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an electronic bulletin from
Tourism Partnership North Wales

Short breaks provide long-term boost

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Tourism bosses in North Wales are poised to take advantage of the growing popularity of staycations.

The recession and the weakness of the pound mean that fewer people are taking foreign holidays – and are instead opting for a short break closer to home.

Tourism Partnership North Wales, the body responsible for the strategic development of the region's visitor economy, is planning a major campaign to promote short breaks here.

Even before the credit crunch, short breaks were developing into an increasingly important dimension of the visitor economy but the recession has accelerated the trend.

Tourism Partnership is now investing £25,000 in the online campaign and is confident of reaping a £500,000 return.

That's the equivalent of generating £20 for every £1 being spent by Tourism Partnership.

Marketing Executive Carole Startin explained: "Short breaks have been a growing market for at least four or five years which is why we have been concentrating on them instead of traditional holiday packages.

"We are still doing niche marketing when it comes to things like golf, gardens, walking and adventure but generic short breaks now make up 80 per cent of the UK market.

"Short breaks support so many of our other campaigns. Apart from the day visitor market for attractions, we are always looking at ways of persuading people to stay over and spend more time here.

"We don't print a short breaks brochure because our efforts are now 100 per cent online.

"We have the website www.breaksnorthwales.co.uk and visitors can book online 24/7 with the 100 plus accommodation providers who are on there – and it's working well.

"The Internet is now the first port of call for everybody investigating where they want to go.

"In relation to accommodation, they not only do their research online they also book online.

According to Ms Startin, more and more people were deciding to have a staycation instead of jetting off to Europe or further afield because the weak pound made overseas holidays significantly more expensive.

Rather than sacrifice their annual holidays, people were choosing to take more short breaks or staycations in the UK.

Ms Startin added: "Certainly, most



accommodation providers, attractions and various tourism-related businesses in North Wales have had a good year which is bucking the trend.

“People are reluctant to give up all their holidays and short breaks are becoming a more attractive option.

“Holidays are not now a luxury, they are a stress-busting necessity for most people and our aim is to make sure that more and more of them are rediscovering the delights of North Wales.

“Part of our repositioning of North Wales is that we are no longer the long-stay holiday of bygone years – we are targeting the short breaks market.

“We are striving to become the adventure capital of North Wales but there is so much more to the region than seeking out thrills and spills.

“People are absolutely amazed how much there is to do here and one of our challenges is getting that across to potential visitors.

“For 2010, we are focusing a lot more on bringing in business, getting the short breaks brand out there – using PR to get stories out there and using database marketing.

“We will be targeting people from the North West, the North East, the Midlands and the Home Counties who are interested in leisure breaks in the UK.

“We will be emailing them information about the offers we have in North Wales around school holidays, Easter and other Bank Holidays.

“The website is constantly kept up to date and

we are doing a lot more in relation to search engine optimization to make sure we’re coming higher up the rankings on Google.

“The website will also be a one-stop shop for people who want to order a brochure for any of our North Wales campaigns.

“We are we are aiming to get 130,000 visitors to the Short Breaks website in 2010 which is an increase of 300 per cent on this year.

“We will also be measuring the click through rate in relation to the people who translate that initial

interest into bookings by clicking on the website’s booking tag.

“Over the next couple of years, the reduction of consumer confidence in the economy will again increase the number of people taking a holiday in the UK and Short Breaks North Wales will be seeking to take advantage of this trend.”

