Queensborough Community College creates Chinese tourism seminar

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The Chinese are coming - and Queensborough Community College is ready with Dragon Certification.

The rapid rise in the number of tourists from China has led the Bayside school to create a three-day training seminar for local businesses to help them prepare for the visitors.

The college has joined with with two Beijing universities and local community groups here, including the Chinese-American Planning Council, to help businesses in the service industry develop a better understanding of Chinese culture and history, and even a little of the language.

"When it comes to Chinese customers, first impressions make a big difference," said Jeff Chen, director of the Chinese-American Planning Council. "We want to put our best foot forward."

To better serve them, the seminar will help educate participating businesses - including hotel staff and retailers - about the shopping and eating preferences of Chinese visitors.

"Also, certain courtesies may not be typical of New Yorkers, like paying attention to seniors, which is important in Chinese culture," said Denise Ward, assistant dean for continuing education and work force development at Queensborough Community College.

Tourists from China are the 11th-largest spending group of visitors to the U.S., according to the Commerce Department.

The seminar is set for July 27, 28 and 29 at the college .

"We'll also teach participants about Chinese holidays and history, and even some of the language," said Ward.

Successful completion of the $300 per person course will qualify businesses as Dragon Certified, which will distinguish them as merchants whose services are specially tuned to meet the needs of Chinese visitors.

"We want to market this as sort of like a Zagat rating," said Alan Werner, community outreach coordinator at Queensborough.

Since 2004, the number of Chinese tourists here has spiked sharply - more than 120% - and 490,000 visited last year. The Commerce Department projects this figure will grow to 800,000 by 2013.

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Read more: http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/queens/2009/06/24/2009-06-24_queensborough_community_college_creates_chinese_tourism_program_for_local_busine.html#ixzz0JNjyeALf&C