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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PREPARE FOR TAKE-OFF AT THE WISCONSIN GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM

Shirley, we're not kidding - pop culture history is made as "Airplane!" stars reunite to promote Wisconsin; Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Robert Hays, the Zucker brothers and Jim Abrahams premiere new aerial ads

MADISON, Wis. (March 3, 2014) — Buckle your seat belts, put your tray tables up and move your seats to their upright positions - NBA legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and actor Robert Hays, stars of the 1980 comedy classic "Airplane!" are taking people on a tour of Wisconsin in a zany new set of aerial flyover 30-second TV ads for the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. And in the commercial, Kareem, when viewing the beauty of the state says, "I can't believe I ever left this place," a humorous reference to his departure from the Milwaukee Bucks to the Los Angeles Lakers in 1975.

The new summer, fall and winter spots premiered today at the Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Tourism (WIGCOT) and include seasonal aerial footage of Wisconsin along with some new scenes filmed in the original cockpit of the movie. The spots also reunited Wisconsin natives and "Airplane!" writers and directors David and Jerry Zucker and Jim Abrahams.



"Roger Murdock" (Kareem Abdul-Jabbar), "Ted Striker" (Robert Hays) and Otto Pilot in the original "Airplane!" cockpit during the shoot of the new aerial ads for the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. The ads premiered today at WIGCOT.

Abdul-Jabbar, Hays, the Zuckers, Abrahams and Otto Pilot unveiled the ads along with Wisconsin Tourism Secretary Stephanie Klett at the conference.

"Wisconsin is blessed to have so much to offer visitors," said Klett. "We're so fortunate to have Wisconsin talent, a former Milwaukee Buck and NBA legend and a Hollywood star lend their talents to showcase the beauty of Wisconsin in a fun and memorable way."

For the NBA's all-time leading scorer, participating in the commercials was a slam-dunk. "I started my NBA career in Wisconsin and I still hold many fond memories of the state and its people," said Kareem. "It's always fun to put on the pilot's uniform and reprise the Roger Murdock character."

Hays said returning to the cockpit with Kareem was great fun. "I was calm, cool and collected during the filming and did not have to return to my old drinking problem."

The summer spot will run on local markets and in cinemas May 12 through July 24 throughout Wisconsin, Chicago, Twin Cities, and Cedar Rapids and from late-June to late-July in the Quad Cities. The ad will also air at Milwaukee Bucks games during the month of March. Other summer campaign components include radio, out of home, print, social media and public relations. In addition, Otto Pilot will blog for Travel Wisconsin and make appearances at various events to provide user engagement with the campaign.

As for the directors of the ad, they were more than excited to be back. "We love our home state of Wisconsin and we're happy to promote it whenever we can. Go Packers! Go Bucks! Go Brewers!" said Zucker, Zucker and Abrahams in unison.

The summer spot is [available to download in high resolution](#) and can also be found on the [Travel Wisconsin YouTube page](#). The fall and winter spots were previewed during WIGCOT and will debut in the coming seasons in select markets.

Milwaukee-based Laughlin Constable is the marketing agency of record for the Wisconsin Department of Tourism.

The mission of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism is to market the state as the Midwest's premier travel destination by executing industry-leading marketing programs and establishing strategic partnerships. The Department plays a significant role in generating greater economic impact and jobs for Wisconsin. The portal for traveler information can be found at www.travelwisconsin.com.

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"Airplane!" directors and cast members David Zucker, Robert Hays, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Jerry Zucker and Jim Abrahams reunited to shoot Wisconsin tourism ads after 30 years.