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JUNE 2017

Take ... a hike

Adventure and beauty abound
in North American parklands

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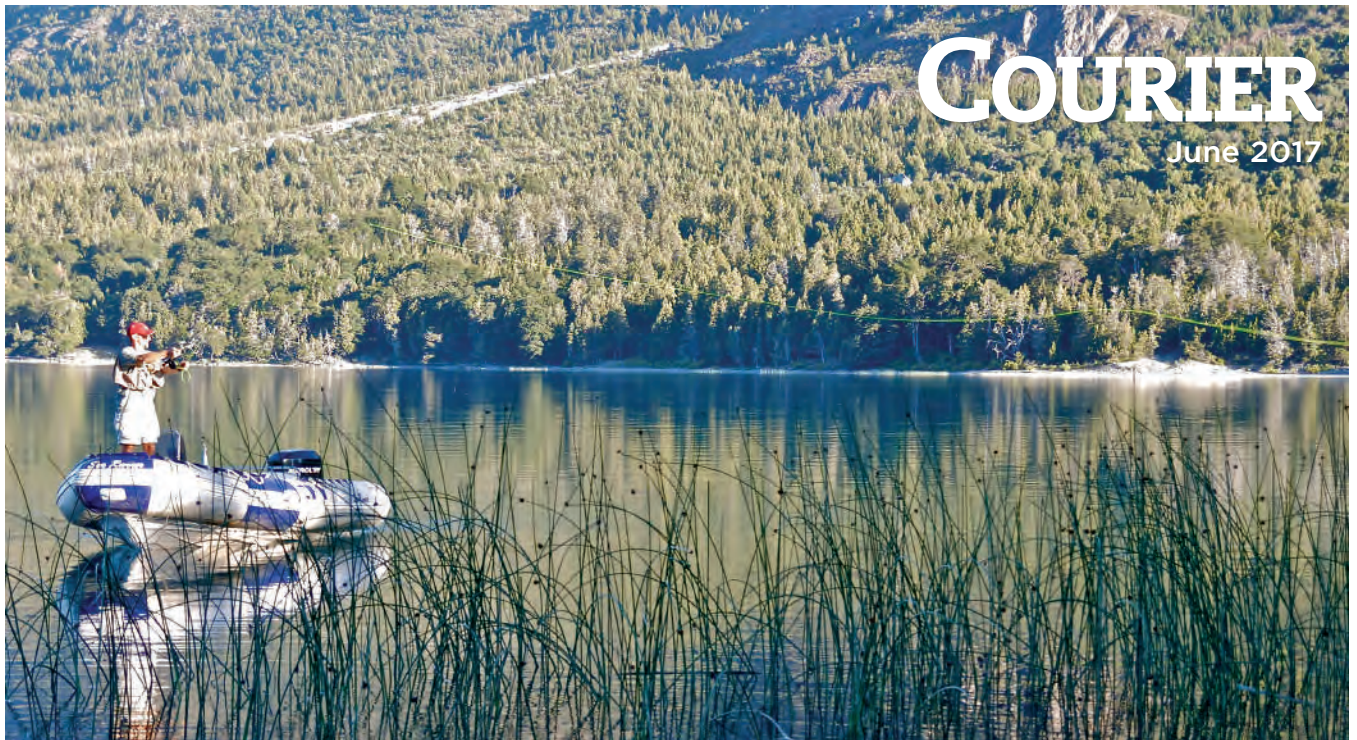
Montana's Glacier National Park



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June 2017

A yes-fly zone: Jorge Cazenave (Cazenave Argentina) casts a fly rod in Argentina's Futaleufu River. To learn about Cazenave's South American fishing tips—and get ideas for tours throughout Latin America—turn to page 48.

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► AUGUST/SEPTEMBER ISSUE

DESTINATIONS

Coastal California

Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco

Great Lakes

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

Southwest U.S.

Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

Eastern Europe

Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

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SPECIAL COVERAGE

Museums

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DEADLINES

Space: June 2 | Material: June 12

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New England

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Great Plains

Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota

China

Vietnam

City Spotlight: Nashville, Tennessee

SPECIAL COVERAGE

Music Destinations and Attractions
Guide: Theaters and Broadway Shows

DEADLINES

Space: Aug. 4 | Material: Aug. 14

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Courier aims to facilitate member-to-member partnering by spotlighting member product and destinations worldwide, to provide information on current industry trends and issues, and to inform members about NTA initiatives, events and benefits.



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A recent trip to three California parks—Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon—reminded *Courier* designer Jeff Quire of the majesty of U.S. national parks and how important they are to travelers from around the world.

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HAPPY JUNE to half of you.

I say that after digesting NTA's most recent communications survey, which revealed detailed information about *Courier* readership. As I obsessed read over the numbers, I learned that a whopping 77 percent of NTA members read this magazine. That's humbling.

I was further humbled when I saw that 50.6 percent read the editor's letter—this page. I should be flattered, given that a mere 20 percent of people in the United States pick up a newspaper. But 50 percent, compared to 77 percent, seems like a steep drop-off.

Still, the report is impressive. Two-thirds of you read the Compass and What's On sections, which detail member destinations and tour product. And an almost equal percentage of you read the business section, which is a pleasant surprise.

And sure, a lot of members read this page—including you, I know—so I'm thinking I could take a page from NTA Chair Jay Smith's "Just Bring One" book and ask that you implore just one non-reader to peruse this letter. (Just Force One!) That would bring me to 100 percent.

In the meantime, you can read about Jay's recruitment campaign on page 17.

I know that a very high percentage of you will want to read this issue's big feature on national parks, starting on page 20,

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Where in the World is COURIER?

Prior to attending Destination Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., NTA's Kami Risk (left) and Doug Rentz connected with Newseum's Roxana Rivera, who is holding the *Courier* issue that spotlights the Distinguished Dozen gold winners, including ... Newseum!

with senior writer Pat Henderson as your skillful guide. Pat also gives us a la-la-lavish look at Los Angeles, shining in the City Spotlight on pages 26-29.

And the popular Compass section includes Gabe Webb's exploration of the U.S. Deep South, on pages 32-38, and the Mid-Atlantic U.S. states, on pages 40-46. You can also take a trip through Latin America, pages 48-49, and over to Italy on page 50.

I mentioned the well-read business section earlier. I think you'll enjoy "Partners in prime time," a story about your NTA colleagues who have teamed up to make Travel Exchange and Contact more engaging. It starts on page 14.

Look, I don't want you to think I'm all wrapped up in this 50 percent thing. The glass is half-full, right? And who knows—maybe the stat really means that every NTA member reads this page ... with one eye covered. That's probably it.

Write on,



On the cover:

Hundreds of miles of hiking trails wind through Montana's Glacier National Park, taking visitors to scenic spots such as 5,395-foot Tinkham Peak.
Photo: NPS/Jacob W. Frank

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Members take to the Hill to influence policy, impact travel

BY DOUG RENTZ



NTA WAS FOUNDED ON ADVOCACY. You can trace the association's roots with a straight line back to a meeting in 1951, when a dozen tour operators came together to combat federal regulations that would've crippled an industry that was just gaining traction. Together, they succeeded.

Fast forward six decades, and NTA members still gather to have their voices heard regarding legislative issues. In March, travel professionals from across the United States—325 people from 42 states—met in Washington, D.C., for Destination Capitol Hill. The industry's premier fly-in event gives attendees a chance to educate policymakers about the power of travel and showcase it as one of America's strongest economic sectors.

"National travel and tourism policies sculpt an economic impact in the United States and beyond, and advocacy at this event is important to me running my own company," says Jay Smith, 2017 NTA chair and owner of Hatfield, Massachusetts-based Sports Travel and Tours.

Prior to the 305 meetings held at the U.S. Capitol with elected officials, attendees were prepped on legislative priorities that are critical to the security and economy of the United States. NTA annually partners with U.S. Travel Association and Destination Marketing Association International on the two-day program, and this strength in numbers has a greater impact when attendees walk the halls of Congress.

"I'm there to meet and work side by side with other NTA members to advocate for our industry but also to network and build relationships with other travel professionals," says Paul Larsen of Ed-Ventures in Rochester, Minnesota. "We each carry the message that travel continues to drive the economy."

The key issues set by U.S. Travel are consistent with NTA members' priorities, and Chase Poffenberger of D.C.-based



Three Massachusetts men meet with their senator. From left: John Tavano, Yankee Leisure Group; Sen. Elizabeth Warren; John Yonce, Tourism Cares; Jay Smith, Sports Travel and Tours.

Academic Travel Abroad says taking part in DCH also is consistent with her company's core beliefs.

"It's important for our team to participate and lend our voices in support of the industry's top legislative priorities," Poffenberger says. "When we send a team up to the Hill to lobby with NTA colleagues, we get to live out a core part of our mission statement, which is to contribute meaningfully to our world, our field and our community."

Mark your calendar for March 21–22, 2018, and join us in Washington next spring at Destination Capitol Hill. A new administration is in place, and by working together, we can ensure travel will continue to be a powerful economic engine for the United States.

Doug Rentz is the director of communication and marketing for NTA.

2017 NTA Legislative Priorities

In a 2017 survey, NTA members identified the following priorities when asked what issues are top of mind for them this year:

- National park funding
- Modernizing airport infrastructure
- Expanding the Visa Waiver Program
- Transportation Security Administration programs
- Surface transportation funding

Comments from Destination Capitol Hill 2017



"Knowing your congressperson is as important as knowing your banker. Going there in person, year after year, shows

the people I meet with that I'm serious about being informed. If something happens that turns the world upside down, I have contacts who can help me."

—Mark Hoffmann, CTP, Sports Leisure Vacations; Sacramento, California; NTA Advocacy Advisory Group member



"If you're a bit intimidated by the thought of participating, have no worries; it's structured where anyone can do it. The legislators and their aides are very respectful, take notes and really listen. If we don't share our perspective, who will?"

—Jerry Varner, Making Memories Tours; Washburn, Missouri; NTA Advocacy Advisory Group member

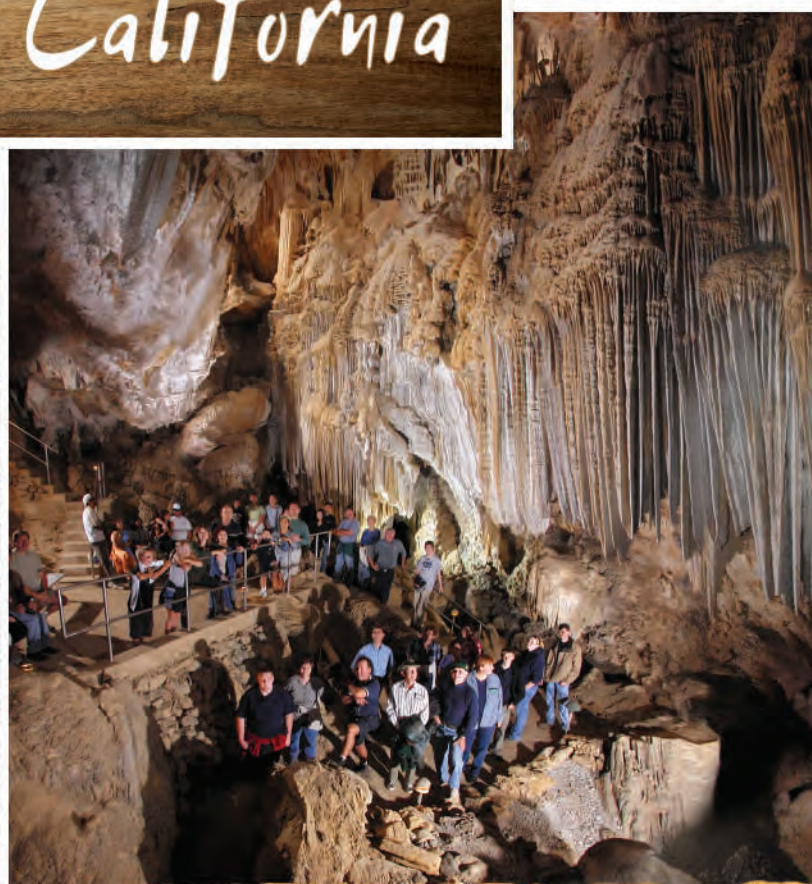


"Because I have participated in NTA's event and made contacts and worked those contacts, now when I need something, I know who to call and they know who I am."

—Paul Nakamoto, Gray Line San Francisco; 2014 NTA Chair



Truly Northern California



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COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

IPW highlights busy stretch for NTA staff, members

IPW

Washington, D.C. (June 3-7)

This international product showcase will be attended by NTA staff members Pam Inman, Catherine Prather, Morgan Maravich, Lin Wang and Beth Engel. On June 4, your association will hold a Meet-up reception for NTA members and others at Arena Stage starting at 4:30 p.m.

TAP Dance

Tucson, Arizona (June 11-15)

Pam Inman will be in Tucson for a fun week at this year's Travel Alliance Partners conference, which will also be attended by many NTA members.

North American Skål Congress

Toronto (June 15-18)

Morgan Maravich will join hundreds of tourism professionals, including Skål club leaders from around the globe, in Toronto for the 2017 Congress. Maravich serves on the organization's board of directors.



