

DELIVERING BUSINESS ESSENTIALS TO NTA MEMBERS

NOVEMBER 2019

Courier

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NTA President

Pam Inman, CTP pam.inman@ntastaff.com

Editorial

Editor in Chief Bob Rouse bob.rouse@ntaservicesinc.com

Managing Editor Pat Henderson pat.henderson@ntaservicesinc.com

Writer Kendall Fletcher kendall.fletcher@ntaservicesinc.com

Writer Kay Saffari kay.saffari@faithtravelassociation.com

Contributors Jessica Flores, Catherine Heeg, Paul Larsen

Graphic Design Jeff Quire

Advertising

President, NTA Services Kami Risk kami.risk@ntaservicesinc.com

Director of Sales and Key Accounts Beth Engel, CTP beth.engel@ntaservicesinc.com

Senior Manager, Membership Sales June Calk, CTP june.calk@ntastaff.com

Account Executive/Western U.S. Kelley Burchell kelly.burchell@ntaservicesinc.com

Account Executive/Central U.S. & Canada Gina Rutledge gina.rutledge@ntaservicesinc.com

Account Executive/Eastern U.S. TJ Olmsted tj.olmsted@ntastaff.com

Senior Manager, Marketing Ashley Fish ashley.fish@ntaservicesinc.com

PLANNING AHEAD

To view the 2020 editorial calendar, visit NTAonline.com/advertising. NTA members can submit tour product information or editorial queries to bob.rouse@ntaservicesinc.com. And for advertising information, contact Kendall Fletcher at +1.859.264.6559 or kendall@ntaservicesinc.com.

► JANUARY ISSUE

DESTINATIONS

Midwest U.S.

Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma
West U.S.

Alaska, California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington
Belgium, France, and the Netherlands
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City Spotlight: Niagara Falls, Ontario

SPECIAL COVERAGE

Preview to Anchorage (Contact '20)
Casinos and Gaming
Guide: Casinos and Gaming

DEADLINES

Space: Nov. 1 | Material: Nov. 11

► FEBRUARY ISSUE

DESTINATIONS

Atlantic Coast

Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia
Great Frontier U.S.

Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming
Western Canada

Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Yukon
Latin America

City Spotlight: Portland, Oregon

SPECIAL COVERAGE

Travel Exchange – Fort Worth Recap
Sightseeing, River and Big Ship Cruises
Guide: Sightseeing, River and Big Ship Cruises

DEADLINES

Space: Dec. 6 | Material: Dec. 16



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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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**Bob Rouse**

Editor in Chief

101 Prosperous Place, Suite 350

Lexington, KY 40509 USA

+1.859.264.6548

bob.rouse@ntaservicesinc.com

WE TAKE OUR SHOW ON THE ROAD.

After the *Courier* team cranks out two more issues prior to departing for Travel Exchange '19 in Fort Worth, the *TREXpress Daily* team will kick into gear. Pictured with me above are Ashley Fish (designer, left) and Anna Pettus (editor). I serve as correspondent and flunky for the on-site publication.

I tell you this to point out that while I get my photo on page 4 of every issue of *Courier*, there are NTA staffers standing beside me who work just as hard, yet seldom show up in photos. Ashley and Anna will, among other trusty TREX duties, produce a daily newsletter that's printed on-site overnight and handed out to delegates in the morning.

Travel Exchange '19 is my 10th convention—more than some staffers have experienced, far fewer than others. TREX never gets old, though. I look at every event with fresh eyes, because I have new co-workers to assist, new members to meet, and a raft of unique activities, challenges, and celebrations. I can't wait.

And now: TREXtra, TREXtra, read *all* about it! Starting on page 17 and stretching to page 43 you'll find all the details on

the big event. Prior to that section you can gather excellent advice from NTA colleagues for building a better business appointment (pages 14–15) and tips from Catherine Heeg on rapid follow-ups (page 12). Plus, Tourism Cares' Jess Flores tells you what her organization is bringing to the TREX table in Fort Worth (page 10).

Your *Courier* writers hit the road in recent months, and the fruits of our travels are ready for picking. See what Pat Henderson experienced on an Arctic cruise with Adventure Canada, pages 44–47, and I've got a Philadelphia story to share that starts on page 48.

Any time you want to get sneak previews of writers' trips to NTA destinations, you can check our Facebook page (@NTAcourier). I can tell you that Kendall Fletcher posted some good shots from her October Fam in British Columbia, with more details coming to a *Courier* near you soon!

Kendall, Pat, and Kay Safari provide excellent coverage of NTA members in our Compass section, pages 51 to 61. And play along with our guess-the-year quiz on page 65.

As dedicated as your *Courier* team is to delivering high quality coverage of our favorite people and places (all NTA, all the time), your entire HQ team is equally committed to delivering a sensational conference in December.

I'll see you in Fort Worth.

Read on,

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Fort Worth's National
Cowgirl Museum & Hall of
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Photo: Rhonda Hole



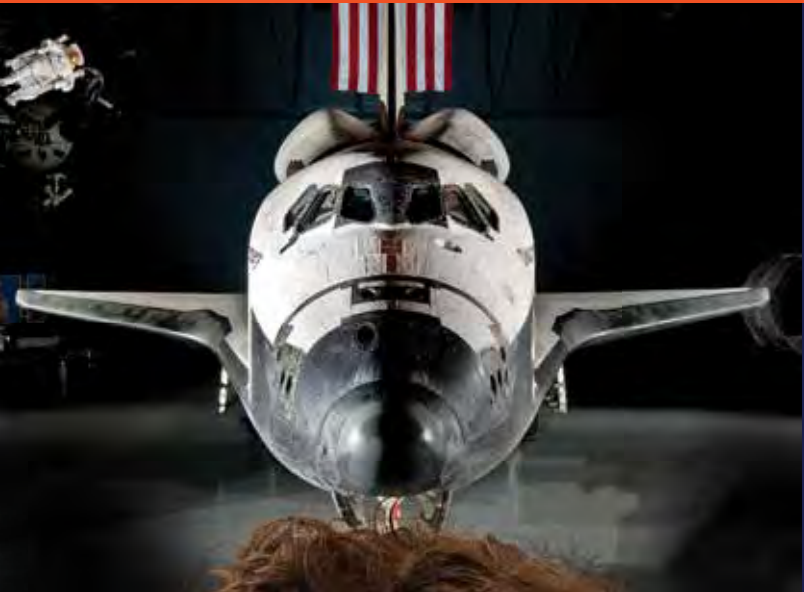
IDEAS THAT DEFY

BOUNDARIES

Charles Lindbergh's historic trans-Atlantic journey in the *Spirit of St. Louis* extended the limits of air travel to an intercontinental scale.

PRECONCEPTIONS

Weighing more than 80 tons, Space Shuttle *Discovery* is one of the largest objects to leave Earth's atmosphere—and return.



IMAGINATION

With two locations and thousands of artifacts on display, you can see the creativity and ingenuity that has transported us from lighter-than-air to supersonic flight. What will inspire you?



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National Air and Space Museum

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Washington, DC

Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center
14390 Air and Space Museum Pkwy.
Chantilly, VA

Both locations are open daily from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Free admission; parking fees apply at the Udvar-Hazy Center



Paul Larsen
Chair, NTA Board of Directors
pcl@ed-ventures.com

MY TIME AS CHAIR of the NTA Board is drawing to a close. Whether it is in three minutes from the Travel Exchange stage or in these 450 words in *Courier*, there is not enough time or space to say thank you to each and every one of you. So let me simply say thank you to all of you together—members and staff—for the difference you make!

In September, I attended the U.S.-China Leadership Summit in Seattle with fellow NTA board member Chris Babb and NTA staffers Catherine Prather and Lin Wang. There, a Chinese tourism official stated that if we would just forget about the presidents, we in the tourism industry could solve a lot of problems in the world and grow the economy. It was not a political statement, but rather a testament to the power of travel, as Chinese and Americans gathered at the conference, forming new friendships and exchanging ideas.

It is also a statement about the difference each of you makes. You take travelers to the neighboring city, across state borders, or over the ocean. You create the experience!



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You mix travel with art, music, history, faith, and more. Travelers discover new cultures. They discover commonality and appreciate differences, and in the process, they make new friends. DMOs, suppliers, and operators bring people together and make the world a better place.

During that conference, Chris and I reminisced how far NTA has come under Pam Inman's leadership, adapting to a changing and more competitive landscape. We watched Catherine Prather, our incoming president, in the crowd. Catherine was bold, intelligent, and noticed. She is a leader. The industry listens to her.

It is clear that NTA is ready to reassert itself as a front-runner in the industry. We have been adapting to the changing landscape and are in a stronger position to lead the industry into the future and conduct business, too. We owe a great deal of gratitude to Pam for that. We also should give our support to Catherine as we look forward with confidence to the days and years ahead. Each of us—each member—ultimately shares in the responsibility as we move into a new era.

I am looking forward to Travel Exchange in Fort Worth—eager to try out the innovations in the format, exchange ideas, renew friendships, make new friends, and find the right partners to generate the kinds of experiences you all create every day. Whether it is a Civil Rights tour across the U.S. South, a wine-tasting tour in France, an experience of faith, a look back at history, a majestic moment in creation, or a Broadway play, our work brings people together.

Rest assured, through travel you make a difference in the world. You bring people together ... and together, we go further.

Paul

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Ed-Ventures
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jwarren@andersonvacations.ca

Secretary

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J. Chris Babb
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dnitkiewicz@experiencegr.com

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Kelly Dean

Ottawa Tourism
kdean@ottawatourism.ca

Angela Harness, CTP

Tanger Outlets
angela.harness@tangeroutlets.com

Ashley Kingman

Travel Portland
ashley@travelportland.com

Cory Mace

North Central Group –
Hilton & Marriott Hotels
cmace@ncghotels.com

Fraser Neave, CTP

Wells Gray Tours
fraser@wellsgraytours.com

Chase Poffenberger

Academic Travel Abroad
cpoffenberger@academic-travel.com

Monique van Dijk-Seppola

Scandinavia Tours
monique@scandiaviatours.no

Jerry Varner

Making Memories Tours
jerry@makingmemoriestours.com

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Custom Holidays
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COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

Travel Exchange heads to Cleveland in 2021

Last month, NTA announced that Cleveland will play host to Travel Exchange 2021. The city, which has seen billions of dollars in investment for new or upgraded attractions, hotels, entertainment centers, sporting venues, and restaurants over the past few years, welcomed a record-setting 19.2 million visitors in 2018.

"Cleveland is an amazing city that has so much to offer," says NTA's Director of Events Dawn Pettus, CTP. "We are thrilled to bring Travel Exchange '21 to Ohio and can't wait for attendees to experience this progressive and energetic destination!"

Travel Exchange '21 will take place Nov. 14–18 at the Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland, and it will be the first time since 1991 that the city has welcomed the association's convention. Cleveland will follow Fort Worth (Dec. 8–12, 2019) and Reno Tahoe, Nevada (Nov. 15–19, 2020) as host cities for NTA's signature event.

To learn more about Travel Exchange, go to ntatravalexchange.com. For more information on Cleveland, visit the Destination Cleveland website at thisiscleveland.com.

Cleveland's West Side Market



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NTA survey indicates members are cautiously optimistic for 2020

The result of a recent NTA survey reveals that, despite challenges, members believe bookings and visitation for 2020 will be strong.

In response to the 2019 Mid-year Business and 2020 Outlook Survey, tour operators, destination marketers, and tour suppliers unanimously said they are anticipating sales and visitation in 2020 to exceed numbers from 2018 and 2019.

More than 85% of tour operators noted that bookings for next year are on pace to be equal or greater than in 2019. The numbers are similar for tour suppliers, with 62% stating they expect year-over-year sales to be greater in 2020. Destinations also reported seeing more visitors in the first half of 2019, compared to 2018, and 68% believe the numbers will rise again in the new year.

That optimism is tempered with concern about the current political atmosphere and 2020 being a U.S. presidential election year, as well as forecasts pointing to a coming economic recession. Only 17% of operators say they aren't worried about a recession.

Tour operators continue to adapt to the changing world and are planning products and services to meet the demands of today's travelers. According to the survey, the five primary areas where operators see the need to direct their focus are small groups/independent travel, experiential/luxury travel, political/travel/economic policies, demographic shifts, and booking policies and shorter booking windows.

To learn more about these and other NTA surveys, go to ntaonline.com/education/research.

And speaking of member benefits ...

In addition to surveys and education that NTA provides to member organizations, the association has a number of other programs and initiatives it offers, including the following five:

Engage NTA's virtual platform has been a popular spot for members to exchange

personal notes and information on industry trends, business practices, and product offerings. engage.ntaonline.com



The NTA Loyalty Program Members get points for the many ways they are involved in the NTA community, which help them earn special rewards. ntaonline.com/mynta/nta-loyalty-program

NTA Career Center This interactive job board allows members and nonmembers to see information on openings within the travel industry. careers.ntaonline.com

China Preferred Partner Program Available to NTA's North American destinations and suppliers, the initiative offers resources and marketing opportunities to help participating companies better understand and reach the Chinese outbound travel market. chinapartner.ntaonline.com

Corporate Partners This group of NTA-affiliated companies offer programs and discounts that can save members time and money. To see a full list, go to page 62. ntaonline.com/partners

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Catch up on sustainability at TREX with Tourism Cares

BY JESSICA FLORES

AS AN INDUSTRY, we are all working toward the same goal: to connect our customers with amazing experiences, people, and places around the world while doing it in a *sustainable* and *responsible* way. It seems like a big undertaking—to combat climate change, eliminate hunger, and eradicate poverty—but as a unified industry we have the power to create the ripples that lead to waves of change.

We know the NTA community arrives at Tourism Cares events ready to roll up their sleeves and give back. And while we may not have shovels in hand at Travel Exchange, we hope you'll leave Fort Worth equipped to roll up your sleeves and committed to making long-term impacts through your business practices.

Our week at TREX will be all about ways you can improve your business by learning best practices, providing business boosts, and gaining insights into trends. And the Tourism Cares booth will act as a convening space to further those conference goals.

Best practices

Our world is changing. Our customers and clients are demanding more. And the guidepost is right there, developed for us. Tourism Cares is using the 17 Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations to coalesce the industry around positive impact. Seventeen goals that can change the world—seems too simple. And it can be.

You're probably already doing a number of things to further those goals.



A Giving Marketplace, similar to one at the Tourism Cares for Puerto Rico event, above, will introduce social enterprises to NTA delegates in Fort Worth.

(Buying local produce? That's SDG No. 12. Eliminated one-time use plastics? You've hit SDG No. 14). The fact is, we are one of the few industries that directly or indirectly contributes to all 17 goals.

We're bringing the SDGs with us to Travel Exchange this year. Tourism Cares, with our partner MaCher, will serve as a resource at a "Sustainability Center" on the TREX Floor. Is your company making big strides around sustainability? Visit us and share your story. Is your company just getting started? Stop by for tips, tools, and inspiration.

Business boost

Tourism Cares will invite local businesses to join us for our "Giving Marketplace," a space that introduces social enterprises to the NTA delegation.

We will feature goods and services provided by businesses that serve a higher purpose: a home goods company that employs survivors of human trafficking, a fashion brand that uses only ethically sourced and sustainable materials, and a local café that employs adults with special needs.

By purchasing goods at our marketplace, you'll be supporting a greater purpose, and the benefactor of those acts will be the Fort Worth businesses.

Insights into trends

Tourism Cares is again bringing its mentoring program to the NTA show. This legacy program invites scholarship recipients to join us for two days of Travel Exchange and connects them with NTA members who can share their industry experience.

Yet we all benefit from having these students among us. What better way to gain insight into the future of travel than from the next generation of the industry—from individuals who love both the experience and the work of travel?

We know this next generation will be powerful players in the evolution of travel. They are merging their concern for sustainability into their travel habits—and into their career goals. They're interested in sustainable best practices for hotels, in eco-friendly trips, and in making a positive impact within the communities they visit.

I look forward to seeing you in our "green space" in Fort Worth. Our Tourism Cares booth will be a place to connect, to be inspired, and to shop! ☘

Jessica Flores is the director of programs and marketing for Tourism Cares, NTA's official philanthropy. You can email her at jessica.flores@tourismcares.org and learn more about the organization at tourismcares.org.



Plan your 2020/2021 yacht cruise in Croatia!



Katarina Line is a leading DMC in Kvarner - Croatia and premier small ship cruise company. Offering weekly guaranteed departures from April to mid-October from the major tourist centers; Opatija, Split and Dubrovnik, with a fleet of more than 60 vessels in six different vessel categories. Cruise or land itineraries give travellers the opportunity to explore the stunning natural environment and picturesque, quaint Mediterranean towns while hopping from one island to another. This unique way of travelling and exploring the coastal towns is the most popular and easiest way to experience the true Croatia. With the land & cruise programs travellers get the opportunity to explore coastal and continental Croatia as well as neighboring countries.



HR-AB-51-040009767

3 post-TREX networking tactics

BY CATHERINE HEEG



TRAVEL EXCHANGE is filled with so many amazing opportunities to build new relationships, see old friends, and meet up with colleagues from the NTA family. But once the last booth is taken down, the last box is shipped home, and you've checked out of your hotel, how do you stay in touch and keep these relationships strong? Meet up at the airport and carry on the conversation!

But that one's easy. What else can you do?

While you're waiting at the airport ...

... get busy on LinkedIn.

- 1 Dig out your business cards and connect with each person on LinkedIn. Remember to include a personalized note along with each invitation to connect.
- 2 As you're connecting, check out which **LinkedIn groups** each person belongs to. If suitable, join the group yourself.
- 3 Write a **LinkedIn article** showcasing your efforts at the conference. Mention the benefit your partners at the event were most intrigued by: a new attraction, an update, or a feature of your company.
- 4 Be sure to follow the NTA page for the latest updates and remember to like, comment on, and share the posts. Then connect with others in the group who you know.
- 5 While you're logged in to LinkedIn, create a video post about your convention experience. Use @ to provide a shout-out and # to gather related content together.

... tap into Facebook

- 1 Send friend requests to your list of new contacts and add them into your social networking strategy.
- Pro tip:** You can also check the **Travel Exchange app** prior to the show and connect with all those people with whom



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you have appointments, as well as with NTA staff.

