

COURIER

DELIVERING BUSINESS ESSENTIALS TO NTA MEMBERS

FEBRUARY 2018

A CORNUCOPIA OF CRUISE OPTIONS

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A sparkling success

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and San Antonio's 300th birthday

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The Wright coast: Wright Brothers National Memorial in North Carolina's Outer Banks highlights the aviatonal genius of Orville and Wilbur Wright, who in December 1903 successfully engineered the first sustained, powered flight. Go to page 36 to learn about destinations along the U.S. Atlantic Coast.

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► APRIL/MAY ISSUE

DESTINATIONS

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Latin America

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Germany and Switzerland

City Spotlight: Los Angeles

SPECIAL COVERAGE

North American National Parks

Travel Exchange '18 Preview (Milwaukee)

DEADLINES

Space: April 6 | Material: April 16

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COURIER'S MISSION STATEMENT

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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WALK A MILE IN MY BOOTS.

If you were at Travel Exchange in San Antonio, chances are you saw an NTA staff member on the move—searching for someone, carrying boxes or scurrying to the next assignment throughout the massive convention center.

Beth Engel, a colleague who staffed the *Courier* booth, tracked her mileage for the seven days (and 121 on-duty hours) we worked the convention, and it totaled 53. I think her steps speak for all of us.

We're not complaining, though, we're bragging. Serving you and the NTA community—and heck, the tour industry—is our badge of honor. We proudly prop our sore feet up.

Of course, our work didn't end with the final toast of Travel Exchange, and every staff member has long since gone back to their "normal" job at NTA. Here in *Courierland*, we're lucky that our jobs involve frequent interactions with members.

Our goal is to focus attention on you and your organization. But sometimes when we ask for guidance on exactly what to spotlight, our queries go unanswered.

Maybe you don't know it's us when we email.

If you don't recognize the bad hombres in the photo, that's Pat Henderson and me. But despite our realistic portrayal in the photo, we aren't the only ones who are holding down the editorial fort.

Gabe Webb, although he has left NTA Headquarters to pursue a master's degree in The Netherlands (!), will continue to

contribute to *Courier* as his academic demands allow. Before he headed off to Europe, Gabe led the charge on assembling images and comments from Travel Exchange; his convention recap starts on page 20.

Pat set aside his six-shooter to explore the beauty and creativity of Western Canada, pages 49 and 50, and he takes the helm on the stories (and guide) detailing NTA-member cruise companies, pages 29–34.

Kendall Fletcher, now with a full year of NTA experience, covers a ton of territory in her look at members in the U.S. Great Frontier, which spans pages 41 to 48.

I invite you to take sit down with The Interview on pages 14 and 15. You can learn about the success of three member-specific networks—and perhaps commit yourself to getting involved.

And we introduce Patti Nickell, as Patti introduces you to NTA members in the Atlantic Coast states, pages 36–40. Patti is a travel writer whose articles appear in newspapers across the U.S., and now she's contributing to *Courier*. Don't ditch her email if she comes knocking on your inbox!

Truth be told, I was sorry to leave San Antonio and the company of my favorite travel professionals. But we've got lots of *Courier* articles ahead of us. And I still have my cowboy hat.

Read on,

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On the cover:

During the Travel Exchange icebreaker at the Witte Museum, NTA's Pam Inman and Visit San Antonio's Dave Krupinski light the cake to celebrate the city's 300th birthday.

Photo: Courtesy of Visit San Antonio



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WE ARE WELL INTO THE NEW YEAR (and only 277 days until the next Travel Exchange ... but who's counting?), yet I am still reveling in the afterglow of Travel Exchange in San Antonio.

Our friends at Visit San Antonio outdid themselves—helping us plan, connecting us to key partners and throwing a fantastic icebreaker. And allowing NTA to be part of the celebration for the city's 300th anniversary was over the top.

I was recently in Boston for a Tourism Cares meeting, and Bruce Beckham, who was president of NTA in 1983, told me that he thought the event was the best NTA convention he had ever attended, and he credited the city of San Antonio for making it fabulous. That's high praise coming from someone who has attended NTA conventions and Travel Exchanges for decades.

This successful, enjoyable event couldn't have happened without your encouragement and participation nor without the excellent planning and execution by the NTA team that works every day to support building value for your membership.

One way to build value is to enhance Travel Exchange, which is why the board hired Minding Your Business, a research firm that specializes in association events. Thanks to everyone who responded to the survey from Minding Your Business and to those of you who provided input to MYB's Sue Tinnish on-site at Travel Exchange. Your opinions will be sliced and diced by MYB, which will in turn give recommendations to the NTA Board of Directors in April. The primary goal is to increase your ROI when you attend Travel Exchange.

Speaking of the board, make sure you go to NTAonline.com (or page 2) and see the results of the election, which were announced at Travel Exchange. If you don't already know your board members, get to know them by email or phone and share your thoughts with them.

New benefits that kicked off at Travel Exchange in San Antonio were the DMO Network and the Tour Supplier Network. These are industry communities where NTA members can exchange ideas, talk shop and explore new partnerships. At its first meeting, the DMO Network had 70 members attend, and the Tour Supplier Network had 55 participants. The feedback we've heard was that the sessions were too short because the conversations were so engaging and everyone was learning from one another. Many found this to be one of the most valuable parts of the show.

I hope you will get engaged with these networks and attend the next meetings, scheduled for April 22 in Charleston, South Carolina, the day after Contact concludes. Attendees who travel to Charleston for those sessions will have the opportunity to catch Contact's closing event on the USS Yorktown. Of course, I hope to see you for the entire Contact meeting.

Before Contact, though, we have Destination Capitol Hill, March 21–22. This is your opportunity to come to Washington, D.C., to meet your members of Congress in their offices on Capitol Hill and to share your insights about what is important to you and to your business. Always remember that the impact of influence is greatest from constituents—the ones who vote!

Check NTA Online and watch your inbox for information about Destination Capitol Hill, Contact and the member network meetings in Charleston. I hope to see you at one—or every—event in 2018!

Pam



Sue Tinnish of Minding Your Business engaged with a number of NTA members while she attended Travel Exchange to research the association's keystone event. "I was impressed with delegates' willingness to share their opinions about—and their loyalty to—NTA," she said. "And I love to travel, so being at Travel Exchange gave me several more destinations to add to my bucket list."

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2018 FEATURES



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Your organization's profile on NTA Online is one of your most important marketing tools within the association. It allows other buyers and sellers to learn more about you, and it can lead to better opportunities for connections and future business.

Now that the new year is a few weeks old, make sure your profile is accurate to show your colleagues exactly who you are and what you do best. Updating it is simple: Just sign into NTA Online and click the person icon in the top right of the page next to the search function.

Reminder: Only an organization's NTA primary contact can update the profile, which includes your company info, description, logo, photos and social media links.

If you need assistance updating your profile, just email headquarters@ntastaff.com or call 800.682.8886 (toll-free in the U.S. and Canada) or +1.859.264.6540.

Did you know?

Accessible 24/7 on NTAonline.com, the NTA member search feature is used approximately 8,000 times a month.



Busy upcoming stretch for NTA board, staff

Your association's board and staff will be on the road at a number of key industry events in the coming weeks, including the following five:

Heartland Travel Showcase

Feb. 16-18, Buffalo, New York

NTA representative: Bond Milburn, CTP

Tourism Cares with Jordan

Feb. 23-28, Jordan

NTA representatives: Chris Babb and Jay Smith (board members), NTA President Pam Inman, CTP, and Bob Rouse (covering for *Courier* magazine)

Travel South Showcase

March 18-21, Biloxi, Mississippi

NTA representative: Bond Milburn, CTP

Destination Capitol Hill

March 21-22, Washington, D.C.

NTA representatives: Chris Babb, Jay Smith, Paul Larsen and Jerry Varner (board members), and NTA President Pam Inman, CTP

NTA is a partner of this annual event that includes advocacy training and a legislative day on Capitol Hill.

NTA Owners Network

March 23, Washington, D.C.

NTA representative: Pam Inman, CTP

The NTA Owners Network brings together tour operator company owners for high-level conversation.

New U.S. Travel Advisory system in place

On Jan. 10, the U.S. Department of State unveiled a new system for sharing information on international destinations with U.S. travelers. The improvements will provide clear, timely, and reliable safety and security information about countries across the globe. Under the new system, every country will have a Travel Advisory, providing levels of travel precautions that ranging from 1 to 4:

Level 1 Exercise Normal Precautions

Level 2 Exercise Increased Caution

Level 3 Reconsider Travel

Level 4 Do Not Travel

These new Travel Advisories, available for every country, replace the previous Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts the department issued. While the department will still provide an overall Travel Advisory ranking for all nations, levels may vary for specific locations or areas within a country.

There also will be specific risk indicators that detail why one of the four levels is being assigned. Those categories are Crime, Terrorism, Civil Unrest, Health, Natural Disaster, Time-limited Event and Other.

Information on the new system can be found at the newly redesigned travel.state.gov. The site also is the place where Travel Advisories are posted, and it includes pages with detailed information on each country.

