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THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



Is Southern New Jersey Tourism's Main Season Set to Rebound to Pre-recession Levels?

Stockton's Levenson Institute to Offer Insights as Visitors Make Their Annual Vacation Plans

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Galloway Township, NJ- Is the southern New Jersey Shore's economy ready for a major rebound as the tourism and hospitality industries gear up for the main season?

"Despite record gas prices and continued uncertainty about the general state of the economy, we are seeing signs the Jersey Shore is going to have some bounce this spring and summer," said Israel Posner, executive director of the Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality and Tourism (LIGHT) of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

On Wednesday May 11 from 8:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., the Levenson Institute will offer a unique insider's look at the regional economy when it hosts the annual Jersey Shorecast. The event takes place at Stockton's Carnegie Library Center at Pacific Avenue and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Although the event is free and open to the public, pre-registration is required as seating is limited. Call 609-347-2175 or email light@stockton.edu to register.

Now in its third year, the Shorecast has become one of the region's most anticipated events for followers of the region's business and economic trends. Stockton faculty members team with tourism and hospitality industry representatives for a candid, fast-paced and insightful look at questions such as: Will day-trippers, vacationers and casino patrons make 2011 a banner year? How does the overall economy affect travel and tourism? How are summer rentals, hotel and motel bookings shaping up? And what about those skyrocketing gas prices?

"At first glance one might think gas prices could be a deterrent," Posner said, "however the Jersey Shore still is close by for a huge segment of the United States population. One tank of gas is still relatively inexpensive for travel these days. What's more, we are coming off a very difficult winter with regard to the weather, and people who stayed home last summer may

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be ready to come back. The Jersey Shore holds a strong emotional pull for generations of visitors. There could be pent-up demand from folks who stayed home or visited less than usual in 2009 or 2010.”

Posner said the region survived the worst period of the economic downturn during the past several years, and last year’s Shorecast - which called for cautious optimism - was on-point as a minor upturn in business may have foreshadowed an even stronger comeback for this year. He said published reports have indicated advance bookings of vacations and events are ahead of last year’s levels at this time.

“It will be interesting to hear what our panelists have to say about the prospects for this year’s tourism season, as we have a diverse group lined up.” Posner added.

The Shorecast panelists include Stockton faculty members Dr. Oliver Cooke, associate professor of economics and Dr. Brian Tyrrell, associate professor of hospitality and tourism management studies. Also on hand will be Vicki Clarke, president of the Cape May Chamber of Commerce; Michele Gillian, executive director of the Ocean City Chamber of Commerce; Lori Pepenella, director of destination marketing at the Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce; and George Lynn, President Emeritus of AtlantiCare, representing the Greater Atlantic City Region Chamber of Commerce.

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