

“New Mexico True” Delivers 72:1 Return in Visitor Spending

In 2012, the New Mexico Tourism Department discovered the state had a perception problem. Research indicated potential visitors had a limited understanding of New Mexico’s travel offerings and an inaccurate perception of the state as an arid, barren desert.



To reverse these misperceptions, the department launched “New Mexico True,” a \$1.2-million marketing campaign to showcase the real New Mexico experience. The campaign featured images of couples and families exploring Chaco Culture National Historical Park, driving on open roads through historic towns, trekking with llamas through the

beautiful Sangre de Cristo Mountains and hiking around Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument.

The impact was immediate. The spring/summer 2012 campaign generated 264,000 additional trips and \$3.6 million in state and local taxes.⁴¹ One study found that every \$1 invested in the ad campaign generated \$30 in visitor spending and \$3 in tax revenues.⁴²

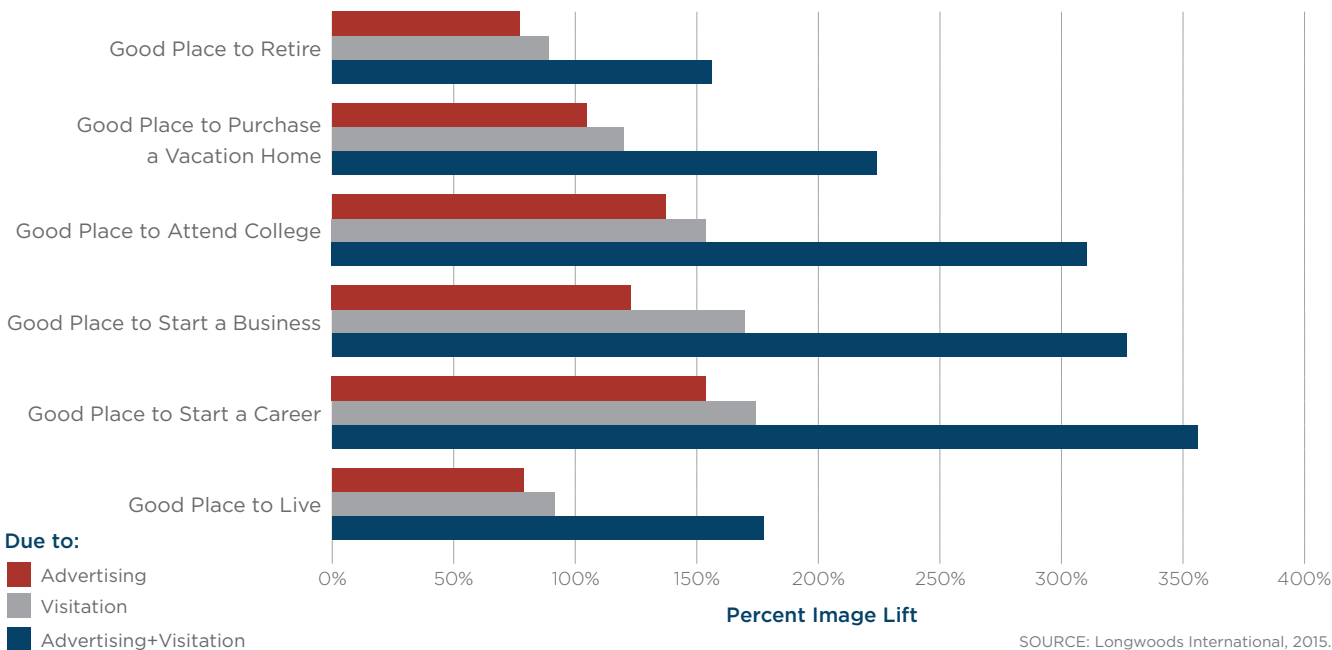
Additional investments yielded even higher returns. Between 2013 and 2015, the New Mexico Tourism Department expanded the campaign to five key out-of-state markets. The updated \$2.5 million advertising investment generated 895,000 incremental trips, **\$176 million** in incremental visitor spending and **\$18 million** in state and local taxes.⁴³ Every dollar invested in this new campaign generated \$72 in visitor spending and \$7 in tax revenue, all benefitting New Mexico residents.⁴⁴

