

National Park Service



American - Made Products and Handicrafts in Concession Retail Stores

Concessions Management Advisory Board Meeting
March, 2008

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Legislative Background



- Section 416 of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-391) encourages the sale of authentic US Indian, Alaska Native, Native Samoan, and Native Hawaiian handicrafts relating to the cultural, historical, and geographic characteristics of units of the national park system, and exempts such sales from franchise fees.
- House Report 109-108 directed NPS to explore ways to encourage the sale by concessioners of authentic American Made souvenirs, and required a report.

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Action Overview

- NPS and NPHA developed a retail questionnaire and conducted a survey of NPS concession retail operations
- Survey gathered a snapshot of American Made and American handcraft merchandise and sales
- Retail merchandise buying patterns and merchandise sources for concession retail stores
- Report developed and sent to Congress in 2007

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Survey Report Highlights:

- American Made merchandise, American and Native American handicrafts represent 65 percent of the annual concession retail stores gross sales
- 70% of NPS concession retail stores sell American handicrafts with the majority of the handicraft items handmade by American craftspeople
- American and/or Native American handicrafts are required to be labeled as such and also carry interpretive information

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'American Made' Retail Challenges:

- Label issue: It is not always clear whether a product is 'Made in America.'
 - Tee shirts are assembled abroad using US cotton, and then "finished" (silk screened and/or embroidered) in the U.S.
 - American vendors import blank gift items (mugs, magnets) which are finished in the US – embroidered, silk-screen, decals, glazing, painted, etc.
- Item Availability: Certain items are no longer manufactured in the United States.
 - More than 90 percent of all apparel sold in the US is imported
 - 98 percent of all footwear sold in US is imported

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Concessioner Concerns:

- Retail concessions in National Parks will be at a competitive disadvantage if they are required to sell only 'Made in America' products, while vendors outside the park boundaries are unrestricted
- Sales cost of merchandise for park visitor will increase sharply
- Sales item selection and purchase price points limited
- Retail sales volume will be reduced

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NPS Follow-Up Activities:

- Work with concessioners to encourage more 'Made in America' signage and include more American Made merchandise in retail sales inventory
- Encourage concessioners to "site label" products as 'Finished in America' or 'Made in America' as accurate
- Encourage concessioners to seek American Made and American Handicraft items at gift trade shows, and from local and regional handicraft artisans
- Work with the Indian Arts and Crafts Board (IACB) to add a vendor item labeling requirement to the current Native American handicraft regulations (36 CFR 51.83) to assist with the identification of authentic Native American art and handicrafts.

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Next Steps:

- NPS strongly supports American Made products
- NPS Concession Program encourages park concessioners to offer American Made retail products and handicrafts where possible and reasonable
- NPS will meet with NPHA to discuss additional American Made initiatives and help develop Best Practices for retail signage/labeling
- Work with Concessions Management Advisory Board to seek additional recommendations on American Made issue

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Questions?