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**(S.D.)- SD Tourism Officials Look To Lure Chinese Visitors**



By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 07/10/2013 11:09 AM

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) - The South Dakota Department of Tourism is hoping to draw Chinese visitors to the Mount Rushmore state.

South Dakota tourism officials recently hosted the first-ever Chinese familiarization tour of the state for Chinese tour operators. The 12 participants visited Rapid City, Badlands National Park, Sturgis, Deadwood, Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Crazy Horse Memorial and Custer State Park.

Tourism Secretary Jim Hagen says the U.S. and South Dakota continue to see increased numbers of international visitors. He says the recent tour allowed South Dakota tourism officials to reach out to China as a new market.

According to the World Tourism Organization, Chinese visitors are now the top source of tourism spending in the world.