

## **Destinations Offering Insights, Stories about Martin Luther King, Jr, Civil Rights Movement Rank High with African American Travelers**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Jan. 17, 2011) – A new poll suggests cultural heritage plays a key role when it comes to destination selection for African Americans travelers, with more than one-third “very likely” to take a trip where stories and sites related to Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement are available.

The African American Traveler study, released this week by Washington, D.C.-based Mandala Research, outlines the travel habits and preferences of African American travelers, and also suggests a significantly higher percentage of these vacationers would visit more parks if they saw greater diversity among employees and visitors.

“We know that some of the travel industry’s greatest untapped domestic opportunities involve diverse markets, particularly the African American market,” said Laura Mandala, Managing Director of Mandala Research. “Understanding what motivates this lucrative segment will allow travel providers to refine their marketing and hiring practices, as well as better tailor their products and services.”

The online study conducted in December queried 1,018 African American leisure travelers who had taken at least one trip within the United States in the past 12 months that was 50+ miles away from home one-way, or where the traveler spent at least one overnight and had shared or sole responsibility for travel planning. The study was underwritten by the U.S. Cultural and Heritage Tourism Marketing Council and Shop America, in partnership with Louisiana Travel, Visit Baltimore, The Museum Store, Hester Group, the Center for Socioeconomic Research and Education at Texas A&M, and the Henry Ford Foundation.

The survey reveals three primary segments within the African American travel market:

- “Curious and Engaged” – 32 percent of the respondents who indicated the availability of African American history sites and culture was a key reason in trip selection.
- “Family Reunion” travelers, 29 percent defined as those who said they attended a social or family event during their most recent trip.
- and “Business Travelers,” the 27 percent who said they had taken one or more business trips in the last 12 months.

Half of the travelers surveyed suggest they’d be more inclined to visit attractions that offer more exhibits about African American history and culture, and that percentage increases to 74 percent among Curious and Engaged travelers.

Another key motivator showed that 44 percent of African Americans would visit more parks if they saw greater diversity among employees and visitors, a number that increased significantly to 65 percent amongst the Curious and Engaged segment.

A high priority is also placed on offering educational experiences for children when traveling, with 46 percent indicating it is very important for leisure trips to include activities that teach their children about African American history and culture.

“These insights are invaluable to organizations eager to expand their reach within the African American travel community, and will go a long way to significantly improving the travel experience for this market,” said Shelia Armstrong, chair of the U.S. Cultural and Heritage Tourism Marketing Council.

Entertainment magazines are effective mediums for reaching this market, with more than 40 percent of travelers acknowledging they read Essence. Facebook is another popular outlet for African Americans with more than two-thirds indicating they read and post to the social website.

#### **About Mandala Research**

[Mandala Research](#) is a trusted firm that offers hotel, travel & tourism market research products and services – along with expert analysis – to Fortune 500 companies, non-profit organizations and government agencies.