If U.S. citizens wish to receive security and other important updates while traveling, they can enroll their travel plans in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (step.state.gov). 📍

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RELATING TO GOVERNMENT

INSIGHTS ON U.S. LEGISLATIVE ISSUES AND INDUSTRY TOPICS



Safe travels and the Transportation Security Administration

THE THANKSGIVING and December holiday travel seasons are consistently some of the busiest times for airports, airlines and travelers—and for the Transportation Security Administration. TSA reported that the Sunday following the 2017 Thanksgiving holiday was the fifth-busiest day TSA has had since its establishment following the September 2001 attacks, with over 2.6 million passengers and airline crew members going through TSA screening.

During the entire Thanksgiving holiday (Nov. 17–26), TSA screened more than 21.6 million passengers and crew members. The agency predicted that through the December holidays and the new year (Dec. 19 to Jan. 2) more than 34 million people would go through TSA screening procedures.

Due to this high volume of passengers facing stricter TSA screening procedures, concerns had been raised regarding long security lines. One reason for those concerns was that passengers are now required to remove electronics larger than a cellphone from their carry-on bags. However, TSA reports that 98.1 percent of the 21.6 million Thanksgiving travelers waited less than 20 minutes in TSA checkpoint lines.

The TSA PreCheck program and various apps also help travelers minimize their waits in airport lines. For example, the Mobile Passport app, valid at 24 U.S. airports, asks passengers to set up a profile based on their official passport and then answer a series of brief questions

about their trip. The app then submits this information to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which allows passengers to swiftly pass through customs.

While speed is a concern of TSA, safety and security of the traveling public are the ultimate priorities. TSA Administrator David Pekoske, who was nominated by President Donald Trump in June 2017 and then confirmed and sworn in in August, has stated that

the TSA PreCheck program to expedite passenger screening.

Also on the legislative agenda is the reauthorization of the Department of Homeland Security, something that has not been accomplished since DHS was established 15 years ago in 2002. The Department of Homeland Security Authorization Act (H.R. 2825), which passed the House in July 2017, would authorize several TSA pilot programs,

including automated identity and document verification and the use of biometric identity verification for those enrolled in PreCheck. Provisions within the bill would direct TSA to study access points and response guidelines to improve airport facility security. The bill would also require TSA to have certain numbers of canine explosive-detection teams active at airports.

While the major holiday travel season is behind us, the safety and security of travelers remains a con-

cern and a priority for both the travel and tourism industry and for the U.S. federal government. As Congress moves forward with its TSA Modernization Act and with the reauthorization of the Department of Homeland Security, NTA remains engaged to ensure that the TSA continues to improve its operations and so that our priority of travel security is addressed. ☛

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



CC FLICKR/ANDREW PILLIOUS; bit.ly/2m8LHdu

terrorism threats to aviation remain present. He credits enhanced security screening measures and TSA canine teams with keeping travelers safe over the recent holiday season.

NTA is a strong supporter of the TSA Modernization Act (S. 1872), cosponsored by Senate Commerce Committee Chair John Thune, R-S.D.; Senate Commerce Committee Ranking Member Bill Nelson, D-Fla.; Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo.; and Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash. This act would establish funding levels for TSA from 2018 to 2020, establish a five-year term for the TSA administrator and expand



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Back on track

After stalling in 2017, international travel to the U.S. is projected to produce 90 million annual visitors by 2022

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

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT of Commerce projects international travel to the United States will continue experiencing growth through 2022, based on the National Travel and Tourism Office's 2017 Fall Travel Forecast.

Visitor volume in 2017 was expected to end the year unchanged compared to the 2016 level of 75.9 million visitors who stayed one or more nights in the U.S. Growth is expected to resume in 2018 and produce a 3.9 percent increase and a new volume record of 78.9 million visitors.

According to the forecast for 2017–22, the United States would see a 2.9 percent compounded average annual increase in visitor volume. By 2022 this growth would produce 90.0 million total visitors, a 19 percent increase, and more than 14 million additional visitors compared to 2016. The compounded growth rate is lower than the 3.3 percent projected in the 2016 Fall Travel Forecast due to the unexpected flat performance last year. Using 2017 as the base year produces a 3.5 percent compounded growth rate through 2022, and thus the long-term growth potential for international visitation remains unchanged.

All but one of the top 21 visitor origin countries are forecast to grow from 2016 through 2022. Top origin countries with the largest projected total growth percentages are China (57%), South Korea (46%), Ireland (28%), Canada (22%) and Italy (22%). Mexico and India do not make this top-growth list because of steep declines expected in 2017.

Venezuela is the only country expected to have a decline in visitors (-33%) by the end of the forecast period.

Four countries are expected to account for 54 percent of the projected volume growth from 2017 through 2022: Canada (with 30 percent of the expected total growth of 14.1 million additional visitors), China (12%), South Korea (6%) and Mexico (6%).

If the forecast results are realized through 2022, the current top 10 countries will experience minor shifts in rankings; the top 10 origin countries in 2016 will remain so in 2022.

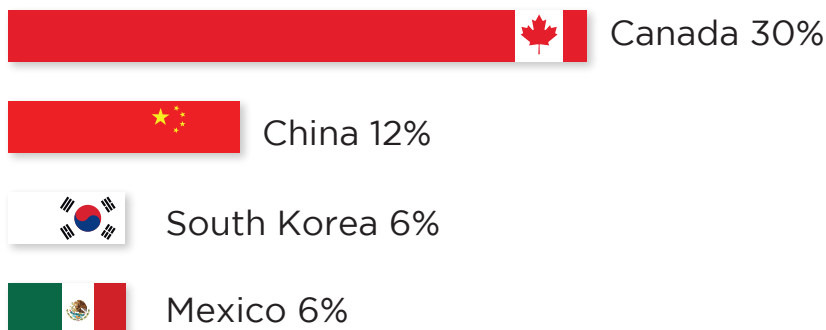
The U.S. Travel Forecast was prepared by research staff in the Department of Commerce/National Travel and Tourism Office using economic, demographic and social factors; historical visitation trends; input from the DOC Global Markets staff members living abroad; and numerous other sources. The Travel Forecast is updated in the spring and fall each year.

2017–22 forecast highlights, by region

North America The forecast for this region, comprised of Canada and Mexico, is downgraded slightly from the fall 2016 forecast because of the 2017 decline in visitation from Mexico. North America is still projected to have the largest regional growth over the forecast period, though. The region should generate

More visitors

These four countries are projected to account for more than half of the total growth in U.S.-inbound visitation through 2022:



5 million more visitors in 2022 than in 2016, dominated by Canada's 4.2 million additional visitors, which projects to 23.5 million by the end of 2022. Visitor volume from Mexico should grow by about 800,000 visitors, reflecting only modest annual growth following the 2017 decline.

Europe By the end of 2022, arrivals from Europe are projected to be 16.9 million, or 15 percent higher than the 2016 volume. The largest volume growth from Europe will come from France (333,000), the United Kingdom (320,000), Italy (212,000), Germany (168,000) and Ireland (122,000).

These forecasts mostly reflect low-growth rates based on large traveler volume bases. Ireland, which projected to have a European-leading 4.1 percent increase, is the exception. Western Europe countries are expected to produce 1.9 million additional travelers over the forecast period, compared to 268,000 additional travelers from Eastern Europe countries.

Asia-Pacific This region is expected to produce a 30 percent increase in visitors by 2022. Japan, the largest Asian market and second-largest overseas market, is forecast to have a small increase in visitor volume in 2022 compared to 2016; however, an expected 2022 volume of 3.8 million will remain well below the 1997 record level of 5.4 million.


Conversely, high growth rates and large growth volumes are expected for other top Asia-Pacific countries. China is expected to increase by a total of 1.7 million visitors, a 57 percent increase through 2022, and to produce the second-largest number of additional visitors, behind only Canada. Additionally, China is expected to become the top overseas origin market, and third overall, by the end of 2022. South Korea is forecast to produce 913,000 additional visitors (up 46%). Australia dominates the Oceania sub-region and should produce an additional 228,000 visitors (up 17%).

South America South America will remain an important source

of additional travelers for the next several years, and its contribution to arrivals' growth is upgraded slightly in this forecast. By 2022 South America will generate 856,000 more visitors, a 16 percent increase compared to 2016. Visitation from Brazil, the largest source market in the region (1.7 million in 2016), is expected to rebound beginning in 2018, following an 11 percent decline in 2017 and a 24 percent decline in 2016. The country is forecast to have a net gain of 70,000 visitors over the forecast period.

Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela—ranked 13th, 14th and 17th, respectively—were all moving up the list a few years ago but are now countries on different paths. Colombia should reverse its losses of 2015, 2016 and (expected) 2017 and resume its prior growth performances and produce an increase of 74,000 visitors (9%). Argentina should rebound from its 16 percent decline in 2017 and manage net growth of 29,000 by the end of the forecast period.

Venezuela's reversal in outlook two years ago remains one of the most dramatic among top origin countries. The long-term hopes for this high-performing country over the past decade were replaced by a forecast two years ago calling for sobering net losses of visitors. This forecast update continues the negative outlook and projects an additional decline of 192,000 (33%) through 2022.

For more information on the NTTO Travel Forecast, including data tables for the world regions and the top 21 visitor origin countries, visit travel.trade.gov/view/f-2000-99-001/index.html. 

About NTTO

The National Travel and Tourism Office of the U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Administration manages the Travel and Tourism Statistical System for the U.S. For more information and the latest data, market research, news releases and policy information, visit travel.trade.gov.

