

## British Tourist Authority Targets U.S. Seniors

By Melissa Campanelli

The British Tourist Authority received nearly 8,000 direct responses and more than 28,000 Web site hits from a direct mail piece it sent to 750,000 senior citizens across the United States earlier this year promoting the United Kingdom as a tourism destination, the group said last month.

Ruf Strategic Solutions, Olathe, KS, a market research and data analysis company, assisted the BTA in the project, and the mailing list was selected using Ruf's proprietary household clusters.

"I expected a 1 [percent] to 1.5 percent response rate," said Cheryl Brazier, senior marketing executive for the BTA. "I would have been happy with a 2 percent response. The actual response was nearly 4 percent."

The BTA said it is targeting top tourism-producing markets and audiences as a way to overcome terrorist threats, increased security complications and other factors making tourists more reluctant to travel.

Ruf's household clusters are built from a variety of data sources and represent years of research, development and testing. The clusters are differentiated by demographics; lifestyle traits, including Ruf's proprietary travel lifestyles; summarized credit traits; and automotive traits.

Those targeted for the January-February mailing were 60 and older, earning at least \$100,000.

The BTA provides impartial information to potential visitors and gathers essential market intelligence for the hugely fragmented UK tourism industry. ■