

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Note to editors:**

*Images of volunteers at all work sites are available*

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**THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY PITCHES IN AND SHINES THE SPOTLIGHT ON SAN PEDRO**

*300 volunteers revitalize tourism attractions along the LA Waterfront, including Battleship IOWA*

**Los Angeles, CA —Nov. 14, 2014** —Three-hundred travel professionals from 25 states and nearly 80 companies joined together along the LA Waterfront and throughout historic harbor communities of San Pedro and Wilmington. Through an organization called Tourism Cares, their aim is to give back to a number of tourist destinations that support L.A.'s tourism industry, including the LA Waterfront's popular Battleship IOWA attractions.

Discovered by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in 1542, San Pedro Bay has always been central to trade and growth of the Southern California region, from its early Spanish missionary trading post days to being one of America's busiest ports. Historic landmarks dot the harbor, from the Korean Friendship Bell and the Los Angeles Maritime Museum, to World War II ships such as the S.S. Lane Victory and the headliner, the Battleship IOWA. There is also the grandeur of nearby Catalina Island.

More than 1.5 million visitors see the LA Waterfront every year, including a large number of cruise passengers. Tourism Cares' goals are to support local efforts to increase this number, through our volunteer projects and by reminding Los Angeles and the country of the remarkable historic and cultural treasures that can be discovered and experienced in and around the LA Waterfront.

For the Battleship IOWA, Tourism Cares will be supporting their goal to boost annual visitation from a projected 200,000 to 300,000, revisiting the level of excitement and visitation seen when this iconic ship came out of mothballs and first opened in Dec. 2011.

"We are thrilled to be able to contribute to the health, appreciation and vitality of San Pedro by sharing it with the Tourism Cares community", said Mike Rea, CEO, Tourism Cares. "Through our volunteer labor but also our media and marketing, we hope to start to modernize perceptions of San Pedro and promote the larger LA Waterfront area as a destination with many visitor offerings. There's so much to discover, and much more is clearly to come as the area's renaissance continues."

Volunteers divided into groups and together donated more than \$50,000 in volunteer labor to work sites [Battleship IOWA](#), [S.S. Lane Victory](#), [White Point Nature Preserve](#), [Korean Friendship Bell](#), and [Banning Museum](#) in Wilmington. Work projects ranged from painting and cleaning soon-to-open exhibits aboard the ships, to planting native species and removing invasives among the 102 acres at

White Point, adding a coat of wax to the Friendship Bell to preserve it from the harsh salt from the Pacific, and participating in a massive stagecoach barn cleaning at the historic Banning home. On the USS IOWA volunteers worked on 2nd level deck, which included the mess, post office and barber shop, helping to reopen a portion of the ship to visitors that was the hub of life aboard ship.

“We, at the Battleship Iowa, take great pride in being part of the LA Waterfront community,” said Jonathan Williams, president and CEO of Battleship IOWA. “We have worked tirelessly to create a venue that offers our visitors a memorable experience and celebrates the American Spirit. We hope that we can continue to stand as a beacon for the revitalization of the LA Waterfront into the future.”

Volunteers from across the country are working side-by-side with California travel and tourism industry employees including large groups from the Los Angeles Convention and Tourism Board, Delta, The Travel Corporation and Viking River Cruises.

“L.A. Tourism is honored to be working alongside Tourism Cares and fellow travel industry peers on this initiative in support of the LA Waterfront,” said Ernest Wooden Jr., President and CEO of Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board. “It is important for tourism to maintain and restore landmarks, such as those found on the LA Waterfront for the education and enjoyment of our visitors today and into the future.”

Additionally, volunteers will continue in their good works by volunteering again on Saturday, Nov. 15 on Catalina Island. Seventy-five volunteers will work alongside Catalina Island Conservancy staff to assist in a number of priority projects at the Conservancy’s Wrigley Memorial & Botanic Garden, Ben Weston Beach, Ackerman Native Plant Nursery/Seed Bank and more within the interior of the island. Located 22 miles from Los Angeles, Catalina Island is truly a jewel of the Pacific. The Catalina Island Conservancy is one of the oldest private land trusts in Southern California, protecting 88 percent of Catalina Island, including more than 62 miles of unspoiled beaches and secluded coves. Catalina Island is home to more than 60 plant, animal and insect species found nowhere else in the world and is visited by more than one million people annually.

“We appreciate the hard work and dedication of Tourism Cares and its volunteers,” said Ann M. Muscat, PhD, Catalina Island Conservancy president and CEO. “With the help of volunteers like these, the Conservancy can protect and restore Catalina’s magnificent natural and cultural heritage.”

Tourism Cares is grateful to *Delta Air Lines, Viking Cruises, U.S.Travel Association, The Travel Corporation, Trip Mate, Signature Travel Network, MaCher, USTOA, American Bus Association, NTA, Hostelling International USA, Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board, Port of Los Angeles, Pacific Battleship Center/ Battleship IOWA, Catalina Island Conservancy, Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, Korean Friendship Bell Preservation Committee, Banning Museum, S.S. Lane Victory, San Pedro Historic Waterfront Business Improvement District (PBID), Los Angeles Parks & Recreation, Ports of Call Restaurant and The Coca-Cola Company.*

### **History of the “Tourism Cares for America” program**

Created in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, Tourism Cares for America brings together the tourism industry to give back to American icons in need of care. Volunteer restorations have united nearly 4,000 travel industry professionals who have donated 31,189 hours at a value of \$600,000 at culturally and historically significant destinations such as Ellis Island, New Orleans, Biloxi, Gulfport, Gettysburg, Valley Forge, Plymouth, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, and the Grand Canyon.

### **Tourism Cares announces 2015 program calendar**

Tourism Cares is pleased to announce its two volunteer projects for 2015:

Tourism Cares for Hallowed Ground, Leesburg, VA May 7 & 8, 2015

Tourism Cares for Arizona Icons (including the Grand Canyon), Williams, AZ Nov 1 & 2, 2015

**About Tourism Cares**

Tourism Cares preserves and enhances the travel experience for future generations.

We channel the philanthropic passion and commitment of the travel industry to protect and restore valuable destinations we all care about—and to support those destinations as engines for prosperity, civil society, and pride in their communities. Our domestic programs focus on industry-wide volunteer events, capacity building for the nonprofit stewards of tourism sites, and scholarships and mentoring to support a talented workforce. Globally, our efforts include corporate social responsibility partnerships, strategic investments, and advocacy and education across the travel industry. For more: [www.TourismCares.org](http://www.TourismCares.org).