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Statement to the
Joint Committee on Senate Commerce and House Economic Development & Tourism
January 30, 2008
By Mary Arlington, Executive Director

Committee Chairs Brownlee, Jordan and Gordon, and members of the Senate Commerce Committee and House Economic Development & Tourism Committee,

I'm writing to you on behalf of the members of our association, who are all small business owners of RV parks and campgrounds. We cater to the needs of the Kansas tourists who prefer to spend their nights in RVs or tents.

- Our outdoor hospitality caters to the needs of 7.92 million RVs (motorhomes, travel trailers, fifth-wheel trailers, truck campers, and folding camper trailers).

- The state of Kansas is stereo-typically referred to as the drive-through state. Like all of us in the tourism sector, we prefer they stop for a night, if not several.

- In 2004 our customers left behind an average of $324.39 per campsite on a holiday weekend (according to a survey by the National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds).

- Every night they spend in Kansas equates to more money being left behind in a Kansas campgrounds, restaurants, attractions, stores, service centers, and gas stations.

- The National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds reports that Colorado was the first most desired destination for all active campers (The American Camper: Profiles & Perspectives; by Yesawich, Pepperdien, Brown & Russell, 2005).

Given the number of families who camp, and with their statistical spending habits, this sector of tourism is a significant factor to many businesses in Kansas. However, without our state properly funding and supporting the tourism sector and properly investing in tourism marketing opportunities, we will remain a pass-through state, allowing our surrounding states to capture RV tourism dollars.

Kansas tourism deserves a much larger return on its investment than we have historically witnessed. I urge you to make the Kansas Tourism Initiative a reality.