NTA will hold a Meet-up reception June 4 during IPW.

DMAI Annual Convention

Montréal (July 11-14)

This learning-focused event is geared for destination marketing and management professionals. NTA will be represented by Morgan Maravich.

Welcome aboard

NTA continues to strengthen its benefits through the addition of corporate and strategic partnerships. Check out the following new partners to learn how they can work for you and your business:

Corporate Partners

TourConnect Whether you are a supplier looking to find new tour operators or a tour operator looking to collect rates more efficiently, TourConnect is an online network where you can meet and do business with travel partners.

WeChat Marketing Agency, TMG The company offers a turn-key WeChat marketing solution to help international brands target Chinese outbound travelers.

Universal Air Travel Plan UATP's Insider's Club offers annual travel protection coverage for travel professionals on industry-free, reduced-rate or full-fare tickets on scheduled airlines, Amtrak trains or cruise lines.

Strategic Partners

Destination Marketing Association International DMAI is home to more than 4,400 professionals from nearly 600 destinations in approximately 15 countries. NTA's partnership brings new educational offerings to our DMOs and contributions to the DMO Network, NTA's new idea-sharing initiative.

Ontario Motor Coach Association With more than 700 members, OMCA is one of the largest travel- and tourism-related associations in Canada and is the voice of private-sector bus operators, inter-city bus lines, charter and coach tour companies in Ontario.

To see the complete list of NTA strategic partners, go to ntaonline.com/partners.

'Tis the season for NTA Meet-ups

Your association is conducting a series of Meet-up events again this year, and the next one will take place in conjunction with IPW in Washington, D.C. Meet-ups bring together members and prospects in specific cities to learn more about NTA, hear from association leaders and enjoy a couple of hours of informal networking.

The Washington, D.C., event is scheduled for Arena Stage on Sunday, June 4, starting at 4:30 p.m. Drinks and light snacks will be served, then at 6, the group will head over to the IPW opening event.

San Antonio, which will host Travel Exchange in December, will be the site of a Meet-up on Thursday, Aug. 3. The event will take place at the Visit San Antonio offices (time TBD).

If you are interested in attending either the Washington, D.C., or San Antonio Meet-up, please RSVP by emailing headquarters@ntastaff.com.

Plans also are in the works for more Meet-ups, including one in Charleston, South Carolina in September or October. Please check NTA's Tuesday newsletter for announcements regarding dates, locations and additional details. ☺

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RELATING TO GOVERNMENT

INSIGHTS ON U.S. LEGISLATIVE ISSUES AND INDUSTRY TOPICS



The road to an infrastructure package

THROUGHOUT DONALD TRUMP'S 2016 presidential campaign, and following his election and inauguration, a plan for an infrastructure package has been discussed frequently. High-speed rail, highway improvements and other travel-related focal points have been tossed around, but no exact plan has been released. At a time when the U.S. transportation system is often touted as broken and crumbling, infrastructure is a focus that Democrats and Republicans alike, representing both urban and rural constituents, can support.

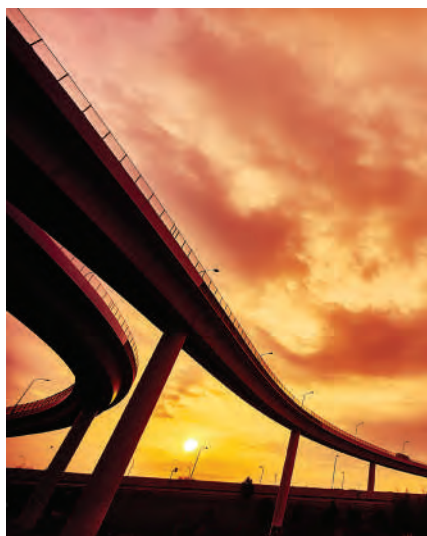
Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao also has not yet released many details of an infrastructure plan. The few comments Chao has made while giving talks or interviews since her Senate confirmation in January describe a Trump administration-led infrastructure package that will 1) focus on speeding the process for government-funded projects and 2) offer incentives for public-private partnerships.

Secretary Chao has stated that the infrastructure plan will be unveiled later in 2017, meaning it is likely that the Trump administration will continue to prioritize health care and tax reform before directing attention to infrastructure.

While Washington awaits a comprehensive package from the administration, infrastructure and transportation improvements are still being made throughout the country. In December 2015, then-President Barack Obama signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act into law. The FAST Act was the first time in over a decade that Republicans and Democrats had come together in a bipartisan compromise to provide long-term funding for surface transportation throughout the United States. The bill, which passed

359 to 65 in the House and 83 to 16 in the Senate, consisted of \$305 billion in funding over five years: fiscal years 2016 through 2020.

Among the wide variety of surface-transportation authorization and funding, the FAST Act focused on improving mobility on America's highways. The act authorized (through September 2020) the Highway Trust Fund, which is a source of funding for most of the bill's programs. As a part of this highway-centric focus, the FAST Act created funding programs to maintain critical transportation projects that are aimed at decreasing congestion in certain areas so that drivers can utilize highways that are safer and less congested.



While concentrating on road improvements, the legislation also created improvements for bridges, bicycling and walking. This means that projects address not only roadway and highway improvements, but also other modes of transport that affect and better the lives of millions of Americans.

Aside from highway funding, the FAST Act also took into consideration

the current and future needs of citizens and visitors by creating the National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure. This group provides recommendations to the transportation secretary and is made up of a wide variety of highly qualified travel and tourism representatives, including many from NTA-member companies. This committee provides a channel for stakeholder input on vital transportation and infrastructure decisions.

The FAST Act also took into consideration the level at which tourists rely on various transportation means by creating improvements and enhancements to intermodal transportation. With fixes and funding planned to roads, highways, bridges, walkways and bicycles lanes, traveling to and within tourism centers is simpler and safer, making for a more enjoyable visitor experience.

While the details and timing of a Trump administration infrastructure package remain unsettled, it is vital that NTA remains engaged in the political process and continues to show the economic importance of tourism and the rate at which the nation's infrastructure system is utilized for travel, and to point out where improvements or changes are still needed.

Travel and tourism play an important role in the lives of Americans and to this country's economy. As plans for a multibillion-dollar infrastructure plan come together, through both the administration and Congress, investments in improving the way people travel here will continue to have a positive effect on the tourism industry. 📍

Signal Group is a Washington, D.C., lobbying firm retained by NTA to advise members about travel-related issues and legislation.



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The U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board

Private sector professionals propose industry solutions to the commerce secretary

BY JULIE P. HEIZER, NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM OFFICE,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

THE U.S. TRAVEL AND TOURISM Advisory Board serves as the advisory body to the Commerce Department on matters relating to the travel and tourism industry in the United States. The board advises the commerce secretary on government policies and programs that affect U.S. travel and tourism, offers counsel on current and emerging issues, and provides a forum for discussing and proposing solutions to industry-related problems.

Past boards have presented commerce secretaries with advice on a wide range of issues facing travel and tourism, including travel facilitation, visa policy, infrastructure, aviation security, energy policy and economic sustainability. The board also offers valuable advice on the National Travel and Tourism Strategy, a plan launched in 2012 with the goal of making the United States more competitive as an international destination.

Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross met with the TTAB and conveyed that the administration understands both the economic and diplomatic importance of the travel and tourism industry.

The board is composed of up to 32 members who are appointed by the commerce secretary (see sidebar for the current TTAB roster). Members are from organizations in the travel industry that represent a broad range of products and services, company sizes, and geographic locations. Members serve at the pleasure of the secretary, typically for a two-year term. The board was chartered in

2003, and because of the department's need for ongoing advice from industry representatives, it has been re-chartered six times, most recently in August 2015.

The National Travel and Tourism Office is the TTAB's official liaison, serving as the designated federal officer for this advisory committee and providing subject-matter expertise to members of the TTAB.

In late March, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross spoke for the first time with the TTAB to convey the administration's support for the travel and tourism industry and to communicate that the administration understands both the economic and diplomatic importance of the industry.

To provide direction for developing specific recommendations, the secretary tasked the TTAB with three requests to be met by the end of June:

- 1) Deliver a topline review of the National Travel and Tourism Strategy goals and strategies.
- 2) Based on that analysis, identify the top five issues that the Commerce Department should address to support the global competitiveness of the industry.
- 3) Suggest what the administration can do to make sure the United States remains a welcoming destination while at the same time ensuring our national security.

The TTAB is set to meet in early June to deliberate the findings and recommendations of its subcommittees. Out of this process, a formal letter of recommendation will be sent to Secretary Ross to meet the end of the month deadline. 📍

Julie P. Heizer is Deputy Director, Industry Relations, at the National Travel and Tourism Office of the International Trade Administration.

U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board

The following TTAB members are serving the 2016-18 term:

- George Aguel, president and CEO, Visit Orlando
- Theodore Balestreri, president and CEO, Cannery Row Company
- Helane Becker, managing director, Cowen and Company
- Bruce Charendoff, chief public policy officer, Sabre Holdings
- Henry Cruz, senior partner, CrossBrook Organizations
- Todd Davidson, CEO, Travel Oregon
- Brad Dean, president and CEO, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce
- Fred Dixon, president and CEO, NYC & Company
- Kurt Ekert, president and CEO, Carlson Wagonlit Travel
- Elliott Ferguson, president and CEO, Destination DC
- Mike Gallagher, co-founder and co-chairman, City PASS
- Adam Goldstein, co-founder and CEO, Hipmunk
- James Hagen, secretary of tourism, South Dakota Department of Tourism
- Nick Hentschel, vice president of business development, AmericanTours International
- Taylor Hoang, owner, executive vice president and chief operating officer, Pho Cyclo
- Margaret McKeough, TTAB vice chair; executive vice president and chief operating officer, Metro Washington Airports Authority
- Adam Medros, senior vice president for global product, TripAdvisor
- Steve Morrissey, vice president of regulatory and policy, United Airlines
- Mary Motsenbocker, president, International Tourism Marketing
- Susan Presby, owner and director of sales, The Mount Washington Cog Railway
- Tricia Primrose, chief global communications and public affairs officer, Marriott International
- Olga Ramudo, president and CEO, Express Travel
- Sherry Rupert, executive director, Nevada Indian Commission
- Adam Sacks, founder and president, Tourism Economics
- Marty St. George, executive vice president of commercial and planning, JetBlue Airways
- Gary Schluter, general manager, RMH Tours
- John Sprouls, TTAB chair; executive vice president and chief administrative officer, Universal Parks and Resorts
- Greg Stubblefield, TTAB vice chair; executive vice president and chief strategic officer, Enterprise Holdings
- William Talbert, president and CEO, Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Denise Thevenot, executive director, Louisiana Tax-Free Shopping for International Visitors
- Ernest Wooden Jr., president and CEO, Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board

They came for the work, not the weather

TOURISM CARES for Oakland brought together 175 volunteers from 65 companies and 22 U.S. states for a (rainy) workday in the Bay Area. The volunteers worked side by side at three popular Oakland tourist sites: Children's Fairyland, Lake Merritt and a brewery on the Oakland Ale Trail. The 900 hours logged by workers—including NTA members and staff—accomplished in one day what might take three weeks for the staffs of the work sites to achieve.

"An all-volunteer workforce maintains the park at Lake Merritt. To see the work that they do on a daily basis and how well the gardens are kept was an amazing testament to how much pride and love they have for their city and how treasured the lake is to everyone."

—Morgan Maravich, NTA member engagement manager

"What struck me the most about the event was the positive vibe. Despite the wind and rain, the Tourism Cares staff, volunteers and locals were helpful, productive and upbeat. I made some really great friends that day while "roughing the elements" at Lake Merritt. It's just another example of how rewarding and fun it is to be a part of the tourism community."

—Anna Pettus, NTA communication and marketing manager

"I always love how people from the industry come together and really get after it during Tourism Cares projects, and I enjoyed being in Oakland this time. I'd never spent much time there before, and it was cool to get to roam around downtown and the waterfront. The next time I'm in the Bay Area, I'll definitely be going back to explore Oakland in more depth."

—Pat Henderson, NTA senior writer



NTA staffers Anna Pettus, Pat Henderson and Morgan Maravich volunteered at Tourism Cares for Oakland.

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Partners in prime time

Collaborative sponsorships at NTA events build business and teamwork

"There's no question that, this year, Tennessee was in the house."

And with that—on the last day of Travel Exchange '17 in St. Louis—Frances Manzitto of Visit Clarksville declared Tennessee's collaborative sponsorship a success. The partnership, which included four DMOs, four attractions, a hotel and a tour company, is the most recent example of NTA members teaming up to sponsor at association events. While participants differ in goals and strategies, most reach the same conclusion Manzitto did: "We had bumps in the road, but it was worth all of the work, and it came together beautifully."



Getting together

The origins of sponsor partnerships are as varied as the members who assemble them.

Maverick Aviation Group has co-sponsored a breakfast at Contact with the Las Vegas CVA for the past five years, and for Maverick's Dan Flores, it was a matter of name recognition: Vegas had it and he didn't.

