



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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ARRIVALS EXCEED 400,000 VISITORS – HIGHEST ANNUAL TOTAL SINCE 2006
NMI August 2013 Visitor Arrivals Up 12%

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – Total visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) have reached 400,000 passengers so far this year, exceeding arrival levels last seen in 2006 when Japan Airlines was flying to the NMI from the Japan market. In addition, according to the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), arrivals from China have now reached 102,810 pax for the year while arrivals from Russia have reached 10,476 pax, both of which are record annual totals.

August 2013 visitor arrivals to the NMI were up 12 percent compared to August 2012, registering 44,817 visitors in August compared to 40,225 in August 2012.

Arrivals from Japan reached the highest levels of the year in August at 17,755 visitors, just 1 percent down from August 2012 and maintaining Japan's position as the NMI's leading source of visitors. Delta Air Lines operated a third flight on 17 days in August to support peak season travel from Japan. Asiana Airlines launched charter flights from Osaka and 16 charters from Narita in August, as Asiana continued to boost its charter commitment to the NMI. Finally, Saipan saw six Delta Air Lines charters from Nagoya in August and an additional charter from Hiroshima, all of which combined to drive arrivals from Japan in August to the highest levels seen this year. Key travel agencies in Japan, however, continue to attribute the flat market from

Japan to the NMI to the continuing difficulty agents have had securing rooms for last-minute Japanese visitors to the NMI this summer as competition for rooms from the Korea and China markets becomes increasingly intense. .

Arrivals from Korea rose 5 percent in August to 13,389 visitors. Asiana Airlines boosted its Busan-Saipan flights from four times a week to daily service in August, targeting the summer peak season, using an Airbus 320 with 155 seats and bringing in an additional 1,860 seats to the Northern Marianas this summer. In addition, Asiana operated daily charter flights from Incheon to Saipan from July 15 to Aug. 31 using an Airbus 321 with 177 seats, bringing an additional 8,319 seats into the NMI, generating continued growth in Korean arrivals this summer.

Meanwhile, arrivals from China jumped 60 percent in August to 10,804 visitors, once again exceeding the 10,000 monthly mark due to an additional flight from Beijing compared to August 2012. Continued rapid growth is projected out of the China market for the remainder of this fiscal year, with travel to the NMI projected to rise significantly through the national holidays in early October.

Finally, arrivals from Russia more than doubled in August for the second month in a row, jumping 133 percent to 835. The Northern Marianas has been receiving bi-weekly direct charter flights from Vladivostok from October 2012 to August 2013 and weekly charter flights from Khabarovsk since March this year, driving rapid growth out of the Russia market. Weekly charter flights from Vladivostok will resume in October 2013.

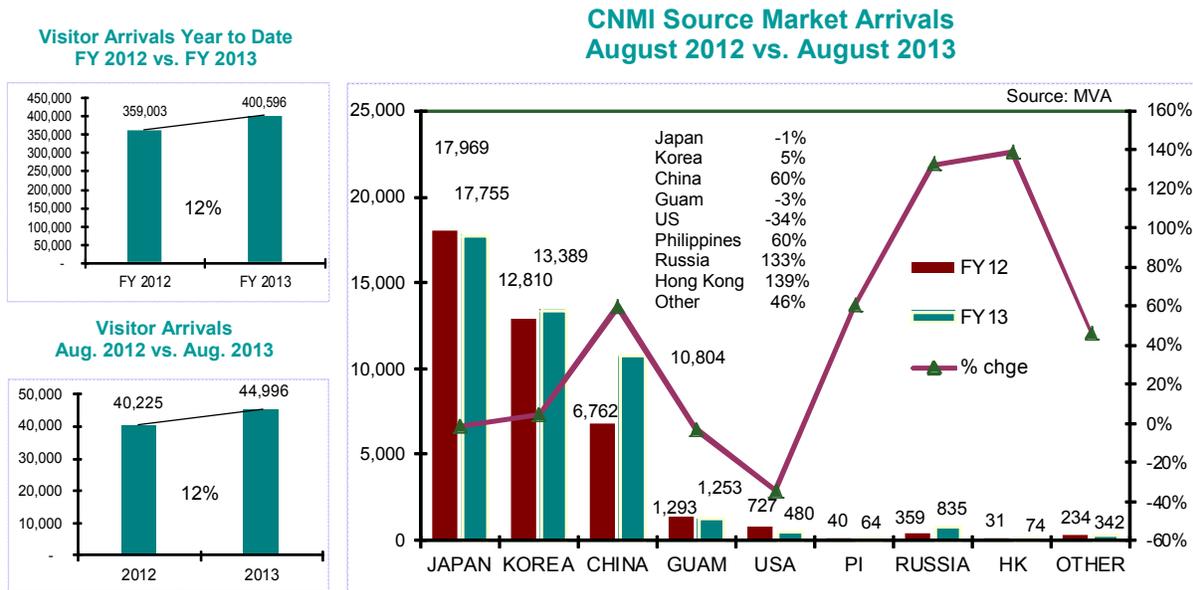
Japan, Korea and China Economic Highlights

In its August report, the Japan Cabinet Office noted that the Japanese economy continues to pick up steadily and the economic recovery is expected to continue. In August, the value of the yen slightly appreciated to 98 yen versus the U.S. dollar due to uncertainty about the economic effects of action against Syria. Japan's largest travel agent JTB conducted a survey of its customers to determine summer travel trends. The most popular family travel destinations in order were Europe, Hawai'i, the US mainland/Canada, Guam/Saipan and Oceania.

Korea's exports fared well despite external risks including the financial woes in emerging Asian economies. August exports from Korea soared 7.7 percent from the same month last year, the fastest increase since January, and a reflection of the continued strength of Korea's economy.

As Koreans become more health conscious, running marathons and riding bicycles are becoming popular health/sports trends. There are many new marathons with different themes and the most famous ones for summer are “night races” which take place at midnight. Bike riding is rapidly gaining popularity as a hot trend, with leading bicycle manufacturers reporting sales soaring by 20 percent this summer compared to the same period last year. As a result, the MVA is placing increasing emphasis on positioning the Northern Marianas as a “sports paradise” in Korea and marketing the NMI’s marathon and triathlon products to the growing Korean active sports market.

China's National Economic Research Institute noted the economy is stabilizing and, if exports continue to see modest growth in the second half, GDP growth for 2013 is likely to be close to 7.5 percent. The Chinese currency Renminbi, or the yuan, gained 22 basis points to 6.1675 in its central parity rate against the U.S. dollar on Aug. 21, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trading System.



The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are a chain of idyllic islands in the West Pacific, offering a friendly, fun and exciting vacation in paradise. They are an excellent destination for families, adventure and sports-minded travelers, as well as business people looking for a tropical haven. Adventurous travelers from Asia, Australia, Europe and elsewhere looking for new travel discoveries will find them in the Mariana Islands, just three hours travel from most cities in Japan, and four from Asia and Australia. The Northern Marianas are served from Tokyo and Osaka in Japan by Delta and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. China is served from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Russia is served via Vladivostok and Khabarovsk. United Airlines has daily flight connections from nine cities in Japan to Saipan via Guam. United States mainland connections can be made by United Airlines to Saipan via Guam,

and Delta Airlines from the west coast to Saipan via Narita. For more information visit www.mymarianas.com.

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