

# Landmarks Create US City's Identity & Image

## What's Your City's Claim to Fame?

By Jeff Coy, ISHC

Orlando is the number one most visited city in the USA with 48 million domestic and international visitors, according to Forbes, followed by New York City, Chicago and Anaheim. OK, I can understand why Orlando is #1. It has landmarks and visual images that are immediately recognizable.



Just say the word Orlando and visual images of Mickey Mouse, the Magic Kingdom, Shamu and thrill rides appear in my mind's eye.

Say New York City and I see images of the Big Apple, the Statue of Liberty, Times Square and Broadway theaters. I can even hear Frank singing, *"these little town blues are melting away."* Mention Chicago, and I see the Sears/Willis Tower and Oprah and I can hear the blues. And when you say Anaheim, I envision all the fun things to see and do at Disneyland, Sea World and Knott's Berry Farm. What's your city's claim to fame?

Top 10 Most Visited US Cities		
Rank	City	Number of Visitors
1	Orlando FL	48,000,000
2	New York City NY	47,000,000
3	Chicago IL	45,580,000
4	Anaheim/Orange County CA	42,700,000
5	Miami FL	38,100,000
6	Las Vegas NV	36,351,469
7	Atlanta GA	35,400,000
8	Houston TX	31,060,000
9	Philadelphia PA	30,320,000
10	San Diego CA	29,600,000

Sources: Forbes, Smith Travel Research & US Travel Association

On the world stage, New York City was the USA's most-visited city in 2010 with 9.7 million international arrivals, according to the World Tourism Organization. The Top 10 Favorites are headed by Paris, London and NYC --- cities with strong architectural icons, nicknames, slogans and songs that are immediately recognizable around the world.

Top 10 Most Visited by International Tourists					
Rank	Country	2010	Rank	City	2010
1	France	76.8 million	1	Paris	15.1 million
2	United State	59.7 million	2	London	14.6 million
3	China	55.7 million	3	New York City	9.7 million
4	Spain	52.7 million	4	Antalya	9.2 million
5	Italy	43.6 million	5	Singapore	9.2 million
6	United Kingdom	28.1 million	6	Kuala Lumpur	8.9 million
7	Turkey	27.0 million	7	Hong Kong	8.4 million
8	Germany	26.9 million	8	Dubai	8.3 million
9	Malaysia	24.6 million	9	Bangkok	7.2 million
10	Mexico	22.4 million	10	Istanbul	6.9 million

Source: World Tourism Organization

Paris has the Eiffel Tower, Arch of Triumph, Notre Dame, Moulin Rouge and Palace of Versailles. London has Big Ben and Tower of London. New York has many visual symbols that project the city's personality and hospitality.

The rest of the world's favorite cities include the emerging destinations of the Middle East and Asia --- evidence of a

blossoming middle class that is traveling the Asian continent and, hopefully, will soon

discover America. Consider the millions of global travelers visiting their favorite cities, such as Antalya, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Dubai, Bangkok and Istanbul.

What's your city's claim to fame? Is your city an attractive place to visit?

## ***Global Travel Market***

Currently, "the USA struggles to attract international guests," according to HotelNewsNow.com, "due in part to a bloated visa process and the lack of a cohesive unified marketing push."

The total number of global travelers grew from 152 million in 2000 to 213 million in 2010, yet the US market share dropped from 17% in 2000 to 12.4% in 2010. Brazil, China and India are the fastest-growing, highest-spending sources of overseas travel to the US, but the wait to even apply for a yearly visa can be 100 days or more." We are talking about a visa to visit the US, spend money, create American jobs and then go back home, not to stay here. This delay results from policies adopted following 9/11 but it doesn't make our country safer; it just makes us look like we can't process visitors effectively.

But according to the US Travel Association, all that is changing fast.

## ***What is Brand USA?***

The Corporation for Travel Promotion is transforming into Brand USA Inc, a public-private partnership created to restore our prominence as a destination in the world. Brand USA is okay as a name, but it is not a marketing strategy. It is not a slogan, it is not a tag line and as a message it communicates nothing. "To me, Brand USA gives no reason for people in China to visit the US," say Ed Watkins, editor of Lodging Hospitality.

The USA needs to establish its brand as a destination in the world. In fact, we have had a strong brand in the past --- we just got off track a bit. Our national mission statement is wrapped up in our monuments, the Statue of Liberty, our Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution and our Bill of Rights. That's who we are! That's Uncle Sam. And Uncle Sam wants you --- to visit America.

