

Great Lakes USA Increases Markets and Membership

The Great Lakes USA (GLUSA) is the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors' and Premiers' regional tourism consortium in the USA. GLUSA's goal is to promote, foster and encourage travel to and within the region from key overseas markets. Leveraging GLUSA's "regional concept" provides members the ability to strategically grow their vital international business in a cost-effective way. Target markets include the United Kingdom/Ireland, the German-speaking countries of Germany, Austria and Switzerland and **NEW in 2017...China**.

China is the fastest growing market for the United States as well as for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Region. As of 2016, China surpassed the UK as the number one market for the Region. Between 2015 and 2016, the U.S. experienced a 14.7% increase, and growth to the Region was even higher at 20%.

As of July 1, GLUSA started a full-scale China program including education, sales and marketing. Even though the Chinese are already coming, the Region still has a lot of work to do in preparation for Chinese travelers. For the second year, GLUSA will hold a China Readiness program to provide the information and tools necessary to welcome Chinese travelers. GLUSA will also conduct a similar Chinese program to the current successful UK/German programs and include public relations, consumer publications, newsletters, social media, familiarization tours, sales mission, travel trade outreach and trade shows.

GLUSA membership also grew in 2017. The consortium was happy to welcome Indiana back as a member. Member States now include Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. GLUSA's "Preferred Partner" program continues to grow with new members joining the marketing consortium.

