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E-Newsletter

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Experience
Jordan Now!

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JORDAN TOURISM BOARD N.A. LAUNCHES \$100K AD CAMPAIGN

*Educational Ads on the "Cradle of Christianity" Mark First Foray into Advertising;
Religious Tourism Key Growth Component for Jordan Tourism*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Nov. 7, 2005) – The Jordan Tourism Board, N.A. (JTBNA) has launched a \$100,000 advertising and promotional campaign to attract religious tourists to the "Cradle of Christianity." This first-ever campaign for JTBNA includes \$70,000 in print and online ad placements and \$30,000 in co-operative marketing promotions with trade organizations that specialize in religious travel to Jordan. The effort is part of an overall marketing strategy to increase awareness among the North American religious community of Jordan's holy sites, which should lead to increased overnight stays in the Kingdom.

"We believe these ads will help us to build on the momentum we have gained in the North American religious community," said Malia Asfour, JTBNA director. "By elevating awareness of the rich spiritual legacy of Jordan and the accessibility of our holy sites, we think our promotion will make a significant impression among religious travel planners and potential travelers."

The ads feature a mosaic motif and a list of key holy sites in Jordan under an exhortation to "Experience Your Faith." Ads were placed in publications that target religious travel decision-makers such as church group travel planners and religious conference planners, as well as end-consumers, i.e., potential travelers. All ads are 4-color, full-page ads, and most will have several frequencies to make multiple impressions among the target readers. In addition to the ads, magazine outserts and stand-alone mailers are planned to reinforce the message and achieve multiple touchpoints.

Publications -- a mixture of Protestant, Catholic and non-sectarian -- were chosen by JTBNA based on audience demographics; circulation; affiliation and overall ability to reach defined audiences. Print ads were placed in *Church Executive; Going on Faith; The Lutheran; Liguorian; Presbyterian Today; Catholic Digest; U.S. Catholic; and Religious Conference Management Association (RCMA)*. Online ads include *Church Executive; Catholic Digest; U.S. Catholic; and RCMA*. The timing takes advantage of the industry trend toward late bookings, as well as the overall peak booking periods of October, November, February and March. Also, some placements were made to correspond to particular editorial emphases.

The first ad concept was designed to provide an educational overview of Jordan's Old and New Testament destinations. In 2006, JTBNA plans to continue its campaign with an expanded group of media outlets and ads that focus on specific holy sites in the Kingdom, such as Bethany beyond the Jordan, which current archaeological

scholarship has confirmed as the place where Jesus was baptized. JTBNA also plans to undertake limited electronic advertisements next year.

Existing marketing strategies for JTBNA in the religious market already target wholesalers (tour operators) who specialize in religious travel; religious leaders; and religious press. The ad campaign marks the first time JTBNA is taking its message directly to the religious consumer. It also represents an increased effort to connect with the niche group of religious travel planners. In tandem with the ads, JTBNA is working with several tour operators specializing in religious travel on co-op marketing efforts that include brochures and mailers on Jordan's holy sites and specific Jordan tour packages.

"We are encouraging tour operators who specialize in religious travel to Jordan to take advantage of our groundwork by placing their own ads about specific packages they offer," said Asfour. "These publications have readers who have interest in religious travel and the means to do it, so it makes good sense for our tour operators to piggyback off of our efforts to gain market share in the religious sector. In addition, we are offering co-op support to these tour operators to send stand-alone mailers on their specific Jordan packages to our key target audiences."

In addition to Bethany-beyond-the-Jordan, other holy sites in the kingdom include Mount Nebo, from where Moses saw the Promised Land; the Jabbok River, where Jacob wrestled the Angel; ancient Gadara, where Jesus cast the demons into the swine; and Mukawir, Herod's hilltop fortress where Salome danced and where John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded. With so many key biblical sites, it is no wonder that *Christian History* editor Marshall Shelley says (as mentioned in the JTBNA ad) that "coming to Jordan is the difference between seeing the movie in black and white and seeing it in color."

Jordan's Other Niche Markets

Jordan's other niche markets are cultural heritage (archaeology); eco-tourism; health and wellness (spa); adventure; leisure; meetings, incentives, conferences and events (MICE); and cruising.

In May, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) released its 2005 Travel and Tourism Forecasts for the Middle East, which projected the rise in tourism to the region would continue climbing at a growth rate of 4.8%, leveling out after a phenomenal regional growth rate in 2004 of 9.1%. The WTTC forecast for Jordan expects tourism to "equal or exceed the robust level posted for 2004."

In 2004, His Majesty King Abdullah outlined a national tourism strategy that seeks to double the kingdom's tourism economy by 2010. Already, tourism contributes more than US\$800 million to Jordan's economy and accounts for about 10 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP).

JTBNA is a non-profit private-public cooperative that exists to promote tourism to Jordan.

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