## ***USA Top Observation Towers***

To compete for world travelers, our country and our cities need to create an identity and image that can project personality and hospitality --- inviting the world to visit us. Identity and image are built from landmarks, monuments, architectural icons, nicknames, slogans and songs written and sung about our country and our cities. Let's visit a few:

- Stratosphere
- Royal Gorge Bridge
- Tower of the America's

- Gateway Arch
- Space Needle
- JFK Space Center
- Carew Tower
- San Jacinto Monument
- Reunion Tower
- Washington Monument
- Las Vegas Eiffel Tower
- Penobscot Observatory
- Gatlinburg Space Needle
- Jefferson Davis Monument
- Perry's Victory & International Peace Memorial
- Total Tower Overlooking Elitch Gardens
- Statue of Liberty
- Sunsphere Knoxville
- Liberty Memorial
- Coit Tower

Top Observation Towers in the USA									
Name	City	Height feet	Year Open	Rest	Ride	Hotel	Cost to Construct	Annual Attendance	Owner
Stratosphere Tower	Las Vegas NV	1149	1996	X	X	X	\$550,000,000		Whitehall Street RE
Royal Gorge Bridge	Royal Gorge CO	1053	1929		X				Royal Gorge Bridge
Tower of the Americas	San Antonio, TX	750	1968	X	X				
Gateway Arch	St. Louis MO	630	1965		X		\$13,000,000	4,000,000	US National Park Service
Space Needle	Seattle WA	605	1962	X			\$4,500,000	1,300,000	Space Needle Corporation
JFK Space Center Launch Pad	Cape Canaveral, FL	600	2009						NASA
Carew Tower	Cincinnati, OH	574	1929	X		X	\$33,000,000		US National Historic Landmark
San Jacinto Monument	La Porte, TX	567	1939				\$1,500,000	250,000	US National Historic Landmark
Reunion Tower	Dallas TX	560	1978	X		X			
Washington Monument	Washington, DC	555	1884				\$1,187,710	800,000	US National Park Service
Las Vegas Eiffel Tower	Las Vegas NV	540	1999	X	X		\$785,000,000		Caesar's Entertainment
Penobscot Observatory	Penobscot RI	446	2007						
Gatlinburg Space Needle	Gatlinburg TN	407	1970						
Jefferson Davis Monument	Fairview, KY	351	1924				\$200,000		Kentucky State Park
Perry's Victory & Intl Peace Memorial	Put-in-Bay, OH	351	1915					200,000	US National Park Service
Total Tower Elitch Gardens	Denver CO	336							
Statue of Liberty	New York	305	1886						
Sunsphere Knoxville	Knoxville TN	266	1982	X					
Liberty Memorial	Kansas City MO	216	1926						
Coit Tower	San Francisco CA	210	1933						

Source: Jeff Coy, JLC Hospitality Consulting, 480-488-3382. [www.jeffcoy.com](http://www.jeffcoy.com) Rest=Restaurant. Ride=Thrill Ride. Hotel=Hotel Integrated, Attached or On-Site.

**Stratosphere** is a tower, casino and hotel that opened in 1996 in Las Vegas NV. At 1,149 feet high, it is the tallest observation tower in the US. The casino covers 80,000 sq feet and the hotel has 2,427 rooms in a separate 24-story building. At the top of the tower, there are two observation decks, a revolving restaurant known as “Top of the World” and four thrill rides: (1) Big Shot, (2) Insanity, (3) X-Scream and (4) Sky Jump.

Big Shot at 1,081 feet is the highest thrill ride in the world. Strap into the Big Shot and prepare to be shot 160 feet into the air at 45 mph as you overlook Las Vegas. In a matter of seconds, the Big Shot thrill ride catapults 16 riders from the 921-foot high platform up the tower’s mast to a height of 1,081 feet and down again. Before you can catch your breath, you’ll be shot back up again at 4 Gs of force on the way and feel negative Gs on the way down. Cost to ride is \$13.

Insanity the Ride is a mind-blowing experience. It opened in 2005 at 900 feet. It is the second highest thrill ride in the world. A massive mechanical arm extends out 64 feet over



the edge of the Stratosphere Tower at height of over 900 feet. This ride will spin you in the open air at speeds of up to 3 Gs. You will be propelled to an angle of 70 degrees, which will tilt your body into one position --- straight down! If you’re brave enough to keep your eyes open, you’ll get a breathtaking view of historic downtown Las Vegas. Cost to ride is \$12.