"I was new to Contact, but John (Meyer, of the Las Vegas CVA) and I had been friends for a long time," Flores says. "It wasn't feasible for Maverick to sponsor on our own, but partnering with the destination really works."

Teaming up to get more bang for the buck is not unusual. It's the reason the Tennessee partners came together, and it's also how Patti Culp of the Alabama Travel Council was able to join with Sports Leisure Vacations to sponsor the Past President's Reception and the Board of Directors Dinner, held each year on Convention Eve.

"Clayton Whitehead asked if I would consider hosting with Sports Leisure Vacations, and I told him I didn't have the budget for it but would find some partners," says Culp, who rounded up several Alabama DMOs. "And they were thrilled."

Whitehead, as a tour operator, approached the venture from a different perspective. "We aren't your average sponsor. We have nothing to sell," he says, speaking also on behalf of business and life partner Mark Hoffmann. "We do it for spiritual reasons; it just *feels* right. Mark and I are giving back to the association that has given us so much."

A native of Savannah, Georgia, Whitehead also cited a cultural angle for picking Culp as a partner. "I felt what people really wanted was simply to visit with one another in an unstructured setting, but above all, I wanted the event to be Southern!" he says. "So I called Patti and she was all in."

Left, top: Strutting their stuff for Savannah at Contact '16: Renea Scott (Old Savannah Tours), Kai Williams (B Historic Savannah), Kate Burke (Hotel 504) and Mindy Shepard (Telfair Museums).

Left, bottom: Mindy Shea (Visit Savannah), left, and Mindy Shepard (Telfair Museums) are a "project" within the Savannah partnership.

Finding a formula

Even for Southern folks, deciding exactly how to sponsor isn't always as easy as Whitehead makes it sound. Mindy Shea of Visit Savannah pulled together several NTA members to promote her city at Contact '16, but picking a team was only the start.

"We thought sponsorship would be a no-brainer, but it took many of our sales team members helping with ideas to make it happen," Shea says. "We wanted to put our name into everyone's hands—literally—so we chose to supply the event pens."

Team Savannah pored over design and messaging options for their pens, and then fate intervened.

"As we were searching, Savannah was named by *Travel and Leisure* magazine as one of the top 10 cities of the world," Shea recalls. "We found a pen with a globe on top and had 'Top 10 City of the World' imprinted on it. *Taa-daa!*"

Ready to look into launching your own sponsor partnership at an NTA event?

Contact NTA's Laura Scott at sponsor@ntastaff.com.

NTA members in Oregon, too, reap the benefits of a collaborative effort. Lisa Itel of Travel Oregon works with Team Oregon—composed of representatives of Travel Portland and other DMOs and suppliers from around the state—to cook up ideas.

"It takes a village," Itel says. "Travel Oregon might develop initial event concepts for our NTA sponsorships, but it's Team Oregon that brings our events to life."

Itel says what she likes most is that her partners think outside the box to bring quirky, creative ideas to their NTA family. "We inspire people to stop reading about the donut phenomenon in Portland, the craft beer culture moving across Oregon and the fourth deepest lake on the planet and go ahead and book a trip," she says. "We love changing people's lives."

For the Tennessee partners, one central theme—Tennessee's Music Highway—created a chorus of ideas, according to Shelda Rees of the Chattanooga CVB.

"Once we were all on the same page with music as our overall theme, we discussed entertainment at the luncheon,

door prize centerpieces and a sponsor card for registration bags," Rees says. "Then the state tourism office offered to put together a music video to showcase all of us."

As a Contact meal sponsor, Flores takes a turn at the mic to get his message to members.

"People's attention spans are growing shorter, so a brief presentation reaches them," he says. "Before I can sell anyone on a helicopter flight, they have to get to Las Vegas. John talks first about Las Vegas, and then I tell them something specific they can do. It reminds people that Las Vegas is more than just casinos."

Weighing the results

And it works—for Flores and others.

"The visibility is great. For the rest of the event, people come up and thank me, and we trade business cards," he says. "After people have seen you on stage, they're more comfortable walking up and talking to you."

Meyer, Flores' breakfast partner, gets access to tour operators by sponsoring at Contact. "What makes it valuable is the networking and relationship development," he says. "And we're branding Las Vegas as a viable option for groups."

Sponsors also take advantage of having an event-long presence on the show floor.

"I love having a Sweet Home Alabama booth!" Culp says. "That gives us great exposure to the entire convention."

Chattanooga also had some sweetness to impart at Travel Exchange in St. Louis, where Rees shared her city's iconic confection. "Chattanooga Bakery and the famous MoonPie turned 100 years old this year, and we used that as one of our hooks," she says. "We loved giving them out at our booth."

Having a tangible giveaway worked well for Shea and her Savannah cohorts, too. She is confident that her team and their pens reminded Contact attendees in Québec City last August of the positive experience they had in Savannah the year before.

Even the intangible results are positive, as Culp has learned through sponsoring the board dinner.

"It gives Sweet Home Alabama great coverage, and my partners are able to be seen by and to see the NTA leadership in a casual setting," Culp says. "As a direct



Dan Flores (Maverick Aviation Group), left, and John Meyer (Las Vegas CVA) grew up in Las Vegas and played on different baseball teams. Ever since 2012, though, they have teamed up as Contact sponsors, including in Québec City last August.

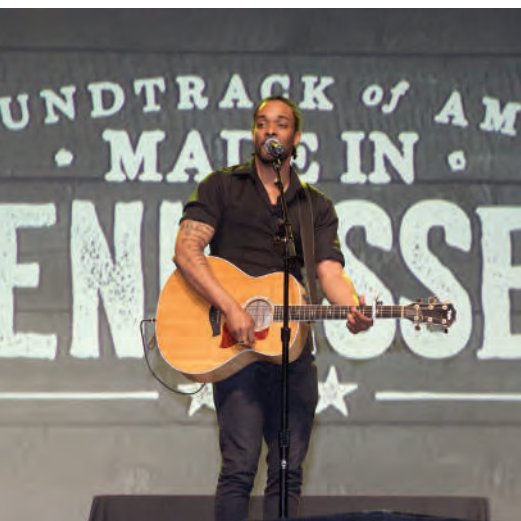


Clayton Whitehead (Sports Leisure Vacations) partnered with Patti Culp (Alabama Travel Council) and Judy Ryals (Huntsville CVB) to sponsor the Past President's Reception and the Board of Directors Dinner in St. Louis, as they also did in 2015 and 2016. Other Alabama sponsors were the Alabama Tourism Department and the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association.



Lisa Itel (Travel Oregon), left, has partnered with Heather Anderson (Travel Portland) and other Team Oregon DMOs and suppliers to sponsor at every NTA convention since 2008, as well as at Contact. The two, pictured last August in Québec City, were presented the NTA Shining Star Award in St. Louis at Travel Exchange.

NAIM HASAN PHOTOGRAPHY



NAIM HASAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Damien Horn's performance at Travel Exchange in St. Louis was sponsored by the Tennessee partnership: Chattanooga CVB, Cheekwood Botanical Gardens & Art Museum, Country Music Hall of Fame, Gaylord Opryland Hotel & Resort, Grand Ole Opry, Hatfield & McCoy Dinner Show, Memphis CVB, Nashville CVB, Pigeon Forge Department of Tourism, Sweet Magnolia Tours, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development and Visit Clarksville.

result of this sponsorship we have hosted tours by operators who might never have made it to Alabama."

And according to Itel, even if operators don't package her destination themselves, connections her team makes through sponsorships still lead to new business.

"The biggest benefit to our Oregon partners is the ability to create and strengthen relationships," she says. "For example, Oregon doesn't have a major-league baseball team, so it's hard for a company like Sports Travel and Tours to sell Oregon, but when their staff is included in our events, they can become Oregon ambassadors."

Speaking from experience

Sponsorships can be complex or simple and range from small items to enormous productions, yet those experienced with sponsor partnerships offer advice that's remarkably consistent.

Determine objectives

- "Consider the end first. What do you want from the sponsorship? Who do you want to reach? Then find a

sponsorship that meets those goals." Clayton Whitehead

- "Before committing to the project, have a meeting or conference call and find out what's the most important thing to each of the partners. Then make a plan using everyone's input and go for it." Shelda Rees
- "Remember that every sponsorship is an opportunity to spotlight your destination or product." Mindy Shea

Work together

- "Plan out the budget and find partners within your area, within your state or within your region—all of those partnerships can be successful." Patti Culp
- "Engage with your statewide or regional partners to build a better presence with NTA operators. It organically helps with creativity and helps suppliers from around your area build stronger partnerships, which result in better business." Lisa Itel
- "Partner with the right company for your business. You should have similar objectives for the partnership." John Meyer
- "Work with attractions and hotels in your area and in other communities and get as many partners as you need to make it affordable for everyone." Shelda Rees

Find the right message

- "Make sure the sponsorship reflects your organization and puts out the message that you want to send." Mindy Shea
- "What you do at the function is important, but following up is what will get you the business." Patti Culp
- "Sure, there are the 'standard' sponsorships, but do they meet your goals? If not, dialogue with NTA. The team is creative. They can massage existing sponsorships or even create one just for you to meet your budget and end goals." Clayton Whitehead

Sponsors play an important role in making NTA events more enjoyable, engaging and affordable for all members. And if you're the one writing the check? Enjoy the attention that comes from providing your colleagues with an experience or service they appreciate. That's what Dan Flores has learned every time he steps off the stage.

"Thanks' starts a lot of conversations." 🗣️



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3 questions with Jay Smith

NTA chair issues challenge to Just Bring One



WHEN JAY SMITH was introduced as NTA chair at Travel Exchange '17 in St. Louis, his incoming remarks included a battle cry for 2017: Just Bring One! What exactly does he want you to bring? We caught up with the Sports Travel and Tours owner at Destination Capitol Hill and asked him to share his vision.

Q: How did Just Bring One get started?

A: I was looking over my notes from the board meeting in Québec City last summer before Contact, and at some point I wrote at the top of my notes, "Just Bring One." I can't tell you exactly why I wrote it, but I thought to myself that if every member just brought one more new member to NTA or if they got just one colleague to attend Travel Exchange and experience the show, the possibilities for everyone involved in NTA would be so much greater.

Q: What do you want to accomplish with this campaign?

A: Of course, just from a numbers standpoint, I want to grow the membership and increase convention attendance because that would make us a stronger, healthier organization and open up new business lines. But I really want to keep the buzz going. We had a strong, positive vibe coming out of St. Louis, and I want to maintain that energy, that enthusiasm, going into San Antonio in December. And by bringing a new member into NTA or to Travel Exchange, we can show who we

are, what we're about and how together, we really can go further. So yes, it's a membership campaign, but it's also about sharing and introducing the NTA brand to as many folks as we can to ensure sustained success.

Q: How will Just Bring One help NTA members?

A: Every NTA member at Travel Exchange represents a unique experience. The more connections we make, the more hands we shake, the more product options there are and the more market experts we have, the better it is for each of us and our travelers. So Just Bring One ... bring a new member to NTA and to Travel Exchange. Don't be afraid to tell your story and share how NTA has benefited you and your business. NTA is about relationships, and building on our already strong, diverse membership encourages more collaboration, new markets and fresh ideas for everyone.



NTA is making it worth your while to Just Bring One. Refer a prospect who joins NTA between now and Oct. 1, and you'll get \$50 per new member. Plus, you'll get an additional \$50 for each one who signs up for Travel Exchange '17 in the same time frame. Just Bring One for an easy \$100 in your pocket! (Or NTA can credit you \$100.)

Send your member referrals to NTA's Debbi Alley at debbi.alley@ntastaff.com or call +1.859.264.6544.



"I was able to have one-on-one appointments with actual decision makers, which was very important to me. I believe that you have to get out there, network and be seen or you run the risk of being forgotten."

—Portia Conerly, Arlington (Virginia) Convention & Visitors Service, Travel Exchange '17 St. Louis attendee

Deadline for deep discounts nears

Circle **July 14** on your calendar.

If you're a tour supplier or DMO who didn't attend in St. Louis, you have until **July 14** to receive a \$300 early-bird discount when register for Travel Exchange '17 in San Antonio (Dec. 14–18). And if you attended Travel Exchange in St. Louis, **July 14** is the last day you can receive half-off registration fees for the San Antonio convention.

Visit NTAonline.com/convention and sign up today to experience the one show where 80 percent of NTA tour operators can only be found—Travel Exchange.



TREX Checks

What: Travel Exchange '17

Where: San Antonio, Texas

When: Dec. 14–18

Web: NTAonline.com/convention

COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON AND KENDALL FLETCHER

Burn, baby burn, Reno artferno

Reno, Nevada, is the gateway to Burning Man, the 10-day festival that is based around arts, creativity and self-expression. And, although Burning Man takes place in the Black Rock Desert two hours north of Reno, the city and its arts scene are heavily impacted by the annual event.

Reno boasts a large collection of public art, which includes many permanent pieces that had a temporary home at the

Burning Man event. Groups can follow the Playa Art Trail, which includes a series of sculptures located throughout the city. Some of the trail's most popular permanent installations are "BELIEVE," "Portal of Evolution" and "The Ichthyosaur Puppet." The Reno Playa Art Park also is home to a temporary group of installations that were on display during the most recent Burning Man.