- 2 Post your conference experiences on your profile and in groups that are geared to our industry.
- Pro tip:** Share videos, create albums, build slideshows, and tag people.
- 3 If you manage your **company page**, consider profiling your conference experiences to build credibility and professionalism.
 - 4 Create a Facebook and Instagram **Story** for your connections.

The power of face-to-face video

We may live and work miles apart, but the power of a face-to-face meeting shrinks those miles. Short of showing up at the door, here are two ways to amp up the power of your next long-distance meeting.

Zoom (zoom.us) Whether you want to meet one-to-one or one-to-many, Zoom is a free video conferencing tool that allows you to share screens and host up to three participants. The paid version provides up to 100 seats along with screen sharing. You can even record your conversation. Super easy!

Loom (loom.com) Voicemail is good, but wouldn't you love to ramp it up to great? To add a more personal touch, how about recording a quick video message and emailing it? Using Loom makes it easy to record the video to strengthen a budding business relationship. Then

take Loom up a notch by providing a quick screen-sharing video. Your recipient can play (and save) it in email without linking to another video site.

Short, shareable videos

Maximize the popularity of video by making and sharing your own. Use these steps:

- Create short, shareable videos on the TREX Floor and during sessions.
- When shooting video, use landscape for a more expansive view on Facebook. Plus, you can repurpose your video into blog posts and future marketing events.
- Interview key suppliers, clients, and colleagues.
- Use an external microphone in a quiet area to attain optimal audio.
- If your clients are on SnapChat or TikTok, create video specifically for those platforms.

Frequency matters

While we don't have all day to network, adding several posts over a week is usually manageable. Keep in mind that all of your connections won't see every post you make.

To maximize your exposure and time, create a **blog post**, **Facebook Note**, and/or **LinkedIn Article**. These options give your content a more evergreen effect.

And don't underestimate the power of email, the phone, and follow-up handshakes! While traditional marketing may not seem as sexy as social, it has the power to cement relationships.

Strong relationships are the foundation of our industry. Don't let your hard-earned connections wilt or that stack of business cards collect dust on your desk after the convention. Keeping these bonds strong takes some effort, and it's made easier by your social savvy. ☺

Catherine Heeg, an international speaker and trainer, focuses on social media marketing strategies for the tourism and hospitality industry. Connect with her socially and at **cmsspeaking.com**.

FORT WORTH

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When buyers meet sellers

BY BOB ROUSE

NTA MEMBERS meet at Travel Exchange to build or renew friendships and to gain industry insights. Mostly, though, they go for the business.

Every professional can identify strategies for success in one-on-one appointments, and when *Courier* reached out to NTA tour operators, they generously shared information and advice.

Buyers, how can sellers get on your radar?

- “Look at my website and think of ways we could include you in an itinerary. Determine what types of products we sell and come up with something similar.”
- “Offer sample itineraries and include lists of special visits and unique access they can provide.”
- “Tell us what is available year-round that we can easily incorporate into itineraries.”

How much lead time do you need?

- “For multiday tours and larger groups, we plan six months to 1.5 years in advance. For smaller groups and higher-end FIT, we might plan from a few days to a few months in advance.”
- “We can incorporate an activity into an existing program if we receive the information three months prior to departure.”
- “So many theaters don’t give enough lead time. For example, they’ll release their next season’s performance schedule just two months before the first curtain.”

What are you looking for to help set your tours apart?

- “We choose our suppliers based on a number of criteria, and what tips the decision in their favor is their ability to deliver unique experiences or special access.”
- “We want experiences that only groups can get: behind-the-scenes tours, talks by local experts, and meet-and-greets with celebrities.”
- “Unique sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of the local cuisine.”
- “Most destinations focus only on senior group travel, but determine what is available for younger, more mobile, markets.”

What else helps to seal the deal?

- “Website upkeep is important for DMOs. I might find great-sounding restaurants or attractions on a website only to learn that they have closed or are too small for a motorcoach group.”
- “Be sure to reply to inquiry emails within 48 hours. It actually makes a big difference.”
- “It would be wonderful if DMOs held workshops to help their supplier partners understand the difference between meetings/conferences and the tour/travel market—and what group tours need.”



NORMAND HUBERDEAU

How DMOs and suppliers lose operators' business:

- Being slow to respond
- Adding costs after the operator advertises a trip
- Treating guests like they're just another group
- Selecting poor local guides
- Not understanding the basic needs and mission of the group

And how they gain it:

- Create an itinerary that has a manageable pace
- Reconfirm all arrangements
- Provide great local guides and experts
- Create unique visits: curator-led tours, private openings, meetings with local experts, dinners in a private home, etc.
- Know your providers and experiences to insure they deliver what is promised

To learn more about business appointments at Travel Exchange '19 in Fort Worth, visit ntatravelexchange.com/appointments. ☎

Courier thanks these NTA members, whose comments appear here: Shari Feldman, Fraser Neave, Michele Michalewicz, Elaine Moulder, Theresa Nemetz, Betsy Painter, Chase Poffenberger, Mindy Shea, Phil Sheldon, Taunya Wolfe-Finn.



NORMAND HUBERDEAU

Sellers speak

DMO and tour supplier members also offer strategies for successful appointments.

From a DMO: The first step is offering a sample itinerary that gives buyers a place to start. Then we discuss specific ideas for their programs, depending on the makeup of the group and their budget.

From a hotelier: It is very boring for operators to hear about your pool and business center. That's not what tour groups are interested in, so find out what they *are* interested in and sell to that.

From an attraction: Talk about specific dates and provide operators with the rates during your appointment, so you both have all the info you need. But don't talk business only. Get to know the person and build a relationship.



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La Grande Roue de Montréal



LA GRANDE ROUE DE MONTRÉAL

A must-do Roue

There are many sights to see in beautiful Montréal, and groups can take them in from a skyward perspective on Canada's tallest observation wheel, La Grande Roue de Montréal. With panoramic views from its 42 cabins, the state-of-the-art wheel, set near the Saint Lawrence River, lifts passengers 197 feet over Old Montréal. Each cabin can fit up to eight people.

"The prime location of La Grande Roue de Montréal allows us to showcase all the major landmarks," says Kathleen Plamondon, part of the company's strategy and business development team.

Some of those landmarks include Marché Bonsecours, Notre-Dame-De-Bon-Secours, the Biosphère, and Pont Jacques-Cartier.

"The city views from our cabins make for some captivating Instagram moments," Plamondon says.

The wheel runs year-round, with air

conditioning in the summer. It's also open on Christmas and New Year's Day, making it one of the only attractions open—and the perfect spot to see the snow-covered sights from its temperature-controlled gondolas.

La Grande Roue de Montréal operates during the day as well as at night, when the city comes to life with multi-colored lights, and nighttime and daytime combo tickets are available. Groups can purchase tickets for a private gondola or the VIP gondola outfitted with a glass floor and large upholstered seats for four people.

Visitors can also dine in the Bistro de la Grande Roue, which offers a diverse menu, and the Café de la Grande Roue, which serves up specialty coffee drinks, pastries, ice cream, and crêpes.

For more information, email Plamondon at kathleen.plamondon@lgrdm.com or go to lgrdm.com. —K.F.



CC FLICKR/ERIK DROST bit.ly/2UuApZ

A historical look at Harpers Ferry

This year marks the 75th year of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park being part of the U.S. National Park Service. Travelers can learn about key events pertaining to the U.S. Civil War at the attraction, which is located in West Virginia at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers.

Before the conflict began, John Brown and his followers raided a U.S. armory in Harpers Ferry with the goal of gaining weapons that slaves could use in a rebellion. Even though the 1859 attack was unsuccessful and Brown was hanged for treason, the uprising called further attention to anti-slavery sentiments.

The eastern West Virginia city also was the site of many Civil War battles and troop movements. In September 1862, Confederate General Stonewall Jackson captured 12,500 Union troops, which was the largest number of northern troops to surrender at one time.

In addition to learning about the war, visitors can walk along the three miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail that run through the park and enjoy year-round ranger-led workshops at Lower Town that focus on typical trades from the 19th century. Other popular spots include Loudoun Heights, Murphy Farm, John Brown Fort, and Bolivar Heights.

For more information, go to nps.gov/hafe. —P.H.

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Celebrating a hundred years of The Huntington

In August of 1919, Henry Edwards Huntington and his wife, Arabella, established The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens as a research and educational institution. The attraction, located in San Marino just 12 miles from downtown Los Angeles, recently kicked off its gala 100th anniversary celebration that will last through September of 2020.

A series of special exhibitions, events, public programs, and more will highlight the commemoration. During the centennial kickoff activities, the "Nineteen Nineteen" exhibit debuted. Using the tumultuous founding year as the lens, the show features more than 250 objects from the permanent collection.

Coming up after the beginning of the year are three more special exhibits: "The Hilton Als Series: Lynette Yiadom-Boakye" (Jan. 25–May 11), "Lifelines/Timelines" (March 14–June 22), and "What Now: Collecting for the Library in the 21st Century [Part II]" (May 1–Aug. 24).

One of the other highlights is the May 2020 opening of eight acres of new features in the Chinese Garden. Around the time the garden redevelopment project debuts, "A Garden of Words: The Calligraphy of Liu Fang Yuan," will go on exhibit and remain up until Jan. 4, 2021.



Group at The Huntington's Japanese Bridge

THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY, ART MUSEUM, AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

A number of guest lectures are part of the programming, with many presentations falling under the President's Series and the Why it Matters Series.

To learn more, email Jane Sandmeier at jsandmeier@huntington.org, and to check the centennial schedule for a complete list of programs, events, speakers, and dates, go to huntington.org. —P.H. 📍



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Everything is bigger in Texas.

Right? Hats and pickup trucks, sure, but also spaces and attitudes.

And Travel Exchange '19 fits right in.

This show has always been a massive meet-up of packaged travel pros, busily swapping business cards, jotting down awesome ideas, and building businesses, reputations, and friendships.

NTA members have held conventions for 68 years, and the events are never exactly the same. People change, consumers change, technology changes. You never step into the same river twice, you know ... especially in this industry. Especially if you want to stay, well, current.

But the changes you'll see in Fort Worth are bigger than usual, which suits the site. There'll be new ways to connect on the TREX Floor. The marathon of appointments will take a breather, and Tuesday will usher in a raft of fresh ideas and activities: Sales Missions, Best Pitch, and a networking lunch in the convention hall.

We're laying out a lot of information about Travel Exchange on the pages that follow. Read what's here and go to NTAtravelexchange.com to read more. Or reach out to NTA by email or phone: headquarters@ntastaff.com, +1.859.264.6540.

There's a lot to take in, but there's also a lot to gain in Fort Worth: business, ideas, and friendships. And they'll all be bigger. Right?

Because, after all, this is Texas.

New in '19

NTA is riding into Fort Worth with a wide range of innovations, so saddle up and see what's on the horizon for Travel Exchange '19:

Buyer Breakfast

On Monday morning, tour operators and travel agents can catch up with colleagues over a glass of OJ and a plate of food, but there's a message with the meal, too. The keynote will come from Christian de Boer, a hotelier in Cambodia who founded RefillTheWorld, a program that works to reduce the number of plastic bottles used by travelers.

Appointment-free Tuesday

Buyers, who are seated all week, will get a break from one-on-one appointments and gather destination information in two new formats:

Sales Mission: NTA members specialize in packaged travel, and this year we'll have packaged presentations. State and provincial DMOs are delivering pop-up presentations to small groups of buyers Tuesday morning. Each of the two Sales Mission sessions will be broken into three periods for presentations, with 20 or so going on simultaneously. A buyer could attend six presentations total.

There will be a lot of missions motion, with DMOs and participating suppliers either setting up for their presentation or packing up to make way for the next group of presenters. And buyers will need to make sure they attend the missions they are scheduled for. But amid the activity, operators and agents will get great ideas for packaging entire regions.



Best Pitch: In this session, buyers will be seated theater-style while they get quick summaries of international countries delivered either by National Tourism Office representatives, city or regional DMOs, or receptive tour operators. Each three- to four-minute presentation will be followed by a minute or two for questions. Operators will gain new ideas for programs—along with a name and a face for following up—in countries around the globe.

More news for Tuesday: With no prescheduled appointments, you can engage with other members in more ways: during education seminars, at lunch on the TREX Floor, and in state and provincial caucuses.

Now awarding ... The TREXies!

This year, NTA will present the first TREXies, honoring outstanding sponsor booths in four categories:

- Best giveaways (appeal of branded items distributed at booth)
- Most interactive (effectiveness of staff, materials, displays, giveaways, etc.)
- Tastiest treat (open to official TREX refreshment sponsors)
- Best of Show (overall appearance and effectiveness—and welcoming setting)

Serving as judges are the very people sponsors are targeting: NTA buyers, who will be given ballots to visit sponsor booths and vote for one booth in each category. The TREXie Award winners will be announced at Happy Hour on Tuesday afternoon.





Schedule

Sunday Dec. 8	Monday Dec. 9	Tuesday Dec. 10	Wednesday Dec. 11	Thursday Dec. 12
Tour Operator Day	DMO Appointments, Sales Missions, and Best Pitch		Tour Supplier Appointments	
	Buyer Breakfast <i>Sponsored by Peachtree City CVB</i>	FTA Breakfast (by ticket only)	Government Relations Breakfast Bistro (by ticket only)	Breakfast on your own
Sightseeing Tours <i>Sponsored by Visit Fort Worth (tours) and Roadrunner Charters (transportation)</i>	DMO Appointments Education Sessions	DMO Sales Missions Education Sessions	Tour Supplier Appointments Education Sessions	Tour Supplier Appointments Education Sessions
Lunch on your own	NYC Center Stage Luncheon <i>Sponsored by Broadway Inbound and NYC & Company</i>	Networking Lunch on the TREX Floor	Luncheon <i>Sponsored by Norwegian Cruise Line</i> Distinguished Dozen Awards <i>presented by Courier magazine</i>	Luncheon <i>Sponsored by Visit Anchorage and Reno Tahoe</i>
Education Sessions	DMO Appointments	Best Pitch Education Sessions Network Forums Caucuses	Tour Supplier Appointments Education Sessions	Tour Supplier Appointments Education Sessions
Icebreaker at National Cowgirl Museum & Hall of Fame/ Fort Worth Museum of Science & History <i>Sponsored by Visit Fort Worth</i>	Monday Night Party at Pinstripes <i>Sponsored by Pinstripes</i>	Happy Hour Dine-around Tourism Rocks	Networking Reception Dine-around	Fiesta de TREX! Final Night '80s Party: Hair We Go Again!

Go-to guys, gals, and gadgets

Tune in

Two webinars will be available on the Travel Exchange website after they air live. “Know Before You Go,” scheduled for Nov. 20, is hosted by convention sage Clayton Whitehead, CTP, of Sports Leisure Vacations. And “Trex 101,” hosted by convention veteran Michael Weinberg, CTP, of Hiltons of Chicago and NTA staffers Dawn Pettus, CTP, and Todd Probus, CTP, has already been taped. Both presentations (when completed) can be found on NTAtravelexchange.com: Pull down the About menu and click First Timers.

Ask by email

NTA ambassadors are experienced TREXsters who make themselves available to first-timers—or anyone—who has questions about Travel Exchange. You can ask them about topics ranging from what to pack to how to package tour products. These 10 veterans are waiting to help you:

- **Jim Coggin**, Virginia Beach CVB
jcoggin@visitvirginiabeach.com
- **Scott Hartcorn**, Shilo Inns Suites Hotels
scott.hartcorn@shiloinns.com
- **Melody Johnson**, Falcon's Crest
melody@falconscrestinc.com
- **Michelle Pino**, Northeast Unlimited Tours
michelle@northeastunlimitedtours.com
- **John Shaffer**, Luray Caverns
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- **Clayton Whitehead**, CTP, Sports Leisure Vacations
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- **Pam Williams**, Huntsville, Alabama CVB
pam@huntsville.org



Connect with your networks

NTA member networks are wonderful, productive opportunities for specific types of members to meet and share ideas and best practices. Concerns about competition quickly fade as colleagues provide support and solutions for each other. Whether you were on the ground floor with your network or you're looking for new avenues of answers, you'll benefit by attending your session on Tuesday, from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m.:

- Tour Supplier Network Forum
- DMO Network Forum
- Buyer Network Forum
- Associate Network Forum

Keep up!

You've got several ways to stay current with announcements, schedules, and updates for Travel Exchange '19:

Your inbox Between now and Fort Worth, every issue of *TREXpress* and *Tuesday* will have news about Travel Exchange.

HQ to the rescue Email (headquarters@ntastaff.com) or call (+1.859.264.6540) the NTA office in the weeks and days leading up to Travel Exchange. And after it starts, stop by ...



NTA Central This is your on-site go-to spot for information. Or flag down an NTA staff member, recognizable by the logo on their clothes and the receiver in their ears.

In print *TREXpress Daily* is printed and distributed at the convention center to let you know what's coming up each day—and to let you know how things looked the day before.



