

FIELD OFFICE3845 NW 25th Street
Miami, Florida 33142www.micdot.com
1 888 838 5355**Miami Intermodal Center****News Clip**From: *Miami Today*, Thursday, April 29, 2010Subject: **Joint marketing effort has \$4 million with new phase to launch in summer**Provided by: Jenine Spoliansky, Kommunikatz, Inc.
jspoliansky@kommunikatz.com

Joint marketing effort has \$4 million with new phase to launch in summer

BY MARILYN BOWDEN

Miami's cosmopolitan-tropical ambience is its trump card in competing with southeastern US and Caribbean destinations for summer travelers, backed by a major marketing campaign funded by a partnership among some of the county's major institutions.

"There are lots of great tropical destinations, but many don't provide the cosmopolitan experience," said Rolando Aedo, senior vice president of marketing & tourism at the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau.

"Many of the great cultural destinations don't have that tropical element. We feel Miami is the perfect combination of tropical and cosmopolitan. That gives us our competitive advantage."

With room rates down, the bureau, which relies on resort tax revenues for its marketing funds, doesn't have the budget it once enjoyed, but through a joint marketing program with the Beacon Council, American Airlines, Miami International Airport, Port of Miami, Miami-Dade County, Miami's Downtown Development Authority and Baptist Health Systems it's committing more resources than ever to keep the recovery going.

"We've jointly committed \$4 million in marketing around the world," Mr. Aedo said. "We just completed phase 2 in New York last month, and we're looking to renew and launch phase 3 this summer."

"This partnership has given us a huge advantage. I can't overstate how critical it's been doing a down period. It's allowed us to expand our marketing despite our own spending pare-down due to the decrease in tax revenues."

It seems to be working, he said: in the first quarter of 2010, Miami led the country in hotel occupancy percentage and placed either first or

second behind New York in every other industry metric.

Mr. Aedo said the bureau closely watches its market share versus competing destinations, and "even in the last couple of years, we were able to increase market share during down times, at the expense of other destinations."

Located at the bottom of the state, a longish drive from the rest of the country, Miami has always relied heavily on air traffic, he said: more than 90% of visitors arrive by air.

"Another thing that helps grow our market share," Mr. Aedo said, "is the strength of our air service. Last year, when service to most cities was cut back, Miami actually added flights. Our lift is unmatched by any Caribbean destination."

For example, he said, American Airlines expanded its Latin American-Caribbean Region service in Miami.

The Miami Intermodal Center, a massive ground transportation hub under construction next to Miami International Airport, also will enhance Miami's attraction, Mr. Aedo said.

"I can't express how important that is from our perspective," he said. "For the first time ever, people will be able to get to downtown from the airport via monorail. We will outshine other airports in the region."

For travelers from other parts of the US, Mr. Aedo said, Miami offers value in difficult economic times. Market research, he said, shows the likelihood that first-time visitors to the area will return is 90%.

"The reality is that we are still in somewhat uncertain times," he said, "and people are extremely value-conscious. But they still want a great experience. They can come to Miami and enjoy our cosmopolitan, tropical-infused experience without having to leave the country. We are no longer a seasonal destination."