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TV ads to boost the Bronx's image as a destination for tourists

NEW YORK (AP) — The time to start planning your vacation to the Bronx is now — at least that is the hope of a series of new television commercials touting the borough's image.

The 30-second spots promoting the borough of 1.3 million as a tourist destination are part of a marketing campaign called "We're Talking the Bronx."

The ads were unveiled June 12 by Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion Jr., who spoke of the Bronx's journey from blight to a new frontier of residential and commercial development.

"The Bronx has risen from the decades of the '70s and '80s to a place that many people didn't imagine that it could," Carrion said. "It is a great American story of a community that refused failure, that embraced success and opportunity."

Carrion appears on the commercials as the borough's pitchman, selling its Zagat-rated restaurants and attractions, including Yankee Stadium, the Bronx Zoo and botanical gardens. Carrion also talks about efforts to reduce traffic congestion and rebuild playgrounds.

There is no mention of the borough's high unemployment rate and lack of a major hotel.

The commercials, produced by White Plains-based ad agency Weinrib & Conner, will run for nine weeks on cable networks in parts of the Bronx, Manhattan and Westchester County. They are part of an overall marketing campaign, already in its fourth year, aimed at improving the image of the Bronx and attracting more tourists. Last year, the borough had seven million visitors.

Lloyd Ultan, the borough historian, said the commercials may help to boost the Bronx's image, which has long been overshadowed by the crime, arson and abandoned buildings of the 1970s and 1980s.

"People must realize that there are no longer any devastated areas in the Bronx, that crime in the Bronx has dropped to the lowest levels in 40 years," Ultan said.

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http://www.usatoday.com/travel/destinations/2007-06-19-bronx-tourism-campaign_N.htm

June 13, 2007

A New Television Campaign, Starring the Bronx as a Tourist's Delight

By [MANNY FERNANDEZ](#)

Television viewers in the New York region will learn about a new and intriguing tourist destination this month. It is an exotic land the size of Paris, an urban retreat that gave the world not only hip-hop but also [Billy Joel](#), and is home to a zoo, a baseball stadium and a jeer disguised as a cheer.

The Bronx.

A series of television commercials promoting the borough of 1.3 million will be on the airwaves starting June 25. The 30-second spots, the first television advertisements the Bronx has used to sell itself, are part of a marketing campaign called "We're Talking the Bronx," starring [Adolfo Carrión Jr.](#), the borough president.

In the nine commercials, Mr. Carrión boasts of the borough's [Zagat](#)-rated restaurants (there are 25 of them, he says), its booming residential and commercial development, its physical beauty and its many attractions, like the [Bronx Zoo](#) and Yankee Stadium. The \$200,000 campaign was paid for by several Bronx institutions and companies featured prominently in the ads, including the Yankees, [Fordham University](#) and North Fork Bank.

Mr. Carrión unveiled the ads yesterday at a news conference at Fordham Preparatory School. Though the image of the Bronx as a burning, dangerous place is outdated by several decades, he said people outside the borough still needed to be reminded not so much of what the Bronx is, but what it is not.

"The Bronx has risen from the decades of the '70s and '80s to a place that many people didn't imagine that it could," Mr. Carrión said after the event. "It is a great American story of a community that refused failure, that embraced success and opportunity."

The ads will run for nine weeks on cable networks including CNN and ESPN in parts of the Bronx, Manhattan and Westchester County. They could be seen by roughly one million viewers, according to Weinrib & Connor, the White Plains advertising agency that produced the commercials.

The spots promoting one of New York City's grittier boroughs give the place a rather old-fashioned, small-town feel. A fiddle plays pleasantly in the background as Mr. Carrión and others smile at the camera, though the borough's homegrown musical legacies include hip-hop, doo-wop and salsa.

In one ad, an unidentified representative of Woodlawn Cemetery, one of the financial sponsors of the campaign, stares into the camera and says: "Whether preplanning or at a time of need, come talk with us."

In others, viewers are whisked from the borough's Little Italy on Arthur Avenue to the blue-backed seats of Yankee Stadium to the interior of North Central Bronx Hospital, "the hospital of choice for the Norwood community." There are shots of Mike's Deli on Arthur Avenue and the eager staff of a Ridgewood Savings Bank branch.

The ads were shot throughout the borough in four days in May. The focus is on the big picture, and the little one, too. Mr. Carrión says in one scene that in the past five years, \$2.4 billion has been invested in housing in the Bronx. In others, he points out the borough's efforts to reduce traffic congestion in neighborhoods and rebuild playgrounds.