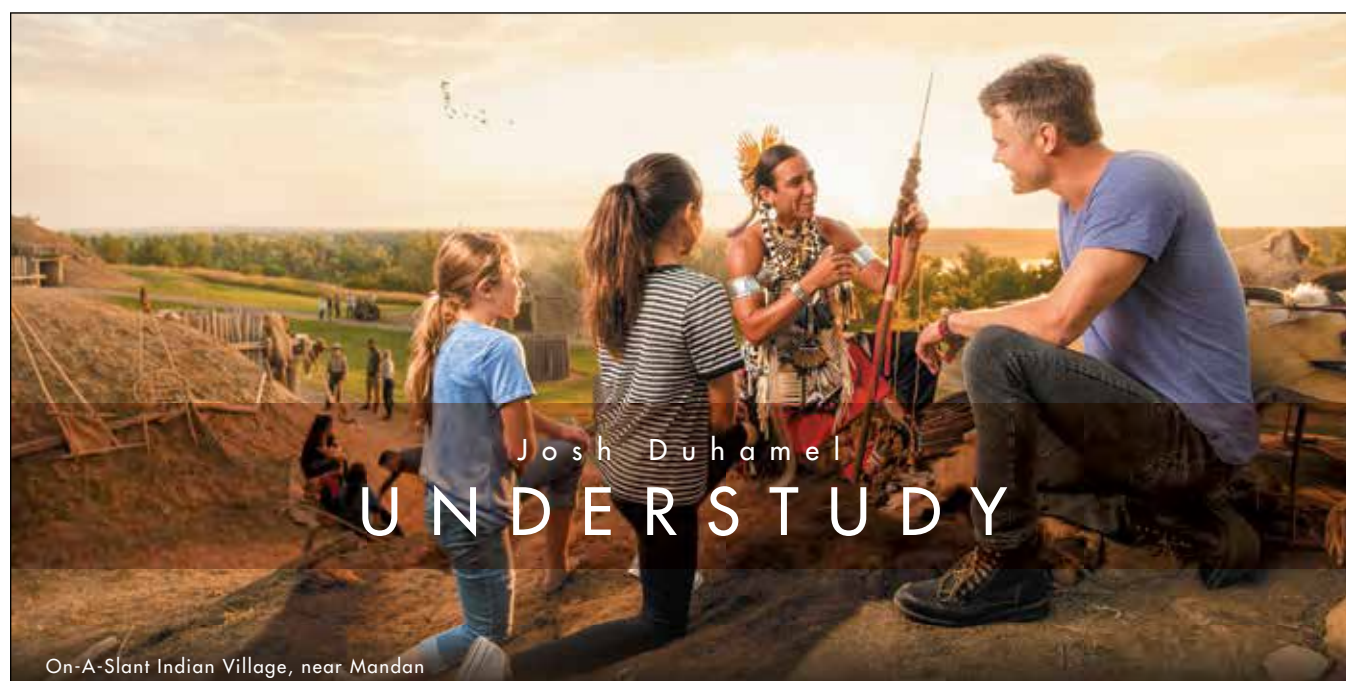
That app

Whether you swear by your phone or swear at it, the Travel Exchange '19 mobile app is your friend in Fort Worth. Along with the full event schedule, the app holds your personalized appointment schedule, a list of all delegates, and an easy way to message them. Plus, it's the app that alerts you to reminders and schedule changes throughout the week.

The Travel Exchange '19 mobile app will launch in late November, and registered delegates will receive an email with steps for downloading and logging on.



The app is compatible with iOS and Android devices, and it's accessible from a web browser, too. Search for Travel Exchange or TREX19 in your preferred app store. You'll need your NTA online username and password to access it. Once you're in Fort Worth, if you lose login details or need a little help, go to NTA Central.



Actor and North Dakota native, Josh Duhamel, calls the people of his home state "inspiring." You're invited to be inspired, too. Join us for historic re-enactments, international powwows and cultural festivals celebrating our diverse heritage. Visit us online to learn more and start planning your next tour itinerary.

NDtourism.com/grouptravel

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Here to help

From airport to hotel and back

For delegates flying into the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW), transportation to convention hotels will be provided by Dan Dipert Tours. Shuttles will depart every 30 minutes on Saturday, Dec. 7, and Sunday, Dec. 8, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., picking up Travel Exchange delegates at Terminals A, B, and E.



Attendees arriving in other terminals may take the airport shuttle to Terminal A, B, or E and then hop on a Dan Dipert coach. Transportation will be provided from each convention hotel back to the airport on Friday, Dec. 13, from 4 to 11 a.m., and will drop off at all terminals.

Another option is to ride the Trinity Railway Express, which departs every 30 minutes from Terminal B. From the station in downtown Fort Worth, convention hotels are a short walk, a quick cab ride, or a Molly Trolley stop away. Train fares are \$2.50.

Any volunteers?

Yes! Convention-goers always find that volunteering is a great way to meet and network with other delegates. You can make yourself available for general assignment or for specific duties that include the following:

- **Registration:** Give out registration bags and badges as delegates check in.
- **Morning greeter:** Welcome your peers and hand out *TREXpress Daily* newsletters.

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The Getty

Two Locations.

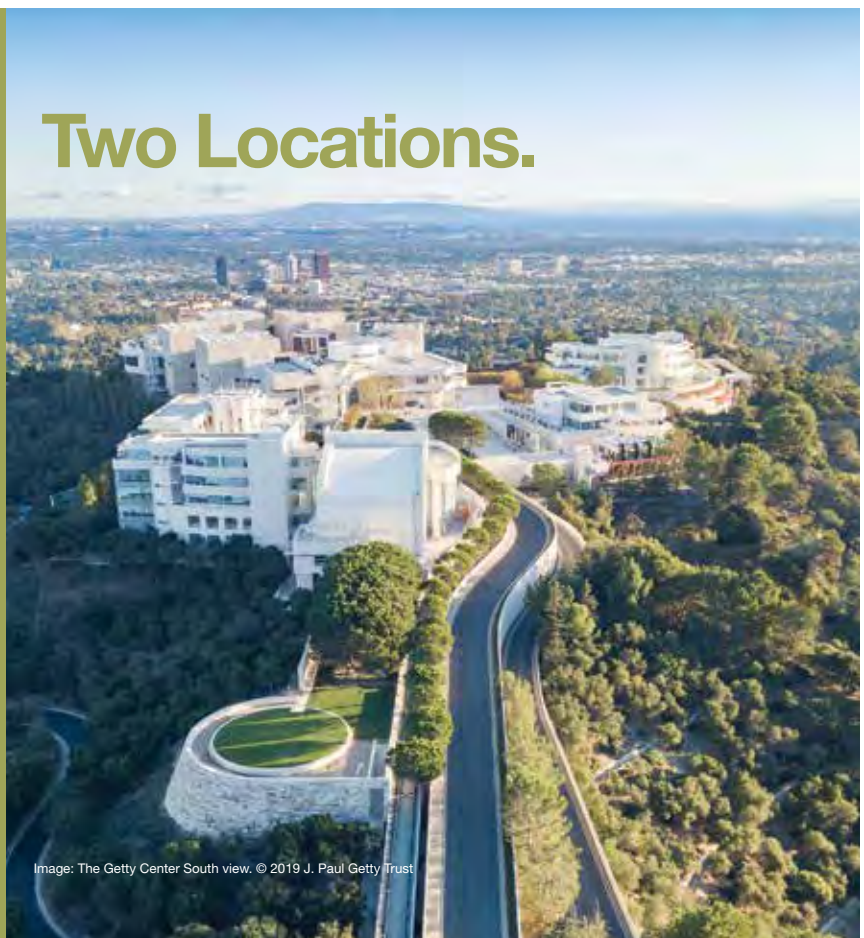


Image: The Getty Center South view. © 2019 J. Paul Getty Trust



NORMAND HUBERDEAU



- **Seminar monitor:** Serve as the contact person—and the introducer—for speakers, tally attendee numbers, and distribute and collect evaluation forms.
- **Tourism Cares student mentor:** Share your NTA and industry experience with a Tourism Cares scholarship recipient by having a student shadow you during your appointments.

Ready to step up and volunteer? Send an email to NTA at headquarters@ntastaff.com.

On-site tutorial

Newcomers learn about all aspects of Travel Exchange during Travel Exchange 101—and long-timers can benefit, too. Clayton Whitehead, star of the “Know Before You Go” webinar, leads this informative seminar, which offers strategies for your business appointments, tips for social events, and ways to maximize your downtime. Join Clayton on Sunday, 2:45–3:45 p.m., for an instructional hour that includes a guided tour of the TREX Floor.

Clayton Whitehead leads Travel Exchange 101



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Familiarize yourself

Familiarization tours come in several sizes and directions prior to Travel Exchange. Read the overviews below, and for details about arrivals, guests, cost, and sign-ups, check ntatravelexchange.com/schedule/fam-tours.

Pre-event Fam

West Texas is the Best Texas

You'll want to make sure your boots are made for walkin' as you head out to experience all the charm and hospitality that West Texas has to offer. Your first stop will be Amarillo, in the heart of the Texas Panhandle. Here you will experience Native American culture, the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, the Amarillo Botanical Gardens, and Palo Duro Canyon. Next, head south to Lubbock, the home of rock 'n' roll legend Buddy Holly and six award-winning wineries.

Begins: Tuesday morning, Dec. 3, in Amarillo

Ends: Friday evening, Dec. 6, in Fort Worth at convention hotels

Pre-event Fam

Visit East Texas: Piney Woods' Blooms & Booms

Find rolling hills, pine forests, and magnificent lakes within the Texas Piney Woods region, where the warmth of Southern hospitality is alive and well. Stop and smell the roses in Tyler, the Rose Capital of America. The brick streets of its Historic Azalea District will be all lit up for the holidays. Then it's "all aboard" to Palestine and its train depot and historical sites. Up next are Henderson, voted as one of the "prettiest little towns in Texas," and Kilgore, known as the "City of Stars," with its 60-plus oil derricks topped with lighted stars.

Begins: Tuesday morning, Dec. 3, at DFW Airport

Ends: Friday evening, Dec. 6, in Fort Worth at convention hotels

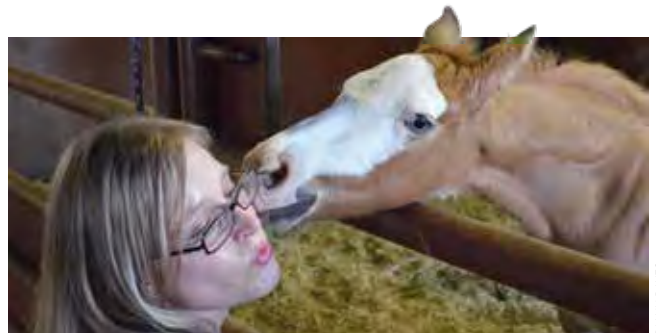
Pre-event Fam

Dallas: Retro-chic

During this sampling of the best Dallas has to offer, you'll learn about presidential history at the Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza and at the George W. Bush Presidential Library. Glide through the streets of downtown on an Efrogs City Tour, and experience the Twelve Days of Christmas installation at the Dallas Arboretum & Botanical Gardens. Walk like a Ewing on the grounds of Southfork Ranch, and soar to the top of Reunion Tower to get a bird's eye view of the city. Enjoy a holiday show in the glitzy Dallas Arts District, and savor Southwestern flavors at Dallas' favorite restaurants and entertainment districts.

Begins: Thursday morning, Dec. 5

Ends: Saturday afternoon, Dec. 7



DIANN BATES

One-day Fam

Horse Country Tour and Texas Motor Speedway

Discover the beautiful horse country of North Texas, home to more than 40,000 horses that are treated like royalty, among more than 350 farms and ranches in Denton County. While famous for the quarter horse, Texas also offers an exciting variety of breeds—thoroughbreds, Arabians, paints, and more—with a focus in disciplines such as halter, Western pleasure, cutting, reining, and jumpers. After lunch, the day will finish with a tour of Texas Motor Speedway, the second-largest speedway in the U.S.

Begins: Saturday morning, Dec. 7, at the Fort Worth Convention Center

Ends: Saturday afternoon, at convention hotels

One-day Fam

It's all about Magnolia and more in Waco

HGTV stars Chip and Joanna Gaines own several businesses in Waco, including Magnolia Market at the Silos and the Magnolia Table restaurant. Thirty thousand visitors make the trek to the Silos each week hoping to catch a glimpse of Chip and Joanna, or to visit places featured on the show, such as Harp Design and JDH Iron Works. And if you love Christmas lights, you'll enjoy seasonal decorations in Waco's pedestrian-friendly historical Fairmount district.

Begins: Saturday morning, Dec. 7, at the Fort Worth Convention Center

Ends: Saturday afternoon, at convention hotels

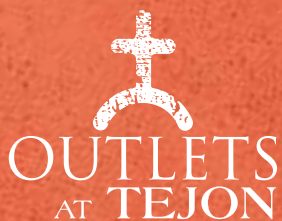
Evening Fam

Stockyards Championship Rodeo and BBQ Dinner

This Saturday evening tour will start with a traditional BBQ dinner at the site of the Stockyards Championship Rodeo. The Fort Worth Cowtown Coliseum is the venue of the world's first indoor rodeo and the only year-round rodeo in the world. Held every Friday and Saturday night, the two-hour show you will attend features bull riding, tie-down roping, team roping, barrel racing, bronc riding, and breakaway roping.

Begins: Saturday, Dec. 7, at 6:30 p.m. from the Fort Worth Convention Center

Ends: 10:30 p.m., at convention hotels



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You can see the sights

Sunday morning is your time to tour Fort Worth and surrounding areas. Sponsored by Visit Fort Worth, with transportation provided by Roadrunner Charters, sightseeing tours begin and end at the Fort Worth Convention Center. With the exception of the trip to the Stockyards (9 a.m.) and Wildcatter Ranch & Resort (8 a.m.), all sightseeing tours depart at 9:30 a.m. and return at 1 p.m.

To register online, go to ntatravelexchange.com/schedule/sightseeing-tours. Itineraries are subject to change.

Arts & Architecture

Fort Worth, with three major art museums, has an art and architectural presence that might surprise you. Enjoy art ranging from Michelangelo's first painting to Andy Warhol's self-portrait. Delight in the energy of the city's historical downtown. Take a step back in time and learn about the families who have so generously provided to give Fort Worth this great legacy. Light refreshments included.

Get Wild at the Fort Worth Zoo!

Recognized as one of the top five zoos in the U.S., the Fort Worth Zoo is a must-see for all groups. The educational team at the zoo will show you all their great programs for student groups and families. You'll get a chance to feed giraffes, visit Texas Wild, see the Museum of Living Art, and do a photo safari. Bring your camera! Light lunch provided.

Influencers of the Mid-1900s and Horses that Cut

In this tour you'll learn about Fort Worth's kingmakers and their relationship with presidents and generals. You'll also visit the Will Rogers Memorial Center, home to over 80 annual equestrian events. You will tour of the National Cutting Horse Futurity event and see the beautiful horses in action. You'll also see works from Remington and Russell at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art and at the Sid Richardson Museum.

Fort Worth Stockyards: Kick Up Your Heels and Let Yourself Go!

From the original brick walkways to the wooden corrals, every inch of the Fort Worth Stockyards National Historic District embodies Texas' famous livestock industry. The morning includes historical walking tours; a meet-and-greet with drovers of the Fort Worth Herd; a longhorn cattle drive; a line dancing class at Billy Bob's Texas, the world's largest honky-tonk; and a visit to Mule Alley, Western saloons, and shops.



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Offer valid for student groups of 15 or more. Please book 30 days prior to visit. Offer valid on regularly scheduled operating days March 23rd - Oct. 27th, 2019. 60% savings based on General Admission price of \$54.99. Additional savings available with a meal. Prices, products and park schedule are subject to change. Please verify park schedule prior to booking. ©2019 Busch Gardens Parks & Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved.



Tacos and Margaritas **SOLD OUT**

This tour gives you the best way to experience Fort Worth's amazing taco culture. It's an insider's view of Fort Worth as we see hidden gems and familiar favorites. You will visit two taco spots, enjoy some of the best margaritas in town, and learn about the history and influence of the Hispanic culture on the city. And in case you're wondering: Yes, Joe T. Garcia's is on the list!

Take Me Out to the Ball Park

See Arlington's sports playground and developments for yourself. The area is well known for hosting some of the best spectator sporting events, and today you will get a taste of one of them. Lunch is included.

Discover the Beauty of Texas at Wildcatter Ranch & Resort **SOLD OUT**

Located west of Fort Worth in the North Texas Hill Country, Wildcatter Ranch & Resort is an authentic working Texas guest ranch, complete with guest rooms, facilities, a steakhouse, and activities. The tour will conclude with tomahawk throwing, archery, shooting at the range, and lunch: a slow-smoked pork tenderloin BBQ sandwich served with housemade catter chips and banana pudding as you head back to Fort Worth.

Departs at 8 a.m. from the Fort Worth Convention Center and returns at 2 p.m.

Arts & Architecture:
Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth



VISIT FORT WORTH

Fort Worth Taste Makers: Distilleries & Breweries

Taste Makers tells about culinary entrepreneurs' bold visions with Texas roots—including coffee infused with whiskey, vodka made from black-eyed peas, Texas whiskey, and delicious beer. On this tour you will visit Avoca Coffee and Black-Eyed Distilling in the Near Southside, then it's off to Whiskey Ranch, the largest whiskey distillery west of the Mississippi. Your last stop will be the Wild Acre Brewing Company.

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Bellwether and board members

NTA's Corporate Partners, Signature Partners, associate members, and board members bring a wealth of resources, leadership, and expertise to Travel Exchange (and NTA members all year long). To meet and learn from these valuable colleagues in person, check your On-site Guide for booth locations, sponsored events, and educational session information.

Corporate Partners and Signature Partners

AON Affinity Travel Practice | Peter Maidhof, Geni Priolo
 Broadway Inbound | Bob Hofmann, Peter Waugh
 Delta Air Lines | Lydia Fields
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 Travel Insured International | Sue Barbanel, Bud Geissler
 Travelex Insurance Services | Michael Ray, Benjamin Stone
 USI Affinity Travel Insurance Services | Sharon Broo
 WeTravel | Lucas Ennis
 Whisper Trading & Services | Leah Wilson



Vice Chair nominee
Chase Poffenberger

Your vote for the NTA Board of Directors

Ballots for the 2020 NTA Board of Directors will be emailed to members Nov. 4, and voting by email and mail will close Dec. 4.

Delegates who did not vote prior to Travel Exchange can do so at the Meet the Candidates session, Dec. 8 at 4 p.m. on the TREX Floor. Candidates will speak, and members can ask questions. Voting closes at the conclusion of that event, and the new board will be announced later in the week.

Here is the slate of candidates presented by the NTA Nominating Committee:

- **Vice Chair:** Chase Poffenberger, Academic Travel Abroad
- **Secretary:** Debra Asberry, Women Traveling Together
- **Tour Supplier Director (three-year term):** Jara Haas, Major Marine Tours & Harbor 360 Hotel
- **DMO Director (three-year term):** Dawn Burns, Deadwood Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau
- **DMO Director (one-year term):** Kelly Dean, Ottawa Tourism

Tour operators vote for operator candidates and officers, tour suppliers vote for supplier candidates, and DMOs vote for DMO candidates. Jim Warren, CTP, Anderson Vacations, will rise to the office of chair after serving as vice chair during 2019.