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The Interview

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS FROM NTA MEMBERS

The net worth of networks

BY BOB ROUSE

During his recent term as NTA chair, Jay Smith often said, “The Owners Network is NTA’s best-kept secret.”

Eighteen of the 20-member group met during Travel Exchange in San Antonio, but the secret is definitely out. Also convening during the convention were 55 members who attended the inaugural meeting of the Tour Supplier Network and 70 members who gathered for the second session of the DMO Network.

“The involvement and the high level of conversations were fantastic,” said Morgan Maravich, NTA’s manager of industry and member engagement. “After the Tour Supplier Network session, even the most experienced members said they were taking away new pieces of information. And when the DMO Network session ended, the group broke out in spontaneous applause. They were just so grateful this initiative is getting off the ground.”

Courier talked with three NTA members who hold a leadership role with their respective networks.



Mark Hoffmann, CTP,
Sports Leisure
Vacations
Owners Network

Courier: The Owners Network was formed a decade ago to give tour operator CEOs a way to share information and discuss business ideas. What makes it work so well?

Hoffmann: Our meetings are an opportunity to sit down with people who do business in the same industry and discuss things you wouldn’t normally talk about in your office. You can sort out stressful situations with peers who understand. It’s like having your own set of consultants, and for a small company, that’s a huge resource. I came back from our San Antonio meeting with an idea that could make thousands of dollars; I put it in motion as soon as I got home.

Courier: How many owners are involved?

Hoffmann: We’ve grown this group one owner at a time. We started with five or six, and now we have 20 members. And once somebody joins, they don’t leave.

Courier: Is there a cost?

Hoffmann: There’s no charge for belonging, but we do pay a fee for a third-party accountant to compile financial information we submit anonymously. That

analysis gives us financial benchmarks we can each compare our company to.

Courier: And you meet in person, right?

Hoffmann: Yes. We usually meet twice a year, and it’s always on a Friday so we can steal a portion of the weekend and not miss as much time in the office. Everybody invests real currency and time to travel to meetings, but the payoff is unbelievable. I’ve been an NTA member for 28 years, and this is by far the single-best benefit that’s come along.



Sally Berry, CTP,
Corning Museum
of Glass
Tour Supplier Network

Courier: Tell me about your first meeting.

Berry: There were 55 suppliers—more than any of us expected—representing sectors such as retail, passenger vessels, museums, hotels, restaurants and events/festivals. What impressed me most, though, was the number of first-time attendees who took the brave step to join in.

Courier: How did you structure the session?

Berry: We set up the room with round



tables and had people sit at tables based on specific criteria that we determined in advance. The first grouping was based on type of supplier, and to give you an idea of the diversity, the members at the passenger-vessel table ranged from a family-owned boat in Alaska to Jodi from Norwegian Cruise Line. The second grouping was based on geography—Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Midwest, etc.—and the final grouping was based on the number of full-time employees.

Courier: What did you observe?

Berry: First, the group discussions allowed for a lot of networking with people they probably would not have spoken with otherwise. And breaking into specific topics helped steer conversations. Also, we created an environment where people could have detailed discussions. Weather and its implications was a popular topic when we broke up by region. I also heard the passenger vessel group talking about new laws and how those laws impact their sector of the industry.

Courier: How do you see this group moving forward?

Berry: The consensus was that this network is needed. I saw a lot of business card exchanges, which I take as a great sign of connection. We are planning a program for the day after Contact, and we'll also start a LinkedIn group for the Supplier Network. And I want to find a way to keep the discussion going on various topics, but we haven't finalized anything yet.



Lisa Itel,
Travel Oregon
DMO Network

Courier: How did your group get started?

Itel: In talking with owners about their network, and with NTA staff, I knew it would make sense for DMOs to organize ourselves, too. We see each other once a year at Travel Exchange, but things come up during the rest of the year. There are opportunities we've been missing that we can discover when we get together.



NAIM HASAN

I've been an NTA member for 28 years, and this is by far the single-best benefit that's come along.

—Mark Hoffmann, CTP,
Sports Leisure Vacations

Courier: How was your session in San Antonio structured?

Itel: We had a designated topic—and a moderator—for each table, and attendees made their way to each topic around the room. The topics included partnerships, budgets and how to make the most of your NTA membership. The people at my table took a lot of notes and shared a lot of ideas.

Courier: Was there anything that surprised you?

Itel: The discussions themselves were surprising. I had envisioned that DMOs would sort of align according to the size of their destination and discuss their issues and successes. What I observed, though, was that large DMOs were learning from small DMOs and vice versa, and the idea sharing generated very positive take-aways for everyone. I was also surprised that the participants

were so engaged with the topics, which was very exciting.

Courier: What's next for the DMO Network?

Itel: The group will meet again in Charleston after Contact, and we are working on an online meeting as well. We have also started a platform on Facebook so people can communicate year-round. We now have a network of colleagues we can reach out to, and this will really fill a void that this segment of the industry has been looking for. This network is something NTA does really well: Add a benefit I don't have to pay for. ☺

Network nexts

The Owners Network will meet March 23 in Washington, D.C., following Destination Capitol Hill. For details, contact Laurie Lincoln of Main Street Experiences, at laurie@mainstreetexperiences.com.



The DMO Network and Tour Supplier Network will meet April 22 in Charleston, South Carolina. Watch your inbox for information about registration—or contact Morgan Maravich at morgan.maravich@ntastaff.com to get details or to suggest topics for discussion.

#TREX17 Part 2 as told by you

NTA was #blessed with two Travel Exchanges in 2017, and boy did San Antonio show up as host of TREX17 Part 2. You created new business, formed friendships and made memories that are sure to last a lifetime. The Alamo City was full of positive energy and holiday cheer, and you documented it all on social media using #TREX17. Check out some of our favorite posts from our time together in the Lone Star State:



Benjamin J Maddy
#TREX17



AmeriLink US East @AICHotelsEast
Thanks for the wonderful week. @NTAnews and Pam Inman! Our phones were already ringing before the event was over! #TREX17

Paul Nakamoto

So excited and proud of the newly elected NTA board of directors and officers. NTA is in excellent hands with these tourism professionals guiding NTA's future, proud of you all! [Paul Larsen](#), [Jerry Varner](#), [Dave Nitkiewicz](#), [Daniel Flores](#). #TREX17



theteeagency

The entertainment at #TREX17 has been phenomenal. Broadway Inbound, American Idol finalist Tristan McIntosh, America's Got Talent finalists, the Mariachi Brothers, and an awesome band called Finding Friday! #TEETravels

Dave Nitkiewicz @DNitkiewicz

@jaybaer "There is plenty of oxygen on the high road" love that. #TREX17 @NTAnow



Butchart Sales @ButchartSales
It's been an unforgettable week of meetings & events at @NTAnews #TREX17 in @VisitSanAntonio! Wishing all the attendees safe travels home & happy holidays!



Louisiana MotorCoach @LAMotorCoach

It may be the first timers dinner for NTA, but everyone feels like old friends. #TREX17 #NTAnow #travel



Stephanie Dilling

So much fun tonight at Six Flags Fiesta Texas. #TREX17

Jordan Hathaway @hathaja

Just realized @thomsinger has sessions at #TREX17. Never miss an opportunity to hear you speak!



Beth Ziesenis @NerdyBFF

Lots of gorgeous nerds at #TREX17



Paul Vitale @PVitale Speaks

Gearing up to present two breakouts this afternoon at #TREX17. A big thumbs up to @NTAnews for the awesome opportunity to return! With these superheroes, I should be ready to roll. @VisitSanAntonio!

Elly Devries @EllyGroupTour

Warm welcome this morning @VisitSanAntonio @NTAnews#TREX17





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THE GRAND HOTEL

A Grand time at the 'Somewhere in Time' weekend

Travelers heading to Michigan's timeless Mackinac Island can tour locations used for the 1980 Hollywood romance "Somewhere in Time." Groups are taken to the island by ferry and then transported by horse and buggy to filming spots such as the Victorian-era Grand Hotel and Mission Point Resort.

More than half of the movie was shot at the Grand, which boasts the world's largest front porch, a 660-footer. While taking a tour at the stately hotel, visitors see places where scenes featuring the movie's stars, Christopher Reeve and Jane Seymour, were filmed. They also will hear behind-the-scenes stories and details on mishaps, including when

Reeve fell during a scene near the courtyard pool area and delayed filming.

The hotel hosts a "Somewhere in Time" event each autumn (Oct. 26–28 this year). This special weekend includes a screening of the film, discussions of the movie's production process and appearances by returning cast members—Seymour is a regular. The event includes a costume promenade and the Grand Luncheon Buffet, and guests are invited to appear in costume at cocktail receptions.

To learn more, call the Grand Hotel's Julia Luckey-Ottenwess at +1.906.847.3331 or go to grandhotel.com. —K.F.

Spies like us

The International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C., is the only public museum in the world dedicated to exploring the history, impact and tradecraft of intelligence and espionage from a global perspective. The attraction features the largest collection of international espionage-related artifacts ever placed on public display, including:

- Items created for international intelligence services, such as cipher machines, counterfeit currency, disguised weapons and miniature cameras.
- Espionage training films from World War II and documentation obtained by spies.
- Pop culture items inspired by fictitious portrayals of spies in movies and on TV.



