**Denight: Guam needs more hotel rooms**

Buenas yan hafa adai! This past week, the Guam Visitors Bureau team was in Taiwan for two important events — the International Travel Fair, the largest travel expo in Taiwan for consumers, media and agents and to be a part of Gov. Eddie Calvo’s economic trade mission delegation.

More than 350,000 people attend the ITF each year, making it one of the largest travel shows GVB attends. Our Guam booth is always one of the biggest and most attractive, thanks to our GVB members and cultural demonstrations. We also maximize our time to meet with key travel agents and airlines that promote Guam.

Taiwan is currently Guam’s third-largest visitor source market, but it still has lots of potential for growth. Moreover, there has been much investment in Guam from Taiwan, with several large pieces of beachfront land being acquired by Taiwanese companies. Gov. Calvo, the Guam Economic Development Authority and GVB met with several of these companies to encourage them to develop their properties, which is in line with the third objective of the Tourism 2020 strategic plan — to add hotel rooms and incentivize reinvestment.

Our vision is to increase Guam’s hotel room inventory to 10,091 rooms by 2020, to be able to have sufficient capacity to meet a target of 1.75 million visitors without a China visa waiver. Today, Guam offers travelers a variety of accommodations from 34 hotels with a total of 9,244 hotel rooms.

**READ MORE:**

[Updating Guam's Tourism 2020 plan](http://www.guampdn.com/story/opinion/columnists/2017/10/23/updating-guams-tourism-2020-plan-1024/788079001/)

[Denight: Improving our island begins with its product](http://www.guampdn.com/story/opinion/columnists/2017/10/16/improving-our-island-begins-its-product/765778001/)

So what does that mean for you? Every new hotel brings hundreds of jobs for our local people. When the Dusit Thani opened its doors in 2015, it provided more than 400 new jobs. When the new Tsubaki Tower opens in 2019, it will provide 350 new jobs for the local community. I’m proud of the fact that Guam’s tourism industry now supports more than 21,000 jobs for Guam, or one in every three.

In 2014, the Guam Economic Development Authority created the Special Hotel Qualifying Certificate Program, which was passed into law by the Guam Legislature. This was in response to the Tourism 2020 plan and in support of developing 1,600 new hotel rooms by the year 2020. The QC program welcomes developers and owners to apply for a tax relief that equals to 10 percent of total construction costs. This program is a great tool to encourage new development on Guam.

Unfortunately, the lack of H-2 workers is making it almost impossible to build new hotels. Gov. Calvo is doing everything he can to work with the federal government on this issue.

We applaud our tourism partners who have recently completed extensive improvement projects and appeal to all stakeholders to continue to invest in their products. We believe a quality-minded approach to Guam’s tourism future will positively impact our economy. Best of all, when properties invest in their product, it is an investment in our island and its people.

Next week, I’ll talk about the fourth objective of Tourism 2020 – focusing on the MICE market.

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