Others continuing to serve their terms on the board are Angela Harness, Ashley Kingman, Paul Larsen, Cory Mace, Fraser Neave, Monique van Dijk-Seppola, Jerry Varner, and Christina Werner.





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Sun sets ... fun rises

Travel Exchange Icebreaker

Sunday | 7-10 p.m.

Sponsored by Visit Fort Worth

Saddle up for the Sunday night Icebreaker event at the Fort Worth Cultural District, just minutes from downtown. Meet and network with your fellow NTA delegates while exploring the National Cowgirl Museum & Hall of Fame, the only museum in the world dedicated to honoring and celebrating women—past and present—whose lives exemplify the courage, resilience, and independence that helped shape the American West. Also on-site is the Fort Worth Museum of Science & History, with exhibits that explore the history and heritage of Fort Worth and the region's cattle industry and energy resources. The event includes live music, local fare, and true Texas hospitality.

Party at Pinstripes

Monday | 7-10 p.m.

Sponsored by Pinstripes

After the first full days of Travel Exchange education, networking, and business, it's time to make new friends in a relaxed environment. Pinstripes was built from a passion to gather, to celebrate, and to experience sophisticated fun. Huddle around the outdoor fire pit, challenge friends to a game of bocce, or lace up the bowling shoes in Pinstripes' grand rendition of the classic American pastime while you enjoy Italian/American cuisine served from the scratch kitchen.



Tourism Rocks

Tuesday | 9:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m.

Sponsored by Las Vegas CVA, Visit Fort Worth, and The Stockyards Association

This Travel Exchange favorite gives you a chance to socialize, dance, and stay out late for a good cause. Taking place this year at River Ranch Stockyards, the event will benefit Tourism Cares, which advances the travel industry's social impact initiatives and provides scholarships for rising travel and hospitality professionals. Tour operators attend as guests of the sponsor, and DMOs and suppliers may purchase tickets by emailing headquarters@ntastaff.com. If the event is not sold out, tickets will be available at the Tourism Cares booth on the TREX Floor in Fort Worth.



National Cowgirl Museum & Hall of Fame, site of the Travel Exchange Icebreaker

CRAIG KUHNER

Final Night '80s Party: Hair We Go Again

Thursday | 7-10 p.m.

Our final night in Fort Worth will be an '80s "Celebration" in the ballroom at the convention center. So get the "Word Up"—and out. "Tell Her About It," and "Let's Hear It For The Boy." Build your best '80s look: "Father Figure" George Michael, "Physical" Olivia Newton-John, "Purple Rain" Prince or hey, just be Kool (and the Gang). Whoever you dress like, make sure you're ready to dance and "Shout"—but don't get caught in a "Careless Whisper." Because it's so "Hard To Say I'm Sorry."



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The better business center

Business appointments at Travel Exchange are your one-on-one meetings for making new connections, sharing information, and building itineraries. New to TREX in Fort Worth: Buyers will be seated all week, and their schedule of appointments will be pleasantly interrupted by the new appointment-free (and info-filled) Tuesday. DMO appointments take place Monday, and the Supplier Exchange appointments are Wednesday and Thursday.

DMO appointments

DMO delegates have seven-minute prescheduled appointments with buyers on Monday. Buyers will be seated in booths, with DMOs visiting them for their appointments. Tuesday will offer new ways for DMOs to connect with buyers through Sales Missions and Best Pitch presentations. (See page 18 for details.)



Supplier Exchange

Suppliers have seven-minute prescheduled appointments with tour operators at Travel Exchange. In this one-on-one business format, the tour operators are seated in booths, and tour suppliers visit them for their appointments. Appointments are concentrated in one day for each type of seller:

Wednesday

- Railroads
- Casinos
- Multiple Services
- Passenger Vessels
- Restaurants
- Hotels
- Motorcoach Operators

Thursday

- DMC
- Sightseeing
- Tour Operators (those registered as sellers)
- Attractions
- Airlines
- Corporate Partners



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One operator's request

As you're navigating the appointment-making process, you can follow the advice of Mark Hoffmann, CTP, owner of Sports Leisure Vacations. The Fort Worth convention isn't his first rodeo. As a two-time NTA board chair and a veteran of more than 30 conventions, Mark knows how to do business.

“ My staff and I put great value in the NTA annual convention. It's a time for those who want our business to update us on their products and to offer fresh ideas to upgrade the experience our travelers receive, and we *prefer* to do business with NTA members.

If you're a seller, it helps both of us if you'll take just a few minutes to learn about us by reading our profile before requesting an appointment. Feel free to send me a note to ask if your product is something we would consider, particularly if this is your first convention.

Having been around NTA for a while, I can tell you that good partners are of great value. It's more than just a tagline: We do go further together.

”

NAIM HASSAN

Mark Hoffmann, CTP



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You're making meetings

Profile yourself

Your online profile helps potential partners understand you and your organization better, and you can add photos to personalize your page. The details you provide are what other members want to know to help them build a productive schedule of appointments. If you need help updating your profile, email headquarters@ntastaff.com.

Tune in

After you read about Travel Exchange here, you can reinforce the message by listening to Todd Talks, hosted by Todd Probus, NTA's director of member solutions. In this series of videos, honed by thousands of conversations with members, Todd delivers step-by-step instructions for how to get the most from your Travel Exchange experience. Find the series of Todd Talks on NTA's YouTube channel: youtube.com/user/ntaonline. (Autograph seekers can find Todd at NTA Central when Travel Exchange begins.)



Be direct

After you receive your appointment schedule on Nov. 18, you can add more meetings—by direct request—before leaving for Travel Exchange. Here are the steps:

- 1 Go back to the online request system and check to see if there are members you want to meet with who registered after Nov. 4, when the system made its matches.
- 2 Reach out to colleagues who have the same open time slots as you do, and see if you can schedule a meeting.
- 3 Each request that's accepted will be automatically added to your schedule—and to theirs.
- 4 Direct request scheduling closes Dec. 3.

Work it

Sellers who missed getting an appointment with a company can still seek out the representative on the TREX Floor in Fort Worth. Buyers are seated all week, and if you see an operator you want to meet with (and who isn't engaged in an appointment at the moment), ask if you can find a time that works for both of you. If one's not available, you can leave your profile form and business card—and chat later with that operator at a meal or an evening event.



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Set your alarm

Buyer Breakfast

Monday | 7:30 a.m.

This event, limited to buyers and sponsored by the Peachtree City CVB, will be an excellent chance for colleagues to catch up with each other. After the coffee kicks in, participants will hear from keynote speaker Christian de Boer, founder of RefillTheWorld, a grassroots nonprofit focused on reducing plastic use and waste within the travel industry.

FTA Breakfast

Tuesday | 8 a.m.

Free to FTA members and invited guests—and sponsored by Plimoth Plantation—this event gives members of the Faith Travel Association the chance to meet, network, and enjoy a performance. Two re-enactors will portray Pilgrims who played key roles in the settling of Plymouth Colony, and they'll discuss the importance of establishing the Church of Christ in New England. Sign up in advance by emailing FTA's Kay Saffari: kay.saffari@faithtravelassociation.com.



FTA Breakfast

NORMAND HUBERDEAU

Government Relations Breakfast Bistro

Wednesday | 8 a.m.

This annual event, sponsored by The Group Tour Company, serves up hot topics and a hot breakfast. Scheduled to speak are representatives from the National Parks Service, Amtrak, and Elevate Government Affairs (NTA's lobbying firm). Along with news about top legislative issues affecting travel, you'll get a chance to cheer the recipient of the James D. Santini Award. Support NTA's advocacy efforts and purchase your \$75 ticket when you register or by emailing NTA: headquarters@ntastaff.com.

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Education

SUNDAY, DEC. 8

Tour Operator Risk Management

1:30–2:30 p.m.

Aon's Peter Maidhof covers managing risk for your business.

Ask the Operator for DMOs

1:30–2:30 p.m.

Ask questions and get feedback from a panel of tour operators.

Mastering the Art and Science of Marketing

1:30–2:30 p.m.

Peter Kerr provides advanced ways to generate powerful messages.

Get Answers to your Legal Questions

2:45–3:45 p.m.

Jeff Ment addresses your questions about travel-related legal issues.

Travel Exchange 101

2:45–3:45 p.m.

Learn how to get the most from TREX appointments, social events, and seminars.

Going Global in the 21st Century: Tips for International Business Success

2:45–3:45 p.m.

Peter Kerr teaches how to communicate well across cultures.

MONDAY, DEC. 9



Christian de Boer

SPOTLIGHT SESSION

Plastics are the Travel Industry's Worst Nightmare

9:30–11:45 a.m.

Plastic water bottles, straws, and packaging are slowly destroying some of the world's most popular tourist destinations. It is not too late to reverse



NORMAND HUBEREAU

course, though. Join Christian de Boer of RefillTheWorld and Patrick Marsden with MaCher for an interactive presentation where you'll learn how you can help reduce and eliminate plastics pollution from your business and destination.

Winning Body Language to Influence and Persuade

10:30–11:30 a.m.

Learn the body language techniques that engage, influence, and persuade others.

Hispanic Travel Market Seminar

10:30–11:30 a.m.

Discover the scope of this market and its many business opportunities.

Putting Your Body Language Knowledge into Practice

2–3 p.m.

Understand how physical and verbal cues help you deliver and gather information.

Navigating Difficult Conversations: Deepen Your Relationships, Don't Just Solve a Problem

2–3 p.m.

Uncover strategies to own your message and ask the right questions.

Want to Sell More? You Need to Know How People Make Decisions

3:30–4:30 p.m.

Examine the decision-making process to increase connections and drive buy-in.

Ask the Operator for Suppliers

3:30–4:30 p.m.

Gather intel and feedback from a diverse panel of tour operators.

TUESDAY, DEC. 10



SPOTLIGHT SESSION

Managing Up, Part 1: How to Succeed with Any Type of Boss

9–10 a.m.

In the first half of this lively and interactive two-part workshop, Mary Abbajay helps you explore proven strategies and techniques to increase cooperation and collaboration between those with different power levels, perspectives, and workplace preferences. You will receive tools on how to navigate difficult boss behaviors and adapt to different leadership styles while taking ownership for your own professional success.

Managing Up, Part 2: The Power of Adapting

10:30–11:30 a.m.

Explore the role that personality plays in interactions with co-workers and supervisors.

Developing Product for the FIT Market

10:30–11:30 a.m.

Gain insights and strategies for capitalizing on this growing segment of travelers.

Automation and Integration

1:30–2:30 p.m.

Improve your online presence, from ratings and functionality to customer trust.

China Market Session

1:30–2:30 p.m.

Get updates in this changing—and still enormous—market.

NTA Tour Supplier Network Forum

2:45–3:45 p.m.

Join with industry colleagues and learn ways to increase visitation and spending.



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NTA DMO Network Forum

2:45–3:45 p.m.

Share ideas and best practices to find synergies and increase visitation.

NTA Buyer Network Forum

2:45–3:45 p.m.

Tour operator colleagues join together to talk business and get ideas.

NTA Associate Network Forum

2:45–3:45 p.m.

Diverse members become a resource for each other in this open discussion of best practices.

E-commerce: Selling Your Tours and Products Online

4–5 p.m.

Learn how to grow your business through online bookings.

Legal Hot Topics

4–5 p.m.

Attorney Jeff Ment helps you protect your company and your clients.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 11**SPOTLIGHT SESSION****Understanding the Differences among Generations**

9:30–10:30 a.m.

Join Cathleen Johnson for an in-depth look at the demographics, travel desires, and consumer behaviors of boomers and seniors. In this session, you'll explore the similarities and differences between these generations, particularly when it comes to the influences on their buying decisions, and how you can reach these affluent travelers.



Cathleen Johnson

Adjusting Your Business for Changing Audiences

11 a.m.–Noon

Learn how to attract and keep the millennial and Gen X audience and buyer.

Faith Travel Market Seminar

11 a.m.–Noon

Gain ideas and strategies from colleagues who experienced in this market.

Designing for Community Tourism

2–3 p.m.

Greg Takehara of Tourism Cares leads a panel discussion of tourism's impact on destinations.

Improv-ing Your Sales: Becoming a More Dynamic Seller through the Art of Improv

2–3 p.m.

Find out how the principles of improv can make you a more confident seller.

Ask the NTA Associates

3:30–4:30 p.m.

Join this discussion about digital marketing, insurance, payment solutions, and technology.

Discover the World of Sports Travel

3:30–4:30 p.m.

Learn how to make sports travel your hottest ticket in town.

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THURSDAY, DEC. 12**Digital Advertising Master Class**

9–10 a.m.

Catherine Heeg shows how to fine-tune your audience and content with social media.

Social Ads and Video Master Class

10:30–11:30 a.m.

Explore the strategies and basics of video creation and marketing finesse.

FIT for DMOs

10:30–11:30 a.m.

With more than half of all NTA operators packaging FIT, learn how to meet their needs.

SPOTLIGHT SESSION**TREX Forum on the Packaged Travel Industry**

2–3:15 p.m.

After a full week of networking, education, and entertainment, what can you take away from Travel Exchange? Join this session to compare notes, discuss ideas and insights, and share key takeaways from Fort Worth. 📍

The education schedule was accurate as of Oct. 10. Seminar times and content are subject to change.



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Pinstripes
Monday Night Party



Visit Fort Worth
Host City, Sightseeing
Tours, Icebreaker, and
Tourism Rocks



Las Vegas CVA
Tourism Rocks



Reno Tahoe
Thursday Luncheon



Roadrunner Charters
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Astronaut Multi Axis Trainer
and Profile Form Notebook



Visit Anchorage
Thursday Luncheon

SILVER



A Closer Look Tours
Fiesta de TREX! and
Refreshment Booth



Aon
Happy Hour



Billy Bob's Texas
Host City Co-partner



Courier magazine
Wednesday Luncheon,
Distinguished
Dozen Awards



**Coeur d'Alene
Casino Resort**
Buyer Notebooks



Cowtown Coliseum
Host City Co-partner



**Cracker Barrel
Old Country Store**
Cracker Barrel Lounge



Dan Dipert Tours
Official Airport
Transportation Provider



Discover Klamath VCB
On-site Guide



Ed-Ventures
Sponsor Appreciation
Reception, Seminar,
On-site Guide, and Owners
Network Reception



**Fort Worth Museum of
Science and History**
Host City Co-partner



**Fort Worth Stockyards
Business Association**
Tourism Rocks



Group Tour Media
Media Sponsor



The Group Travel Leader
Media Sponsor



**Hilmar Cheese Company
Visitor Center**
Happy Hour:
Cheese Sponsor



**La Grande Roue
de Montréal**
Hotel Key Cards



**National Cowgirl Museum
and Hall of Fame**
Host City Co-partner



Ohio Has It!
Trex Toiletries



Ottawa Tourism
Refreshments: Coffee & Tea



Peachtree City CVB
Buyer Breakfast



Plimoth & Mayflower
FTA Breakfast



Pybus Point Lodge
Monday Spotlight Session



River Ranch
Tourism Rocks



**Ronald Reagan
Presidential Library
& Museum**
TREXpress Daily and
Refreshments



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Sports Leisure Vacations
Board of Directors and
Past Presidents/Chairs
Dinner, Ask the Operator
Sessions, and GR Breakfast



**St. Augustine/
Ponte Vedra VCB**
Network Forum: Buyers



Stockyards Heritage
Host City Co-partner



Sweet Home Alabama
Board of Directors and Past
Presidents/Chairs Dinner



Temple Square Hospitality
Refreshments



**Travel Alliance
Partners (TAP)**
TREX Rx



Team Texas
Refreshments: Soft Drinks



Tour Colorado
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Tourism Alliance**
Mobile App and
Refreshments



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Travel Exchange Headsets



Academic Travel Abroad
TREXpress Daily



Alaska Coach Tours
Profile Form Notebook



CroisiEurope Cruises
Spotlight Session:
TREX Forum



Destination Cleveland
On-site Guide



The Group Tour Company
Government Relations
Breakfast Bistro



**Jamestown-Yorktown
Foundation**
Buyer Appointment
Table Gift



Louisville CVB
Profile Form Notebook



Making Memories Tours
Seminar

**Maryland Office
of Tourism**
Profile Form Notebook



**Mystic Country
Connecticut**
TREXpress Daily



Ocean City, MD CVB
Profile Form Notebook
and *TREXpress Daily*



**USI Affinity Travel
Insurance Services**
TREXpress Daily



City of Virginia Beach
Buyer Appointment
Table Gift



**Virginia Tourism
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Visit Plano Texas
Profile Form Notebook



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**Women Traveling
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Tour Operator Staplers

BRONZE

ARCTIC ADVENTURE AT SEA

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PAT HENDERSON

One of my college dorm buddies used to say, when asked how small his hometown was, “There is no one, everywhere.”

That is a pretty accurate description of the places I visited when I joined the High Arctic Explorer tour in August that was offered by NTA-member Adventure Canada. The 12-day trip on board the *Ocean Endeavour* went west from Resolute, Nunavut, which is located nearly 2,200 miles (3,400 kilometers) north of Ottawa, to Kangerlussuaq on Greenland’s southwestern coast.

The trip marked a lot of firsts for me: First time taking a multi-day cruise ... First time in Nunavut and Greenland ... First time above the Arctic Circle ... First real experience with the it’s-light-every-hour-of-the-day phenomena.

And I enjoyed ‘em all.



Ilulissat Icefjord

NTA's Pat Henderson during the High Arctic Explorer tour



MORE ICEBERGS THAN HUMANS

Labeling these places we went as remote doesn't begin to describe what we saw—and didn't see—during the journey. For the first six days, we weren't in, as my Mom used to say, "conversing distance" with anyone who wasn't on the ship. No. Other. Humans.

But while the Baffin Bay area is lacking in inhabitants, there is no shortage of stunning, other-worldly scenery. I never tired of seeing icebergs, glaciers, swooping shorebirds, colorful fauna, and postcard-worthy sunsets as we made our way through the famed Northwest Passage. [Note: While the sun did technically disappear below the horizon for a couple of hours each day, it never got truly dark, and I found the 24-hour brightness to be invigorating.]