INTERNATIONAL SPY MUSEUM

Groups can take part in interactive experiences, such as Operation Spy and Spy in the City. Operation Spy is an action-packed opportunity for visitors to be a spy and locate a missing trigger device before it falls into the wrong hands. As part of Spy in the City, participants head outdoors to complete a mission and receive clues, codes and audio intercepts via a GPS device.

The museum is scheduled to move into a new building at L'Enfant Plaza, two blocks south of the National Mall, in early 2019. The new location will more than double the floor space of the existing building and will include four extra exhibit areas, additional classroom space, a separate group entrance and a dedicated motorcoach loading zone.

For more information, call the museum's Lori Scott at +1.202.654.2844 or go to spymuseum.org. —P.H.

Tales (and tails) of BC's fur trading days

Located 30 miles west of downtown Vancouver, British Columbia, Fort Langley National Historic Site tells the story of the Hudson's Bay Company in the area during the 19th century. At the fort, which is open year-round, groups can learn more about the French-Canadian traders who bartered with gold prospectors and First Nations people for everything from animal pelts and weapons to salmon and cranberries.

Built in 1827 on the banks of the Fraser River, the complex includes a mix of original and reconstructed buildings, many of which are part of tours and interpretive programs. One of the most popular daily tours is a 30-minute walk that's led by a costumed guide who shares information about the fort's emergence as one of southern British Columbia's foremost trading centers.

Other regularly scheduled activities include a wool spinning demonstration, a blacksmith experience, an interactive food production session and the popular Historic Treasures program, which showcases specific items and artifacts from the attraction's vast collection.

A number of offerings specifically geared for students, including the Girl Guides Heritage Badge program and the Fur Trader Challenge, also are available.

Go to parkscanada.ca/langley or call Parks Canada's Jennifer Burnell at +1.204.984.4555 to find out more. —P.H.



CC FLICKR/RUTH HARTNUP: bit.ly/2mLekyB



CC FLICKR/JVL: bit.ly/2EOn8aB

Eureka! I have heard it!

With more than 15 percent of its population being working artists, it's no surprise that Eureka Springs, Arkansas, puts on a compelling range of cultural events. The city's roster of annual festivals includes a number that are music-based, including the following three:



HIGHBERRYFESTIVAL.COM/JEREMY SCOTT



OZARKMOUNTAINMUSICFESTIVAL.COM/JAMIE SEED

Eureka Springs Blues Weekend

June 14–17, 2018

This summer staple has brought a wide cross-section of blues musicians—including both local artists and Grammy award-winning international acts—to Eureka Springs across the years. Held at the Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge, the festival also has an arts and crafts fair, food and beverage vendors, and a children's area.

Highberry Music Festival

July 5–7, 2018

Highberry is a Grateful Dead-oriented event that takes place around the July 4th holiday weekend. The 2018 edition will mark the ninth year of the popular festival and the second year it will take place at The Farm. That outdoor venue sits on 160 acres backing up to a national forest, which provide a scenic backdrop for the music.

Ozark Mountain Music Festival

January 2019 (exact dates TBD)

This winter event, held downtown at the Basin Park Hotel, brings together top bluegrass, folk and American roots acts. In addition to the performances by regional and national bands, such as Tall Tall Trees and Carrie Nation & the Speakeasy who headlined the 2018 installment last month, the event includes interactive workshops.

To learn more about these and other festivals in Eureka Springs, contact Karen Pryor of the city's promotion commission at +1.479.253.7333 or go to eurekasprings.org. —P.H. ☎

A toast to Texas

Travel Exchange '17 in San Antonio was a Texas-sized success

travel
exchange '17

NTA held its second Travel Exchange convention of 2017 Dec. 14-18 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas. The event was packed with old favorites (evening celebrations and entertaining luncheons, including first-rate Broadway performances) and mixed in plenty of site-specific highlights (sightseeing, an appearance by a longhorn steer and an evening on the River Walk). Of course, there were plenty of business-building appointments, too.

But we'll let your fellow NTA members tell the story. Read on to learn what they had to say about Travel Exchange, Texas style.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NAIM HASAN



“ As a designated ‘Legacy Member’ in 2017, Visit Rochester has been engaged with NTA for very a long time. In San Antonio, I was pleased to experience a sense of strong organizational direction and commitment to member success by the board and staff. ”

—GREG MARSHALL, VISIT ROCHESTER
(ROCHESTER, NEW YORK)



“ I really enjoyed the event in San Antonio. It was great meeting old friends again and making new ones. The first conference I attended was in Toronto in 2004, and I experience that the more NTA conferences I attend, the better they become. I will definitely continue visiting the NTA conferences! ”

—CORNÉ RUIJS, RUIJS TRAVEL (LITH, THE NETHERLANDS)



Gold winners of Courier's Distinguished Dozen.

“ Attending Travel Exchange is great for us. As a small business, it is a nice reminder that we are part of something special. It is fabulous to have the connection and support of like-minded NTA business partners. It helps us keep things fresh, inspires tweaks and affirms that we are good at what we do. ”

—KATE CARRIGAN, SPECIAL GROUP TOURS
(ALBRIGHTSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA)



“ This is my second time attending NTA, and what an experience! As a supplier, I truly enjoy the opportunity to connect with some of the top tour operators. This is a one-stop shop for us and a great return on our investment. I look forward to Travel Exchange 2018. ”

—GINA DUQUENNE, ASHLAND HILLS HOTEL AND SUITES
(ASHLAND, OREGON)



“ NTA Travel Exchange is an invaluable opportunity to meet suppliers (new and current) and tour operators. As we move forward using email and programs, we lose a little bit of the hospitality that is meeting and negotiating in person, seeing engagement and pushing each other for the greatest good: our mutual travelers. ”

—ASHLEY LANDERS, GATE 1 TRAVEL
(FORT WASHINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA)

People to meet means places to go

Tour operator members met with their DMO and supplier counterparts across four days of appointments to develop new business and touch base with colleagues from across the globe.



“ The quality of appointments at Travel Exchange was outstanding. As a small DMO from Alaska, attending Travel Exchange is a great opportunity to meet with key tour operators in one place. ”

—CASEY RESSLER, MAT-SU CVB
(PALMER, ALASKA)

“ I thought DMOs and suppliers were ready with concise, pertinent information for tour operators. Many suppliers in particular overhauled their profile sheets to make it easy for tour operators to access programs and pricings quickly when customizing itineraries and providing pricings. ”

—CHRISTEN M. ELIASON, THE GROUP TOUR COMPANY (WASHINGTON, D.C.)



“ My appointments at NTA were, as always, invaluable. The amount of time spent with the operators, in addition to the intimate setting, allows a more personal connection. I believe NTA has the perfect amount of attendees to make it worth your while! ”

—ELISE SWEARINGEN, PROVIDENCE WARWICK CVB
(PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND)

“ I had great appointments again this year with friends from the NTA family. I was encouraged to hear operators are looking outside of our popular summer season and are focused on creating itineraries that are unique and different from the norm. Our TREX '17 meetings allowed me to support our current tour operator partners and to develop new relationships with a host of operators and new itineraries to our destination for 2019. ”

—RYAN ELLIOTT, BANFF & LAKE LOUISE TOURISM
(BANFF, ALBERTA)





“ The one-on-one appointments are the perfect balance of networking with existing buyers and establishing new industry relationships. I enjoy learning about each tour operator’s business and sharing Carnegie Hall’s programs with them. ”

—RAYNA BOURKE, CARNEGIE HALL (NEW YORK CITY)

“ This year TREX in San Antonio was great for A Closer Look Tours. Our appointments were really beneficial, even the few that won’t lead to immediate business. I always tell any first-timers that it’s not about the sales you are going to go home with, but the relationships you build. ”

—COLIN CAPARRÓS, A CLOSER LOOK (PHOENIX, ARIZONA)



“ I found that the appointments I had this NTA were very successful. In fact, I am already receiving business from the meetings. I found that most of my appointments were with the decision makers or one step away. This is important so that follow-ups do not fall on deaf ears. ”

—JASON ALLAN, EXCLUSIVELY MALTA (HAMILTON, ONTARIO)



“ I saw both the quantity and quality of appointments increase at TREX in San Antonio, with a good mix of new and returning business. ”

—CAROL ROSS, PORTLAND ROSE FESTIVAL (PORTLAND, OREGON)



The shows within the show

Luncheons and evenings at Travel Exchange '17 were filled with parties at top local attractions and dazzling shows by marquee performers.