X-Scream is the third highest thrill ride in the world. Ever played on a giant teeter-totter 866 feet above the ground? X-Scream propels you and several other riders headfirst 27 feet over the edge of the Stratosphere Casino, Hotel & Tower. You’ll dangled weightlessly above the strip before being pulled back and then propelled back out over the edge again. Cost to ride is \$12.

In January 2010, American Casino & Entertainment Properties announced a fourth thrill ride called SkyJump for the top of the tower. SkyJump is a controlled free fall that sends you jumping off the 108<sup>th</sup> floor at a scream-inducing speed. The bungee jumping-like ride allows riders to plummet 855 feet attached to a high speed, descent wire. It opened on April 20, 2010. Cost to ride is \$110. For more, go to [www.skyjumpllasvegas.com](http://www.skyjumpllasvegas.com).

Stratosphere is owned by Whitehall Street Real Estate Funds, an affiliate of Goldman-Sachs who purchased American Casino & Entertainment Properties in 2008.



**Royal Gorge Bridge & Park** is a tourist attraction near Canon City CO within a 360-acre theme park. Royal Gorge is a natural wonder 2,500 years in the making. The bridge deck



hangs 955 feet above the Arkansas River and held the record of the highest bridge in the world from 1929 until 2003, when it was surpassed by the Beipanjiang River Bridge in China. It is still the highest bridge in North America. Royal Gorge Bridge is suspended from towers that are 150 feet high and runs a length of 1,270 feet. The bridge was constructed in six months during 1929 at a cost of \$350,000, which would be \$15 million today. From 1982-1983 the bridge was renovated to the tune of \$2.8 million.

The bridge owners hosted the television show *That's Incredible* for a group of British bungee jumpers from the Oxford Dangerous Sports Club. In addition, GM filmed a Super Bowl TV commercial at the bridge.

Attractions at the bridge include an Aerial Tram, a Cliff Walk scenic overhang and the Royal Rush Skycoaster, built in 2003 and voted the scariest skycoaster in the world. Three people are harnessed in per ride, starting from a 100-foot tower and traveling up to speeds of 50 mph across the Arkansas River 1,200 feet high. Other attractions include: railroad, carousel, trolley, inclined railway, theater, petting zoo, burro rides, trading post, wildlife park, entertainment pavilion, mule team rides, water clock, trail rides, dog kennels and gun fights.



**Tower of the Americas** in downtown San Antonio, Texas is another observation tower with restaurant and thrill rides. After 18 months of construction, the tower opened at 750 feet as



the themed structure for the 1968 World's Fair. Designed by architect O'Neill Ford, it was the tallest observation tower in the USA from 1968-1996, when the Las Vegas Stratosphere Tower was completed. Two observation decks are accessible by elevator for a fee \$10.95 for adults. At 800 feet per minute, it takes only 43 seconds for the elevators to climb to the top. Three elevators can carry 1,950 passengers per hour. The outdoor observation deck can handle 340 people while the indoor observation area accommodates 500 people.

The top house was constructed on the ground and hoisted, using cables, up to the top of the poured concrete shaft. The revolving top house at the top of the tower is 76 feet tall. It is so well balanced that it takes just a 1 horsepower motor to rotate the structure. The top house consists of a lounge and revolving 250-seat restaurant which occupied 10,150 sq feet. In 2004, Landry's Restaurants Inc won a 15-year lease to manage the tower for the City of San Antonio. Landry's completed an \$8 million renovation of restaurant, lounge and observation deck and added a 4-D "ride" called Skies Over Texas

that gives the history of Texas in a film format. Landry's spent another \$4 million to add ground level attractions, café and gift shop. The tower reopened in 2006 with the new Eyes Over Texas restaurant, which converted to Chart House in 2007. The Skies Over Texas 4-D theater film ride continues to take visitors on a high-flying trip across the Lone Star State, zooming in on such scenes as a Friday night high school football game and working up close with a space shuttle at NASA.

**Gateway Arch** aka the St Louis Arch or Gateway to the West completed construction in 1965 as a monument to the westward expansion of the United States. At 630 feet high, it is the tallest man-made monument in the US. Designed by Finnish-American architect Eero Saarinen and structural engineer Hannskarl Bandel in 1947. Construction period was 32 months, costing US\$13 million at the time or about US\$90 million today. Opened in 1967.