Travelers also can enjoy seeing the more than 60 murals that are part of the Midtown Mural Trail. Works by local and international artists can be found on the city's buildings, sidewalks and alleyways in the Midtown area. Both docent-led and self-guided tours highlighting street art are available.

Travel planners also can time a group visit to coincide with one of the city's arts-based festivals. Artown takes place throughout July and includes more than 500 dance, music and theater performances, visual arts displays, workshops and guided tours. Another local favorite is RenoSculptureFest, which takes place each May.

For more information, visit artspotreno.com or call +1.775.827.7655. —P.H.



RENO RIVERWALK/JERAMIE LU PHOTOGRAPHY

Just Bring One!

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Call **800.682.8886** or email debbi.alley@ntastaff.com with your referrals today!

[#JustBringOne](https://www.facebook.com/JustBringOne)



Miami museum movin' on up

The Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, will open in its new, permanent home in the city's Design District this December. The building, with its minimalist design and geometrical façades, reflects the city's iconic architecture. The new location will have more than 20,000-square-feet to house exhibition galleries, and it includes a 15,000-square-foot sculpture garden.

The ICA Miami, launched in 2014 and currently operating in the landmark Moore Building, works to promote the continuance of experimentation in contemporary art in the Miami area and internationally. The museum keeps up its objective by offering free, year-round admission.

On view from Dec. 1 through Feb. 26, 2018, will be "The Everywhere Studio," a group exhibition examining the cultural breakthroughs and the evolution of the artist's studio. The exhibit will include about 100 works in painting, sculpture, video and installation from more than 50 artists who've made a name for themselves over the past five decades. The pieces, organized chronologically, will explore the artists' changing relationships with their studios.

The ICA Miami offers programming through ICA Speaks, which promotes the exchange of art and ideas; ICA Performs, which encourages leading artists to present at the museum to



ICAMIAMI.ORG


nurture developing performers; and ICA Residents, an initiative that focuses on strengthening the museum's engagement through short-term commissions, projects and events.

The museum also promotes education through The Art + Research Center, Family Day, community engagement and the Young Artists Initiative.


To learn more, call +1.305.901.5272 or go to icamiami.org.

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Waves of beauty and adventure

North American national parks include coastal sites that showcase whales, glaciers and whole lot more

COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

Between the U.S. National Park Service's centennial in 2016 and Canada's 150th anniversary this year, park sites across the two North American nations have been receiving a lot of attention lately. More than 600 NPS and Parks Canada sites are welcoming the influx of visitors with an innovative group of tours and programs.

The following pages include information on popular activities at coastal parks in Alaska, Québec and four national lakeshores in the U.S. Midwest, as well as details on adventurous options in Montana's Glacier National Park and Newfoundland & Labrador's Gros Morne National Park.

And if travel planners needed additional incentive to feature park sites on their tours, Parks Canada is offering free admission through the end of December as part of the country's sesquicentennial celebration.



Do you know the way to Saguenay?

One of the most unique sites in the Parks Canada system is Saguenay–St. Lawrence National Marine Park. This coastal attraction, which is located 130 miles up its namesake river from Québec City, is the playground of whales, seals and seabirds.

Whale-watching excursions are a favorite activity from May to October, but the experience can vary depending on what type of vessel is chosen. Visitors can opt for a narrated tour aboard a more traditional sightseeing ship or choose a small-group program on a sailboat, while speedy zodiac boats and paddling trips on kayaks provide more adventurous ways to spy the whales.

A number of educational activities take place at the park's three interpretive centers, including outdoor talks overlooking the river. One of the most popular programs, "Live, from Beneath the St. Lawrence River!" is held at the Marine Environment Discovery Centre.

During this 75-minute program, participants watch a live video feed showing divers as they swim among thousands of sea creatures in the deep waters. Thanks to the high-tech



PARKS CANADA/L. LÉVESQUE

"Live, from Beneath the St. Lawrence River!"

masks the divers wear, viewers can ask questions and receive real-time answers.

To find out more, contact Jennifer Burnell of Parks Canada at jennifer.burnell@pc.gc.ca or visit parkscanada.gc.ca/saguenay.

Ranger-led program at Saguenay–St. Lawrence National Marine Park



A tale of two glacier parks

The U.S. West is home to a number of spots where nature never fails to impress. Two prime examples are the similarly named Glacier National Park and Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve. While the parks vary in location—Glacier is in inland Montana and Glacier Bay is in coastal Alaska—they share more than just a very descriptive word in the name. Both are packed with unspoiled beauty, mountain peaks, glacial valleys, acres of wilderness and wildflowers, and hundreds of species of animals.



NPS/TIM RAINS

Glacier National Park

West Glacier, Montana | nps.gov/glac

The basics: Glacier is home to headwaters for streams and rivers that flow to the Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico and to Hudson's Bay. There are more than 200 high-altitude lakes along with nearly 50 glaciers spread across the park's 1,600 square miles, which blend seamlessly with rugged mountains and alpine meadows.

Top activities: Hiking is the best way to see the park, and its hundreds of miles of trails lead to waterfalls, forests and scenic overlooks. Options range from short nature walks to multi-day backcountry excursions. Boating, biking and horse-back tours also take visitors deep into the park.

Unique experiences: Going-to-the-Sun Road, which connects the eastern and western sides of the park, meanders beside long stretches of St. Mary's Lake and Lake McDonald and reaches 6,646 feet when it heads over Logan Pass. Groups can book a ride along the famous road in one of the park's iconic Red Jammer vehicles.

Wildlife viewing: Glacier is grizzly country, as it boasts one of the largest remaining grizzly bear populations in the lower 48 states. The park also is home to bats, beavers, bighorn sheep and elk, as well as lynx.

To learn more, contact Debbie Picard of Montana's Glacier Country at gcsales@glaciermt.com.



CC FLICKR/MATT ZIMMERMAN: bit.ly/2qTPSYt

Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve

Gustavus, Alaska | nps.gov/glb

The basics: Located at the northern end of Alaska's Inside Passage, Glacier Bay is many things: a living laboratory, a designated wilderness, a biosphere reserve and a UNESCO World Heritage site. The marine park's remoteness helps protect its glaciers and fjords, as well as its rainforest and snow-capped mountains.

Top activities: While shore-based tours are interesting, getting out on the water is the way to go at Glacier Bay. Whale-watching excursions and other boat tours detail the park's rich maritime heritage, while the area also is one of America's top spots for sport fishermen.

Unique experiences: Sea kayaking provides unparalleled access to glaciers and icebergs. Popular options include a tour that goes from the Glacier Bay Lodge to the Beardslee Islands and one around the Point Adolphus area, which may put paddlers up close with humpback whales. There are routes geared for both veteran and novice kayakers.

Wildlife viewing: Marine mammals abound, with the stars of the show being migrating whales, stellar sea lions, Dall's porpoises and harbor seals. Bald eagles, which nest in tall cottonwoods, are one of the many seabirds found in the park.

To learn more, contact the Alaska Travel Industry Association's Tanya Carlson at tcarlson@alaskatdia.org.

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Lots to love at national lakeshores

One of the lesser-known designations for sites that are managed by the National Park Service is National Lakeshore. Four coastal sites—two in Michigan, one in Indiana and one in Wisconsin—have received this designation, and here is a look at what travelers can see and do when they visit these Midwestern NPS sites:



CC FLICKR/JUSTIN MEISSEN: bit.ly/2qrasi9



INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE



CC FLICKR/JIM SORBLE: bit.ly/2q320kw

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

Bayfield, Wisconsin | nps.gov/apis

There are a number of things to do along the mainland—lighthouse tours, nature walks, summer campfire programs—but boat excursions make the islands more accessible. One of the park's most unique features is its sea caves, which become works of art when they freeze over in the winter.

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

Porter, Indiana | nps.gov/indu

In addition to enjoying 15 miles of sandy beach, visitors can go kayaking and fishing in Lake Michigan. Groups also can enjoy seasonal interpretive programs that include everything from nature walks and ranger-led bicycle tours to guided snowshoeing excursions in the winter.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

Empire, Michigan | nps.gov/slbe

This popular recreation area near Traverse City beckons visitors with its 64 miles of beaches, coves and inlets. The towering 400-foot sand dunes are the main attraction, and sweeping views of Lake Michigan are available from atop Sleeping Bear, Empire and Pyramid Point bluffs.



Badlands National Park, SD

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore

Munising, Michigan | nps.gov/piro

Located in Michigan's Upper Peninsula along Lake Superior, Pictured Rocks celebrated its 50th anniversary last year. Travelers have a variety of activities awaiting them, including learning about park's tie to the U.S. Lighthouse Service, exploring the cliffs and forests, and hiking to waterfalls.

Monu-mantle exploration at Gros Morne

Gros Morne National Park is famous for its fjords, forests, waterfalls, lakes and abundant wildlife. But the signature feature of this stunning attraction on Newfoundland's western coast is its unique rock formations.

This UNESCO World Heritage site contains examples of the Earth's mantle, which illustrate the theory of plate tectonics. The exposed layers of rock have allowed researchers to gain key insights about how geological shifts across millennia resulted in the erosion and reforming of land masses along the Atlantic coast.

Parks Canada's Jennifer Burnell says one of the best ways to explore this aspect of the park's vivid history is on a guided tour that follows the Tablelands Trail. These two-hour walks, which start at 10 a.m. daily during summer months, unpack the findings that have changed how we understand our planet.

Parks Canada interpreters lead the exploration of this bizarre and beautiful landscape that includes glacially carved valleys and rugged hills. Guides also will share information on the unique plants and vegetation found in the Tablelands area of the park.

Reach out to Burnell at jennifer.burnell@pc.gc.ca or visit parkscanada.gc.ca/grosmorne to learn more. 📍



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CITY SPOTLIGHT

Los Angeles

COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

“As one of the world’s premier travel destinations, Los Angeles rolls out the red carpet for groups of all sizes,” says Kathryn Smits, vice president, international tourism, travel industry, for Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board. “The city offers signature ‘only-in-L.A.’ experiences that you’d expect from the undisputed entertainment capital of the world.”

For more information, contact Tamy Martelli of the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board at tmartelli@latourism.org or visit discoverlosangeles.com.

City of Stars

As Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone danced and sang their way across Los Angeles in the acclaimed 2016 film “La La Land,” they not only captured the hearts of moviegoers but also provided the City of Angels with a major day in the sun. While this wasn’t Los Angeles’ first shining moment on the Silver Screen, “La La Land” artfully showcased many of the things that make the city enduringly appealing to visitors.

“‘La La Land’ beautifully captures the spirit and energy of Los Angeles, and we have been so thrilled to see the film’s representation of the city transmitted into an enthusiasm to experience it firsthand,” says Smits.

Travelers seeking to channel their inner Sebastian and Mia can explore some of the movie’s popular filming sites, such as the following five:

Griffith Park

After a party, Sebastian and Mia take in the spectacular view of the San Fernando Valley from 4,300-acre Griffith Park, where they perform “A Lovely Night.”

Griffith Observatory

As an homage to “Rebel Without a Cause,” Sebastian and Mia visit the Observatory, where an unforgettable scene takes place in the Samuel Oschin Planetarium.

The Lighthouse Café

This Hermosa Beach staple, which has been showcasing live jazz since 1949, was a stop for the movie’s main characters during a big night out.

Hermosa Pier

After the couple’s visit to The Lighthouse Café, they stroll along the pier overlooking the Pacific Ocean, and Sebastian sings “City of Stars.”

The Bridge in Pasadena

A stop at the Colorado Street Bridge allows travelers to re-create Mia and Sebastian’s bridge interlude or discover Pasadena’s other architectural highlights.



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Groups see the Central Perk set from "Friends" as part of the Warner Bros. VIP Studio Tour.

Studio stops set the stage

One of the best ways to learn more about Hollywood's century-long love affair with the movie and TV industry is to visit the studios of the major production companies that call the Los Angeles area home.

"People love taking tours of real, working movie studios, such as Warner Bros., Universal Hollywood and Paramount," says Smits, "as well as visiting the Hollywood Walk of Fame; the Dolby Theatre, home of the Oscars; The Grammy Museum; and so much more."

At Warner Bros., groups can get a behind-the-camera look at the magic of Hollywood during the VIP Studio Tour and the Deluxe Tour. Both the two-hour VIP option and the five-hour Deluxe Tour include guided visits to backlots and soundstages, the DC Universe and Batman exhibits, the props department and more.

Each finishes with time to explore Stage 48, an interactive area that details key phases of the entertainment production process. During their self-guided exploration of Stage 48, visitors can check out the Central Perk set from "Friends," become Hobbit-sized at the forced-perspective special effect table and soar around on a broom just like Harry Potter as part of a green-screen experience.

Additional features of the Deluxe Tour are a continental breakfast, a three-course lunch in the Commissary Fine Dining Room and extended time to explore the studio lot's post-production area, where scenery artists, special effects experts, construction teams and Foley artists work their magic.

For more information, contact Denis Zyuzin at denis.zyuzin@warnerbros.com or visit wbtour.com.