Our group included just over 150 passengers, a group of 30 Adventure Canada staffers and consultants, and the 100-member crew. On board, we enjoyed educational sessions and shared meals, drinks, songs, and laughs.

We typically left the ship once a day for activities that included zodiac boat rides around beautiful (and often iceberg-laden) harbors and hikes around remote places, such as Beechey Island and Disko Bay.

We also went ashore and toured three coastal villages: Pond Inlet, Nunavut, and Ilulissat and Sisimiut, Greenland. The respective population of those places is 200, 3,500 and 5,500, and the visits offered interesting snapshots of daily life in the Arctic.

The locals in Pond Inlet treated us to an hour-long presentation that included

traditional songs, dances, and games.

There also was a soccer match at the community center between some fleet-footed locals and a self-selected group of passengers. Despite a solid effort from the *Ocean Endeavour* all-stars, the home team rallied for a one-goal win.

The main draw in Ilulissat is the town's namesake icefjord. A one-mile hike from the city center along a boardwalk takes you to the viewpoint overlooking this UNESCO World Heritage site. The icefjord includes Semuq Kujalleq glacier, which is responsible for more than 10 percent of Greenland's calved glaciers, many of which make the open waters because of Semuq's access to the sea. I spent more than an hour just listening to the crackling ice and staring at various formations found at this massive natural wonder.

The guided tour in Sisimiut, by far the largest of the three towns, centered more around the area's man-made spots and human history. The main area around the harbor is dotted with brightly colored buildings, which kept my index finger busy as I took picture after picture.

While these spots were great during the warmer August days—the highs throughout our trip ranged from 45 to 55 F (7 to 12 C)—it was tough to contemplate the winter realities of sub-zero temperatures and nonstop darkness in the isolated Arctic north.

If you ever really feel like you want to get away from it on your next vacation, though, this is the tour for you. Just go in the summer.

Adventure Canada runs cruises to multiple destinations in Arctic and Atlantic Canada, Greenland, and Europe, and has sailings in the Southern Hemisphere between January and March. The company also offers a series of land tours to remote areas of Canada. For more information on Adventure Canada, contact Jean Bouffard at jean@adventurecanada.com or go to adventurecanada.com.



THE NON-CRUISE CRUISE EXPERIENCE

When addressing the passengers during a briefing the night before we boarded the plane for Resolute, Adventure Canada CEO Cedar Swan said, “We aren’t a cruise company.”

Now, while my knowledge of cruises was limited to second-hand vacation tales of others and the articles I’ve written on the topic over the years for *Courier*, what kept going through my head was: on a ship for 12 days = cruising.

Her words stayed with me, though, and their meaning became clear as the trip unfolded.

The immediate difference I noticed between my perception and reality was scale. While the family-and-friends reports pointed to the “anything you wanted to see and do, you could” regarding big-ship cruising, the experiences on the *Ocean Endeavour* fell firmly into the less-is-more category. The size of the boat and the lower passenger count made for a more intimate voyage, and that was very appealing.

I love few things more than good conversation, and the Adventure Canada itinerary—and the trip design—afforded a near-endless supply of opportunities

for some lively banter. The fact that I was always doing the same things at the same time as my fellow travelers made it easy pickings.

If I wanted to continue a conversation I had at breakfast, I could do it on a zodiac boat ride, during the day’s shore hike, at one of the educational sessions, or just up on deck watching the icebergs float by. Full disclosure: We had a hearty and humorous group on board, and that made a huge difference.

But, when I needed some alone time, there were spaces on the ship where I could go to get away from everyone. I found the lounge on the top deck to be a dependably isolated place, and I went there on the nights when I was sorting through the day’s photos and writing a few sentences to post on the *Courier* social media channels. Hard to think I’d have found such a spot on a megaship.

Another thing that stuck out was the connection the Adventure Canada staff had to the remote destinations we were visiting. Nunavut and Greenland weren’t merely stops on this week’s itinerary; staff members were from these areas and presenters had studied these landscapes.

As they educated us on the sites of our shore excursions, they spoke passionately about each of the places. They didn’t use disconnected words such as “there, them, and they” in their descriptions, but rather used the inclusive tone of “we, our, and my.” Accordingly, their places



became my places, and I came away with a deeper connection to the Arctic.

Those and a few other things brought Cedar’s words into focus. I only hope my next cruise will closely resemble the non-cruise experience Adventure Canada offers.

BACK TO SCHOOL

While the ubiquitous, crazy-good scenery was the highlight of the trip, the on-board seminars were a close second. On all its voyages, Adventure Canada brings along a gaggle of experts to lead the educational sessions that are related to the people, landscapes, and cultures of the area (in our case, Arctic Canada and Greenland).

Our ultra-knowledgeable group of presenters included a biologist, a geologist, an archaeologist, an ornithologist, a botanist, a historian, a filmmaker, and three native culturalists. We also had a glaciologist along with us.

I will admit that I didn’t know that was a job/discipline, but after hearing

Colorful Sismiut



Charlotte Mougeot speak on how permafrost—another term I was unfamiliar with—is impacting the glaciers in the Arctic, I was very happy we had our own glaciologist in tow. (And yeah, that was another travel first for me.)

In addition to her session, I sat in on many other talks, most of which were an hour long. Some of my favorites were a discussion among the experts on climate change, a seminar on national parks, a presentation on Inuit culture that included throat singing and traditional games, and an interactive lesson on the Inuktitut language. The first session was so popular that a second one was added, and I can now write my name in Inuktitut.

The on-board education was enhanced by the living classroom experiences that occurred during the shore excursions. Our archaeologist, Chris Wolf, would be stationed at different sites and explain their history, our ornithologist, Garry Donaldson, would point out birds unique to an area, and our botanist, Dawn Bazely, would explain the various flowers, shrubs and trees we'd see as we hiked along.

On May 16, 1987—the day my “there is no one, everywhere” friend and I graduated from university—I vowed to never take another college class. Over the years I've held true to my word, but I'll admit I didn't mind the floating master class that was offered during this trip. 🧊

ALL IN THE (NTA) FAMILY

One of the added bonuses to Adventure Canada's High Arctic Explorer tour was the fact that the company had invited 14 journalists and 25 tour operators and travel agents along for the ride. I always enjoy getting to talk shop with fellow writer types, and I learn a lot when I hang out and swap stories with operators.

In addition to there being Adventure Canada staff members on board, two other NTA members were represented: Autocar Excellence and Wells Gray Tours. I ended up spending a lot of time with Claudia Boissonneault of Autocar Excellence and Wells Gray's Kerrie Neimeier and Pam Jensen. I'm well versed in knowing that NTA members add to the fun no matter what you are doing, and those three—as well as the lively Adventure Canada staff—helped make a great trip even better.



Inuit culture presentation



Zodiac boat among the icebergs



Botanist Dawn Bazely discussing Powell Inlet's plants

Philadelphia

BY BOB ROUSE

NTA members are listed in **bold type**.

"It is hard to get tired of Philadelphia, for amusements are not scarce."

—Mark Twain

As an 18-year-old in 1853, a decade before he became Mark Twain and a famous writer, Samuel Clemens was impressed with Philadelphia.

I am decades past age 18—and decades away from becoming a famous writer—but I agree with Clemens/Twain's sentiments. I found Philadelphia to be

wonderfully amusing ... and stimulating, invigorating, and illuminating.

It helps that I had the best of hosts during my three-day visit in June: Jim DePhilippo, the **Philadelphia CVB** connection known to many NTA members, and Anthony Stipa, the organization's communications manager. These two introduced me to a city I should have visited sooner in my travels, but had not.

I'm so glad I did. It's a major city with smaller-town qualities. The city center

is entirely walkable, and the people are totally friendly.

On the first evening of my Philadelphia story, Jim and Anthony took me to **One Liberty Observation Deck** on the 57th floor of One Liberty Place (about three minutes from the Sonesta Hotel, my marvelous accommodations).

"There are any number of ways to see the city, but this is a great place to start," Jim said. "You get a great view of the city."

The observation deck is the tallest standing attraction in Philadelphia, and the first in the city to be built higher than the statue of William Penn atop City Hall. It's open every day of the year and has a well-designed motorcoach drop-off and pick up area. Up top, photo ops can range from skyline sunsets to scenic selfies.

Filled. Up.

I expected to get a heavy dose of history in Philadelphia—we'll get to that—and before I arrived, I hadn't given a moment's thought to Philly's food. But after a series of epic meals there, I haven't stopped thinking about it. We dined at both innovative new restaurants and comfy old eateries.

And Philadelphians own their foodiness, as Alethia Calbeck, also with the CVB, explained.

"What I love about our restaurant scene is the number of chef owners. The guy who's cooking your entrée also owns the chair you're sitting in," she said.

Beyond the restaurants, I discovered two other food-rich arenas that will satisfy a wide swath of appetites.

The Reading Terminal Market is a beehive of food stalls and lunch counters, along with other stands featuring fresh produce, meats, cheeses, and flowers.

"There's an area available for group seating," Jim told me later, "but most tour leaders let the group loose to explore the market on their own."

Another great spot for grazing is The Bourse, an upscale food court housed in a century-old stock exchange building. Vendors offer international cuisine, teas,

To get information and itinerary suggestions, contact Jim DePhilippo at the Philadelphia CVB by email, jim@discoverphl.com or visit discoverphl.com.



K. HUFF FOR PHILCVB



BOB ROUSE

Signers Hall at the National Constitution Center

cocktails, pastries, and cheesesteaks. It's interesting food, and it's near the major museums and Colonial hot spots.

Spirit of history

The spirit of the founding and the founders of the United States is palpable. History is celebrated here because so much of it was created here. Cooked up by Colonists. Produced by patriots.

My Colonial immersion began at the **National Constitution Center**, where I noted two absolute must-do's. The first is "Freedom Rising," a stirring presentation about post-Revolution America. A talented actress delivered a convincing soliloquy that, along with a multimedia display, explained how a truly national government was formed in 1787.

After the show, I walked through a series of exhibits that highlight the history and the enormous challenges of creating and preserving citizens' rights as Americans—then and now.

The other must-do is Signers Hall, a room with 42 life-sized bronze statues of the Founding Fathers who signed the Constitution, including George Washington, Ben Franklin, and Alexander Hamilton.

The docent told me that kids really like this room ... so I'm a kid. I was utterly fascinated by the faces—and the physical presence—of the nation's earliest leaders.

I kept thinking about how these Constitutional Convention delegates traveled for weeks to get to Philadelphia to make momentous decisions that

charted a nation's path. I had made the 600-mile trip in one morning.

The attraction also has exhibits that make return visits a new experience. Opening in summer 2020 is one that will commemorate the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which 100 years before, gave women the right to vote.

For my next history lesson, Jim took me to the Museum of the American Revolution. Although there's much I know about this era, I had never really felt it quite so much.

"We have audio-visuals, touch screens, immersive elements, and

tableaus depicting real people," said Alex McKechnie, the museum's public relations manager. "We tell the story through the lens of those who are not often talked about—people on the margins: women, African-Americans, and laborers."

They also tell a story—in a 12-minute multimedia presentation—about a person who is often talked about. And its focus of the show is a remarkable artifact: the tent that served as General George Washington's office and sleeping quarters during much of the war.

"Washington's War Tent" is the gem of our collection. It's the culminating event of a visit to the museum," Alex said.

The art part

Before I departed the city, Anthony took a few travel writers and me to the **Philadelphia Museum of Art**. It's a law, I think, that you have to run up the steps and rejoice at the top, and then get a photo of yourself in front of the "Rocky" statue in that same celebratory pose.

But go inside, too. You'll rejoice at seeing what the museum offers: from paintings by Renoir and van Gogh to the China sets of several U.S. presidents and fine examples of Philadelphia furniture with ball-and-claw feet.

What made the difference for me was having a knowledgeable docent who



JEFF FUSCO

brought the art to life. After learning about a painting's composition of elements and colors, plus background information about the artist and the time, I walked away feeling like an expert.

"We can help arrange admission and provide guided tours of the permanent collections, special exhibitions, and the Rodin Museum, as well as tours of the historical houses in Fairmount Park," said Shari Feldman, manager of group sales. There are six such houses in the park, two of which the museum administers, and Shari can help arrange tours at all of them.

Human resources

This was an eye-opening trip for me. I knew very little about the city, but through NTA, I connected with people who know everything about the city.

Ryan O'Connor, general manager of **Entertainment Cruises**, explained dozens of ways that groups can ply the Delaware River and eat (lunch or dinner), play (bingo, Gospel music, DJ jams), and enjoy the skyline views of Philadelphia. Ryan has two ships, one large and one small,



and he can customize a cruise to fit the size or celebration of a group.

And Jim is such a remarkable resource. Walking through the historical district and discussing so many distinctive restaurants and hotel options, I was struck by the real value of working with a DMO. Jim understands price points and space, and given the age, aims, and budget of a group, his mind can sort through the options for lodging and food—computer-like—and he'll produce a quick solution.

And then he can tell you about unique offerings and experiences at attractions I visited as well as others, such as the Ben Franklin Museum, the Betsy Ross House, the Liberty Bell, and Christ Church (the birthplace of the Episcopal Church).

Staying only two nights, I felt like I rushed past too many bits of history and art. And my talks with Jim and Anthony gave me more reasons to return. They include the **Philadelphia Flower Show**, Feb. 29–March 8, 2020; The Army-Navy football game, played this year the day after we leave Fort Worth; and the holiday season.

"We have fabulous opportunities at Christmastime, with fantastic hotel rates," Jim said. "There's a Christmas market outside of City Hall, and the new shopping experiences, especially the Fashion District, will be a bonus."

The Fashion District, which opened in September, has nearly 900,000 square feet of shopping, dining, and immersive entertainment.

"Many cities have retail centers nearby, but Fashion District is in the heart of downtown with street access," Jim said. "You can shop in the city and walk to the Liberty Bell. This mall is good for adult groups—especially when the weather isn't great."

I wouldn't know about that, as I experienced nothing but sunshine and blue skies during my days in Philly. I'm willing to go back during more indoorsy times, though. Because just like that great writer, I didn't get tired of Philadelphia. 📍



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Maryland's engaging events

From its mountainous western region to its shoreline along the Atlantic Ocean, Maryland offers a variety of experiences that showcase its physical and cultural landscapes. Visitors can check out the state's diversity at myriad annual festivals, including the following six. All dates listed are for 2020.



KAVEH SARDARI

The National Harbor Cherry Blossom Festival (National Harbor, March 20–April 12)

National Harbor holds events in March and April in conjunction with the National Cherry Blossom Festival in nearby Washington, D.C. In addition to being able to see the colorful blooms along the city's Harbor Trail and at Gaylord National Resort, visitors can enjoy Sakura Day, a one-day free festival in National Harbor that highlights many aspects of Japanese culture.

NTA Contact: Josh Winston of Visit National Harbor, at jwinston@nationalharbor.com.



BETHESDA.ORG

Bethesda Fine Arts Festival (Bethesda, May 9–10)

Across its 16-year history, the festival has featured the works of thousands of artists from the region and around the world. Held in Bethesda's Woodmont Triangle area, the two-day event includes everything from paintings, sculpture, and mixed media pieces to jewelry and handicrafts. Attendees also can enjoy live entertainment and food from local restaurants.

NTA Contact: Lee Callicutt of Visit Montgomery, lcallicutt@visitmontgomery.com.



AFRAMBALTIMORE.COM

AFRAM Festival (Baltimore, Aug. 8–9)

One of the largest cultural celebrations on the U.S. East Coast, AFRAM serves as a platform to highlight Baltimore's African-American community. Held at the 745-acre Druid Hill Park, the event brings together more than 100,000 people for concerts by headlining entertainers, cultural presentations, art displays, and local food and drink.

NTA Contact: Eric Masterton of Visit Baltimore, emasterton@baltimore.org.



AUGUSTOBERFEST.ORG

Augustoberfest (Hagerstown, August)

This festival, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2020, pays tribute to the area's German heritage and supports the strong link between Hagerstown and its sister city: Wesel, Germany. Traditional music and dance performances are held throughout both days of the annual event, and attendees can enjoy German food, crafts, and souvenirs.

NTA Contact: Audrey Vargason of Visit Hagerstown, audrey@visithagerstown.com.



MARYLAND SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

Maryland Seafood Festival (Annapolis, September)

Held at Sandy Point State Park in Maryland's capital city, the event showcases the state's renowned fresh catch. In addition to sampling a range of seafood, festival-goers can enjoy local wines and craft beers. The event, which started in 1966, also features oyster shucking and crab cake eating contests as well as a crab soup cook-off.

NTA Contact: Rich Gilbert of the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, rgilbert@visitmaryland.org.

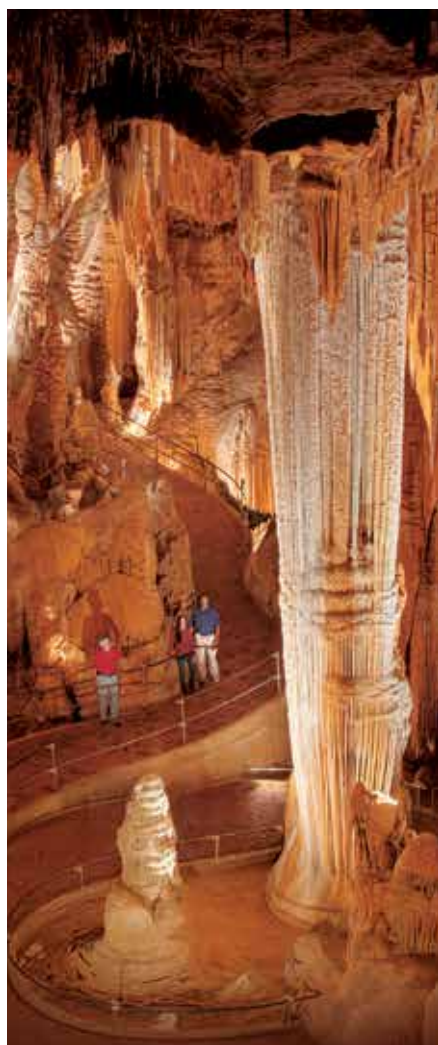


OCOCEAN.COM

Sunfest (Ocean City, Sept. 24–27)

Sunfest, a nationally recognized arts-focused event, celebrated its 45th anniversary in 2019. Across its four days, the popular gathering features music, food, and art. There are outdoor and indoor stages showcasing live music from top regional and national performers, as well as crafts booths, art displays, and children's activities.