During hard times in 1933, civic leader Luther Ely Smith noticed the crumbling St Louis riverfront and envisioned that building a memorial there would both revive the riverfront and stimulate the economy. He communicated his idea to the mayor who raised it in a meeting with city leaders. They sanctioned the proposal and the non-profit Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Association was formed. Smith was appointed chairman and the mayor vice chairman. Their goal was to create a permanent memorial to the men who made possible the western territorial expansion of the US --- particularly President Jefferson, his aides Livingston and Monroe, the great explorers, Lewis and Clark, and the hunters, trappers, frontiersmen and pioneers who contributed to the accomplishment. In

1934, a bill asking for \$30 million was introduced in the US Congress, but it failed. Joint resolutions establishing a federal commission to develop the memorial also met with opposition. Finally, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a bill into law establishing the US Territorial Expansion Memorial Commission. Design competition guidelines were written in 1935 and the \$30 million budget was set. The Public Works Administration and the Works Progress Administration each promised \$10 million, and it was decided that the National Park Service would manage the memorial. Roosevelt's executive order approved the memorial, designated the first National Historic Site and appropriated the money to acquire the buildings within the historic site --- through condemnation rather than purchase --- and demolish them. Demolition was complete in 1938, and the design competition ran from 1945-1948. It took years to relocate railroads.

Finally, the project broke ground in 1959, and the foundation of the structure was laid in 1961. Construction of the arch itself began in 1963 and completed in 1965. Gateway Arch did not provide 5,000 jobs as expected. As of 1964, workers numbered fewer than 100. The project did, however, lead to other riverfront restoration efforts totaling \$150 million.



More difficult to build than a 62-story skyscraper, the Gateway Arch is an inverted weighted catenary shape --- a chain that supports its own weight. The legs of the arch are bigger than the arch at the top. There are 3 ways to reach the top: two sets of emergency stepping

stairs, a 12-passenger elevator to the 373-foot level and a tram in each leg. Near the top of the arch, passengers exit the tram and climb a slight grade to enter the arched observation area. There are 32 windows (16 per side) each measuring 7 by 27 inches that provide views of St Louis and across the Mississippi River. The observation deck can handle about 160 people --- the capacity of four trams.

**The Seattle Space Needle** is a towering symbol for the City of Seattle and a major landmark for the Pacific Northwest. Located at the Seattle Center, it was built for the 1962 World's Fair. Nearly 20,000 people a day or a total of 2.3 million people used the elevators during the fair. The Space Needle is 605 feet high. When it was completed, it was the tallest structure west of the Mississippi River. In some photos the Space Needle appears higher than Seattle's skyscrapers --- that's because it is located in a prominent position nearly one mile northwest of downtown.

The Space Needle features an observation deck at 520 feet and the rotating SkyCity Restaurant at 500 feet. Visitors reach the top in 43 seconds via elevators. In 1993, new computerized elevators were installed. The new elevators descend at a rate of 10 mph or 15 feet per second. About 1.3 million tourists visit the observation tower annually at an average ticket price of \$16.

Hotelier Ed Carlson, president of Westin International and chairman of the 1962 Seattle World's Fair had the idea for erecting a tower with a

restaurant after a visit to see Stuttgart Tower in Germany. John Graham Jr got involved and made it a revolving restaurant similar to the tower he designed for the Ala Moana shopping center in Honolulu.

The proposed Space Needle had no land on which to be built. Since the tower was not financed by the city, land had to be purchased within the fairgrounds. The search for a site was nearly dead when investors discovered a 120x120 plot one year prior to the opening of the fair. The land sold for \$75,000. The Space Needle was privately financed by the Pentagram Corporation which consisted of Bagley Wright, contractor Howard S. Wright, architect John Graham, Ned Skinner and Norton Clapp. In 1977, Bagley, Skinner and Clapp sold their interest to Howard Wright who now controls it under the name of Space Needle Corporation. With time an issue, the construction crew worked around the clock. The Space Needle was finished in less than one year. Construction cost was \$4.5 million. It is built to withstand winds of up to 200 mph and earthquakes up to 9.1 magnitude. The





top dome, consisting of 5 levels of observation deck and restaurant, was perfectly balanced so it could rotate using a 1.5 hp motor. In 2000, the SkyCity restaurant, observation deck and base retail store were renovated and the Skybeam was installed at a cost of \$21 million. In 2007, the Space Needle welcomed its 45<sup>th</sup> millionth visitor. Although it isn't one of the tallest towers in the world, the Seattle Space Needle is one of the most prominent. Over the years, it has appeared in numerous films such as *It Happened at the World's Fair* (1962), *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993) and TV shows *Frasier* and *Grey's Anatomy*.