“ I have to say the Deep in the Heart of Texas party was the best event I have seen at recent NTA conventions. It was great to see so many people genuinely enjoying themselves, so many people dancing—including some you would not expect to be dancing—great food, fun cowboy pics and, all in all, fun that really felt like a party! ”

—PETER CRADDICK,
GLOBETROTTERS TRAVEL & TOURS
(HARROW, ENGLAND)



“ My favorite moment was the party at Grotto on the River Walk: great food, the River Walk boat tour, dancing and a cowboy photo ... unforgettable! ”

—ELSA LO, CHINA SILK TOURS
(NEW YORK CITY)



“ While all the events were wonderful, I thoroughly enjoyed the dine-arounds I attended. They were a great way to relax and get to know people on a more in-depth level. I also had a blast at the opening event at the Witte Museum! What a surreal experience to have this incredible museum and the exhibits to ourselves. (And the mariachi band that greeted us when we entered was icing on the cake—just outstanding!) ”

—JENNA AUKERMAN, OMANSON TOUR & TRAVEL INC.
(SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA)



“ Everyone loves a birthday party, but a 300th birthday with dinosaurs, drinks, dancing and cake?! It was the perfect opening night icebreaker! ”

—CAROL ROSS, PORTLAND ROSE FESTIVAL
(PORTLAND, OREGON)





“ There is nothing in Europe like this convention. There, it's either a huge show or a tiny show, and none of them have luncheons and evening activities for the whole group. Our best business wasn't from the scheduled appointments, but from people we met at events. ”

—MICHELE MARINARO,
MICHELANGELO INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL
(RIVA DEL GARDA, ITALY)



“ While I enjoyed all of the evening events, I really enjoy the atmosphere during the luncheons. I feel that everyone is on equal ground—happy to have a break for 90 minutes of talk and entertainment. My favorite, of course, is the Broadway Inbound luncheon. ”

—JOY TEVIS,
NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK
(EATONVILLE, WASHINGTON)

“ I always have a blast at the NTA events. They are tailored to not only help support networking (like an armadillo race? What better way to bond?!) but to also increase awareness of the host city. I had no idea San Antonio had so much to offer beyond the Alamo, but I came away with so much more knowledge of the seventh-largest city in the country. I'm definitely going back to see more! ”

—ELISE SWEARINGEN, PROVIDENCE WARWICK CVB (PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND)

“ At Travel Exchange you can make connections everywhere. This year I had meaningful conversations in the hotel restaurant, on the elevator, at meals and, yes, even on the dance floor. ”

—DAVE NITKIEWICZ,
EXPERIENCE GRAND RAPIDS
(GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN)



Volunteer of the Year Renee Eichelberger (center), CTP, of Explore St. Louis, is with Pam Inman and Jay Smith.



Bob Hofmann (center), pictured with Pam Inman and Jay Smith, accepts the Shining Star award for Broadway Inbound.

Quality education, no No. 2 pencils required

When Travel Exchange delegates weren't generating new business on the convention floor, they were generating new ideas at educational sessions and seminars.



“ I attended the session explaining the new DMO Network; it was fantastic. I look forward to the opportunity to share ideas, successes and struggles with this amazing group of professionals. I have already gotten some good advice on the dedicated Facebook page! ”

—JULIANNE FREDRICK, VISIT DURANGO
(DURANGO, COLORADO)



“ I attended a seminar on generational travel preferences that I found really helpful. The speaker identified the differing travel styles between baby boomers, Gen Xers and millennials and discussed how our industry will be shaped going forward. While we know we cannot stereotype people on age alone, this information helped me develop a genuine understanding of how to identify and serve different customer mentalities. ”

—JENNA AUKERMAN, OMANSON TOUR & TRAVEL INC.
(SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA)



“ I enjoyed the new DMO Network session. All sizes of DMOs came together to share ideas and best practices, which generated great discussions and new friendships. ”

—DEANNE CUNNINGHAM, NORTH DAKOTA TOURISM
(BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA)



Lori Erickson



“ I really liked the on-floor seminars about the LGBTQ and the millennial market segments; they were very informative and engaging. I like on both accounts how the presenter engaged the audience to provide real-life experiences and challenges, which resulted in open dialogue among the group. ”

—JASON ALLAN, EXCLUSIVELY MALTA (HAMILTON, ONTARIO)

“ I was able to attend an excellent breakfast presentation by the Faith Travel Association, and generously sponsored by Ed-Ventures. This provided a great forum for discussion and featured a thought-provoking talk by spiritual travel writer Lori Erickson. ”

—JONATHAN TAYLOR, PATHFINDERS (GLOUCESTERSHIRE, ENGLAND)



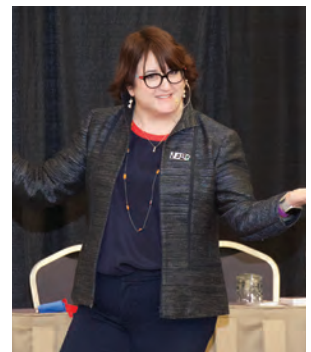
“ It was great to be a speaker for the Ask the Tour Operators for DMOs seminar. Not only did I get a chance to sharpen my tour operator thinking skills, but I was able to personally connect with some DMOs and brainstorm ways that we could effectively exchange beneficial information in an age where new formats of info are rapidly presenting themselves. It also gave me a chance to understand how to effectively put to use the network of industry professionals that NTA curates each year at Travel Exchange. ”

—SCOTT BRODSKY, COUNTRY HERITAGE TOURS (AMHERST, NEW HAMPSHIRE)



“ I went to one seminar on social media posting, although I am not a expert on social media. I did find some clarity in this seminar, and we are actively taking information from our educational settings and beginning to apply them to our business model. ”

—JASON SMITH, SCENIC SAFARIS (JACKSON, WYOMING)





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- **Three C's of Networking:** Conference Catalyst Thom Singer leads this interactive session on how to most effectively connect, create and collaborate.
- **Finding Funny in Change:** The Work Lady Jan McInnis shows you how to diffuse tension, start tough conversations and facilitate communications.



Visit NTAonline.com/contact to register and learn more.

DMOs and suppliers attend as sponsors. Email sponsor@ntastaff.com or visit NTAonline.com/contact.

Cruise control

NTA cruise companies ply the group market with water-based product ranging from weeks-long voyages to one-hour trips. The following pages include two first-person articles from cruise expert (and former NTA Chair) Bob Hoelscher, as well as updates on Entertainment Cruises, Phillips Cruises & Tours and NTA-member cruise companies in Massachusetts. Our coverage concludes with the full list of the association's cruise providers.

Cool Alaskan waters BY BOB HOELSCHER

Last May, spring once again proved to be an ideal time for a cruise to Alaska—in this case a one-week, round-trip sailing from Seattle aboard Holland America Line's spacious *Oosterdam*. Just over 2,000 guests enjoyed splendid weather; visits to Juneau, magnificent Hubbard Glacier in Yakutat Bay, Sitka and Ketchikan; and an evening in Victoria, British Columbia.

Although I have embarked previously on numerous Alaska cruises on a variety of lines, the *Oosterdam*'s excellent food, wide variety of onboard entertainment options and exceptional shore excursions combined to make this voyage one of the most memorable.

In addition to glacier viewing, our sightseeing options included sea kayaking, exploring pristine beaches and beautiful island rainforests (sans the rain), an air/sea trip to Misty Fjords National Monument, plus a wonderful evening exploring the uncrowded, extensively illuminated Butchart Gardens.

This particular itinerary did not feature the famed "Inside Passage," but it did offer sunshine and bright blue skies, lengthy hours of daylight, Alaska *before* countless land travelers arrive beginning Memorial Day weekend (although cruise vessels were already out in force) and the inevitable June mosquito hatch, plus exceptional shoulder-season pricing.



BOB HOELSCHER

Three photos from a cruise on Holland America Line's *Oosterdam*: on the deck; at the dock in Ketchikan, Alaska; and aboard a kayak.



ENTERTAINMENT CRUISES

Entertainment Cruises' entertaining cruises BY PAT HENDERSON

As the nation's largest dining cruise provider, Entertainment Cruises showcases some of the United States' top places on its more than 100 excursions. Tour operators have a variety of options to choose from—sightseeing excursions, meal-themed cruises, special-event sailings, private group charters, thrill rides on speedboats and more—when booking one of the company's one- to four-hour tours.

Entertainment Cruises operates from ports in nine U.S. destinations: Chicago; Boston; Baltimore; Philadelphia; New York City; Lincoln Harbor, New Jersey; Norfolk, Virginia; Washington, D.C.; and National Harbor, Maryland. That list of iconic places allows travelers to see some of the nation's top landmarks as part of tours including:

Washington, D.C. Groups can enjoy everything from meal and sightseeing rides past the famous monuments to educational and photography-centered rides around the nation's capital.

Chicago In addition to its regular fleet, the company has five open-air speedboats that jet around the lakefront and provide great views of Chicago's diverse architecture.

New York City The iconic Statue of Liberty and the city's many bridges are mainstays on harbor tours. A number of specialized culinary cruises of the Big Apple also are available.

For more information, contact Entertainment Cruises' Liz Gilbert at lgilbert@entertainmentcruises.com, or visit entertainmentcruises.com.

Massive cruise options in Massachusetts BY PAT HENDERSON

Travelers who find themselves along Massachusetts' spectacular Atlantic coast have plenty of options for on-the-water experiences. The following six NTA members offer cruises that connect groups with the state's top coastal destinations, as well as with many aspects of local culture.

Boston Duck Tours

These 80-minute tours blend land and water components and cover many of the city's highlights. The rides depart from three locations multiple times a day during the March-to-November season.

Cindy Brown | cindy@bostonducktours.com
bostonducktours.com

Boston Harbor Cruises

Since 1926, Boston Harbor Cruises and the Nolan family have been providing top-notch cruises that showcase the city's historical harbor. The company's fleet of 53 vessels makes more than 500 trips annually.

Doug Hall | dhall@bostonharborcruises.com
bostonharborcruises.com

Captain John Whale Watching and Fishing Tours

This company offers a diverse group of cruises, ranging from whale-watching tours at Provincetown and Plymouth to deep-sea fishing excursions to harbor and meal cruises of Plymouth.

