



For immediate release

VISIT MESA WINS NATIONAL RECOGNITION AT U.S. TRAVEL INDUSTRY'S ANNUAL GATHERING, ON THE HEELS OF WINNING ARIZONA OFFICE OF TOURISM'S 'THE GRAND PITCH' CONTEST '



Visit Mesa's destination marketing efforts won national recognition at this month's ESTO Conference, the annual The U.S. Travel Association's Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO). Each year, state tourism organizations and DMOs from across the country gather for this leading professional development conference. As part of the conference, U.S. Travel presents the Mercury (State tourism) and Destiny (Destination tourism) Awards. Visit Mesa won the 2017 Destiny Award in the category of Digital Campaign, calling out last fiscal year's 360-degree video effort that featured Mesa's adventure, foodie and family lifestyles.

"This changes the game," said Visit Mesa Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing Kimberly Freer. "Earning praise from this esteemed organization tells us people are taking notice of what we are doing and that we are effectively delivering on the brand promise of our destination. It means so much to have Visit Mesa be recognized at this national level." The Destinations Council Destiny Award program recognizes U.S. Travel destination members for excellence and creative accomplishment in destination marketing and promotion; and foster the development of imaginative and innovative destination marketing promotion programs and activities.



This national award comes just a month after Visit Mesa won ‘The Grand Pitch’ prize, a statewide competition sponsored by the Arizona Office of Tourism and promoted at the Arizona Governor’s Conference on Tourism in July. Visit Mesa won the contest in the Urban Destinations and Attractions category with our entry on Limitless Geo-Tagging. The idea was born out of a hash-tag element being incorporated into the new Adventure Explorer Guide, inviting in-bound consumers exploring our destination to tag their location with a special branded hashtag that will be promoted through social media channels by Visit Mesa. Our recent Mesa Visitor Profile identified that more than 70% of overnight visitors used social media for travel, with 34% posting travel photos and video online. The Grand Pitch campaign earned Visit Mesa a collection of media buys in national outlets including digital placements with *National Geographic* magazine, *Outside* magazine, Matador Network, Pandora Radio, TripAdvisor, TravelZoo as well as donated service hours from Off Madison Avenue, the state tourism office’s advertising agency. The total media buy will add \$117,000 worth of national marketing spend for Visit Mesa in the new fiscal year.

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To download the 2017-2018 Visit Mesa Business Development Plan, click [HERE](#). The Business Development Plan is your resource to a full 12-month calendar of destination marketing, planning and outreach.

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