"Harry Potter" cast member Bonnie Wright under the sorting hat at Warner Bros.

Additional studio tours

Here is information on three other popular production company tours in Los Angeles:

Paramount Studios Tour As groups explore an active studio on the two-hour tour, they step into the world of Hollywood's first major movie studio and learn about Paramount's 104-year legacy. Special VIP and After Dark tours also are available.

Universal Studios Hollywood In addition to enjoying the amusement park, Universal guests can take the famous tram that highlights some of the blockbuster movies and TV shows that have been produced at the world's largest working movie studio.

Sony Pictures Studio Tour The guided two-hour walking tour goes to soundstages that were home to films ranging from "The Wizard of Oz" to "Men in Black" and "Spider-Man" and to TV sets of well-known game shows, such as "Jeopardy!" and "Wheel of Fortune."



Discover The Huntington

Group Tours Available | Pasadena Adjacent | huntington.org

From famous theaters and clubs to celebrity homes (and graves)

Beyond studio tours and visits to “La La Land” sites, groups can follow the trail of celebrity stars adorning the sidewalk along the Hollywood Walk of Fame and check out the hand-prints outside Hollywood TCL Chinese Theatre. They also can uncover additional aspects of Hollywood’s iconic entertainment scene at the following attractions:

Historical movie theaters Venues such as the Egyptian Theater, Hollywood TCL Chinese Theatre (formerly Grauman’s Chinese Theatre), The Cinerama Dome and the Aero Theatre recall the early days of Hollywood.

Legendary music clubs From the hippy and psychedelic days of the 1960s and the hard-rocking ‘80s to the present, clubs like Whisky A Go-Go, The Roxy Theatre and the Troubadour have been on the cutting edge of music.

Famous comedy venues Staples such as The Comedy Shop and The Laugh Factory have been bringing a who’s who of standup legends to Los Angeles stages since they opened in the 1970s.

Tours featuring stars’ homes While the days of entrepreneurial types sitting on lawn chairs in Beverly Hills holding up “Maps to Stars’ Homes” signs are long gone, motorcoach tours highlighting the mansions of celebrities remain popular. As do ...



Visits to celebrity gravesites Here’s a sampling of renowned permanent residents at three star-studded cemeteries: Pierce Brothers Westwood Village Memorial Park (Marilyn Monroe, Dean Martin, Natalie Wood); Forest Lawn Memorial Park Glendale (Walt Disney, Michael Jackson, Elizabeth Taylor); and Hollywood Forever Cemetery (Cecil B. DeMille, Rudolph Valentino, Johnny Ramone). ☎

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Photo Courtesy of Jonas Sejr-Thomsen

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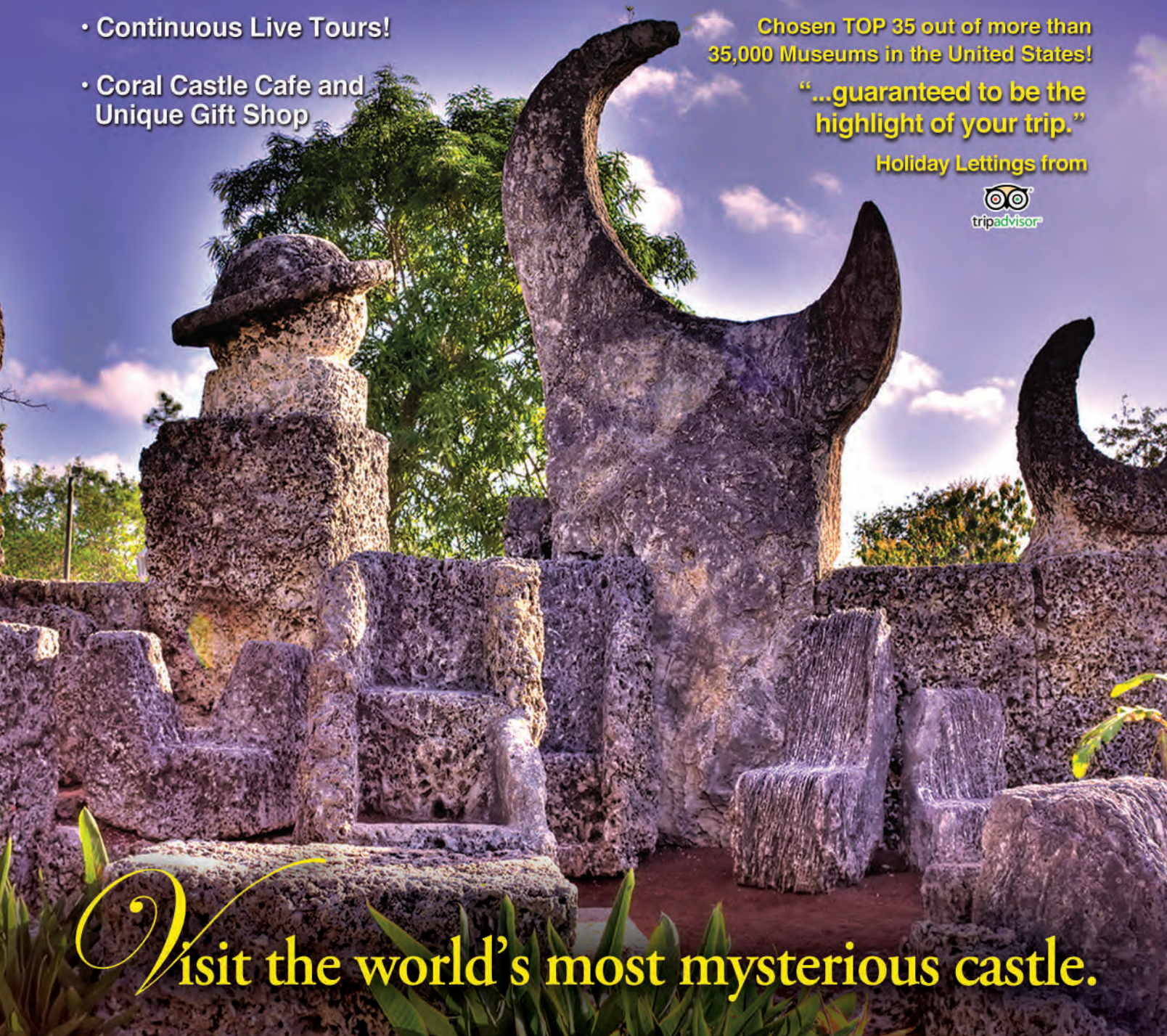
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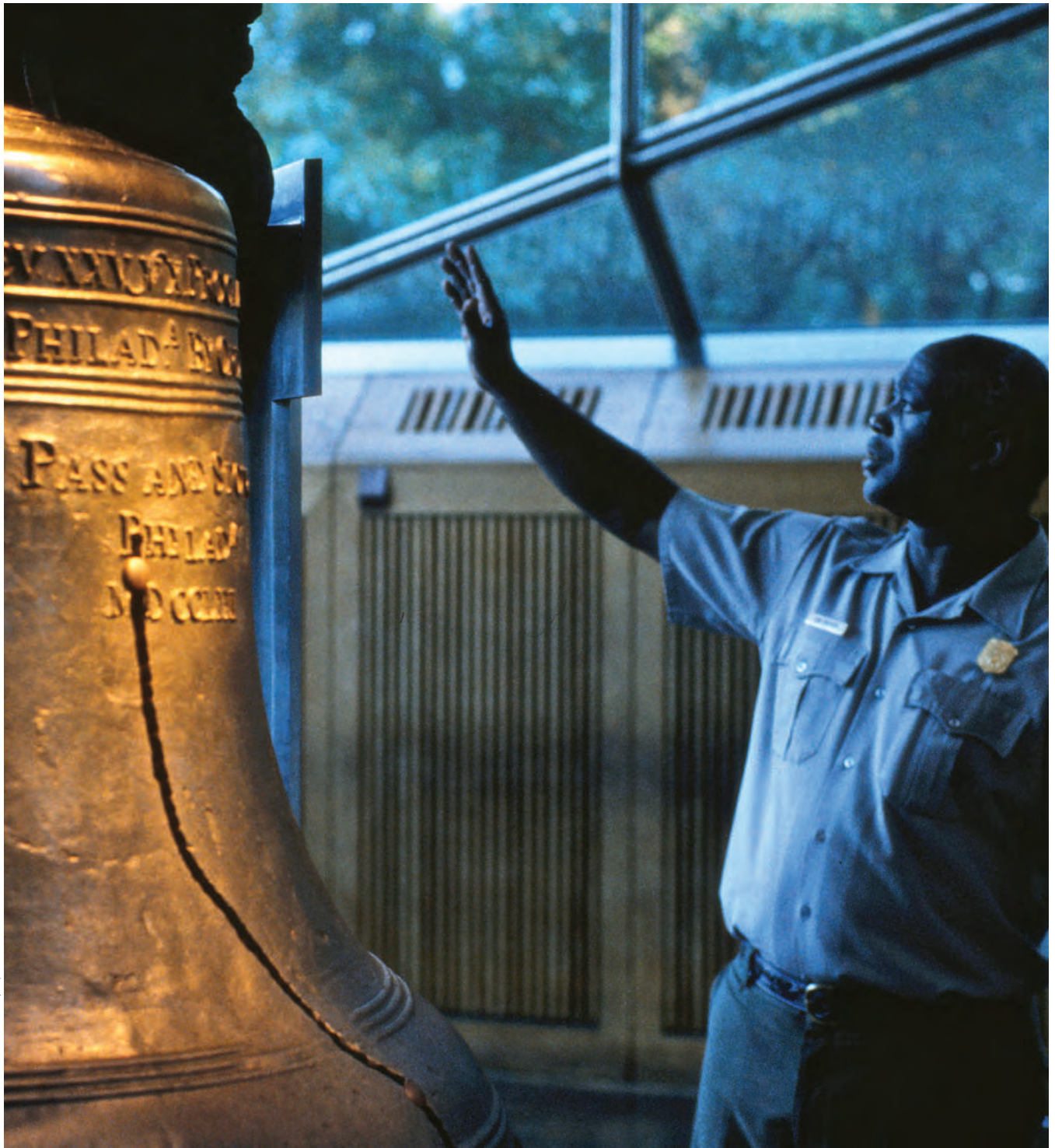
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Seeing is bell-ieving: At sites across the U.S. Mid-Atlantic region, such as Philadelphia's Independence National Historical Park, travelers can see artifacts and learn about locales emblematic of the nation's founding. For more on Philadelphia attractions, turn to page 46.

Deep South	32
Mid-Atlantic U.S.	40
Latin America	48
Italy	50

Deep South

COMPILED BY GABE WEBB



The old is new again in Savannah

"We like to say that Savannah is 'historic but hip,'" says Mindy Shea, director of tour and travel sales for Visit Savannah. "While it boasts the largest urban historic district in America, with more than 1,000 historical buildings, it also has an energy and vibrancy that's immediately evident."

Many of Savannah's group-friendly attractions demonstrate its dynamic history.

"One of our country's most notorious chapters comes to life in the city's newest attraction, the American Prohibition Museum," says Shea. The museum is located in Savannah's City Market, and it features dioramas, artifacts and life-sized figures of people that influenced the Prohibition Era, from its institution to its repeal.

"It's more than your classic, static museum, and guests will have the opportunity to relive history through state-of-the-art technology, costumed docents and multimedia presentations," says Shea. Groups can also sample craft cocktails and learn about mixology in a speakeasy-inspired private event space.

Another one of the city's popular experiences, Savannah Riverboat Cruises, has added a new ship to its fleet. The newly renovated *Georgia Queen* was built as a casino boat in 1995 and underwent a \$4 million conversion before arriving in Savannah. The ship features three ballrooms and an open-air top deck, and its 1,000-passenger capacity makes it the largest riverboat of its kind in the U.S.

For tour operators looking to package the city, Shea suggests considering the late fall. "While springtime will always be an ideal time to visit, don't forget November and December," she says. "The weather is still mild as we head into the holiday season, with many exciting events and performances."

"If your groups haven't been here before, they want to come. And if they've been here before, they want to come back!"

For more information about Savannah attractions, contact Shea at mshea@visitsavannah.com or go to visitsavannah.com.



American Prohibition Museum

AMERICAN PROHIBITION MUSEUM

TOP: GEORGIA QUEEN



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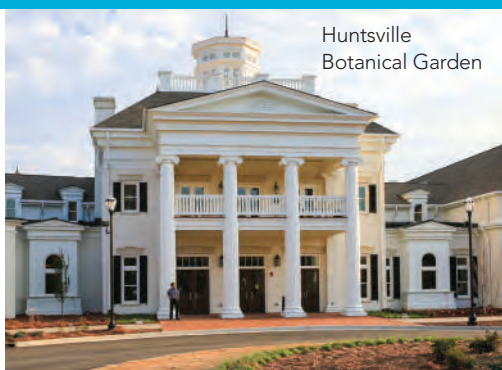
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Huntsville
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Campus No. 805



New places to dine, play and dream in Dallas

Dallas may be well-known as a gateway to the Southwest and its cowboy culture, but the Texas city is constantly adding new attractions that appeal to travelers of all interests.