Bob Avila | bob@captjohn.com
captjohn.com

The Dolphin Fleet of Provincetown

Whale-watching tours go from Provincetown harbor to the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. Along the way, passengers may see many species of whales, as well as dolphins and porpoise.

Jay Hurley | ccodder2@comcast.net
whalewatch.com

Hy-Line Cruises

Two popular options include catamaran service from Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard and a one-hour Hyannis Harbor Cruise that features live commentary. Hy-Line also offers charters for groups.

Dee Forand | dforand@hylinecruises.com
hylinecruises.com

Martha's Vineyard & Nantucket Steamship Authority

The Steamship Authority is the largest ferry service from Cape Cod to the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. Since 1960, it has been the lifeline to the islands year-round for locals and travelers alike.

Kimberlee McHugh | kmchugh@steamshipauthority.com
steamshipauthority.com —P.H.

Belly up to the barge

BY BOB HOELSCHER

In fine, sunny weather last April, I experienced a delightful six-night barge cruise on France's Marne Canal from Paris to Epernay aboard NTA-member CroisiEurope's *Raymonde*. The barge accommodates only 22 guests and is perfect for group charters. *Raymonde's* cabins are compact but quite comfortable once you settle in and discover all the storage spaces.

Our food (continental breakfast buffet, multi-course set menus for lunch and dinner) was very good and service was excellent. This is an all-inclusive program except for crew gratuities, so there is no extra charge for shore excursions. Pricing also includes an open bar throughout, plus numerous French wines and cheeses are served with meals.

The countryside is absolutely beautiful. Picturesque homes, villages, vineyards, farms and fields of golden rape-seed line the canal along the way, and there are numerous small locks and several historical tunnels to transit. The primary difference between French canal cruises and typical European river excursions is that on the latter, the locks and waterways are *much* larger, thus so are the cruise vessels. And there is far more commercial traffic on the rivers.

After a guided tour of Paris featuring the city's unique covered walkways, the cruise's itinerary highlights included lovely Lagny-sur-Marne, the handsome city and cathedral of Meaux, plus an opportunity to learn about and sample the outstanding "King of Cheeses," Brie de Meaux.

Next were a falconry show and sightseeing in Château Thierry, and from Dormans, home of a magnificent World War I memorial, we toured the ancient hilltop village of Châtillon-sur-Marne and saw countless vineyards extending far into the distance. We also visited Hautvillers, the birthplace of Champagne, where Dom Perignon himself is buried.

Finally, in Epernay, we toured the cellars of a major Champagne house, one of hundreds of wineries we passed on the famed Champagne Route and on other area roads. We embarked on an excursion to Reims for a tour of the historical city and its storied cathedral, where French kings were traditionally crowned.

On the morning of our seventh day, a return transfer was provided to Paris, where groups should plan to include a multi-night hotel stay to explore one of the world's greatest cities.



Barges such as CroisiEurope's *Raymonde* are smaller vessels that accommodate a limited number of passengers.



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Old glaciers, new ships

BY PAT HENDERSON

The glaciers, wildlife and natural beauty of coastal Alaska are highlighted on sightseeing tours offered by Phillips Cruises & Tours.

"Prince William Sound is a spectacular place of wonder where every guest can experience a sense of adventure as we retrace the route of early explorers from the Harriman Expedition in 1899," says Lisa Kruse, director of sales and marketing.



PHILLIPS CRUISES & TOURS, LLC

Glacier excursion with Phillips Cruises & Tours

The longtime NTA member has made many investments in its fleet over the past few years. The 149-passenger M/V *Glacier Quest* was added in 2012, and more recently the company purchased the M/V *Bravest* from the Fast Ferry fleet in New York. The *Bravest*, famous for being the ship that was used to rescue passengers from the 2009 "Miracle on the Hudson" flight, is being refitted and is scheduled to be ready for service in 2019.

Last year, the 328-passenger M/V *Klondike Express* received an upgrade that added USB ports at every guest table, "a first in the day-cruise industry here," Kruse adds. On tap for 2018 is the debut of an 80-foot yacht, the M/Y *Sound Endeavor*, which will further expand the company's reach in the luxury market.

"It will be used for day excursions featuring photography workshops, culinary cruise creations, or kayak and glacier adventures," Kruse says. "Overnight expeditions (four day-three night or six day-five night) into Prince William Sound will offer access to three state-rooms, and they'll be ideal for three couples or for families seeking an exceptional, tailored itinerary in one of the most pristine destinations in the world."

To learn more, reach out to her at lkruise@26glaciers.com or visit 26glaciers.com.

The following list has information on NTA's members with a fleet of ships that organize and offer their own cruises, including both companies that provide multi-day cruises and those specializing in shorter sightseeing excursions. The information for this list was provided by the member and was current as of Jan. 9.

With this and all other guides that appear in *Courier*, members can enhance their presence. Contact sales@ntaservicesinc.com for details.

MULTI-DAY CRUISES

OCEAN CRUISES

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2801 NE 183 St., Suite 2204
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n.filippidis@celestyalcruises.com
celestyalcruises.com

Fantasy Cruises

Jeff Behrens
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Pierson, FL 32180
800.234.3861
fancruz@rockisland.com
smallalaskaship.com

Holland America Line Inc.

Charles Dunwoody
300 Elliott Ave. W
Seattle, WA 98119-4198
+1.206.626.7515
cdunwoody@hollandamerica.com
hollandamerica.com

Katarina Line-Incoming Croatia

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V.Spincica 13
51410 Opatija, Croatia
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MSC Cruises

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msccruisesusa.com

Norwegian Cruise Line

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Oceania Cruises

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Royal Caribbean Cruises

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ameloro@rccl.com
royalcaribbean.com

Variety Cruises

Susan Nissim
545 Eighth Ave.
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snissim@varietycruises.com
varietycruises.com/english

RIVER CRUISES

Abercrombie & Kent USA LLC

Keith Baron
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Executive Towers West II, Suite 300
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+1.630.725.3400
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abercrombiekent.com

American Queen Steamboat Company

Mark Cronin
One Commerce Square, 40 South Main St.
Memphis, TN 38103
+1.901.654.2600
nta@aqsc.com
americanqueensteamboatcompany.com

Celebration River Cruises

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celebrationbelle.com

CroisiEurope America

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croisieuropeamericacruises.com

Euro River Cruises

John McGlade
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Riviera River Cruises

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jana.tvedt@rivierarivercruises.com
rivierarivercruises.com

Tauk

Tom Armstrong
10 Westport Road
Wilton, CT 06897
800.468.2825
tarmstrong@tauck.com
tauck.com

Uniworld River Cruises Inc.

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uniworld.com

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ganboatline.com

Hornblower Niagara Cruises

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niagaracruises.com

Mariposa Cruises

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+1.416.203.0178 (206)
courtney@mariposacruises.com
mariposacruises.com

Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours

Jessica DiCarlantonio
61 Melville St., P.O. Box 1215
Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0
+1.905.468.4800 (223)
jessica@whirlpooljet.com
whirlpooljet.com

Québec

Lachine Rapids Tours Ltd.

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Montréal, QC H2Y 2C6
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elenamagni@jetboatingmontreal.com
jetboatingmontreal.com

UNITED STATES

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Mahay's Jet Boat Adventures

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mahaysjetboat.com

Major Marine Tours & Harbor 360 Hotel

Jara Haas
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Phillips Cruises & Tours LLC

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Stan Stephens Glacier and Wildlife Cruises

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stanstephenscruises.com

Arizona

Desert Belle Tour Boat

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desertbelle.com

California

Blue & Gold Fleet

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Pier 41, Marine Terminal
San Francisco, CA 94133
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dennis@blueandgoldfleet.com
blueandgoldfleet.com

Catalina Channel Express

Carol Elliott
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San Pedro, CA 90731
+1.310.519.7971
carol@catalinaexpress.com
catalinaexpress.com

Flagship Cruises & Events/ San Diego Harbor Excursion

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Hornblower Cruises & Events

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Colorado

Arkansas River Tours

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Cotopaxi, CO 81223
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arkansasrivertours.com

Florida

Wild Florida

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Georgia

River Street Riverboat Company

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Illinois

Chicago Architecture Foundation

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grouptours@architecture.org
architecture.org

Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline

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Chicago, IL 60601
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captjason@cruisechicago.com
mercuryskylinecruiseline.com

Shoreline Sightseeing Company

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Chicago, IL 60611-6479
+1.312.373.7258
ah@shoresightsighting.com
shoresightsighting.com

Wendella Sightseeing Boats

Katherine Borgstrom
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+1.312.337.1446
knb@wendellaboats.com
wendellaboats.com

Louisiana

New Orleans Steamboat Company/ Gray Line Tours

Deidra Edwards
400 N. Peters St., Suite 203
New Orleans, LA 70130-1063
+1.504.569.1401
deidra@visitneworleans.com
steamboatnatchez.com

PNO-Cajun Encounters

Peter Boese
941 Decatur St.
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+1.504.503.0420
pboese@pelicanneworleans.com
pelicanneworleans.com

Massachusetts

Boston Duck Tours

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bostonducktours.com

Boston Harbor Cruises

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bostonharborcruises.com

Captain John Whale Watching and Fishing Tours

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The Dolphin Fleet of Provincetown

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Hy-Line Cruises

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Michigan

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Star Line Mackinac Island Ferry

Lora Brown
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mackinacferry.com

Missouri

Silver Dollar City/Showboat Branson Belle

Joey Thorsen
399 Silver Dollar City Parkway
Branson, MO 65616
+1.417.338.8009
jthorsen@silverdollarcity.com
silverdollarcity.com

New York

Circle Line Sightseeing Cruises/ New York Water Taxi

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circleline42.com

Entertainment Cruises

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Pier 62, Chelsea Piers, Suite 200
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lgilbert@entertainmentcruises.com
entertainmentcruises.com

Gray Line New York/ CitySightseeing NY Cruises

Mary Cummings
1430 Broadway, Suite 507
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mary.cummings@newyorksightseeing.com
newyorksightseeing.com

Lake George Steamboat Company, Inc.

