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OSCAR SUCCESS FOR BRITISH TOURISM?

With this year's hotly contested Academy Awards at the weekend, Britain's tourism industry is expecting another successful year for film tourism. Already a multi-award-winner, tourism chiefs believe *The Queen's* six Oscar nominations could help increase Britain's appeal as a set-jetter's paradise.

The Awards are announced at the perfect time for Britain with the country's first British Tourism Week (www.britishtourismweek.com) from 12 to 18 March 2007. Film tourism or 'set-jetting' is an increasingly popular holiday option with 40% of potential visitors "very likely" to visit places from films or TV. International acclaim for *The Queen* – and its release on DVD on 12 March – could raise awareness of the importance of Britain's £74 billion visitor economy.

Tom Wright, chief executive of national tourism agency VisitBritain, says: "If the right film is chosen, it can act as free advertising for a destination, location or attraction; shown to millions of people around the world and whenever they watch the DVD. Showcasing destinations through film helps maintain the enduring popularity of our beautiful landscapes and countryside, centuries of history, iconic characters, actors and actresses and literary greats."

British tourism is expecting a double whammy from *The Queen* because of the royal locations that appear on screen and the film's resonance with Britain's royal heritage appeal. 82% of potential visitors would be most likely to 'sightsee famous monuments or buildings' on a visit to Britain, while 46% of Britons enjoy heritage sites and castles while on holiday.

Every year millions of visitors from Britain and overseas enjoy places and events associated with the royal family and earlier kings and queens. Pageantry and royalty have been an intrinsic part of the British tourism experience since the early days of the industry and there are no signs that interest is waning. The top five royal attractions in the country alone account for 3.8 million visits each year. As well featuring popular tourist spots in London – such as 10 Downing Street and Buckingham Palace – Culzean Castle, Blairquhan Castle and Waddesdon Manor appear in *The Queen*.

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As patron of British Tourism Week, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is undertaking a series of engagements on Monday 12 March in London and in Wales on Friday 16 March to draw further national and international attention to the size, value and importance of the tourism industry.

Stephen Dowd, chairman of British Tourism Week and chief executive of inbound tourism trade body UKinbound, says: "Our unique royal heritage is critically important to Britain's visitor economy. His Royal Highness' interests in heritage and in many of the quintessential elements that constitute Britain's tourism brand, make him a perfect ambassador for tourism.

"Royal recognition of the importance of British Tourism Week will help us redefine both the image and the reality of British tourism in the important years ahead."

London's first international film tourism conference takes place at BAFTA on Friday 16 March in addition to the three national events at the centre of British Tourism Week: VisitBritain's British Travel Trade Fair (13-14 March 2007), UKinbound's 30th Anniversary Convention (14-15 March 2007) and the Tourism Alliance Annual Event (12 March 2007).

Visit www.britishtourismweek.com for further information.

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Notes to Editors

- British Tourism Week (12-18 March 2007) has been established to demonstrate the critical value of tourism to the economy of the United Kingdom. Through a week of events throughout the UK it will:
 - Increase awareness of the success and importance of the tourism industry
 - Raise quality standards
 - Promote training and professionalism
 - Improve competitiveness of the UK tourism industry
 - Support the preparations for hosting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