Dallas' downtown **Statler Hotel & Residences** will reopen in early summer, following a \$255 million redevelopment project. The Hilton property opened in 1956, and the renovation preserves elements of its midcentury architecture and design. More than 150 luxurious guest rooms, as well as fine dining options, boutique shops and live performance venues, are part of the hotel's renewal.

The **Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden** will open A Tasteful Place in late 2017. The \$8 million addition to the facilities will include an orchard, vineyard, and herb and vegetable gardens. Guests will be able to enjoy flower beds, shaded porches and patios overlooking White Rock Lake. Programs will include dinners made with the gardens' produce, chef-led classes and horticultural demonstrations.

The **Dallas Arts District** spans 68 acres across 19 city blocks. It includes Klyde Warren Park—a 5.2-acre deck park built over a six-lane freeway—as well as the Dallas Museum of Art, the Nasher Sculpture Center and the Crow Collection of Asian Art. In October, the district will be the site of Aurora, a free, public exhibition of interactive light, video, performance and sound pieces.

For more information about Dallas tour product, contact Meg Gould, tourism sales manager for VisitDallas, at meg@visitdallas.com or go to visitdallas.com.



Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden



Klyde Warren Park

DALLAS CVB

Culture, cultivation and celebration in Shreveport

"We want to part of your trip-planning experience," says Melissa Small, communications coordinator for the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Board. "Our sales team is poised to help you plan your itinerary and book hotels, and wow you with our service and Southern charm."

The CVB calls the city "Louisiana's Other Side," and group activities and attractions reflect its connections to the Deep South and Texas.

"Groups looking for something exciting can immerse themselves in the unique culture of Shreveport-Bossier through

adventures like All About the Roses," says Small. During this 90-minute tour of the American Rose Center, visitors will learn about the cultivation of roses and the history of the decorative flower. They also can taste rose-flavored tea and jelly and see gardens where new strains of roses are grown.

Another popular experience is the Art and Soul of Shreveport tour at the Southern University Museum of Art. This tour uses artifacts and stories from west and south Africa and the U.S. to explore black culture and history in Shreveport.

Groups also can participate in the state's annual Mardi Gras celebrations at the Red River Mardi Gras Bash. "It's an exclusive party for groups to enjoy one of the largest parties in Louisiana," says Small. "The climate-controlled party tent includes live entertainment, authentic Louisiana cuisine, commemorative Mardi Gras souvenirs and several hands-on experiences." During the parade, groups can watch floats from the party's prime location.

Small says the city's location is ideal, too. "Shreveport-Bossier is conveniently located in the northwest corner of Louisiana, where I-20 and I-49 converge. The destination is three hours east of Dallas, Texas; three hours south of Little Rock, Arkansas; and three hours west of Jackson, Mississippi."

The CTB's staff offers step-on guides and meet-and-greet services for motorcoach groups. To learn more, contact Small at msmall@sbctb.org or go to shreveport-bossier.org.



Mardi Gras celebrations in Shreveport

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Venture outdoors in Kissimmee

Kissimmee, Florida, is an excellent launch pad for visiting Orlando-area theme parks, and other park expansions and new excursions with local outfitters await guests in 2017.

Revolution Off Road offers ATV rides on its 230 acres, and the company recently launched a VIP package that allows groups of up to 25 the ability to rent the entire property. In addition to being kings and queens of the (off) road, guests can arrange for a beachside ATV ride, souvenir t-shirts, meals and snacks, and a USB flash drive loaded with photos from the experience.

Southport Park has completed a landscape overhaul and remodels of park structures. Through Boggy Creek Airboat Rides, visitors will be able to take the helm of a dual-controlled airboat at the park. Other experiences include seeing a Native American village and a fossil dig.

To learn about more Kissimmee attractions, contact Danielle Ackerman, sales manager, North America, for Experience Kissimmee, at dackerman@experiencekissimmee.com or go to experiencekissimmee.com.



Kissimmee's visitors can take airboat tours provided by several local outfitters.

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BIRMINGHAM

Greater Birmingham Convention & Visitors Bureau

Reflect on the journey for civil rights in Birmingham

In January, outgoing president Barack Obama designated the Birmingham Civil Rights District a national monument. The Alabama city saw many significant events in the struggle for expanded civil rights for African Americans.

"Birmingham was ground zero for the civil rights campaign in 1963," said John Oros, president and CEO of the Greater Birmingham CVB, in a statement about the proclamation. "The national monument designation is tribute to the struggles and sacrifices that made Birmingham matter in the course of American history."


The 16th Street Baptist Church, the site of a 1963 bombing that killed four African-American schoolgirls, is perhaps the most recognized part of the new national monument. The monument area also extends to Bethel Baptist Church, the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, the A.G. Gaston Motel and portions of the 4th Avenue Business District.

16th Street Baptist Church



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The designation comes with access to more than \$1.5 million in grants from the National Park Service.

For more information about travel to Birmingham, contact Sara Hamlin, vice president of tourism for the Greater Birmingham CVB, at shamlin@inbirmingham.com or go to inbirmingham.com. 

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Mid-Atlantic U.S.

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First-rate attractions in America's first state

Delaware may be one of the smallest U.S. states (in square miles and population), but it brings plenty of natural, historical and culinary attractions to the, well, table.



Dogfish Head in Milton is a craft brewery that offers tours of its operation and tastings in a steampunk-inspired treehouse. Groups can dine at the brewery or check out the Dogfish Brewpub in nearby Rehoboth Beach. Travelers might also imbibe at Nassau Valley Vineyards, 16 Mile Brewing Company, Painted Stave Distilling and the Delaware Distilling Company.



The state's many coastal communities are prime destinations for sun and sand, and each has its own personality. **Rehoboth Beach** is known for its relaxed vibe, boardwalk and artistic shops and boutiques. Dewey Beach offers lively entertainment in the form of bayside clubs and music venues. Delaware Seashore State Park allows visitors to experience unspoiled nature.



Student groups can learn about Colonial America during a visit to New Castle and its historical courthouse. On guided tours of the **New Castle Courthouse Museum**, groups will learn about the area's European settlers, Delaware's ascension to statehood and the role the state played in the founding of the U.S. Half-hour and hour-long guided walks of the New Castle Historic District are also available.



"Delaware is known for some of the finest mansions and gardens on the East Coast," says Tina Madanat, group tour development leader for the Delaware Tourism Office. "Winterthur is the most prominent." The mansion is the former estate of Henry Francis du Pont, and it is now **Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library**, dedicated to exhibiting American decorative arts. The estate covers more than 60 acres, which include picturesque gardens.

For more on these and other Delaware attractions, contact Madanat at tina.madanat@state.de.us or go to visitdelaware.com.



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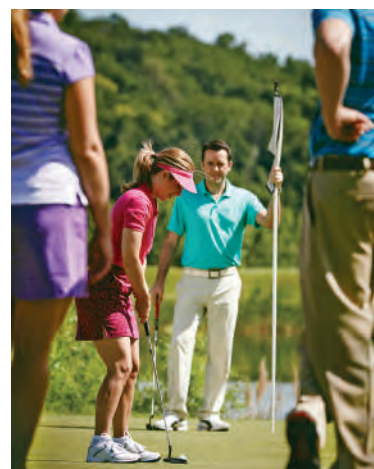
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Elizabeth adds its own flavor to Big Apple itineraries

The city of Elizabeth, New Jersey, has obvious appeal to tour operators taking groups to New York City.

“Elizabeth is just 30 minutes outside of New York City,” says Jennifer Costa, director of the Elizabeth Destination Marketing Organization. She also points out that nearly half of Newark Liberty International Airport is within Elizabeth’s city limits. “Groups can still experience the Big Apple without taking a big chunk out of their vacation budget,” adds Costa.

In addition to the banner attractions of nearby New York, Costa says that Elizabeth offers its own compelling museums, shopping and events.

“Our museums have authentic historical artifacts that allow groups to walk through history in modern times. You can see where Alexander Hamilton lived and went to school, as well as discover lots of other Revolutionary War history.”

Elizabeth is also an attractive destination for shoppers. At The Mills at Jersey Gardens, a Simon property, visitors will

find more than 200 stores and high-end outlets. To heighten the bargain hunt: Clothes and shoes are exempt from New Jersey’s sales tax. “Travelers from all over the world shop in this mall. It’s no wonder why Elizabeth was ranked fifth-best city for shopping in America by SmartAsset,” she says.

Summer in Elizabeth is a time for multicultural festivals that celebrate the diverse heritages of its residents, including the annual parade and celebration on Portugal Day in early June.

“The tourism office is diligently working on bringing in new, special events to our city,” says Costa, noting that the city will welcome a showcase of more than 300 exotic cars in October. “This is one of the many unique events that the tourism initiative is bringing.”

For more information about attractions and lodging in Elizabeth, contact Costa at jcosta@goelizabethnj.com or visit goelizabethnj.com.

Ocean City celebrates new tribute to Harriet Tubman

Visitors to Ocean City, Maryland, will find a new historical attraction to complement the area’s lauded beaches.

“The new Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center, located near Cambridge, Maryland, and on the way to Ocean City, is truly going to be a national treasure,” says Norma Dobrowolski of the Ocean City CVB. The center opened in March and serves as a gateway for the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Scenic Byway. Tubman was born in Dorchester County, Maryland, and the facility’s exhibits and research library help visitors understand the life of the famous abolitionist and her efforts to help slaves escape to freedom.

“The facility is marvelous for family reunions, history buffs and general-interest touring,” says Dobrowolski. “It is next to Blackwater Wildlife Refuge, known as one of the busiest eagle nesting areas in the Mid-Atlantic.”

And visitors taking a stroll or playing carnival games on Ocean City’s famous three-mile boardwalk also are close to nature.

“Everyone goes out to nearby Assateague Island National Seashore—accessible by coach—to get a glimpse of the roaming wild ponies on this barrier island,” says Dobrowolski.

“[Summer] travel is easier Sunday through Thursday if you are coming through metropolitan areas such as Washington

or Baltimore,” she adds. “September weekdays and October are actually great times to visit. The weather is typically warm, and there is plenty of room to explore.”

For more information, contact Dobrowolski at ndobrowolski@ococean.com or visit ococean.com.



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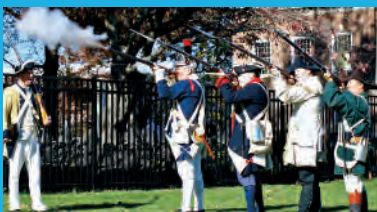
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Make time for play time in Rochester

The Strong Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, holds the world's largest collection of artifacts and media related to having fun.

The museum's exhibits explore the role of play in learning and development, and they encourage active participation. The Strong's permanent collection draws from its International Center for the History of Electronic Games, the National Toy Hall of Fame and the Brian-Sutton Library and Archives of Play. Together, these exhibits cover a spectrum of artifacts ranging from pinball machines, business records, comic books, catalogs, video game consoles and character

merchandise—among many others.

Groups can take guided tours that highlight some of the museum's rare artifacts: early LEGO sets, handmade Monopoly games, a Thomas Edison talking doll and original Barbie dolls. On a VIP behind-the-scenes tour, guests can choose between a look at the world's largest toy collection with a museum curator or having inside access to the Center for the History of Electronic Games laboratory.

To find out more about group tour options, contact Karen Dodson, tourism sales associate, at kdodson@museumofplay.org or go to museumofplay.org.



STRONG MUSEUM OF PLAY



“In prison, they called me Picasso.”

—John Myatt, criminal art forger


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John Myatt's copy of *Oleanders*, after Vincent Van Gogh, is just one of the more than 40 examples of forgeries and counterfeit objects featured in the exhibition, many of which have been at the center of major scandals and court cases. Mixed media on canvas, 2012. Courtesy of Washington Green Fine Art.

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History abounds in Pennsylvania's cities and small towns

NTA supplier members in Pennsylvania represent cosmopolitan cities, charming small towns and the state's Amish communities. To get familiar with both sides of the (surely minted in Philadelphia) coin, take a look at these lodging options and attractions in Philadelphia and Lancaster:

PHILADELPHIA

National Constitution Center

NTA Contact: Gina Romanelli
gromanelli@constitutioncenter.org
+1.215.409.6800
constitutioncenter.org

National Liberty Museum

Lisa Polakoff
lpolakoff@libertymuseum.org
+1.215.925.2800 (103)
libertymuseum.org

National Museum of American Jewish History

Beth Heaney
bheaney@nmajh.org
+1.215.923.3811 (141)
nmajh.org

One Liberty Observation Deck

Diane Meglino
diane@phillyfromthetop.com
+1.215.561.DECK (3325)
phillyfromthetop.com

Philadelphia Flower Show

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theflowershow.com

Philadelphia Museum of Art

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Country Inn of Lancaster

Barry H. Kidd
info@countryinnoflanaster.com
+1.717.393.3413
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Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre/Prather Entertainment Group

Denise S. Trupe
dtrupe@pratherentertainmentgroup.com
800.933.3759
dutchapple.com

Fulton Theatre

Adan Andrusky
aandrusky@thefulton.org
+1.717.397.7425
thefulton.org

Heritage Hotel Lancaster

Lorraine Ruhl
lorraine.ruhl@heritagelancaster.com
+1.717.898.2431
heritagelancaster.com

Lancaster Arts Hotel

Travis Stevens
tstevens@lancasterartshotel.com
+1.717.431.3058
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Latin America

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Hook, line and South American sinker

Jorge Cazenave, general manager of Buenos Aires-based Cazenave Argentina, is the perfect person to have nearby when a member of your group wants to catch a big fish. He knows where the fish are—and he always has a camera.