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Portland Spirit & Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler River Cruises

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portlandspirit.com

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Utah

Canyonlands by Night & Day

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Moab, UT 84532-9623
+1.435.259.5261
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canyonlandsbynight.com

Washington

Argosy Cruises

Dana Barrett
1101 Alaskan Way, Pier 55, Suite 201
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San Juan Cruises

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Wyoming

Dave Hansen River Trips

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Jackson, WY 83001-0915
+1.307.733.6295
info@davehansenwhitewater.com
davehansenwhitewater.com

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1255 S. Highway 89
Jackson, WY 83001
+1.307.733.6203
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Scenic Safaris

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Jackson, WY 83001
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Solitude Float Trips Inc.

Colby Colonel
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Jackson, WY 83001
+1.307.733.2871
manager@solitudefloattrips.com
solitudefloattrips.com

Triangle X Float Trips

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Atlantic Coast

COMPILED BY PATTI NICKELL

Tybee Island: Dig that retro feel

Tour operators taking groups to Savannah will be delighted to learn that Tybee Island, one of the Southeast's most unspoiled beach communities, is just a short drive across the bridge spanning the Savannah River.

So retro is the feel of Tybee, with its mom-and-pop cafés, one-of-a-kind shops and welcoming people, your group members will think they have stepped back in time.

The beach, often called Georgia's best, is the major draw, but there's plenty else for your clients to experience. Start

with Tybee Island Light Station, the state's oldest (begun in 1736) and tallest (154 feet) lighthouse. If they're game, your group can ascend the 178 steps for a panoramic view of the entire island. Fun fact: The lighthouse had a human keeper up until 1972.

Tybee Marine Science Center is another draw for visitors who want to combine nature hikes (beach and marsh walks are both offered), hands-on experiences and informative story times with experts in marine life. We're betting they will love the whale tales and turtle talks.

Another must-see is Fort Pulaski National Monument. Constructed between 1829 and 1847 to defend the port of Savannah from foreign attack, it was an important defensive structure during the Civil War.

After all the hiking and climbing, your group will be ready to eat, and there's no better place to take them than the Crab Shack. The former fish camp turned restaurant offers the island's most iconic dish, Low Country Boil, in a scenic location overlooking Chimney Creek.

For more information, email Kim Webster of Visit Tybee Island at kwebster@visittybee.com or go to visittybee.com.



Tybee Island Light Station

VISIT TYBEE ISLAND

Tours, turtles and crepe myrtles

The South is a region known for beautiful showplace gardens, and none are more beautiful—and showy—than those of Magnolia Plantation on the Ashley River near Charleston, South Carolina. With some sections dating back 325 years, they are the oldest unrestored gardens in the United States.

At their best in spring when ablaze with colorful camellias and azaleas, the gardens are an example of the Romantic Garden, a concept which came to the American South from Europe. Tour operators and their garden-loving clients are in for a landscape designed to impress, with features ranging from a cypress lake where century-old trees line the banks to a replica of London's Hampton Court Palace maze.

Yet, don't think these gardens are manicured and mowed—this is a nature lover's paradise. Your group is just as likely to spot a gator as a gardenia, and turtles are more prevalent than crepe myrtles.

The plantation house might not be as ornate as some, but the interior is equally beautiful and can be seen on a 30-minute tour, although some

visitors opt for the 45-minute From Slavery to Freedom: The Magnolia Cabin Project Tour.

For more information, visit magnoliaplantation.com or contact Sharon Newton at tours@magnoliaplantation.com.



Boardwalk through the swamp gardens at Magnolia Plantation

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Waterside District in Norfolk, Virginia

VISITNORFOLK

Ships, shops and a tattoo

If members of a group are fond of the TV series “NCIS,” they can find the real deal in Norfolk, Virginia. Home to the largest U.S. Navy base in the world, as well as one of NATO’s two Strategic Command Centers, the city will make anyone who loves the big guns (literally) giddy with delight.

At Naval Station Norfolk, visitors can see aircraft carriers, destroyers and amphibious assault ships during year-round 45-minute tours conducted by actual naval personnel.

As water is so much a part of life in Norfolk, it stands to reason that the annual Harborfest on the Downtown Waterfront takes pride of place. The three-day event (this year June 8–10) at Town Point Park includes activities ranging from a tall ships parade and a build-a-boat contest to the largest fireworks display on the East Coast.

If you tell your group they’re going for a tattoo, you could be in danger of scaring some members off. Make sure they know it’s not a skin design that’s on the agenda but a band performance—as in the Virginia International Tattoo (this April 26–29). With a colorful collection of drummers, pipers, fifers and other musicians, it is the largest military show of its kind in the U.S.

New to Norfolk as of last year is Norfolk Premium Outlets, where visitors can shop for brands such as Nike, Michael Kors and Tommy Hilfiger at 25 percent to 65 percent off.

While not new, a revitalized Waterside District offers the best in national, regional and local restaurants in addition to live music and festivals.

For more information, contact VisitNorfolk’s Melissa Hopper at mhopper@visitnorfolktoday.com or go to visitnorfolk.com.

The Outer Banks’ history and highlights

In this scenic sand dunes and rolling surf of North Carolina’s Outer Banks, the Chicamacomico Lifesaving Station on Hatteras Island doesn’t exactly roll off the tongue trippingly. It does, however, offer groups a chance to see one of the few remaining sites in America chronicling the early U.S. Coast Guard and its incredible feats.

There is even more reason to take your groups to Hatteras in 2018 as it marks the 100th anniversary of the Mirlo Rescue, a dramatic effort to save those on board the *Mirlo*, a British tanker, when it was torpedoed by a German U-boat in 1918.

The station and other surviving buildings from the late 18th century are in Rodanthe, the same Cape Hatteras village immortalized by Nicholas Sparks in his novels.

This may be history, but the Outer Banks focuses on the present and future as well. Groups are welcome at the North Carolina Aquarium, which recently re-opened after a \$6.5 million renovation. A main feature at the Roanoke Island-based attraction is an interactive Sea Turtle Assistance and Rehabilitation Center.

If you plan to bring your group sometime in late this summer or early fall, they can be among the first to experience



OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU

the visitors center at the Wright Brothers National Memorial, which is currently undergoing a multimillion renovation.

This will be the seventh year for the Outer Banks Seafood Festival, held the third Saturday in October. Celebrating the area’s local fishermen, seafood heritage and fresh Outer Banks seafood, it continues to be a favorite for group tours.

For more information, reach out to Lorrie Love of the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau at love@outerbanks.org or go to outerbanks.org.



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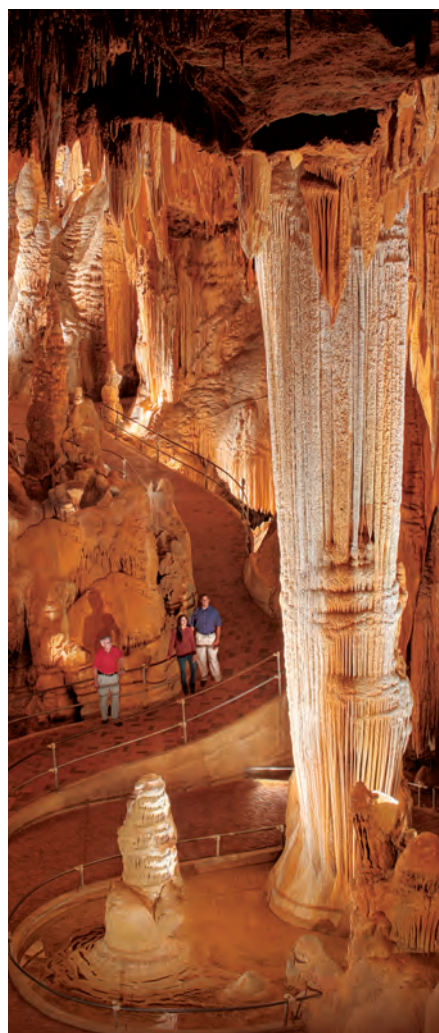
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A segment of the 23 miles of beaches at Daytona Beach, Florida

Rev up for Daytona Beach

Once known as the Spring Break Capital of America and for the Daytona 500—the motorized equivalent of the Kentucky Derby or Boston Marathon—Daytona Beach has worked hard to let tour operators know that it's more than just pretty beaches (23 miles of them to be exact).

While Daytona International Speedway is generally associated with the February NASCAR classic, it offers tour operators and their clients plenty to do any time of the year, from a daily tour of the Speedway grounds to a stroll through the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America.

