



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

PERRY JOHN P. TENORIO
MVA MANAGING DIRECTOR

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For further information, contact:
Perry John P. Tenorio, Managing Director
Marianas Visitors Authority
Telephone: (670) 664-3200/3201 Facsimile: (670) 664-3237
mva@mymarianas.com
www.mymarianas.com

NMI NOVEMBER 2014 VISITOR ARRIVALS UP 16%

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – November 2014 visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) jumped 16 percent compared to November 2013. According to the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota registered 39,137 visitors in November 2014, compared to 33,678 visitors received in November 2013.

Arrivals from Korea grew 31 percent in November to 16,227 visitors, positioning Korea as the #1 source of visitors to the NMI in November and the largest monthly increase for the Korea market year-to-date. Targeting the winter high season demand, Asiana Airlines will be operating additional flights to Saipan from Seoul four times a week beginning Dec. 2 using an Airbus A320 with 171 seats. The strong upward trend in Korean arrivals is expected to continue throughout the winter season with additional seats coming on-line.

Arrivals from China grew 44 percent in November to 13,874 visitors. The MVA joined with Century Tours and Tinian Dynasty to host an NMI booth at China International Travel Mart, the most influential travel show in China, which was held in Shanghai on Nov. 14-16. To highlight the NMI's culture, the MVA sent five performers to present a cultural experience on-site, which hugely boosted destination awareness during the 3-day trade show.

Arrivals from Japan fell 15 percent to 7,023 visitors in November. During the month of November alone, the yen depreciated by 8 percent, making travel to the NMI 8 percent more

expensive for Japanese in the month of November alone. As a result of the consumption tax hike in April, data indicates that Japan's economy has now officially fallen into recession. Despite these strong headwinds in the market, Japan Airlines will operate two direct charter flights from Chubu Centrair International Airport on Dec. 27 and Dec. 30 using B737 aircraft, providing 288 additional seats with all seats sold exclusively by JTB World Vacations.

Arrivals from Russia fell 82 percent to 245 visitors in November following the suspension of direct flights in August. Russia's economic instability and collapsing Russian ruble have caused a dramatic fall in demand for international travel from Russia. Despite these challenges, the MVA is in discussions with potential airlift partners to re-establish direct non-stop flights from Russia to the NMI and is actively working with key Russian travel agents to create new tour packages targeting tourists with higher income who are less responsive to soaring tour prices to the NMI as a result of the collapsing currency.

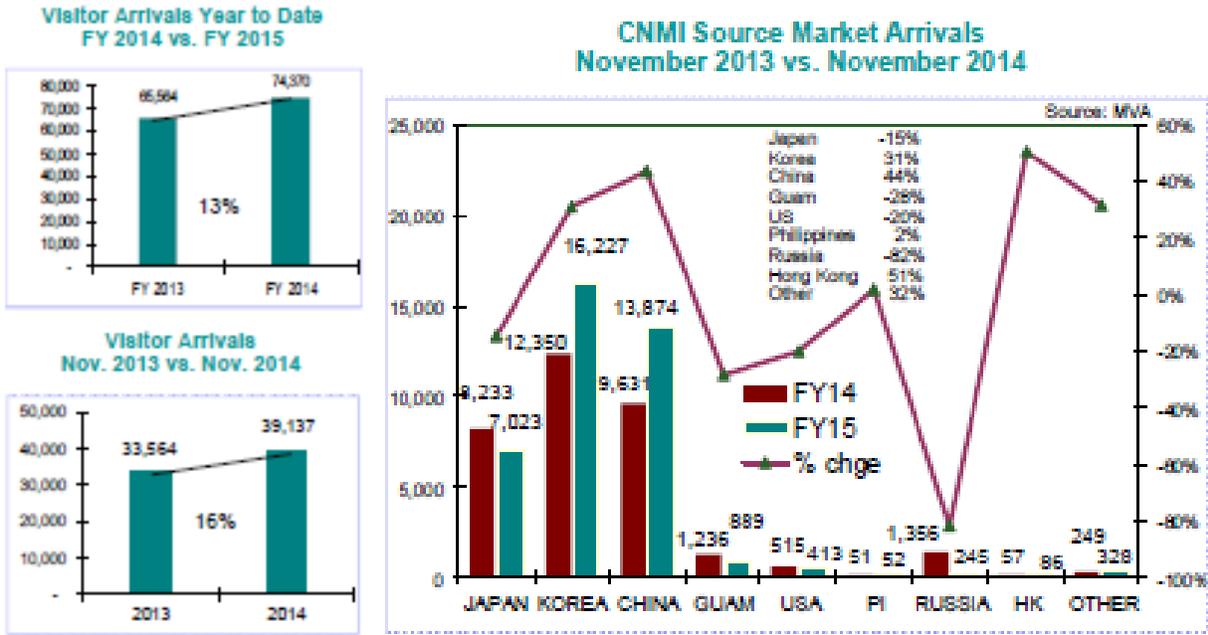
Source Markets Economic Highlights

As of November, the Japanese government continues to uphold a positive view of the economy, despite the recent release of data showing Japan had fallen into recession following the April consumption tax hike. According to the Cabinet Office "the Japanese economy is on a moderate recovery, while weakness can be seen in private consumption." The yen appreciated against the dollar, from 108.17 yen to the dollar at the end of October, to 117.33 yen as of Nov. 27.

Korea's total external debt was \$429.1-billion at the end of September, a decrease of \$13.1-billion from the previous quarter. The South Korean won/dollar exchange rate rose 35.55 won over the past month to close at 1087.19 against the U.S. dollar.

China's retail sales climbed 12% year-on-year to 21.31 trillion yuan (US\$3.47 trillion) in the first 10 months of 2014. The U.S. and China have reached a landmark agreement that grants travelers in both countries 10-year multiple-entry visas and boosts the tourism trade's efforts to lure more Chinese visitors to American shores. The value of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened by 33 basis points to 6.1420 against the U.S. dollar in its central parity rate, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trading System.

In a recent interview the president of Russia declared that Russia's GDP in 2014 is estimated at 0.4-0.5%. The ruble/US dollar exchange rate was highly volatile throughout November. The exchange rate on the last day of November is recorded at 49.32 rubles to the dollar.



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. From China, direct flight service from Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Tianjin, Hangzhou and Wuhan to Saipan is available. United Airlines has daily flight connections from nine cities in Japan to Saipan with one stop. United States mainland connections can be made by Delta Air Lines to Saipan via Tokyo Narita, and United Airlines via Guam. For more information, visit www.mymarianas.com.

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