



For Immediate Release
October 19, 2006

USTOA Consumer Survey Reveals Internet and Word of Mouth
Are Prime Sources of Vacation Information

The internet placed top as the single primary source of information when planning a vacation, cited by more than 35% of respondents, in a recent telephone survey conducted for the U.S. Tour Operators Association. That number increased to 46% of those with college educations.

Word of mouth was a strong second, with nearly 30% of respondents reporting this as their primary source, while travel agents placed third at slightly more than 10%.

Word of mouth was higher for women (33% of women vs. 24% of men), while slightly more men favored internet sites (39% vs. women 33%) as their main source of information..

“For initial research we encourage people to do their vacation planning on the Internet, to ask friends and family about their travel experiences and to visit Internet sites where travelers post their opinions. However, when it comes to making the actual arrangements USTOA highly recommends that people work with a travel agent. Especially on more complex trips a good travel agent can smooth the way and help iron out potential problems, ” advises USTOA president Bob Whitley. Whitley also suggests the USTOA

web site – USTOA.com – as a helpful reference on tours, vacation planning, and consumer advice.

TNS Research conducted the telephone survey of 1,000 participants on behalf of USTOA. Vacation packages were defined as buying hotel and airfare or other arrangements together.

USTOA members are responsible for the vacations of 10.7 million people yearly. The organization's 130 brands have met the travel industry's highest standards, including participation in the USTOA Travelers Assistance Program. This program requires, among other things, that each USTOA member set aside \$1 Million in security to reimburse consumer payments in case the company goes out of business. USTOA is the only travel industry organization with this requirement.

- END-

Contact:

Linda Kundell
(212) 877-2798
LRKPR@aol.com –or-
Kundellcom@nyc.rr.com