**Kennedy Space Center Launch Complex 39** is a NASA rocket launch site on Merritt Island in Florida that consists of two launch pad towers, a Vehicle Assembly Building crawler-transporter, launch control center and other support buildings used in the Apollo, Saturn programs and later Space Shuttle operations. Each pad contains a 2-piece access tower system. One piece provides access to the Shuttle via a retractable arm. The second piece offers "clean" access to the orbiter's payload bay and provides protection from weather and winds up to 60 knots. Although this is not your typical observation tower, it is the view you have seen on TV when astronauts are entering the cockpit of the space module. LC-39A: First launch was 1967; last launch was the Space Shuttle Atlantis in July 2011. With the retirement of the Shuttle in 2011, the future of the LC-39 towers is undetermined. NASA is offering the pad and facilities to private companies to fly missions for the commercial space market.



**Carew Tower**, completed in 1930, stands 49 stories tall in the heart of downtown Cincinnati overlooking the Ohio River. It contains the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza (formerly the Omni Netherland Plaza). The hotel was used as the model for the Empire State Building in New York City. Carew Tower is technically a building, not a tower, because it has floors from the ground up. The building originally had three towers, the tallest housing offices, the second the hotel, and the third serving as a parking garage. From 1967 to 1980, the Carew Tower was featured in the opening and closing credits of the long-running daytime soap opera *The Edge of Night*. Today the building is home to the Hilton Hotel, offices and a shopping mall. Visitors can pay \$2 each to access the observation deck, which is located on the top floor. Because of its architectural standards, as well as its identity with the city's heritage, Carew Tower was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994.



**San Jacinto Monument** is a 567.3-foot high column located on the Houston ship channel near La Porte, Texas. The tower is topped with a 220-ton star that commemorates the Battle of San Jacinto, the decisive battle of the Texas Revolution. The monument was built between 1936 and 1939. It is the world's tallest monumental column. By comparison, the Washington Monument is 555.5 feet tall. The column is octagonal topped with a 34-foot

Lone Star --- the symbol of Texas. Visitors can take an elevator to the observation deck for a view of Houston. About 250,000 people visit the monument each year.

Land was purchased in 1897 for the site. Architect was Alfred C. Finn and the engineer was Robert J. Cummins. In March 1936, as part of the Texas Centennial Celebration, ground was broken for the San Jacinto Monument. The project took three years to complete at a cost of \$1.5 million. Funds were provided by the State of Texas and the US Congress. It was constructed by WS Bellows Construction using reinforced concrete. Since opening, the monument is managed by the San Jacinto Museum of History Association under the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. At the base of the monument there is a 15,000 sq foot museum, 5,000-seat amphitheater, 8 engraved panels depicting the history of Texas and a reflecting pool which shows the entire tower.



With the battle cry, "Remember the Alamo," General Sam Houston and the Texans charged. The enemy taken by surprise, rallied for a few minutes then fled in disorder. The slaughter was appalling, victory complete and Texas free! San Jacinto was one of the most decisive battles of the world. The freedom of Texas from Mexico won here led to annexation and to the Mexican-American War, resulting in the acquisition by the United States of the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Utah and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas and Oklahoma. Almost one-third of the present area of the USA, nearly a million square miles of territory, changed sovereignty.

**Reunion Tower** is a 561 foot observation tower that opened in 1978. It has become one of the most recognizable landmarks in Dallas, Texas. Typically, 275,000 people visit the tower every year. The tower is part of the Hyatt Regency Hotel complex with over a thousand guest rooms, spa, splash pool, the JFK Memorial and the Dallas Convention Center. Reunion tower consists of three floors with circular floor plans on top of four shafts of poured-in-place concrete. The top three floors are encased in an open-air sphere or geodesic dome. At night the dome at the top of the building lights with hundreds of bulbs that flash in various computer-generated patterns. Three rectangular shafts, containing elevators, rise parallel to the central shaft. Each shaft's out-facing wall is made up of glass panels, affording views of the city during the 68-second elevator ride to the top.



Reunion Tower closed for major renovations in 2007. In 2009, celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck opened the fine-dining restaurant, *Five Sixty*, on the tower's rotating top level. The name is a reference to the restaurant's elevation. The middle floor of the tower is used for special events managed by Wolfgang Puck Catering. As of July 2011, the observation deck was still closed off to the public, but it was said to reopen later in the year. The tower and hotel are owned by Woodbine Development Corp. John Scovell is president and ceo.