NTA Contact: Norma Dobrowolski of the Ocean City MD CVB/Department of Tourism, ndobrowolski@ococean.com.



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What will you discover?



Student group at Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument

Washington DC is suffragette city

There are a lot of exciting things in play in Washington, D.C., these days surrounding the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote in the U.S. Many celebrations and special exhibits based around two key dates—the passage of the 19th Amendment by Congress on June 4, 1919, and the ratification of the amendment on Aug. 18, 1920—are highlighting this milestone.

“The nation’s capital is home to hands-on monuments and museums, many of which are free and have interactive and educational exhibits that are perfect for adult group travel,” says Elliott L. Ferguson II, president and CEO of Destination DC. “We are thrilled to commemorate historical moments in the District [regarding] the women’s suffrage centennial with many special offerings, such as an in-depth exhibit on women activists at the National Archives and free tours of the Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument on Capitol Hill, led by the National Park Service.”

Here is a rundown of some of the sites and special exhibits that are part of the centennial celebration:

Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument Travelers can go on guided tours of the Capitol Hill-area home that became the center for the fight for women’s rights.

The Library of Congress “Shall Not Be Denied: Women Fight for the Vote” (on exhibit through September 2020)

The National Museum of American History “American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith” and “All Work, No Pay: A History of Women’s Invisible Labor” (both exhibits are ongoing)

The National Archives “Rightfully Hers: American Women and the Vote” (on exhibit through Jan. 3, 2021)

The U.S. Capitol Travelers can see Portrait Monument to Pioneers of the Suffrage Movement, a statue of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucretia Mott that’s on permanent display.

To learn more, email Lindsey Hill of Destination DC at lindsay@washington.org or go to washington.org.

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The Signature Theatre's production of "Titanic"

Signature offerings at the Signature Theatre

Situated in Arlington, Virginia, just minutes from the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the Signature Theatre stages its own versions of classic musicals and plays. This Tony Award-winning regional theater has produced 56 world premieres, including 19 new musical commissions, since it was founded in 1989.

"The *Washington Post* called the Signature Theatre 'a dream for patrons that models excellence in musicals,' and tour operators will find the best of D.C. theater along with 16 area restaurants nearby," says Emily Adler, the theater's group sales and grassroots marketing manager. "And, bus drop-off at our front door makes the Signature a one-stop shop for an easy and fun night out after a day of sightseeing."

Following a 2007 capital campaign, the Signature Theatre moved into a new

PAUL TATE DEPOO III



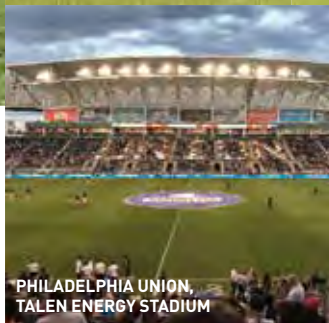
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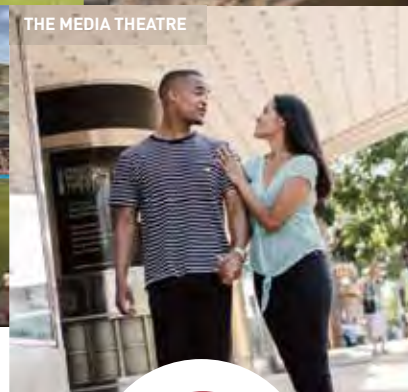
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"West Side Story"

location and serves as the cultural anchor of Arlington's Village at Shirlington. The space includes two intimate venues: The Max, which seats up to 300 people, and The Ark, which holds up to 125. Both theaters have flexible seating configurations that allow for different stage arrangements, depending on the production.

In addition to seeing a performance, groups heading to the Signature Theatre can enjoy other programs.

"We offer talkbacks/Q&A sessions with the cast, acting workshops, or themed workshops where groups can take a

deeper dive into the topics and themes of the show with a facilitator from our education team," says Adler. "Plus, the on-site Ali's Bar offers delicious light bites and a full bar with specialty cocktails inspired by the shows."

The Spring 2020 portion of the current season will feature productions of "Camille Claudel" (March 24–April 19), "Nijinsky's Last Dance" (April 14–May 24), and "Hair" (May 19–July 12).

To learn more, contact Adler at adlere@sigtheatre.org or go to sigtheatre.org.

Coming up ... Mamma Mia!

In mid-October, the Signature Theatre announced a partnership with The Anthem, a new music and performance venue across the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. The organizations will collaborate to present "Mamma Mia!" at The Anthem's 2,000-seat venue next summer from June 25 to July 5.

"We are excited to offer a brand new production of 'Mamma Mia!' with the classic music of Abba," says the Signature Theatre's Emily Adler. "The Anthem allows us the same artistic flexibilities as our convertible theaters in Arlington and the same immersive feeling, but on a much larger scale to accommodate groups of varying sizes."

While general tickets for the performances will be handled through The Anthem, Adler will be coordinating group tickets. Reach out to her at adlere@sigtheatre.org to find out more.



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Getting to the art of things in Pittsburgh

Despite its Steel Town moniker, Pittsburgh is a city that knows its way around good art. Thanks to its acclaimed group of performing arts organizations and many galleries with renowned collections, travelers will find no shortage of cultural offerings, including the following three attractions that focus on visual arts:

The Andy Warhol Museum

The museum is the keeper of the pop icon and Pittsburgh native's life and work—from the art he created as a student in the 1940s through his more progressive works in the 1980s. Four floors are dedicated to a rotating selection of paintings and photographs, and one floor includes permanent gallery with his films and videos.

Featured works: In addition to Warhol's colorful celebrity portraits, the museum has 60 of his feature films and 200 screen tests available for viewing.

The Carnegie Museum of Art

Founded in 1895, the Carnegie Museum of Art offers a look at modern and contemporary art. The attraction has more than 32,000 objects in its permanent collection including paintings, decorative arts, sculptures, drawings, photographs, and other works of visual art from the 19th century to today.

Featured works: The museum contains more than 70,000 negatives of legendary local photographer Charles "Teenie" Harris.




The Andy Warhol Museum

CC FLICKER/EVA BLUE: bit.ly/312H990

The Frick Pittsburgh

This multifaceted attraction includes museums and historical buildings that preserve the legacy of businessman and art collector Henry Clay Frick. During a visit, groups can tour the Frick Art Museum, the family's 19th-century Victorian mansion, 5.5 acres of gardens, and a rebuilt version of their greenhouse.

Featured works: The on-site Car and Carriage Museum includes vintage vehicles dating back to the late 1800s.

For more information, reach out to VisitPittsburgh's Katie Conway at katie.conaway@visitpittsburgh.com or go to visitpittsburgh.com. 



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Continue on to the Black Hills, where Custer State Park provides a place for 1,300 buffalo to roam. It's also where you'll discover breathtaking sites like Sylvan Lake and the towering granite rocks known as the Cathedral Spires.

Across the state, you can take in the vibrant colors and enchanting sounds of Native culture at one of South Dakota's many powwows. Witness the pageantry of the American Indian culture as you experience the dances, songs, regalia, and art that capture centuries of traditions.

Visit South Dakota — where your spirit will be inspired by both the destination and the journey.



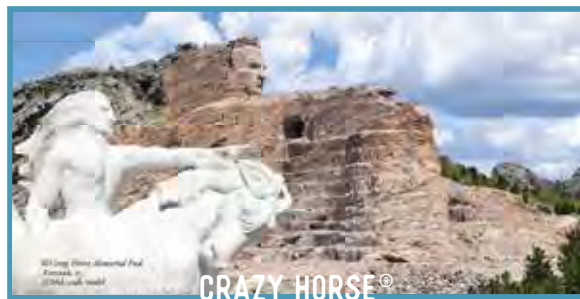




AKTÁ LAKOTA MUSEUM & CULTURAL CENTER

800-798-3452 // AktaLakota.org

The Akta Lakota Museum & Cultural Center, located on the St. Joseph's Indian School campus in Chamberlain, preserves and promotes the arts and history of the Northern Plains Indian people. View beautiful exhibits of contemporary art and historical artifacts along with interactive displays. Guided tours by request. Open year-round and free admission.



CRAZY HORSE

605-673-4681 // CrazyHorseMemorial.org

Celebrate Native American history and culture at Crazy Horse Memorial®! Open year-round, enjoy the Museum, Cultural Center, Sculptor's Studio-Home, restaurant, and gift shop. Seasonal attractions include Native American performers and a nightly laser show. There are no CUA fees and no parking fees. Visit our website for more information!



PIERRE — YOUR ADVENTURE ON THE RIVER

605-224-7361 // Pierre.org

Experience South Dakota's capital city of Pierre! Tour the Capitol, memorials, Trail of Governors, and Oahe Dam & Powerhouse. Pierre is home to museums including the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center and the South Dakota National Guard Museum. Outdoor recreation includes hunting, fishing, kayaking and a cruise on the Sunset, the last working paddlewheel on the Missouri River.



RAPID CITY — DO BIG THINGS

800-487-3223 // TourRapidCity.com

Begin your bucketlist tour in Rapid City, where presidents soar and heart-swelling inspiration hits hard. With close proximity to Yellowstone National Park, immediate access to eight notable parks and monuments and must-see attractions right within the city, your group can unlock monumental moments every day.



WORLD'S ONLY CORN PALACE

605-996-6223 // VisitMitchell.com

There may be one big attraction that brings visitors to Mitchell, but there are a million reasons to stay. Stop by Mitchell's a-MAIZE-ing attractions, refuel at one of 50+ restaurants, and then kick your shoes off at our relaxing accommodations. Biggest stop between Sioux Falls and Rapid City. I-90, Exit 332.



YANKTON — THE MOTHER CITY OF THE DAKOTAS

605-665-3636 // VisitYanktonSD.com

Yankton, the first capital of the Dakota Territory, is rich in both history and modern attractions. Tour one of the state's largest hop farms, experience the beauty and power of the Missouri River and Gavins Point Dam, visit the world's largest archery complex, and so much more!



CUSTER STATE PARK

888-875-0001 // CusterStatePark.com

Custer State Park is South Dakota's oldest and largest state park. Encompassing 71,000 acres in the Black Hills, the park is home to one of the largest public herds of bison in North America and other wildlife. Whether it's camping, hiking, swimming, fishing, or relaxing, there's something here for everyone.



THE MAMMOTH SITE

605-745-6017 // MammothSite.org

The Mammoth Site boasts the largest concentration of Columbian mammoths in the world! This Educational and Scientific Research Institution is an active paleontological dig site and accredited museum. We offer guided tours, summer programs for children, exhibits, and hands-on displays. Open year-round and universally accessible. Located in Hot Springs.



REDLIN ART CENTER

1-877-873-3546 // RedlinArt.com

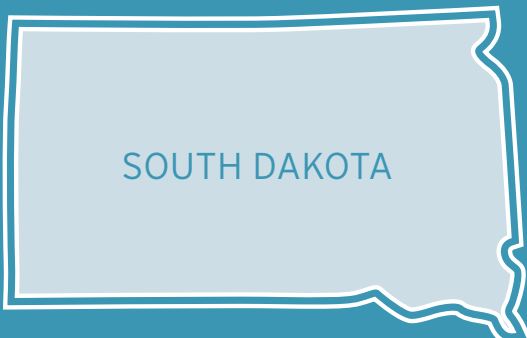
Terry Redlin's gift to his hometown of Watertown, the Redlin Art Center features more than 160 of his original wildlife and Americana paintings. Daily audio tours and complimentary video presentations offered. Shop 3 Gift Shops! Stroll the 30-acre Conservation Park! Let the art of Terry Redlin inspire you! Open year-round and free admission. Motorcoach parking.



WALL DRUG STORE

605-279-2175 // WallDrug.com

America's #1 roadside attraction. Made famous by offering free ice water to weary travelers. There is something for everyone in this wonderland of free attractions, shopping, and dining. Located in Wall off Interstate-90 and 8 miles north of Badlands National Park.



GROUP TOUR PLANNING ASSISTANCE

CALLEY WORTH
South Dakota Department of Tourism
TourSDakota.com
calley.worth@travelsouthdakota.com
800-952-3625

NEEDLES HIGHWAY – CUSTER STATE PARK

**GROUP TOUR
PLANNING ASSISTANCE**

CALLEY WORTH
South Dakota Department of Tourism
TourSDakota.com
calley.worth@travelsouthdakota.com
800-952-3625

WHERE *Memories* ARE MADE

Between the open roads and boundless
skies of South Dakota.



South Dakota



Atlantic Canada

COMPILED BY KENDALL FLETCHER

Western Brook Pond

Hardly staying *in* at the Holiday Inn Express Deer Lake

“Holiday Inn Express Deer Lake and Crescita Hotels & Resorts Atlantic Canada are literally one-stop shops for tour operators offering programs in Newfoundland and Atlantic Canada,” says the Holiday Inn Express’s Laura Barry Walbourne, director of sales.

The Holiday Inn property, part of the Crescita group’s holdings, is located near the Deer Lake Regional Airport in Western Newfoundland—the gateway to the historical Viking Trail and just 30 minutes from the beautiful Gros Morne National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

“Deer Lake is the central location to start and end your touring program and is a multi-season destination ideal for FIT, leisure and sports groups, and the business traveler,” Walbourne says. “Winter is no exception, with hundreds of kilometers of groomed and backcountry snowmobile trails just 20 minutes from Marble Mountain Ski Resort—referred to as the best skiing east of the Rocky Mountains.”

The Deer Lake and Gros Morne National Park areas are also home to several lively festivals throughout the year, including the Deer Lake Strawberry Festival, the Gros Morne Fall Fest, and Writers at Woody Point.

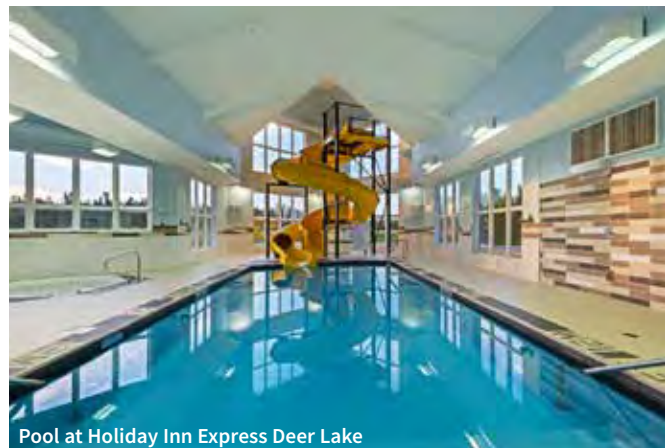
Walbourne says she is happy to provide itinerary logistics, sample touring programs, and competitive group and FIT rates for Crescita Hotels & Resort properties throughout Atlantic Canada.

While visitors are busy taking in the views of the national park’s extraordinary landscapes and traveling the nearby

walking and hiking trails, they can also enjoy the following amenities at the Holiday Inn Express Deer Lake:

- Complimentary airport shuttle service
- Complimentary hot buffet breakfast
- Indoor pool and hot tub
- 24-hour fitness center
- 24-hour business center
- Full-service catering

For more information, contact Walbourne at sales@hiedeerlakehotel.com or go to ihg.com.



Pool at Holiday Inn Express Deer Lake

The *fax* about what's new in Halifax

New lodging options and seaside developments will sweep through Nova Scotia's capital within the next year.

"One of the best ways to experience the historic port city of Halifax is strolling along the downtown waterfront," says Discover Halifax's Michele Bourgeois.

One of the world's longest continuous boardwalks, the Harbourwalk is the province's most-visited attraction. It's 2.5 miles of shopping and dining, as well as the jumping off point to various outdoor activities, like harbor tours and deep-sea fishing. It's also teeming with some of the waterfront's other major attractions and signature festivals.

Halifax waterfront and boardwalk



DISCOVER HALIFAX

Bourgeois says the following are the area's newest expansions and additions:

Queen's Marque District is a five-acre, multi-use development of retail and dining space at the edge of Halifax Harbor, to be completed in 2020. It will feature a 110-room luxury boutique hotel, a new boardwalk, underground parking, three new plazas, and a public rooftop. The site, founded in 1749 and once known as Queen's Landing, is brimming with military, marine, and mercantile history.

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia will be replaced by a new, 142,000-square-foot gallery and cultural hub. Construction is expected to begin in 2020 and will expand the attraction to twice the size of its current facility.

Hotel properties—including the Holiday Inn Express & Suites Halifax Dartmouth; Courtyard by Marriott Halifax-Dartmouth; and the Residence Inn by Marriott Halifax-Dartmouth—opened this summer in Dartmouth Crossing, a popular shopping and entertainment district. The Sutton Place Hotel Halifax will open later this year in the Nova Centre with 262 luxurious guest rooms and suites, situated in the heart of the district.

Along with its new hotels and social scenes, Halifax will also host the 2020 North American Indigenous Games July 12–19, Bourgeois noted.

"The games will draw over 5,000 athletes from 756 Indigenous nations competing in 17 sports. Thousands of visitors will experience a cultural celebration and village at the Halifax Commons, which includes dance, songs, music, games, art, and teachings," she says.

For more information, contact Bourgeois at mbourgeois@discoverhalifaxns.com or go to discoverhalifaxns.com.

Fun is never done at Dundee

Though the setting is tranquil, the activities are always on at Dundee Resort & Golf Club on Cape Breton in Louisdale, Nova Scotia.

"We have an active recreation department that offers many water sports for our guests to explore the serene lake our property sits on: kayaking, canoeing, pedal boating, stand-up paddle boarding—you name it," says Marketing Consultant Krista Luddington. "Our golf is a main attraction due to the breathtaking backdrop that is the panoramic view of the Bras D'or Lakes from nearly every hole, and the course being carved into the richly forested South Mountain. It really is second to none."

