered by the Placencia Tourism Center.

Tourism Trainings:

- A 3rd Session for the Wildlife Conservation Workshop was hosted by the Belize Zoo & Tropical Education Center on September 28th

REGIONAL MEETINGS

Regional Meetings and active participation on the RTC-6 Regional Technical Committee:

The BTB keeps actively participating and representing Belize in the Regional Technical Committee RTC-6 of the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ). The committee consists of members from the Caribbean region that are currently working on drafting of specific minimum standards for the accommodation types "hotels" and "guesthouses". Meetings have been held on November 26th, December 3rd and on December 16th to continue the progress on those minimum standards for the Caribbean region.

COMPLIANCE UNIT

467 Accommodations Inspected:

As of November 2015, a total of 467 accommodations have been inspected country wide at destinations including Placencia, San Pedro, Hopkins, Corozal, Toledo, Caye Caulker, San Ignacio, Orange Walk, Belize City etc.

Horse & Carriage Driving Training:

Horse and Carriage Driving Training- A total of 13 participants that work with horse and carriage tours were provided with training on safe driving and maneuvering of horse and carriages and basic horsemanship for the same. The training was carried out on November 13-15th, 2015.



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Belize Offers a Free, Relaxing Vacation to Next Stressed-Out NFL Kicker to Miss Adam Vinatieri and Nick Novak have first shot tonight
By Tim Nudd

October 6, 2016, 2:38 PM EDT

A photograph of NFL kicker Adam Vinatieri in a white jersey with the number 4, captured in the middle of a kicking motion on a football field. Other players and spectators are visible in the background.

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A wide-angle aerial photograph showing a lush green tropical coastline with white sandy beaches, turquoise water, and small islands or peninsulas extending into the sea.

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Supplement

Discover Belize's richness in nature and culture

By Sun Hsin Hsuan, Supplement Writer
November 7, 2015, 12:52 am TWM

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For Perry Bodden, digital marketing officer of the Belize Tourism Board (BTB), Belize is a country "where you must go once in your life, but where the experience is so indescribable that you just have to find out for yourself." Speaking passionately with a sparkle in his eye, he described the hospitality of the Belizean people and the magnificent nature that the only English-speaking country in the Central American region has to offer.



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Speaking on the first day of the Taipei ITF, Bodden, and Deborah Gilharry, senior travel and trade officer of the BTB, described some of the country's highlights. Facing the Caribbean Sea in the east, bordering Mexico to the north and Guatemala to the west and south, Belize has the advantage of hosting an abundant diversity of terrestrial and marine species in its various ecosystems as it sits in the center of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor.

"It is a small country, but with great nature and landscapes, which is a very attractive prospect for wildlife lovers who are up for outdoor activities as you can make the trip from the inland to the sea in a day," said Deborah.

For adventurers, you can immerse yourself in the greenery of the jungles, climb up to the Mayan temples, go horseback riding, and watch wildlife in the mornings, and then in the afternoon, bask in



Deborah Gilharry, left, senior travel and trade officer of the Belize Tourism Board (BTB), and Perry Bodden, digital marketing officer of the BTB, pose for a photo on the first day of Taipei ITF, Friday, Nov. 6. (Wang Chien-yu, Special to The China Post)

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BY NICOLE ISAACS | HAUTE PURSUITS, NEWS | NOVEMBER 25, 2015

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Belize was on the top of my travel bucket list for a while. I heard so many great things so I finally booked a trip to see the best the country has to offer. I usually squeeze in so many activities on a trip that it's rarely relaxing, but this trip was different. I spent eight days there and took my time to explore the country, soak in the sun, and relax at its finest resorts. Needless to say, I came back to Los Angeles feeling refreshed and with a beautiful Belizean tan.

I started off my trip inland in the small rustic town of San Ignacio. A lot of travelers don't visit the mainland, but I would recommend it—you get an entirely different feel of the country. I arrived in Belize City and took a private shuttle (only \$45) to Saint Ignacio, which is two hours away from the airport. There's a ton to do in Saint Ignacio including visiting the Mayan ruins of Xunantunich and Cahal Pech, jungle adventures like zip lining, cave tubing, and visiting the famous ATM Cave. Some of my highlights from Xunantunich and the ATM cave:

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Mad Dogs In Belize

posted (November 10, 2013)



Belize is featured in a new British series called **Mad Dogs**. If you haven't heard about it, it's because it's new - only at its first season. Now, the show was filmed in Puerto Rico but it's about a group of guys who travel to Belize for the weekend - they expect an island thrill with exclusive parties and beautiful Belizean women, but really, they have no idea what's in store for them. Today we met with the writer and creator of the show **Cris Cole**. He and his team were shooting the **Michael Finnegan Market** and Cole told us that's it's all about bringing the real deal to viewers.

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Cris Cole, Writer and creator - Mad Dogs

"So it's basically about 4 old college buddies who reunite in their 40s to meet a fifth college buddy who lives in Belize and has been very successful and they've come down to stay with him for a weekend and everything goes wrong. Everything that can possibly go wrong, goes wrong. But these are 4 ordinary guys. They don't have any special skills, they don't travel a lot, they are not very worldly and so following the journey of every man as he gets involved in a crime which has nothing to do with him and one thing leads to another. Basically they get into a big hole and keep digging. So, we just made the first season. We've just completed it and we are here and there are 10 one hour episodes that will be on Amazon in January next year. Everyone can watch them on Amazon. What we are doing now is, we shot most of the show, because it was shot in Puerto Rico, we wanted it to look more like Belize. We want to capture Belize, the street life, the wild life - we wanted to show the Tapir which we are going to do which we are very excited about and just get a flavor of Belize; the color, the people and the sounds. So that's what we are doing over the next few days. We are just going to drive around grabbing shots of just life."



Cris Cole

"We are trying to make it authentic as possible. Obviously you can't do everything. Puerto Rico looks similar in some ways and not so similar in other ways. So we try to have as many, the Caribbean accents, the Caribbean looking people as possible. Nigel was very helpful in helping with the creole and accents and we try to use signage and shop fronts that are more to be Belizean. So we did our best. I think people in Belize may look at it and say 'wait a minute, that's not quite right.' But we did our best and that what we are doing now really is try and make that even more full."

They travel to get shots of the tapir and other wildlife tomorrow. The show airs on **SKY NETWORK** in the UK.

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On 13 October, Southwest Airlines commenced services from Houston Hobby to Belize City. The 1,519 kilometre service will operate daily and be flown by the airline's 737-700s according to OAG Schedule Analysts data. The inaugural flight was met in Belize City with traditional dancing.

Branson AirExpress jets off from Branson to Houston Hobby

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Ambergris Caye Belize

With its adjacent Hol Chan Marine Reserve and Shark Ray Alley snorkeling venues and proximity to the famed Blue Hole at Lighthouse Reef Atoll diving site, Ambergris Caye realizes some of the most dynamic underwater sightseeing in the region. In addition, the island makes a good jumping off point for excursions that search for manatees or take you into the Belize mainland jungle. Steeped in Maya culture, Belize boasts ruins and towns, one that has you tubing through the black-out darkness of ancient sacrificial caves.

Photo courtesy of CTO — Damian Solano, Belize Tourist Board

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