**Washington Monument** is a 555.5-foot monumental column built to commemorate the first US president George Washington. It is the iconic landmark of Washington DC. It was



designed by Robert Mills, an architect who had just been chosen Architect of Public Buildings for Washington in 1836. The tower is made of marble, granite and stone. Construction started in 1848 but was not completed until 1884, almost 30 years after the architect's death, due to a lack of funds and the interruption of the American Civil War. The completed monument was dedicated in 1885 and opened in 1888. Upon completion, it became the world's tallest structure, a title previously held by Cologne Cathedral. The monument held this designation until 1889, when the Eiffel Tower was completed in Paris. The Washington Monument attracted large crowds before it officially opened. During the six months that followed its dedication, more than 10,000 people climbed the 897 steps to the top. The original elevator was a steam elevator that took 20 minutes to go to the top. As early as 1888, an average of 55,000 people per month climbed to the peak. Today, the Washington Monument has more than 800,000 visitors annually. In August 2011, the tower experienced damaged

cause by the Virginia Earthquake. It was closed indefinitely in September 2011 for inspection by rappellers at a cost of \$200,000. It is managed by the National Park Service.

**Las Vegas Eiffel Tower** aka Paris Las Vegas opened in 1999 as a hotel and casino. The Paris Hotel has 2,915 rooms and 85,000 sq feet of casino space. The front of the hotel is designed to look like the Paris Opera House and the Louvre. The Las Vegas Eiffel Tower is a half-scale replica that reaches 541 feet high. The Eiffel Tower restaurant is located on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor. You can take a glass-enclosed elevator to the top of the observation deck at 460 feet. When the scale model of the Eiffel Tower was built, it was planned to be full-scale, but the airport was too close and the tower had to be shrunk. The architect was Bergman Walls Associates. Building began in 1997 under Hilton Hotels; Hilton's



casinos were sold off to Park Place Entertainment, which purchased Caesar's World in 2000 and changed its name to Caesar's Entertainment in 2004. The Paris Hotel is linked to its sister property, Bally's, and to the Las Vegas Monorail.

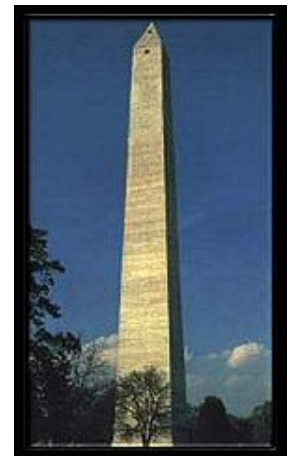
**Penobscot Observatory Tower** is part of Penobscot Narrows Bridge near Bucksport, Maine. The bridge uses a cradle system that carries the strands within the stays from



bridge deck to bridge deck, as a continuous element, eliminating anchorages in the pylons. The bridge appeared in the December 2006 issue of Popular Science as one of the 100 best innovations of the year. The total project cost \$85 million and took 42 months to complete. The bridge is also home to the Penobscot Narrow Observatory, the first bridge observation tower in the United States and the tallest bridge observation tower in the world. It reaches 420 feet into the air and allows visitors to view the bridge, nearby Fort Knox State Historic Site and the Penobscot River and Bay. The tower opened in 2007. More than 81,300 people visit each year. Admission prices are \$7 for adult non-residents and \$5 for adult residents; \$3 for children 5-11 and free for children 4 and under for the observatory and the Fort Knox site. Both are open May 1 to October 31.81.389

**Gatlinburg Space Needle** is a 407-foot tall observation tower and tourist attraction in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Opened in 1970, it took one year to construct. The tower has an outdoor observation deck that provides a 360-degree view of the Great Smoky Mountains and the City of Gatlinburg. Visitors can take two elevators to the top. The deck can accommodate 250 people. The property also has a family fun center.

**Jefferson Davis Monument** is a tower located within a state park that preserves the birthplace of Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederate States of America. The site is in Fairview, Kentucky --- about 9 miles east of Hopkinsville. The focus point of the site is a 351-foot tall unreinforced concrete tower. No steel was used to reinforce the concrete. As one pour was completed, large chunks of limestone were left projecting up to connect it to the next pour above. Architects are Major SF Crecelius and GR Gregg. Construction began in 1917 but stopped in 1918 due to building material rationing during World War I. Construction resumed in 1922 and was finished in 1924 at a cost of \$200,000. The tower was closed to public from 1999 until 2004 for renovations and construction of a new visitor center. An elevator takes visitors to an observation platform at the top of the tower. It is the third-tallest obelisk behind the San Jacinto Monument and the Washington Monument. Annual visitor attendance is 15,000 to 20,000.