The resort is also alive with new projects. The guest rooms, dining room, and pub are undergoing renovations; new golf carts have been added; the guest laundry area and cottages have been updated; and a state-of-the-art pavilion was recently built to accommodate weddings, conferences, and other special events.

Guests can also enjoy the indoor and outdoor pools, lawn games, and bonfires during their stay.

"We believe in delivering the full Cape Breton experience—from our Maritime hospitality and delicious East Coast menu full of tasty Nova Scotia dishes to offering live music on-site three nights a week," Luddington says.

Those events include the popular Wing Night, held in the clubhouse on Wednesday nights, as well as two themed nights in Chanter's Pub. The resort is an industry partner with two Cape Breton music festivals—Kitchenfest! and Celtic Colours International Festival—and is home to the annual Folk Music Festival.

For more information, reach out to NTA contact Sonny Grewal at sonny@dundeeresort.com or visit dundeeresort.com. 📍



Golf course overlooking Bras D'or Lakes

DUNDEE RESORT & GOLF CLUB

Caribbean

COMPILED BY KENDALL FLETCHER

Jamaican me want to go

Located in Montego Bay, the all-inclusive SeaGarden Beach Resort sits at the edge of the Caribbean Sea, surrounded by the natural beauty of lush tropical gardens.

"The beat of reggae music, the searing smell of jerk foods, and the swizzle of rum in your glass creates an experience that is uniquely Jamaican. No place on earth provides the range of attractions and the cultural diversity that can be found here," says the resort's June Wright.

NTA members are offered special discounted rates for bookings of 10 or more rooms, Wright says, as well as personalized roundtrip airport group transfers.

"Upon arrival, your group will be offered a soothing, cool towel and a tasty tropical drink. Check-ins are seamless," she says. "The rooms—offering views of the Montego Hills, the Caribbean Sea, or our gardens—are outfitted with air conditioning, Wi-Fi service, and spa-quality amenities."

Guests can dine in a luxurious private setting or al fresco on the beach or by the pool. The resort offers a variety of activities, including sunrise meditation, mid-morning aerobics, tennis clinics, afternoon cultural talks, and dance sessions. After dinner, travelers can attend folk shows and cabaret performances as



SEAGARDEN BEACH RESORT

well as enjoy late-night entertainment in the lounge.

Wright says Jamaica is now considered one of the top three destinations in the Caribbean, and guests can reserve day trips at the tour desk to see the island. Excursions to natural waterfalls, river rafting tours, and visits to a rum factory or to Bob Marley's estate are just some of the options.

"From each morning's glorious sunrise until the sea swallows the sun at night, Jamaica presents a magnificent palette of experiences—a kaleidoscope of colors and sounds that make our island the most precious jewel in the Caribbean. We are a land of unique culture, engaging activities, breathtaking landscapes, and a warm, welcoming people," she says.

For more information, email NTA contact Tricia-Ann Bicarie at tbicarie@seagardenjamaica.com or go to seagardenjamaica.com.

Field trip? Vámonos!

San Juan-based Vámonos Tours has teamed up with Discover Puerto Rico in an effort to develop the island into the Caribbean's top destination for performing groups, according to company owner Jorge Pardo.

The partners held their first high school performance tour festival in Puerto Rico in February, where many U.S. choirs performed in concert halls, cathedrals, main city squares, and theaters around the island.

"Vámonos' Puerto Rico has become the performance-tour choice for schools in the U.S. wishing to bring their choirs and bands to perform in this friendly U.S. Caribbean destination," Pardo says. "Who wouldn't want to perform (here) during the cold winter months? Why not enjoy 24/7 sunny and warm Puerto Rico and embark on a cultural and diverse journey full of new and unique musical and cultural immersion experiences?"

The company's customized performance tours include airfare, lodging, private transportation, meals, and guides.

"There are private workshops with local music experts, unique performance venues, crowds to mesmerize, and our usual Puerto



VÁMONOS TOURS

Rican charm, among other things," Pardo says.

He also noted that Vámonos Tours is one of the few student operators in the world offering educational tours of French Martinique.

"This delightful French island has outstanding sights, remarkable student-friendly hotels, and many cultural immersion opportunities for students," Pardo says.

Student groups are able to experience the French language and culture by interacting with locals in schools and markets. The island is similar to Puerto Rico with its warm, beautiful beaches, its mix of African and European culture, a historical capital city, and other unique geographical features.

For more information, contact Pardo at jorge@vamonostours.com or go to vamonostours.com.

Hope starts here

Oceania Cruises, along with sister-brand Norwegian Cruise Lines, is partnering with All Hands Volunteers, a disaster relief organization, to raise funds for hurricane relief in the Northern Bahamas. Much of the area was destroyed in a matter of hours when Hurricane Dorian struck in early September. The company is committing up to \$2 million, including matching contributions from its valued guests, team members, suppliers, and partners in order to substantially help the non-profit's aid work.

Oceania Cruises will help the organization, which seeks to provide much-needed assistance, comfort, and support to the Bahamian people. All Hands Volunteers accepts financial donations as well as volunteers to join in the rebuilding process.

Visit oceaniacruises.com/corporate/hopestartshere to donate. ☺



Petra by Night

Egypt, Israel, and Jordan

COMPILED BY KAY SAFFARI

A different take on Petra

Situated between the Red Sea and the Dead Sea in the mountains of western Jordan, Petra is one of the most famous archaeological spots on the planet. The UNESCO World Heritage site features churches, temples, and other buildings that date back thousands of years.

It is an easy 20-minute walk through the Siq canyon to the ancient city. When visitors step through a final narrow gap in the rocks, the magnificent Treasury building appears. The structure, which is one of the world's most photographed places, was carved into the rock more than 2,000 years ago.

As travelers roam among the façades, monuments, and caves chiseled into colorful sandstone, they are following in the footsteps of nomadic tribes, Israelites, Edomites, Nabateans, Crusaders, Arabs,

and Romans that occupied the sacred site over the millennia.

For visitors seeking a different experience, Malia Asfour of the Jordan Tourism Board recommends seeing the Treasury at night. Typically offered three nights a week, Petra by Night includes a guided walk to the site, which is illuminated by more than 1,500 candles that are positioned around the famous building.

She says that the new Petra Museum is also a must-do. Located near the entrance of the archaeological park, the attraction houses hundreds of artifacts that have been unearthed in the area. Its galleries help tell Petra's story from the Stone Age to modern times.

To learn more, reach out to Asfour at malia@visitjordan.com or go to visitjordan.com.



Petra reveals itself as visitors emerge from the Siq canyon.

JORDAN TOURISM BOARD

TOP PHOTO: CC FLICKR/SUVAIN L.; billy/322 pds

Experiencing the Holy Land

Jeff and Sarah Bennett of Prelude Tours in Houston wanted to offer memory-making travel when they founded their company in 1999. Jeff, a musician and full-time worship leader, and Sarah, a detail-oriented accountant, combined their talents to create travel experiences with a Christian focus.



SARAH BENNETT

Like all of their trips to the Holy Land, the upcoming tour there in February will include visits to many historical sites of significance from the Bible and from the life of Jesus, both in Israel and neighboring Jordan. “At each Biblical site that we visit,” Sarah explains, “we offer a scripture teaching about that site led by the host pastor. Linking the scripture to the physical space truly brings the scripture to life.”

Prelude Tours offers experiences that make all its trips memorable. Examples of unique components include baptisms in the Jordan River; a special church service at the Church of the Beatitudes, the site where Jesus delivered his famous Sermon on the Mount; and a meditative communion service on the last night of the trip.

“Two of our most powerful worship times are prayer time in the Garden of Gethsemane and worship and prayer on a boat in the Sea of Galilee,” says Sarah. “We turn the boat motor off to allow everyone to experience the quietness of the sea as they worship and pray. It’s hard to miss God’s presence there.”

For more information, contact Sarah at preludetours@gmail.com or visit preludetours.com.

Faith journeys in Egypt

For many, the mention of Egypt immediately suggests images of the Sphinx and the famous pyramids. In addition to offering these iconic sites, Egypt is a country rich in faith destinations for the three Abrahamic faiths—Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—since members of these faiths lived peacefully together in Egypt for many years.

NTA and FTA member Egyptian Educational Travel offers several faith-based tours that can be combined with the country’s iconic historical and cultural sites. The Jewish Heritage Tour allows groups to examine the history of the Jewish population in Egypt, visit synagogues, and interact with current-day Jewish citizens.

The Islamic Art and Culture Tour includes visits to grand mosques, ancient palaces, stunning gardens, and medieval homes of the Muslim population of Egypt, once 70,000 strong. Groups can meet with local Muslim imams and attend a Muslim Moulid festival.

Several Christian tours are available as well. The Holy Family Tour follows the footsteps of Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus when they fled Bethlehem and came into Egypt, while the Catholic Tour combines the Holy Family Tour with visits to Catholic shrines and churches. The Mount Sinai and St. Catherine Monastery tour includes historical Biblical sites and a visit to one of the oldest, continually operated monasteries in the world, built in the 6th century and now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Says owner Romani Gaballa, “At Egyptian Educational Travel we understand the importance of Egypt’s faith destinations, many of them offering one-of-a-kind religious experiences.”

For more information, contact Gaballa at romani@egyptianedutrael.com or visit egyptianedutrael.com. ☎



Romani Gaballa (left) and his group with a monk at the Monastery of Saint Anthony



ROMANI GABALLA

Saints Sergius and Bacchus Church

Courier's Guide to NTA Corporate Partners and Associate Members

Corporate Partners

NTA's Corporate Partners offer programs and discounts that can save your company money and offset the cost of your NTA membership. Take advantage of savings on business services, crisis- and risk-management solutions, insurance, itinerary planning, marketing and networking platforms, office supplies and shipping services, payment processing, ticketing solutions, travel protection coverage, vehicle rentals, web booking engines, and job postings. The following valued partners provide these services and solutions. Visit NTAonline.com to see full profile and program details. Visit NTAonline.com/partners to see full profile and program details, as well as the latest updates on NTA's Corporate Partners.

The information was provided by the member contact and was current as of Sept. 17.



AFEX

Ned Donkle
Charlotte, NC USA
ndonkle@afex.com
afex.com



Aon CyberBusinessPro

Peter Maidhof
Garden City, NY USA
peter.maidhof@aon.com
aoncybernta.com



Centaur Systems Inc.

Rafeek M. Kottai
Hoffman Estates, IL USA
rkottai@centaursystemsinc.com
centaursystemsinc.com



The Ment Law Group LLC

Jeffrey Ment
Hartford, CT USA
jment@mentlaw.com
mentlaw.com



Aon Affinity Travel Practice – Professional Liability E&O

Peter Maidhof
Garden City, NY USA
peter.maidhof@aon.com
aontravpro.com



Avis and Budget

Lacey Blank
Alexandria, VA USA
avis.com/nta
budget.com/nta



Chase

Jarod Porter
Plano, TX USA
leon.talent@chase.com
chasecommercesolutions.com



Naylor Association Solutions

Tammy Burton
McLean, VA USA
tburton@naylor.com
naylor.com



Aon Affinity Travel Practice – TPP

Geni Priolo
Garden City, NY USA
ntatpp_touropoperator@aon.com
nta.aontravelprotect.com



Beijing Shi Dai Yi Feng Information Technology Co. Ltd. (dba Dragon Trail Interactive)

Matt Grayson
Lexington, KY USA
matt.grayson@dragontrail.com
dragontrail.com



Chatly

Jeff Fish
New York, NY USA
sales@tmgworldwide.com
tmgworldwide.com



Planify (Coteries SA)

Sebastien Flury
Lausanne, Switzerland
info@planify.io
planify.io

**Rezgo**

Stephen Joyce
North Vancouver, BC Canada
stephen.joyce@rezgo.com
rezgo.com

**Staples – Canada**

Darrin Selby
Mississauga, ON Canada
darrin.selby@staples.com
staplesbusinessadvantage.ca

**UATP**

Jody Piland
Washington, DC USA
jpiland@uatp.com
uatp.com

**UPS**

Lacey Blank
Alexandria, VA USA
enroll@1800members.com
savewithups.com/nta

**Staples**

Susan Brandon
Sharon, MA USA
susan.brandon@staples.com
staplesadvantage.com

**TourConnect**

Michael Herrmann
Frisco, TX USA
michaelh@tourconnect.com
tourconnect.com

**United Merchant Services of CA Inc. (dba UMS Banking)**

Lea Terzian
Glendale, CA USA
lea.terzian@umsbanking.com
umsbanking.com

**WordStream**

Tripp Ott
Boston, MA USA
tott@wordstream.com
wordstream.com

Associate Members

NTA's Associate Members offer products, services, tools, and resources that benefit NTA members. The following companies provide services and solutions in areas such as insurance, marketing, technology, and tour operator products. Visit NTAonline.com to see full profile details.

The information was provided by the member contact and was current as of Sept. 17. Please check NTAonline.com for updates on associate members. Members that are also members of the Faith Travel Association have an FTA logo by their name.

INSURANCE

Ameritas

Lindsay Waltower
Atlanta, GA USA
lwaltower@gmail.com
fulfillinglife.com

Arch RoamRight

Melissa Prince
Hunt Valley, MD USA
psee@archinsurance.com
roamright.com

Travelex Insurance Services

Mike Wang
Omaha, NE USA
mike.wang@travelexinsurance.com
travelexinsurance.com

Travel Insured International

Sue Barbanel
Glastonbury, CT USA
sbarbanel@travelinsured.com
travelinsured.com

TravelSafe Insurance

Scott D. Perfetto
Wyomissing, PA USA
info@travelsafe.com
travelsafe.com

Trip Mate Inc./Trip Assure

Kelly Sahner
Kansas City, MO USA
ksahner@tripmate.com
tripmate.com

USI Affinity Travel Insurance Services

Sharon Broo
Alpharetta, GA USA
sharon.broo@usi.com
travelinsure.com

MARKETING

**Courier magazine**

Bob Rouse
Lexington, KY USA
bob.rouse@ntastaff.com
NTAcourier.com

Courier shines a light on the remarkably rewarding and diverse components of packaged travel that National Tour Association members provide to their clients and customers—and to each other. Our writers create original articles that explain tour product, focus on destinations, provide industry insights, and inform members about NTA events and benefits. *Courier* is the magazine of NTA, whose members collaborate to offer unique, creative programs to a traveling public that is eager to enjoy authentic experiences.

Etix

Zarrin Alam
Morrisville, NC USA
zarrin.alam@etix.com
hello.etix.com

Group Tour Media

Eric Lutey
Holland, MI USA
eric@grouptour.com
grouptour.com

The Group Travel Leader Inc.

Kelly Tyner
Lexington, KY USA
kelly@grouptourleader.com
grouptourleader.com

Herron Printing & Graphics

Randy Herron
Gaithersburg, MD USA
sales@herronprinting.com
herronprinting.com

Hospitality Softnet



Lisa Richards
Boston, MA USA
lisarichards@hospitalitysoftnet.com
hospitalitysoftnet.com

MaCher

Derek Hydon
Venice, CA USA
info@macher.com
macher.com

Premier Travel Media

David Bodle
Willowbrook, IL USA
dave@ptmgroups.com
ptmgroups.com

Serendipity Media LLC

Kasie Smith
Grand Rapids, MI USA
info@serendipity-media.com
serendipity-media.com

Solimar International



Gabriel Seder
Washington, DC USA
g.seder@solimarinternational.com
solimarinternational.com

Swift Tourism Digital Media

Michael Schutes
Boston, MA USA
nta@swift-tourism.com
swift-tourism.com

Tourism Tiger

Stephanie Fiero
Santiago, Chile
stephanie@tourismtiger.com
tourismtiger.com

TECHNOLOGY

Gala Prompter

Yonat Burlin
New York, NY USA
yonat@galapro.com
galapro.com

HotelPlanner.com

Scott Beane
West Palm Beach, FL USA
scott.beane@hotelplanner.com
hotelplanner.com

Listen Technologies

Mikey Shaffer
Bluffdale, UT USA
mikey.shaffer@listentech.com
listentalk.com

Podium

Ashley Campbell
Lehi, UT USA
ashley.campbell@podium.com
podium.com

Rezdy LLC

Bob Gilbert
Las Vegas, NV USA
bob.gilbert@rezdy.com
rezdy.com

Simpleview Inc.

Cara Frank
Tucson, AZ USA
cfrank@simpleviewinc.com
simpleviewinc.com

Skyview Apps

Vanessa Boshoff
Bozeman, MT USA
wilderness@mac.com
skyviewyellowstone.com

Travefy

David Chait
Lincoln, NE USA
david@travefy.com
travefy.com/pro

ViaTour Software

Roberta Moore
Templeton, CA USA
roberta@viatoursoftware.com
viatoursoftware.com

Voxnetwork USA LLC

Marc Colenbrander
Scottsdale, AZ USA
marc@voxnetwork.com
voxnetworkusa.com

Whisper Trading & Services LLC

Leah Wilson
Miami Springs, FL USA
l.wilson@whisper-system.com
whisper-system.net

TOUR OPERATOR PRODUCTS

American Express

Tammy Page
Edina, MN USA
tammy.m.page@aexp.com
americanexpress.com/
travelpayments

The Booking Ninja Inc.

Brent Ramirez
Alameda, CA USA
brent@thebookingninja.com
thebookingninja.com

Dusk to Dawn Chaperones

Sandra Dominguez
Lake Mary, FL USA
sandyd@dusktodawnchaperones.com
dusktodawnchaperones.com

Innovative Travel Acquisitions Inc.

Bob Sweeney
Alpharetta, GA USA
bob@tlvacq.com
tlvacq.com

The K Street Group

Steven Porter
Lebanon, NJ USA
sporter@kstreetassociates.org
kstreetgroupsecurity.com

PhotoVision

David Martinson
Charlotte, NC USA
dmartinson@photovision.com
grouptravelvideos.com

Polymath LLC

Ingrid Edstrom
Ashland, OR USA
polymath@polymath.com
polymath.com

Red Hot Celebrations (dba Red Hot Groups)

Suzanne Slavitter, CTP
Lakewood, CA USA
suzanne@redhotgroups.com
redhotgroups.com

VATIT USA Inc.