"More than 7,500 families have bought homes and are living the great American dream right here in the Bronx," the borough president says at one point, referring to the period since 2002. "We're talking the Bronx."

Naturally, the ads put a nice gloss on life in the borough. There is no mention of the borough's high unemployment and

poverty rates, and no mention that it lacks a major hotel.

The ads are part of a marketing campaign that is now in its fourth year. The promotional push has included radio spots, newspaper ads and billboards, and now TV commercials. Past ads featured celebrity Bronxites, including the television host [Regis Philbin](#) and the mystery writer Mary Higgins Clark.

Lloyd Ultan, the borough historian, said a little boosterism was necessary for a borough often overshadowed by Manhattan and still stereotyped by the fires, crime and abandonment of the 1970s and 1980s.

“When you say ‘the Bronx’ to many people, it conjures up images of [Jimmy Carter](#) walking on the plains of Charlotte Street,” said Mr. Ultan, 69, referring to the former president’s visit to rubble-strewn lots in the South Bronx in October 1977. “But that’s 30 years ago. People must realize that there are no longer any devastated areas in the Bronx, that crime in the Bronx has dropped to the lowest levels in 40 years.”

Mr. Carrión said the goal of the campaign was to generate more tourism to the borough, which attracted about seven million visitors last year. The ads also raise the profile of Mr. Carrión, who is considered a possible candidate for mayor in 2009.

When asked if the ads would help his political future, he said yesterday: “Every time I wake up in the morning and do my job right, it helps me to do whatever I’m going to do next.”

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Bronx beep ads toot boro's horn - and also his own

BY ETHAN ROUEN

DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Posted Wednesday, June 13th 2007, 4:00 AM

In case the locals haven't noticed, there's a zoo and a stadium in the Bronx - and the borough president has raised \$200,000 to remind them.

And maybe also to remind voters that he's a potential mayoral candidate.

A nine-week ad campaign running this summer on Cablevision channels in the Bronx, Manhattan and Westchester will feature Adolfo Carrion extolling the virtues of the formerly burning borough.

"We're highlighting the success, the initiative, the beauty," he said. "We believe that things change and get better all the time."

The nine commercials share the slogan "We're talking the Bronx" and will begin airing June 25.

Each opens with Carrion standing at Bronx sites such as Wave Hill and the New Fulton Fish Market at Hunts Point and speaking about the borough's accomplishments. The sponsors, which include banks, check-cashing stores, Fordham University and Woodlawn Cemetery, then peddle their wares for the back half of each 30-second spot.

Carrion hopes to attract more tourist dollars with catchy phrases like "Escape to the Bronx. You'll never want to leave," and "When you do business in the Bronx, you're family."

Although the commercials score free airtime for the potential 2009 mayoral candidate, he stressed yesterday that the ads are strictly to boost the gritty borough's reputation.

His spokesman also emphasized that the ads were paid for with private dollars, preventing a Pataki-esque gaffe that landed the ex-governor in hot water for using state dollars to plaster his mug on television during election season.

The commercials, produced by Weinrib & Connor of White Plains, will run more than 700 times through August on CNN, ESPN, YES, News 12 Westchester and other channels.

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Adolfo Carrion announces \$200,000 ad campaign yesterday.

The Bronx rocks? Ads hit the airwaves

By Magdalene Perez

Special to amNewYork

June 13, 2007

Can you talk Bronx? Yankees President Randy Levine can, and so do a host of others in a new series of television ads geared toward promoting tourism and business in the borough.

The ads, billed "We're Talkin' the Bronx," are set to run beginning June 25. The 30-second spots round up leaders of famous Bronx institutions -- including Yankees Stadium, Fordham University and Woodlawn Cemetery -- to extol the virtues of the borough, once home to celebrities as far flung as Jennifer Lopez, Colin Powell and Edgar Allen Poe.

"This is a great time to visit our borough, to live in the borough and to establish a business here," said Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion.

"The city as a whole gets about 44 million visitors every year. We want to get a larger share of those visitors coming to the Bronx."

Carrion can easily list a dozen of his favorite places in the Bronx. But he said one -- Orchard Beach on a winter morning -- tops all the others.

Said Carrion, "It's just absolutely peaceful."

Famous Bronxites who've appeared in the borough's advertising campaigns in the past include TV talk show host Regis Philbin, singer Valerie Simpson and sportscaster Michael Kay.

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