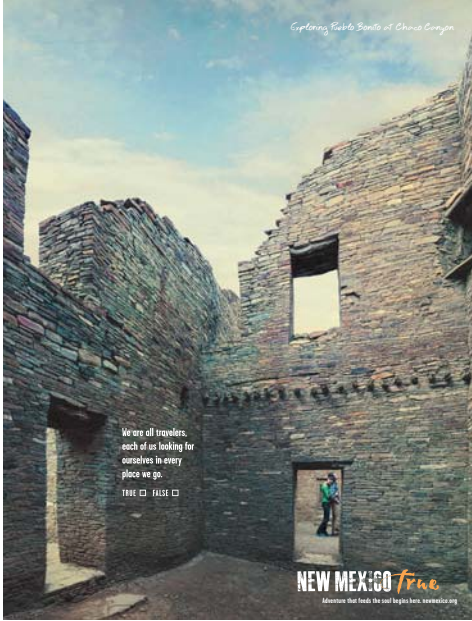
The campaign also boosted perceptions of New Mexico as a good place to start a career, build a business, attend college or purchase a vacation home. In fact, after visiting New Mexico, positive perceptions of the state increased even more. The “New Mexico True” campaign showed people across the country that the Land of Enchantment is much more than just a vacation destination.



Photos Courtesy of New Mexico Tourism Department.

“New Mexico True” Impact on Economic Development Image





Tourism is such a crucial part of our efforts to diversify the economy in communities large and small throughout the state. As we continue to shatter tourism records, it shows that our “New Mexico True” campaign is not only working, it’s a very strong success.

“We’ve known that increases in tourism mean more jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector, and we’ve known that “New Mexico True” does a great job showing what our state has to offer visitors. What we didn’t know until now is how beneficial “New Mexico True” advertising, and the tourism industry as a whole, are to the larger picture of economic development.”

–New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez (July 23, 2015)

Following record-breaking tourism growth and a 45-percent increase in marketable overnight trips since 2010, the travel industry is now a leader in job growth in the state.⁴⁵ In 2014 alone, the travel industry created **2,200 additional jobs**, up 8 percent from 2010.⁴⁶ Visitor spending increased 4.5 percent, surpassing the all-time high of \$6 billion.⁴⁷

Top public officials have praised “New Mexico True’s” success. Governor Susana Martinez credits the campaign for helping New Mexico “shatter tourism records” and boosting “the larger picture of economic development.” As a result of the campaign’s tremendous return on investment (ROI), legislators and tourism officials have preliminarily dedicated \$9.6 million to the advertising budget in FY 2017—more than four times greater than the FY 2010-11 budget.⁴⁸

Since the start of the campaign in FY 2010 through FY 2014-15, New Mexico has seen a 264-percent increase for advertising and promotion funding⁴⁹—significantly higher than the 48-percent increase of U.S. states’ overall budgets.⁵⁰ New Mexico justified the initial expense of campaign development with

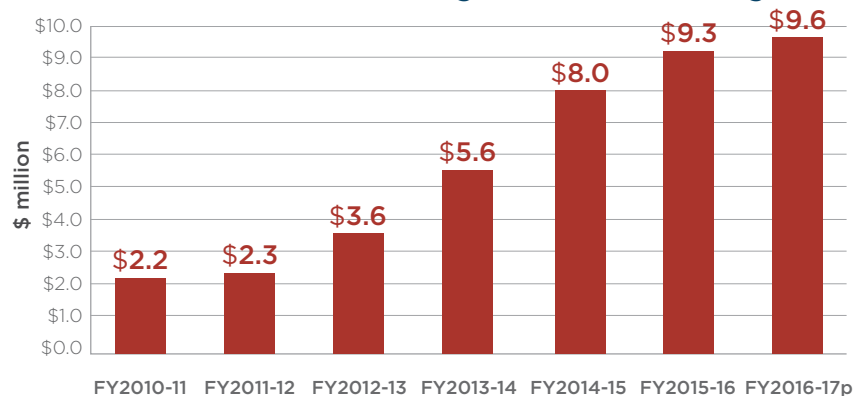
increased ROI, jobs and positive economic impact.

The “New Mexico True” campaign successfully positions New Mexico as a great place to visit, work and live.

Today local products use the “New Mexico True” brand to highlight businesses that are “uniquely New Mexican.” The success of this effort demonstrates how smart investment in tourism marketing not only can boost travel and tourism, but also improve the image of an entire state.



New Mexico Advertising and Promotion Budget



SOURCE: U.S. Travel Association and New Mexico Tourism Department.