Raeleen Swift
Virginia Beach, VA USA
raeleen@vatitusa.com
vatit.com

WeTravel

Lucas Ennis
San Francisco, CA USA
lucas.ennis@wetravel.com
wetravel.com

NTA EVENTS

Save these dates in 2019 and beyond to connect with new partners and destinations. For more information on these events, click the EVENTS tab on NTAonline.com



travel exchange
FORT WORTH
— DECEMBER 8-12, 2019 —

Fort Worth, Texas
Dec. 8-12, 2019



travel exchange '20
RENO TAHOE
NOVEMBER 15-19

Reno Tahoe, Nevada
Nov. 15-19, 2020



travel exchange '21
CLEVELAND
NOVEMBER 14-18

Cleveland, Ohio
Nov. 14-18, 2021



CONTACT
Anchorage | March 18-21, 2020

Anchorage, Alaska
March 18-21, 2020



CONTACT
Memphis | March 17-20, 2021

Memphis, Tennessee
March 17-20, 2021



DESTINATION CAPITOL HILL

Washington, D.C.
April 1-2, 2020

COMMUNITY

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM THE NTA FAMILY

ANDY WAGNER



1



2



3



4



5



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Guess the year and the ... here?

Look at these blasts from the past dozen years of NTA conventions and see how many dates and host cities you can identify.

Answers:

1: 2008 Pittsburgh, 2: 2017 St. Louis, 3: 2016 Atlanta, 4: 2015 New Orleans, 5: 2010 Los Angeles, 6: 2014 Montréal

Meet the Members

Louisiana Motor Coach

MARRERO, LOUISIANA

NTA contact: Jessica Byrd,
director of marketing and sales

Office phone: +1.504.343.1400

Website: louisianamotorcoach.com

NTA member since: 2014

How did Louisiana Motor Coach get its start?

Transportation has always been a huge part of the Sanders family. After several years of working for his father, Louis Sanders and his wife, Mary, branched out on their own, and they continue the family tradition with Louisiana Motor Coach. 2020 will officially mark 10 years!

What are some of the services you provide?

In addition to doing charter work, we also provide convention services, shuttle services, and any other form of group transportation that may be needed in Louisiana or anywhere else in the country.

What's your favorite vacation spot?

I always like to visit somewhere different, rather than the same spot repeatedly, but if I had to choose, I would say going on cruises would be my favorite vacation "spot." Not only do you have everything at your fingertips, but you also get to enjoy multiple port destinations.

What hobbies do you enjoy?

I've recently picked up painting, which is proving my theory that I'm about as artistically talented as a toddler drawing with their toes.

Have you binged on any good television series lately?

Hmmmm ... all of them? Just kidding. Recently I finally gave in and started watching "Downton Abbey," and I'm completely obsessed.

For more information, email Byrd at jessica@louisianamotorcoach.com.



Hello Ireland Tours/ Irish Coaches – 32CC Group

DUBLIN, IRELAND

NTA contact: Sandra Curtin,
executive director

Office phone: +353.1878.8898

Website: irishcoaches.ie

NTA member since: 2011

Tell me about some of the services you provide.

Hello Ireland Tours and Irish Coaches are members of 32CC Group. Hello Ireland Tours is the receptive operator for groups coming to Ireland, and Irish Coaches is the transport arm. We have 50 vehicles based around the island, and we organize visitor attractions, hotels, events, guides, and meals for groups.

What are some of your most popular tours?

We see a big trend recently in screen tourism, especially in visiting the sites used in the "Game of Thrones" series. We have other sites, like the Cliffs of Moher on the Wild Atlantic Way, that were used in "The Princess Bride." We can arrange a boat trip along the base of the cliffs so you can see them up close!

Why is Ireland is such an incredible place to visit?

We have a fairly mild climate, so you can get out and enjoy the clear air and beautiful scenery year-round. The festivals around St. Patrick's Day in March and Halloween in October are amazing. Those are great times to visit, and they aren't as crowded as in the summer. Of course, there is always the 'fáilte' (welcome) and the 'craic' (fun) when you meet the people in Ireland.

What's your dream vacation?

I would love to do whale watching in Alaska, see the fjords in Norway, and visit Antarctica. My favorite place in Ireland has to be County Down. I love walking in the Mourne Mountains, where they sweep down to the sea at Rostrevor. C.S. Lewis described them best in his Narnia novels.



You're picking dinner tonight. Where are you going?

To start, I'd have the sharing plates that we enjoyed in Auckland, New Zealand—beautiful meats and cheeses with bread and dipping oils. For the main course, some barbequed fish from Brittany in France. Dessert has to be a scoop of sea salt ice cream from Murphy's Ice Cream in Dingle, County Kerry, on the Wild Atlantic Way in Ireland.

For more information, email Curtin at sandra@helloireland.com.



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Brian Morin
Account Manager
Brian.Morin@staples.com
603-223-2091



Introducing ... NTA's newest members

Visit Kilgore

KILGORE, TEXAS

DMO

Nestled in the piney woods of East Texas, Kilgore is the place where big arts and energy meet small-town Texas hospitality. With fascinating attractions—including over 60 star-studded steel replica oil derricks—unique events, rich culture, and boutique shopping and delicious dining in historic downtown, it's known as the "City of Stars."



Ryan Polk

Tourism manager
+1.903.218.6896
rpolk@kilgorechamber.com
visitkilgore.com

"I'm a native Texan who has been in hospitality and tourism for over 10 years. I make time for spicy foods and love sharing East Texas with the world."

Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau

GRAPEVINE, TEXAS

DMO

The Christmas capital of Texas, Grapevine has a beautiful, historical downtown with galleries, antiques, and specialty shops. Visitors can sample some of Texas' best wines at nine wineries, choose from 200 restaurants, and enjoy world-class shopping at Grapevine Mills. The city also has more than 5,000 guest rooms, the Grapevine Vintage Railroad, live entertainment, and award-winning festivals.



Heather Egan

Director of leisure and international sales
+1.817.410.3185
hegan@grapevinetexasusa.com
grapevinetexasusa.com

"I am excited to return to the Grapevine CVB. I took a brief hiatus in 2012, moving back home to Wichita, Kansas, and marrying my hometown crush! In July, my husband and I returned to Grapevine, and I'm excited to reunite with my tour and travel family!"

Innovative Travel Company



CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

Tour operator

As an Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and Holy Land specialist for 30 years, the company designs tours for specialized FIT and groups. Clients include educational institutions and alumni, and programs such as Christian religious pilgrimages and cultural and historical tours offer access to rarely available sites. It has offices in multiple locations, with a director based in Cairo.



Robyn Galloway

Managing director
+64.3.3653.910
robyn@innovative-travel.com
innovativetravel.us

"As I walked down ancient roads in Egypt, Jordan, and Israel in 1987, I became inspired that others should be able to share in this journey. Our specialist boutique company, founded in 1990, offers in-depth local knowledge, connections, and entries into incredible places."

Prelude Tours

PORTER, TEXAS

Tour operator

Prelude Tours was founded by Jeff and Sarah Bennett to share their passion for world travel with others. While leading their first group tour in 1999, Jeff and Sarah realized the value of traveling with Christian friends and making lifelong memories in the process. Prelude Tours is dedicated to providing life-changing experiences in the context of Christian faith.



Sarah Bennett

Owner
+1.281.667.1057
preludetours@gmail.com
preludetours.com

"I often say to other Christian believers that if you could only take one trip in your life, it must be to Israel to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. You will never read the Scripture the same after visiting this country!"

Podium

SALT LAKE CITY

Associate

Podium is redefining the way customers interact with local businesses. Through its Interaction Management platform, businesses can message leads and customers, get reviews and feedback, and communicate easily with their teams from a single, simple platform. Podium was named as one of *Forbes'* Next Billion-Dollar Startups and powers over 30,000 businesses.



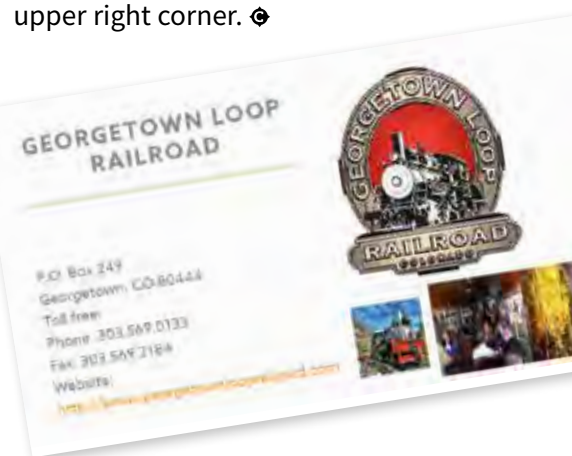
Nick Miller

VP of sales and hospitality
nick.miller@podium.com
833.276.3486
podium.com

"NTA has helped us learn more about what tour operators need in the tech space as they continue to modernize their business. We're excited to continue connecting experience-type businesses to their customers by creating a more seamless customer experience while building the business' online reputations."

PROFILES ENCOURAGED

Think of your member profile on NTA Online as a digital elevator pitch that other members rely on when making business appointments or conducting online searches. Is your profile up to date? To find out, log in and click the "welcome" words in the upper right corner. ☛





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Official NTA Corporate Partner

NEW MEMBERS

The following list shows organizations that joined NTA recently. Companies that also joined the Faith Travel Association have an FTA logo by their name. To access complete information on each of these new members, log on to NTAonline.com and go to the member searches.

DMOs

City of Sierra Vista

Judy Hector
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635 USA
visitsierravista.com

Cochise County Tourism Council

Kate Cox
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635 USA
explorecochise.com

Mystic Country Connecticut

Janice Putnam
Norwich, CT 06360 USA
ctvisit.com

Sumner County Tourism

Sarah King
Gallatin, TN 37066 USA
visitsumner.tn.com

Visit Tallahassee

Katie Gardocki
Tallahassee, FL 32301 USA
visittallahassee.com

TOUR OPERATORS

Diamond Tour Inc.

Yeijing Lu
Fremont, CA 94536 USA

Gemm Travel – Holy Land

Henrique Abreu
Jerusalem, 9119201 Israel
gemmtravel.com

Infinity Tours & Events LLC

Michael Crockett
Provo, UT 84601 USA
infinitytours.us

White Travel UK Limited

Levent Kaptanoglu
Tetbury, GL8 8QT England
whitetraveluk.net

TOUR SUPPLIERS

Atlantis Casino Resort Spa

Fei Kass
Reno, NV 89502 USA
atlantiscasino.com

Courtyard by Marriott Lake Buena Vista at Vista Centre

Veronica Blanco
Orlando, FL 32836 USA
courtyard.com/mcoba

Dan Miller's Cowboy Music Revue

Wendy Corr
Cody, WY 82414 USA
cowboymusicrevue.com

Doubletree by Hilton Fort Smith

Shannon Davis
Fort Smith, AR 72901 USA

Foothills Hospitality Group

Julius Wilson
Oakhurst, CA 93644 USA
foothillshg.com

Glensheen Mansion

Dan Hartman
Duluth, MN 55804 USA
glensheen.org

Go Global Travel

Karen Maier
East Rockaway, NY 11518 USA
goglobal.travel

Grand Canyon West and Hualapai River Runners

Jay Simpson
Las Vegas, NV 89113 USA
grandcanyonwest.com

Holiday Inn Resort Orlando Suites Waterpark

Jessie Colondres
Orlando, FL 32821 USA
hisorlando.com

Hotel Andra

Jordan Hathaway
Seattle, WA 98121 USA
hotelandra.com

Moxy Times Square

Maysoon Nasharty
New York, NY 10018 USA
moxytimesquare.com

Pybus Point Lodge

Darryl Bosshardt
Heber City, UT 84032 USA
pybus.com

Relate Strategy Group

Stephen Ekstrom
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 USA
relatestategy.com

Signature Theatre

Emily Adler
Arlington, VA 22206 USA
sigtheatre.org

TourRadar

Kaitlyn Duggan
Toronto, ON M4M 1J4 Canada
tourradar.com

Town Inn Suites

Daniel Seifer
Toronto, ON M4Y 2G2 Canada
towninn.com

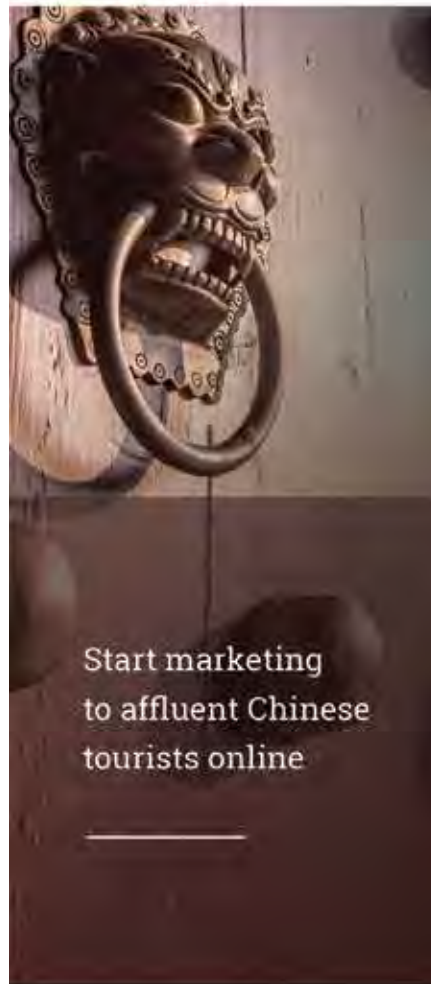
ASSOCIATES

Tourism Tiger

Stephanie Fiero
Santiago, Chile
tourismtiger.com

VATIT USA Inc.

Raeleen Swift
Virginia Beach, VA 23451 USA
vatit.com



110 W. Vine Street, 3rd Floor,
Lexington, KY 40507 USA

E-mail :
americas@dragontrail.com

www.dragontrail.com

Cheers, Bob Hoelscher

WHEN BOB HOELSCHER died in September, the NTA family rushed to praise the former tour operator, board chair, and ultimate curmudgeon. He was an avid photographer and a writer, too, and he penned his own farewell, written in March in response to the announcement of an NTA colleague who had passed away.

“Please do not report ‘sad’ news when it comes time for me to cash in my chips. All in all, it’s been a good ride, and I think I’ve been able to get about as much as I could out of every day that I’ve been on this planet. Whenever the time comes for it to end, so be it. I definitely don’t want to be the source of sorrow or useless ‘thoughts and prayers,’ but if anyone wants to raise a beer to celebrate anything worthwhile that I might have been able to accomplish along the way, that will be more than enough.”



Along with a few of Bob’s photos, we’re sharing some of the comments we collected from colleagues after his death:



“Bob excelled in his role as NTA Board chair; he was a strategic thinker and a progressive person. He always put members first, and he had no personal agenda. He was incredibly supportive of the staff, yet he still challenged us to do our best. As a member of our Past Presidents and Chairs Council, he continued to care, to stay involved, and to push us all to do our best.”

—Catherine Prather, CTP; NTA Executive Vice President

“I can never forget Mr. Hoelscher arriving at Grand Hotel on a personal trip, his camera already filled with colorful photos of his Michigan journey. His adventures were spectacular.”

—Julia Luckey-Ottenwess
Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island

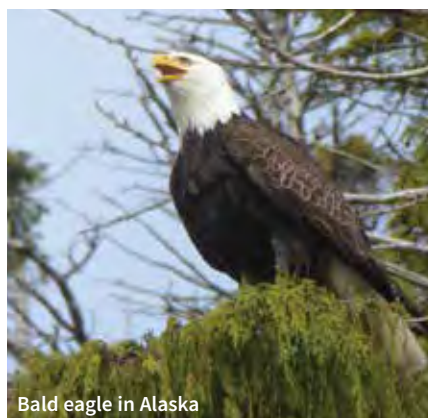


“I was always picking his brain on his decades of traveling experiences, and he gave caring and thoughtful answers. If you looked past his sometimes rough exterior, you would not find a more dedicated and caring person. If there was one thing Bob would want us to remember, it is to not stop traveling—to keep experiencing all the world has to offer.”

—Joey Spellerberg, Moostash Joe Tours

“During his NTA tenure, he dedicated hundreds, if not thousands, of hours to the betterment of the organization and the group travel industry.”

—Charlie McIlvain, CTP; Kerrville (Texas) CVB



“Bob was an original—an original everything—and he loved NTA. This association meant as much to him as anything in his life. NTA, the parks, classical music, and baseball have lost a huge supporter.”

—Mark Hoffmann, CTP; Sports Leisure Vacations

“Bob was a great NTA leader, and he always made the board meetings interesting with a new way of positioning or approaching any subject. Many memories have been going through my head, and smiles replace the sadness.”

—Dottie Maitland, CTP; Greenhurst, New York

Pro tips for TREX

With the first appointment-free Tuesday coming up in December at Travel Exchange '19 in Fort Worth, you need to be prepared. Use these pro tips to get a business-building edge.

Buyers

- Take part in all three of the new sessions—Sales Mission I, Sales Mission II, and Best Pitch—to get the most itinerary ideas (even if you back-burner some of them).
- Check out the sponsor booths, because buyers are judges for the TREXie awards—and one judge will win a crisp \$100 bill.

Suppliers

- Say yes if your DMO invites you to join your state or province's Sales Mission.
- Attend your state/province's caucus to pick up insights and leads.

North American DMOs

- To find out who's leading your Sales Mission—and it might be you!—email Dawn Pettus, NTA's director of events: dawn.pettus@ntastaff.com.
- There's no charge to be part of a Sales Mission with NTA buyers, but first you've got to register for Travel Exchange.

Overseas DMOs

- Get ready for your close-up. Best Pitch puts you in front of an audience of buyers to describe how to best package travel to your country.
- Think of it as a personal introduction to buyers who are considering adding—or expanding—a program to your country.

All sellers

- Presentations won't include projectors and big screens, so get creative with iPads, printed itineraries, and tchotchkes.
- Lunch takes place on the TREX Floor—buddy up with a buyer or two.
- To get a sponsor booth on the TREX Floor ... become a sponsor!

For more info email headquarters@ntastaff.com or visit NTAtravelexchange.com (and see the scrolling list of registrants).

travel  exchange

FORT WORTH

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KEEP CLIMBING



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