

## **Tourism Workforce Initiative Fact Sheet**

The Arizona Office of Tourism, in conjunction with Arizona's P-20 education system (i.e. Arizona's K-12 system, and Arizona's community college and university institutions) are collaborating with tourism industry representatives to assess the workforce development needs of the industry in Arizona, to make recommendations designed to meet those needs, and to implement those recommendations.

The tourism industry is a major economic force in Arizona, contributing a \$30 billion impact on the state's economy and \$1 billion in taxes to the state's general fund each year. More than 450,000 Arizona jobs are tied to tourism.

The continued success of Arizona's tourism industry will depend heavily on our ability to compete with destinations that have very well developed customer service programs and established workforce development initiatives in place. These initiatives provide a mechanism through which the tourism industry and educational institutions can work together to educate students about career opportunities available in the tourism industry, and to train students in the skills needed by the industry.

The current phase of the Tourism Workforce Assessment Initiative will develop a comprehensive picture of the tourism industry in Arizona and conduct an inventory of existing workforce development programs. Ten community forums will be conducted at community college sites throughout the state involving community leaders, tourism industry leaders and educators to discuss local and regional industry trends and training needs. Research teams will compare the existing programs with the industry needs identified during the forums, and conduct a gap analysis to make recommendations for policy and program changes needed to close the training gap. A summary of the research findings, gap analysis and strategic plan will be presented at the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism to be held July 6-8, 2005 at the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix.

A second round of ten community forums will be held throughout the state to engage community leaders, citizens and stakeholders in deliberating on tourism workforce development needs, and to engage communities in helping to close the training gap through local initiatives and advocacy.