Cazenave holds a brown trout from Argentina's Futaleufu River.



"Having some of the largest rivers in the world, South America stands out as a favorite for fishermen," Cazenave says. "The Amazon, Paraná, Paraguay and Uruguay rivers offer a variety of huge catfish, dorado and pacu." (The latter, known as the vegetarian piranha, resembles its sharp-toothed relative, but the pacu feeds on fruit.)

In most South American countries, fishing season starts the first Saturday of November and ends on the first Sunday of May. The exceptions are the lakes located between Argentina and Chile, where fishing is permitted all year.

Cazenave also recommends fishing at the southern tip of South America, famous for its sea-run trout. "Trout and salmon are exotic species to the area, but they have adapted wonderfully to the glacial lakes and rivers," he says.

"Patagonia has some of the best fly fishing areas in the world, and the Rio Grande, in Tierra del Fuego, offers exclusive lodges and the chance for a record catch."

For more information on fishing trips to South America, email Cazenave at jorge@cazenaveargentina.com or go to cazenaveargentina.com.

A trio of exotic spots

S & S Tours, based in Arizona, specializes in small group tours to Latin American destinations, providing in-depth interpretations of each area's culture and natural history. Owner Sue Stilwell spotlights three of them:

Costa Rica

One third of Costa Rica is in reserves or national parks, and Stilwell says any visit should include an expert naturalist guide. "This Central American country is the most ecologically diverse Eden in the hemisphere—full of volcanoes, tropical forests, coffee farms, butterfly gardens, waterfall gardens, hanging bridges and beach parks—all with wonderful wildlife everywhere you go."

One of Stilwell's favorite places is the Arenal Volcano area. "The volcano eruptions, seen from your hotel at night, are dramatic," she says. "And the next day you can enjoy zip lining through the forest, a boat ride on the Rio Frio River or touring a small organic coffee farm."

Galapagos Islands

"The animal kingdom does not get any closer or better than in the Galapagos Islands," Stilwell says.

When visitors arrive on a double catamaran, they'll see colonies of marine iguanas and sea lions that will mostly go about their business. "There is no fear of humans in this protected archipelago of volcanic islands," she says. "You'll point your camera to blue-footed boobies, sea turtles, giant tortoises and penguins. No zoom is required, though—the animals are only inches away."

The Galapagos archipelago lies in equatorial waters some 600 miles off the coast of South America and is reached via a short flight from Quito, Ecuador. S & S Tours rotates in a Galapagos program every two or three years. The next one is April 30–May 6, 2018.



Incan agricultural terraces at Moray, an archaeological site close to Cuzco, Peru

S & S TOURS

Peru

S & S's Peru tour begins and ends in Lima, once the coastal capital city of the Spanish empire in South America. Intriguing museums and a visit to the catacombs are on the itinerary.

Rail fans and ancient history lovers will be thrilled with this country, according to Stilwell. "Three days in Cuzco, the oldest inhabited city of the Western Hemisphere, will reveal the secrets of the enduring Incan architecture through a guided tour to the primary sites in and around the city," she says. "To culminate your exploration of the ancient Inca civilization, you'll ascend by narrow gauge railroad to Machu Picchu, the sacred mountaintop fortress of the Incas."

For more information, visit ss-tours.com or contact Stilwell at ss@ss-tours.com.



Tarahumara athletes run long distances in sandals and togas.

Ready to run?

A Closer Look Tours is in the home stretch of finalizing a new package to Mexico's Copper Canyon. "Running with the Tarahumara is a twist on our usual Copper Canyon tour," says Colin Caparrós, director of operations of the Arizona-based company. "It's focused on the local Indian tribe known worldwide for their running prowess."

A 2010 book about the Tarahumara, "Born to Run," brought to light the stunning athleticism of the sandal-clad natives, and a number of ultramarathons attracted long-distance runners to the canyons. This tour is less demanding. "We are taking a more accessible approach to it," Caparrós says. "Our itinerary includes three runs that, in total, make up a half marathon, which opens it up to casual runners who want to share the experience and explore the culture."

The first tour is set to take off this fall, Oct. 11-19. Groups can fly into Hermosillo International Airport or take a motorcoach from Phoenix. After enjoying Hermosillo for a day, participants go for their first run: 3.5 miles on the beach along the Sea of Cortez. Two days of exploring other towns and attractions are followed by a four-mile morning run alongside the Tarahumara runners in the Sierra Madre Mountains. That afternoon, the group will share a meal with the athletes and their families.

The tour includes another run, a visit to the new Copper Canyon Adventure Park, with a ride on one of the world's longest zip lines—hey, at least everybody's off their feet—and a final stop in the historical city of Chihuahua.

For this program, A Closer Look Tours is partnering with Free Spirit Vacations. For more information, contact Caparrós at ccaparros@acloserlooktours.com or visit acloserlooktours.com.

Cuatro quests in Mexico

Representing a nation loaded with diverse destinations, the Mexico Tourism Board offers four suggestions for NTA tour operators:

Puerto Vallarta offers artistic beauty, one-of-a-kind food tastings, boats and beaches. Visitors stroll down cobblestone streets to reach arts and crafts markets and designer boutiques. A cruise on *Acalli*, a classic Hatteras 58-foot yacht, provides options for snorkeling, parties and coastal sightseeing. And groups can embark on an evening taco adventure or learn about tequila making.

Centrally located **San Luis Potosí** was founded in 1592 and packs powerful history lessons in its colonial center. Other highlights include the Temple of the Carmen, built in remarkable Mexican baroque style, and the National Museum of the Mask, with a permanent collection from all parts of the country. North of the city is Real de Catorce, a former mining town with a historical—and spiritual—attraction.

Los Cabos, on the southern tip of the Baja Peninsula, encompasses the towns of Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo. The area attracts A-list celebrities, but even regular folk are star-struck by its incredible variety of activities. The destination has 11 swimmable beaches, world-class fishing, water sports and luxury cruises. An international film festival is held each November, and the area's cuisine scene features fresh seafood.



Whale watching off the coast of Los Cabos

Groups that spend a week in the central highlands city of **San Miguel de Allende** can find a new focus each day, including art, gastronomy, wellness, adventure and history. An itinerary can include visits to churches and museums, a tour of local wineries and a brewery, a day at a hot springs and spa, perusing art galleries, taking a cooking class, and going on a horseback or all-terrain vehicle tour of the countryside.

For more ideas and information, go to visitmexico.com or contact Ivan Martinez-Vega at imartinez@visitmexico.com. ☎

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FASTA NTA

Italy

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Italian treasures can include buried ones

"Italy is composed of many magical sun-drenched areas, all with their own character, beauty, food and flavors," says Monia Cossa, North American market manager for Gartour.

The Rome-based company offers a range of tours and excursions throughout the country and features a series in Rome called Elite Walking Tours. Each one provides small groups with experienced guides and special itineraries that take them to notable monuments and sites, as well as to unexpected treasures.

And Gartour also shows groups buried treasures. "Our exclusive underground tours, led by an archaeologist, classical historian, medievalist or a certified speleologist, reveal Rome's underground," Cossa says. "Centuries of earthquakes, fires and floods caused the ground level of many areas to rise up as much as 25 meters, covering up entire villas, temples, markets and palaces. We visit many secret sites that are usually impossible for regular tourists to explore."

Outside of the Eternal City, Gartour offers escorted packages to Italy's most well-known destinations, such as Venice, Milan and Florence. Groups also can explore smaller cities and sites.

"Rapallo is a pretty town that is inlaid like a gem in the Portofino Coast," Cossa says. "And nearby lies Cinque Terre, five villages perched on the cliffs and connected by trails. We also recommend a visit to Positano, along the Amalfi Coast, before boarding a ferry to the Isle of Capri, which has the fabled Blue Grotto, Villa San Michele and Monte Solaro."

To learn more about Gartour's receptive services, contact Cossa at m.cossa@gartour.net or visit gartour.com.



Roman Forum

GREGORY FERDINANDSEN

Italy adds up, theme after theme

Michele Mondolfo has done the math, and Italy came out on top.

"Italy is first in the world for tourism density," he says. "All four countries that are ahead of Italy in tourist visits are much larger geographically. Within its small 300,000 square kilometers, Italy holds an incredible density of tourist attractions."

Mondolfo, owner of Milan-based Incoming Partners, bases his rankings on a United Nations World Tourism Organization report, which shows that Italy, with nearly 51 million arrivals in 2015, ranks No. 5 in the world. As for the number of attractions per square kilometer, who's to say he's wrong?

"Italy is known around the world for its cities, landscapes and food, all of which we feature in our classic itineraries," he says. "At the same time, we have a wealth of historical buildings, shows and activities that the masses have not discovered."

Mondolfo explains that his company's specialty is not a particular region, but Italian themes. Here are a few of the themes he has in mind:

- "Opera, ballet and concerts presented in prestigious theaters—temples of music and nest of emotions—are some of the most gratifying products we serve."
- "Food for us is not only nutrition, but also culture and history—and [about] understanding where it comes from. Agricultural tours discover traditions rather than modern techniques."
- "Italian style and fashion are to be admired, and when you visit an artisan shop, you will experience the emotion of having a shirt tailor-made and delivered to your home."
- "Sport can be experienced as a show or an activity, and we are ready to assist in both cases, including matches, motor activities and nature trekking."

Incoming Partners specializes in small groups and high-quality tours, and Mondolfo says that travel is relatively easy from coast to coast and north to south—"and from history to modernity, from archaeology to design and from tradition to innovation."

For details about Italy's "tourism density," contact Mondolfo at marketing@incomingpartners.it or visit incomingpartners.it. ☎



CC FLICKR/SERGEY GALYONKIN: btl/y2qySenj

The Ballad of the Masks, which takes place during the Carnevale of Venice, is an example of artistic expression that's ingrained in Italy's culture.

Courier's GUIDE TO NTA TOUR OPERATOR RECEPTIVE SERVICES

As the desires of travelers for one-of-a-kind experiences continue to rise, one of the best ways to ensure that your tours meet their expectations is to work with a company that can deliver authentic, local tour components.

The NTA membership includes more than 400 tour operators offering receptive services, each with the type of expertise that can turn a good tour into a great one. These local pros also can come up with creative options that provide those truly unique experiences, and by drawing from their expertise, you gain access to such “only-in-my-city” adventures that connect your travelers with the culture of the destination.

Save this guide as a reference of your fellow NTA members who stand ready to add these and other authentic components to your upcoming tours.

** Listings in this guide are based on a company's profile selections and/or membership designations. The information was provided by the member contact and was current as of April 18. The  mark indicates a company's membership in the NTA China Inbound Program, which allows those organizations to work with Chinese travel agents to bring groups to the United States. Please check NTAonline.com for updated information on NTA tour operators who provide receptive services.*

1000 Islands Tours & Travel Inc.

Jean Cutcliffe
Gananoque, ON Canada
1000islandtours.com

101 Travel Corp.

Hornng Daw Hsieh
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gogo101.com

1st Alaska Outdoor School

Maggie Dobrovoly
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1stalaskaoutdoorschool.com

50 Stars Travel Inc.

Kai Wu
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500 Tours Inc.

Phil Campbell
Greenwood, IN USA
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A Closer Look Tours

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AAA Signatours

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Able International Holiday

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ACC — American China Connection

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Accenting Chicago Events & Tours Inc.

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accentingchicago.com

ACFEA Tour Consultants

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Edmonds, WA USA
acfea.com

Adventure Student Travel/ Exploring America Inc.

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Kirksville, MO USA
exploringamerica.com

Africa Untamed Wilderness Adventures Ltd.

Elphas Ongong'o
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africauntamedwilderness.com

Alaska Coach Tours

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Alaska Skylar Travel LLC

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All Aboard America!

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Al Koch
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All American Tours Inc.

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Timothy Ebsary
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American Spring Travel

Jane Huang
City of Industry, CA USA
spring-tour.com

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Paul Monahan
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americanstudenttours.com

American Tours & Travel Inc.

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bandfest.com

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AmericanTours International LLC

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americantours.com

America's Hub World Tours

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americashubworldtours.com

AmeriPac Travel International Inc.

Jing Wang
Anaheim, CA USA
ameripactravel.com

AMG International Group Inc.

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Amiel Tours

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amiel.com

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amphitriangroup.com

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Vicky Lee
San Francisco, CA USA
journey2west.com

Anda International Travel Inc.

