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**For Immediate Release:**

**Giant Sequoia Trees Rank in Top 25 in 8<sup>th</sup> Wonder of the World Contest**

*Visalia, California* (September 12, 2013)—The Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau announced today that the current standings for the quest to crown the “8<sup>th</sup> Wonder of the World” have been released to contest participants. VirtualTourist.com has provided contest standing updates via email to all contestants over the course of the competition. The Bureau received a final update, before the winner is announced, early this week. Thanks to public voting, the Sequoias currently rank in the top 25 out of over 300 nominations. While an exact ranking is unknown, the Giant Sequoias remain somewhere between 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> place based on VirtualTourist’s ranking categories. The Bureau nominated the Giant Sequoia Trees as a candidate for the honor this past June. Giant Sequoias, the largest living things on earth, stand nearly 300 feet tall and are 2,300 + years old, making the trees and National Parks both a national treasure and ultimate playground.

Public voting is now open at VirtualTourist.com, a leading travel research website and community that is a part of Trip Advisor Media Group. The public is encouraged to vote for the Giant Sequoias each day until September 30<sup>th</sup> through [www.VirtualTourist.com](http://www.VirtualTourist.com) or through the Bureau’s website at [www.VisitVisalia.org](http://www.VisitVisalia.org). The winner will be featured in a national broadcast TV segment on a popular syndicated program, as well as receive a massive media relations campaign push from VirtualTourist. The winner of the competition will be notified in early October, and a global announcement will be made mid-October.

**About the Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau**

The Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau ([www.visitvisalia.org](http://www.visitvisalia.org)) is a non-profit organization developed as the region's premier marketing engine that promotes Visalia's world-class assets to leisure visitors, travel trade, and convention businesses. The Bureau works to ensure the cities' economic vitality by generating awareness, new business and leisure travel activity through sales and service, hospitality, marketing and communication. As a regional tourist and meeting destination that features some of California's finest cuisine, boutique shopping and convenience for many travelers, Visalia is quickly becoming one of California's meeting and visitor hotspots. The VCVB is governed by a 17 member board, and partners with travel suppliers and industry leaders throughout the Central Valley to market our destination.

**About VirtualTourist.com**

VirtualTourist.com® is one of the largest online travel communities in the world and a premier resource for travelers seeking an insider perspective. Boasting close to 2 million travel reviews and over 4 million photos of 61,000 destinations worldwide from 1.3 million members, VirtualTourist (<http://www.virtualtourist.com>) attracts 8 million unique visitors per month. Unbiased, respected, insider advice on Hotels, Things to Do, Transportation, Favorites and more is posted entirely by VirtualTourist’s membership from more than 220 countries and territories. Virtual Tourist is a subsidiary of TripAdvisor, Inc.

**About TripAdvisor**

TripAdvisor is the world's largest travel site\*, enabling travelers to plan and have the perfect trip. TripAdvisor offers trusted advice from real travelers and a wide variety of travel choices and planning features with seamless links to booking tools. TripAdvisor branded sites make up the largest travel community in the world, with more than 200 million unique monthly visitors\*\*, and over 100 million reviews and opinions. The sites operate in 30 countries worldwide, including China under [daodao.com](http://daodao.com). TripAdvisor also includes TripAdvisor for Business, a dedicated division that provides the tourism industry access to millions of monthly TripAdvisor visitors.