



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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**NMI VISITOR ARRIVALS 30% LOWER IN AUGUST 2015 IN WAKE OF TYPHOON
SOUDELOR**

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) –Visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) in August 2015 were 30 percent lower compared to August 2014. According to the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota registered 29,996 visitors in August 2015, compared to 42,991 visitors received in August 2014. The decline is largely attributed to the temporary cancellation of operations at Saipan International Airport in the wake of Typhoon Soudelor and the temporary downgrading of the airport. Arrivals had been projected to increase about 3 percent during month.

Due to the airport closures and based on arrivals, the MVA made an adjusted estimate on the total negative impact at \$36-million and a negative impact on taxes at \$2.5-million.

“Tourism is an industry easily influenced by factors we have no control over, such as a natural disasters, economic factors, war, and more,” said MVA Managing Director Perry Tenorio. “What we’ve seen happen during August demonstrates the sensitivity of our tourism industry, and the importance of doing what is within our local power to stabilize it. This includes providing sufficient funding for marketing and demonstrating to investors and tourism partners in China, Korea, Japan, Russia and Taiwan that our government is committed to the industry. For these reasons, it would be wise to keep MVA funding intact in the FY 2016 budget now being considered.”

Saipan International Airport (SIA) was shut down on Aug. 3 due to navigational aids being

damaged by Typhoon Soudelor and reopened to limited hours of operations on Aug. 4. With the navigational aids inoperable, the Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) only allowed flight operations from sunrise to sundown. SIA resumed normal operations on Aug. 17.

On Aug. 21, the CPA downgraded SIA from an Index D to Index C under federal aviation regulations, barring aircraft in excess of 159 feet in length, such as 747s, 777s, Airbus 380s, and Airbus 330s, from landing. The index downgrading was due to the CPA's largest fire truck being inoperable due to an issue with its steering column. On Aug. 25, the fire truck was deemed operable and SIA was once again upgraded to Index D.

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 daily flights from Seoul and Busan and Jeju Air provides daily service from Seoul. From China, direct flight service from Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, 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. Russian and Taiwanese visitors usually arrive via Seoul. For more information, visit www.mymarianas.com.

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