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andachicago.com

Anderson Vacations

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andersonvacations.ca

Angel International Exchange

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usaangel.com

Appina Travel GmbH

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appina-travel.com

Arizona China Travel & Tours

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Richard Arnold
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atlantictours.com

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auroratravel.asia

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excellencecharter.com

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COMMUNITY

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM THE NTA FAMILY

TOURISM CARES



TOURISM CARES



TOURISM CARES



PAT HENDERSON



DO NOVA HAXLEY

More than 170 travel professionals gathered in the Bay Area March 24 for the Tourism Cares for Oakland project. Despite the rainy conditions, groups of poncho-wearing volunteers helped repair and freshen up attractions at Children's Fairyland park, worked to beautify gardens at Lake Merritt and painted murals at a local brewery.

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Meet the Members

PRESENTED BY **VISIT**
Clarksville

Visit Wheeling, WV

WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA

NTA contact: Michael Biela,
marketing assistant

Office Phone: 800.828.3097

Website: visitwheelingwv.com

NTA member since: 1987

What's new and exciting in Wheeling?

There are some exciting new things happening at Oglebay Resort, including the recently remodeled West Family Wing, plus cool amenities such as the Aerial Adventure Course and outdoor bistro. Renovations are complete at the Capitol Theatre and WesBanco Arena. Our historical Centre Market shopping district has locally owned stores, eateries, bakeries and more lining the two Civil War-era market houses.

What are some of Wheeling's other top attractions?

Wheeling is home to West Virginia Independence Hall, the birthplace of West Virginia. It was in this building

where the Wheeling conventions were held, and where the creation of the state of West Virginia was decided. Today it is a free museum as part of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History.

How did you find yourself working at the Wheeling CVB?

I started at the Wheeling CVB in 2010 as an intern. I began working full-time in 2013 and have never looked back. Best job ever!

What's your favorite hobby?

I co-host a polka radio program with my father called "The Polka Showcase." We broadcast every Sunday on two Wheeling-based radio stations and stream live online as well.



Do you have a favorite destination you've traveled to?

Every June, my friends and I journey to the Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival in Manchester, Tennessee. I have made so many friends and memories since we took our first trip in 2010.

For more information, contact Biela at mbiela@wheelingcvb.com.

Scenic Safaris

JACKSON, WYOMING

NTA contact: Jason Smith,
operations manager

Office Phone: +1.307.734.8898

Website: scenic-safaris.com

NTA member since: 2011

What unique experiences does Scenic Safaris offer travelers?

Scenic Safaris has the privilege of sharing Yellowstone, the world's first national park, and its neighbor, Grand Teton National Park, with both domestic and international travelers. In the winter, we use snowmobiles and snow-coaches to access and admire the parks and the surrounding areas. In the summer, we visit many of the same areas, but we use a combination of luxury touring vans and all-terrain vehicles.

How did Scenic Safaris get its start?

Scenic Safaris purchased an existing snowmobile operation in 2010. We

immediately began a summer operation to include wildlife trips, UTV trips and ATV trips—both guided and unguided. Four years later, we were selected by the National Park Service to operate and control the majority of the winter-use permits for the south entrance of Yellowstone National Park. Since 2014, we have increased our operation to include additional activities for guests. In fact, we are currently the largest motorized-activity company in Jackson, Wyoming.

I love my job because ...

I am surrounded by people who take care of their guests and take care of each other. It's easy to get up and go to work when everyone is on the same team.

What are your favorite tunes right now?

I listen to almost any kind of music. If I am going to dance, I like good country music. If I am driving or riding snowmobiles, I really like instrumental music and



rock. I will be honest; some of my favorite music is orchestral music.

For more information, contact Smith at jesmith@scenic-safaris.com.

Visit Clarksville
Frances Manzitto
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frances@visitclarksvilletn.com
visitclarksvilletn.com

From our picturesque and historic downtown to our rolling countryside, Clarksville welcomes you with open arms. Bringing your group to Clarksville means a trip full of Southern hospitality, unique attractions and shopping, great food and memories that will last a lifetime. Find out more at visitclarksvilletn.com.



How can you *not*?

Travel Exchange is where you collect new ideas, new product and new connections. You just can't afford to miss it. And now's the time to act. **Save 50%** on reg fees (St. Louis attendees) or **\$300** with seller early-bird rates until **July 14**.

"Appointments at NTA are the foundation of our tour planning process ... the face-to-face connections we make are a valuable part of our future working relationships."

—Fraser Neave, Wells Gray Tours



SAN ANTONIO DEC. 14–18

NTAonline.com/convention

#TREN17



NEW MEMBERS

The following is a list of organizations that joined NTA recently. To access complete information on each of these new members, including a company description, log on to NTAonline.com and go to the member searches.

DMOs

Arlington Convention & Visitors Bureau

Scott Poland
Arlington, TX 76011-8214 USA
arlington.org

Port Arthur CVB

Callie Summerlin
Port Arthur, TX 77642-5710 USA
visitportarthurtx.com

TOUR OPERATORS

Aldon Tours

Leon Maisel
Montrose, AL 36559 USA
aldontours.com

Belize Nature Getaway

Jacqueline Sean Paul
San Ignacio, Cayo, Belize
belizenaturegetaway.com

DiscoverMX LLC

Ricardo Vilchis
Alpharetta, GA 30005 USA
discovermx.com

FETI Travel Inc.

Lily Zhuang
Boston, MA 02111 USA
fetitravel.com

Golden Bridge Int'l Travel Inc.

Irene Wang
Orlando, FL 32188 USA

Luxurious Abroad

Junita Majette
Savannah, GA 31419 USA
luxuriousabroad.com

Nature Nuts Adventure Travel LLC

James Joyce
Seattle, WA 98136 USA

Pacific Resources Development Inc.

Jason Zhang
Canton, MI 48188 USA

Shrike Safaris

Mark James
Mwanza, 255 Tanzania
shrikesafaris.org

Southwest Adventure Tours LLC

Jason Murray
Cedar City, UT 84720 USA
southwestadventuretours.com

The Travel Group Inc.

Michael Egan
West Springfield, MA 01089 USA

TOUR SUPPLIERS

9/11 Tribute Center

Willie Davis
New York, NY 10007 USA
tributewtc.org

The Anaheim Hotel

Kevin Anawati
Anaheim, CA 92802 USA
theanaheimhotel.com

Banana Bay Resort and Marina

Anthony Dellinger
Marathon, FL 33050 USA
bananabay.com

Boone Hospitality Associates, DBA Courtyard by Marriott, Boone

Jessica Smith
Boone, NC 28607 USA
marriott.com/hkybn

Boston Red Sox

Marcita Thompson
Boston, MA 02215 USA
redsox.com

Choctaw Casino Resort

Erika Davis
Durant, OK 74701 USA
choctawcasinos.com

Comfort Inn & Suites Durango

Patti Reavis
Durango, CO 81303 USA
comfortinndurango.com

Crowne Plaza Hotel Seattle Downtown

Beth Harwood
Seattle, WA 98101-3048 USA
cphotelseattle.com

Homewood Suites by Hilton Charleston Historic District

Jenna Joseph
Charleston, SC 29403 USA

Hospitality Too

Steven Brot
West Orange, NJ 07052 USA

Le Meridien New Orleans

Nikki Jackson
New Orleans, LA 70130 USA
lemeridienneworleanshotel.com

Los Angeles Auto Show

Tara Valdez
Los Angeles, CA 90064 USA
laautoshow.com

Lotus Destinations Pvt. Ltd.

Loretta Pinto
Yonkers, NY 10705 USA
lotusdmc.com

Oceania Cruises

Tina White
Reston, VA 20194 USA
oceaniacruises.com

Reunion Tower

Michelle Taylor
Dallas, TX 75207 USA
reuniontower.com

Ruan Charter LLC

Eric Ruan
Germantown, MD 20874 USA

Silver Hotel Group

Marisol Pena
Mississauga, ON L4V 1G2 Canada
silverhotelgroup.com

Strand Hospitality

Robin Hood-Grazioso
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577 USA
stranddevelopment.com

Westgate Resorts

Becky Jewsbury
Branson, MO 65616 USA

Wyndham Anaheim Garden Grove

Donna Coins
Garden Grove, CA 92840-4001 USA
anaheimwyndham.com

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PEAK 15 Systems

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Smartsave

Lynne Gimmack
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smartsave.com

USI Affinity Travel Insurance Services

Sharon Broo
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Zoompass Inc.

Stephen Lean
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zoompass.com

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★ Cypress Bayou Casino Hotel 35 cypressbayou.com +1.337.923.7284	Maid of the Mist 9 maidofthemist.com +1.716.284.8897	Visit Billings 23 visitbillings.com +1.406.245.4111
★ Elizabeth Destination Marketing Organization 43 goelizabethnj.com +1.908.355.9797	★ Natchitoches Parish Tourist Commission 36 natchitoches.net +1.318.352.8072	Visit Tybee Island 11 visittybee.com +1.912.644.6471
Fairbanks, Alaska-Explore Fairbanks 16 explorefairbanks.com +1.907.457.3282 (3783)	New Jersey Division of Travel & Tourism 41 visitnj.org +1.609.292.4239	Visit Norfolk 3 visitnorfolktoday.com +1.757.664.6620
Forever Resorts 24 travel-forever.com/17cjan +1.480.998.7199 (7114)	★ Oak Alley Plantation Inside Front Cover oakalleyplantation.com +1.225.265.2151	Winterthur Museum 45 winterthur.org +1.302.888.4694

NTA EVENTS

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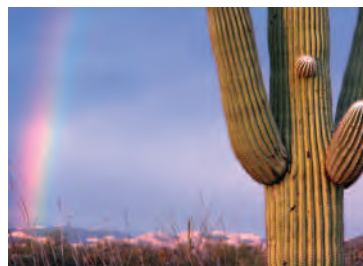


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National parks humble and inspire

Courier's graphic designer takes his artistic eye on the road

BY JEFF QUIRE

I LOVE NATIONAL PARKS and hope to visit as many of them as I can in my lifetime. My wife and I had kept Yosemite National Park on our list for a long time, and in April we finally got to experience it. Weather and geography persuaded us to parlay that into a visit to Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks as well.

Yosemite offers completely different experiences, depending on what time of year you go. We wanted waterfalls, and after the wettest winter in years, they were abundant and awe-inspiring.

As we entered Yosemite, we were prepared for large crowds. It was National Parks Week, and despite our shoulder-season travel timing, our first full day was the perfect storm for a crowd: a holiday weekend, free admission day and the end of spring break for many. There was heavy traffic on the way to Yosemite Valley Lodge, but after parking the car (there is a shuttle to transport visitors throughout the valley), things got more manageable.

Shortly after arriving, we took in an enlightening stargazing program led by an interpretive guide/astronomer. If the towering monolith of El Capitan doesn't make you feel small, learning your place in the cosmos definitely will.

To get away from the congestion on the valley floor, we planned our most strenuous hike (which is probably a leisurely stroll for the more adventure-minded) for that first full day. We climbed to the top of Vernal Fall and Nevada Fall along the Mist Trail and took part of the John Muir Trail to get back down. Every step was breathtaking, and being accustomed to a much lower altitude, I mean that both figuratively and literally.

We also walked a few shorter, more level, paths, all of which rewarded us with



Lower Yosemite Fall

JEFF QUIRE

sweeping vistas, majestic waterfalls or some other wonder. One doesn't have to walk or ride far to see nature's finest on display in Yosemite; accessible viewpoints and routes are abundant in the park. Mirror Lake Trail offered more unremitting beauty and, at the time of our visit, about every shade of green I could imagine.

After a couple days of light, intermittent rain, the precipitation got heavier and steadier. And with Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias closed for renovation (scheduled to reopen this fall), we decided to make the drive down to Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks to see the massive trees.

We started our southern swing at Grant Grove in Kings Canyon, featuring General Grant, the third-largest tree in the world. Just in case my ego was starting to rebound, standing among the sequoias put me in my place again. Resistant to fire, insects and old age, these ancient mammoths grow to unbelievable sizes—truly unbelievable for years, as many who had not seen the trees in person wrote off their existence as a hoax.

The next day we got an early start and took a hike in the Giant Forest of Sequoia National Park. Being the first to arrive on a weekday afforded us a few minutes of quiet solitude with General Sherman, the largest tree on the planet. We walked the paved, but snowy and icy, Congress Trail to see many other

giants in the silence of the morning.

From there we hiked out to Moro Rock and up the 350 steps to the top of the granite dome for an incredible panorama of the Great Western Divide. If heights aren't your thing, this may not be your favorite experience, but the scenery among the clouds is pretty hard to beat.

One thing that was impossible to miss along our journey was the number of international travelers (and employees) we encountered. We talked to a couple from Colombia, one of whom was realizing her lifelong dream of seeing giant sequoias. We shared a bus stop shelter with a group of Chinese travelers, hiked alongside a student group from Wales and exchanged trail closure info with some Australians. We also got a good tip for local ice cream from our Thai server at one of the lodge restaurants.

We met people who had traveled from every corner of the world to visit or work in our national parks, and it made us appreciate even more what we have in our own (relative) backyard. We're already talking about which park we'll visit next. ☺



Jeff Quire, a freelance graphic designer, works from his Crestwood, Kentucky, studio. He has been the designer for Courier since 2011.

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