**Perry's Victory & International Peace Memorial** commemorates the Battle of Lake Erie in which Commodore Oliver Perry led a fleet to victory in one of the most significant naval battles of the War of 1812. Located in Put-in-Bay, Ohio, the 352-foot monument is the

world's massive Doric column. Constructed period was 1912 to 1915. Funding problems prevented the fully realized memorial. In 1919 the federal government assumed control and provided additional funding. Official dedication was in 1931. The memorial also celebrates the lasting peace between Britain, Canada and the United States following the war. Typically, the tower is visited by 155,000 to 200,000 people each year. However, it closed in 2009 for 2-3 years of repairs to the observation deck, the column, the entrance and the rotunda. The visitor center is open but the monument won't reopen until 2012. The repairs to the observation deck are estimated at \$7 million.



**Elitch Gardens Observation Tower** in Denver, Colorado is a 330-foot tower that sits at the entrance of the newly-relocated Elitch Gardens theme park that opened in 1995. Cost of



the new 67-acre plot was \$6.1 million; relocating rides and building new park was \$90 million and the premier additions for the third season was \$28 million --- a total of \$124.1 million. The tower's observation platform at 275-feet was one of seven new attractions to debut at the new park. In 2001, the elevator in the observation tower became stuck and trapped 12 people for more than an hour. All 12 people made it safely out when firefighters drilled a hole in the elevator car to allow the passengers to walk down the tower stairs. The tower was often closed or subject to inclement weather. The tower was built by HUSS Park Attractions of Bremen, Germany. CNL Lifestyle Properties bought Elitch Gardens in 2007 with a lease back

to PARC who defaulted on the lease in 2010. Herschend Family Entertainment took over day to day management in January 2011.

**The Statue of Liberty** in New York Harbor is a neo-classical sculpture of a robed female figure representing Libertas, the Roman goddess of freedom, who bears a torch and a tablet



of laws. Designed by Frederic Auguste Bartholde, the Statue of Liberty was a gift to the United States from the people of France. The French were to finance the statue and the Americans were to provide the site and the pedestal. Bartholde completed the head and torch-bearing arm before the statue was fully designed, and these pieces were exhibited at international expositions. Fundraising for the pedestal proved difficult until publisher Joseph Pulitzer started a campaign to raise \$100,000 (\$2.3 million today) by promising to publish the name of every contributor no matter how small the

amount given. Donations flooded in. The statue was constructed in France, shipped overseas in crates and assembled on its pedestal on Bedloe Island, now Liberty Island, in 1886. Ships arriving in New York City had to sail past it. The statue rapidly became a landmark. Many immigrants who entered through New York saw it as a welcoming sign.

Visitors could climb up the arm into the observation platform that surrounds the torch. Not very tall, the lady measures only 305 feet from the ground to the tip of her torch, but she is one powerful icon representing not only a city but a whole nation. And she speaks, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." If there is one visual symbol for Brand USA, this is it!



Typically, about 3.2 million people visit the icon every year. Over the years, an elevator and exterior lighting were added. Major renovations were made in 1976 and 1984-1986. After the 9-11 attacks, the statue and Liberty Island were immediately closed to the public. The island reopened at the end of 2001, while the pedestal and statue remained closed. The pedestal reopened in 2004 but the National Park Service announced that people could not safely enter the statue due to a difficult evacuation in an emergency. On July 4, 2009, the statue reopened to a limited number of people that could ascend to the crown each day. On October 29, 2011, the statue, pedestal and base closed for up to a year to install new elevators and stairs and to upgrade security and other facilities at a cost of \$27.4 million, but Liberty Island remains open.

**The Sunsphere in Knoxville**, Tennessee is a 266-foot high hexagon steel truss tower topped with a 75-foot gold-colored glass sphere that serves as a symbol of the 1982 World's



Fair. Designed by the local firm of Community Tectonics, the 86.5-foot sphere corresponds to the 865,000 mile diameter of the sun. Most of the World's Fair site is now a public park and a convention center, but the 7-story Sunsphere remains. During the fair, it cost \$2 to take the elevator to the observation deck and restaurant.

While the Sunsphere is the most recognized feature of the Knoxville cityscape, it has remained vacant and underutilized for most of its life. Various proposals have been submitted and failed. Unfortunately, the tall structure was built one of the lowest parts of the city. The adjacent Convention Center opened in 2001. The observation deck, which holds 86 people, reopened in 2007 to give visitors a view of Knoxville. Food and beverage facilities were tried, but now business offices occupy most of the space.

**Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri** is a 216-foot observation tower that is part of a memorial and museum dedicated to the fallen soldiers of World War I. The memorial opened in 1926. It was designed by Harold Van Buren Magonigle and built by Westlake Construction Company. The National World War I Museum opened in 2006. Admission to the museum and observation deck is \$5 for adults. Management is provided by a local non-profit organization in cooperation with Kansas City Parks & Recreation.

**Coit Tower** is a 210-foot tower built on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco, California. The white fluted concrete tower was designed by architects Arthur Brown Jr and Henry Howard.



It took 5 years to build and opened in 1933. The tower is named for Lillie Hitchcock Coit, a wealthy eccentric and patron of the city's volunteer firefighters. For a \$5 adult fee, you can ride the elevator to the observation deck for majestic views of the city and bay. However, one does not have to climb to the top of the tower to get a great view. Telegraph Hill itself is 300-feet high, and the view from the parking area at the base of Coit Tower is excellent. While the main attraction of Coit Tower

is the view, the murals are worth seeing. The walls inside the rotunda are decorated with murals inspired by the murals of Diego Rivera, which depict life in California during the Depression. The murals are open for public viewing without charge during open hours

## ***Under Construction / In Development***

Two observation towers are under construction or in the planning phase:

- Port Canaveral Observation Tower
- SkySpire Observation Tower & Thrill Ride

**Port Canaveral** wants to start attracting tourists and cruise passengers. The Port Authority unveiled plans in 2010 to build a new maritime museum, visitor center and 300-foot observation tower that could cost \$30 million. Conceptual designers say the tower might look a bit like a sail and be high enough so visitors could see over the cruise ships and get a full view of the Space Coast, according to Port Authority CEO Stan Payne. The Port Commission approved spending \$380,000 on a set of feasibility studies with the 1513 Foundation, a group working on a 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ponce de Leon's landing on the Florida coast. AECOM is consulting on the project. In September 2010, the Port Authority began a shorter-term destination project for completion in 2011 --- an open-air Cove Marketplace which will expand to include a visitor center, interactive exhibits, 4-D theater and a free standing observation tower. The 1513 Foundation has taken responsibility for raising the funds to open these facilities by 2013 for the Explore Florida 500 celebration.

**SkySpire** is the brainchild of attractions inventor Bill Kitchen. It is both an Observation Tower and Thrill Ride. The tower ride provides a continuous (walk-on/walk-off, loading and

unloading) flow of passengers both at the ground and observatory levels. For example, people can enter a glass-enclosed elevator and ride to the top through the center of the tower, then exit to enjoy the observation deck's 360-degree panoramic views. When ready to leave, the riders enter a gondola that spirals down around the outside of the tower back to earth. Capacity can be controlled by the height of the tower, the speed of elevator, the observation time and the speed of the descent. The towers can be constructed from 250 feet to 3,000 feet in height. The up ride can vary from 10 to 30 minutes and can deliver 1,000 to 3,000 people per hour. It is unique, affordable and requires a very small footprint. SkySpire comes in two sizes: in-park and megatower from US Thrill Rides, which is currently installing a SkyQuest suspended beam ride at the Indianapolis Zoo and a



SkyView observation wheel with Merlin Entertainment on International Drive in Orlando. The first SkySpire is a closely guarded secret. For more, go to [www.ustrillrides.com](http://www.ustrillrides.com).

And finally --- to sum it up:

Cities compete on an international stage to attract visitors. City icons, such as observation towers, play an important role in communicating a story about fun times to be had. The hardest thing for city leaders is deciding what idea or value they want to express to the world. For Las Vegas it was easy. Their moniker is Sin City. Their motto is "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas!" For other cities, it's not so easy. New York, Chicago, Las Vegas and Washington DC are among the most famous cities in the USA because they have architectural icons, nicknames, slogans and songs that attract even more attention such as films and TV shows. But there are other underrated --- albeit smaller --- cities in this country



that don't get their fair share of the spotlight. Some cities need an extreme makeover. Others cities are doing makeovers but they are still undiscovered by the traveling public.

What's your city's claim to fame?

[See City Branding, Part 1, Nicknames, Slogans & Songs](#)

[See City Branding, Part 2, Observation Towers Worldwide](#)



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