A switch from revving engines to amusement rides and attractions isn't that much of a stretch in Daytona Beach. For a touch of nostalgia, take your group to the Boardwalk and Pier. On Saturday nights between Memorial Day and Labor Day, they can enjoy a dazzling fireworks display; the rest of the year, they will have to content themselves with concerts, street performers, food and fun.

Other activities that appeal to group travelers are eco-tours that showcase some of Florida's most endangered species, from turtles to manatees, and a visit to the Marine Science Center.

Just south of Daytona, the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse is the tallest in Florida at 175 feet. Your group may have to go single file to climb the 203 steps to the top, but it's worth it for the panoramic view of the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway.

If the lighthouse, built in 1887, is something old, Daytona also has something new: One Daytona. The massive complex of shops, restaurants and entertainment venues was scheduled to open in late 2017, but Hurricane Irma pushed back the opening, which is now scheduled for early 2018.

Finally, tour operators should know that Daytona is the Festival Capital of Florida, celebrating everything from oysters to outdoor art. The Daytona Beach Blues Festival, held each October (in 2018, it's Oct. 5–7) is one of the nation's most prestigious.

For more information, visit daytonabeach.com or contact Leda Beever at lbeeve@daytonabeach.com.

North Dakota
LEGENDARY



Fort Mandan, near Washburn

— Josh Duhamel —

UNSCRIPTED

We like to think that Lewis & Clark, along with Sakakawea, enjoyed a good laugh as much as anyone could in the winter of 1804. Rich history is just one reason why North Dakota native Josh Duhamel returns home. This summer, share the fascinating history of our state with your travel group. Visit us online to plan your next tour itinerary.

NDtourism.com/groups



Great Frontier U.S.

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Terry Bison Ranch

Why Wyoming? We'll give you three reasons.

The West

"Cheyenne is an authentic Western town with a name that conjures up images of cowboys, Indians, bison and steam trains chugging over the prairies," says Darren Rudloff, CEO at Visit Cheyenne. "As such, we have an abundance of the Western attractions that visitors expect to see when they are here."

In July is the 122nd Cheyenne Frontier Days, the world's largest outdoor rodeo. Groups can also see Cheyenne's many Western museums and visit the Terry Bison Ranch with over 3,000 bison, ride a train into the herd and feed the animals by hand.

The trains

"Cheyenne was built because of the transcontinental railroad cutting across the country. We have both Union Pacific and Burlington Northern tracks crossing Cheyenne, allowing train fans to watch them daily," Rudloff says.

Sites to see include the impressive original depot and the museum highlighting the Union Pacific's impact on the city; the Big Boy Steam Engine that's on display in Cheyenne's Holliday Park; and the Merci Train, a gift from the French as thanks for U.S. aid in rebuilding after World War II.

The Cheyenne Botanic Gardens

Cheyenne's newest attraction is a multi-million dollar addition to its existing botanic gardens.

The 28,000-square-foot, three-story conservatory opened in August 2017 and houses a large tropical plant collection, a water feature, and meeting and events space. With an observation deck on the third floor, the conservatory has a perfect view of the nearby park and lake. Visitors can also stroll through the property's eight acres and see the beautiful blooms. Admission to the attraction is free.

For more information, contact Rudloff at darren@cheyyenne.org or visit cheyyenne.org.



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See the stars in North Dakota

North Dakota is filled with unique, small-town theaters that give visitors an authentic vintage theater experience with up-to-date technology.

"Little has changed since picture shows made their debuts. Technology in the film room has evolved but the ambiance of a dark theater, buttered popcorn and a movie with friends is the same as it was when Marlon and Marilyn and the Duke filled the screen," says Deanne Cunningham, group travel marketing manager with North Dakota Tourism Division.



NDTOURISM.COM

The Kenmare Theatre and the Harvey Central Cinema—located in their namesake cities—both show first-run movies. The Fargo Theatre will host the 17th annual Fargo Film Festival March 20–24, featuring more than 100 films and a range of social events and panel discussions.

"Under its iconic marquee, visitors will enjoy the art deco interior and Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ in their full glory," Cunningham says. "Fargo opens its arms to filmmakers from all genres, including international, animated, documentary and narrative features and shorts."

She also says there are summer theater performances in some of the state's most beautiful areas.

"The 'Medora Musical' opens in June in the outdoor Burning Hills Amphitheatre, surrounded by nature and the Badlands," she says.

Performances run June through August at the LaMoure County Summer Musical Theatre, featuring a World War I-era auditorium on the Chan SanSan Scenic Backway.

Other venues with performances in June and July include Frost Fire Summer Theatre in Walhalla, Fort Totten Little Theatre in St. Michael, Prairie Regional Center for the Arts in New Rockford and Sleepy Hollow Theatre and Arts Park in Bismarck.

For more information, contact Cunningham at decunningham@nd.gov or visit ndtourism.com.



Carl Preussl (1894-1951).
Old Faithful, 1929. Oil on
canvas. Buffalo Bill Center
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"From foods that honor our Scandinavian, German, Dutch and Native American heritage to a nationally recognized culinary scene, South Dakota offers a variety of dining choices to please everyone's palate," says Vicky Engelhaupt, global travel and trade representative with South Dakota Tourism.

The state's ever-growing culinary scene offers cubed red meat called chislic (a South Dakota specialty), artisan Italian pasta made on a family farm in Alcester and coffee roasted in Parker at Cherrybean Coffee Co.

"M.B. Haskett in Sioux Falls was named the best eco-friendly/farm to-table restaurant in South Dakota by *Travel + Leisure*, and Mount Rushmore Memorial serves up ice cream that's made using the recipe President Thomas Jefferson brought back from France," Engelhaupt says.

To get a taste of the culture, visitors can experience *kuchen*, a custard-topped sweet bread with German-Russian roots (unofficially the state dessert) that's sold at several locations throughout the state, and tanka bars, which are cranberry-bison energy bars made by the Oglala Lakota tribe members on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

In addition to local-fare restaurants, Engelhaupt said they are gaining more wineries and brew pubs.

"Just as in the rest of the country, beer is booming here. South Dakota taps the tones of golden wheat beers, rosy



Chislic



Strawbale Winery

pale ales and chocolaty stouts with more than a dozen craft breweries," she says. "The same holds true for the dozen-plus wineries pouring familiar oak-aged reds like Merlot, newer Midwest-hardy varietals like Frontenac and St. Croix. Or they're honoring their ancestors' backyard harvests in black currant wine slushies or glasses of raspberry-rhubarb vino."

Some breweries and wineries across the state include Fernson Brewing Company in Sioux Falls, Strawbale Winery in Renner and Firehouse Wine Cellars in Rapid City.

To learn more, contact Engelhaupt at vicky.engelhaupt@travelsouthdakota.com or visit toursdakota.com.

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Lake McDonald

Scenery, wildlife abound in Glacier National Park

“Known as the Crown of the Continent, Glacier National Park is a bucket-list experience for many a traveler,” says Lucy Beighle, public relations and earned media manager with Montana’s Glacier Country.

Even if you don’t go to the park for adventure, you can plan a trip just to see the landscape: more than one million acres of stunning glacier-carved terrain, 400-foot waterfalls, mountains, rolling rivers and meadows.

“Scenic byways, majestic mountains, and unparalleled hiking and wildlife viewing opportunities can be combined with historical tours by Glacier Park Boat Tours or the famous Red Bus Tours,” Beighle says.

The Red Bus Tours allow groups to experience an interpretive tour of the park and learn history and highlights while taking in the incredible views in an open-air, vintage-style bus. Beighle

says a must-do for visitors, especially while taking a Red Bus Tour, is traveling Going-to-the-Sun Road, a national historic landmark stretching 50 miles through the park from West Glacier to St. Mary that crosses the Continental Divide at Logan Pass.

For hikers and bikers, the park offers more than 700 miles of maintained hiking trails for all levels of experience. Fall and spring are the most popular seasons for bikers to travel Going-to-the-Sun Road.

The wilderness areas in the park are considered one of the most intact ecosystems of the contiguous United States, so adventurers can expect to see grizzly and black bears, bison, deer, mountain goats, bighorn sheep, elk, moose, wolves, eagles, lynx and a variety of fish.

For more information, contact Beighle at lucy@glaciermt.com or visit glaciermt.com.



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GLACIERMT.COM



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Rafting on the Payette River

Sink, swim or float in Idaho

There are many ways to get out on (er, in) the water in the Gem State, whether it's at a rushing river, a relaxing hot spring or a stunning waterfall.

"Idaho is an incredibly scenic state, and one of the best parts of finding water-based activities is the scenery on the way to them," says Sarah Flick, tourism specialist with Idaho Tourism.

Idaho has more than 3,000 whitewater river miles, more than any of the states in the lower 48.

"We also boast some of the longest and most scenic stretches of river runs in the world. Both Bear Valley Rafting and Cascade Raft & Kayak offer half- and full-day trips on the Payette River, which offers class I to IV river rapids," Flick says.

If travelers are looking to relax, Lava Hot Springs offers a facility large enough for group tours.

"One of the best things to do in Idaho is find a natural hot spring and spend the day soaking away your worries, stress and any sore muscles," Flick says.

Continued on p. 48

Touring Montana or Idaho?

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Continued from p. 47

Lava Hot Springs, which is steeped in Native American and Oregon Trail-related history, also has an indoor aquatic center, and its outdoor hot soaking pools are open year-round. Another hot spring to see is Burgdorf Hot Springs in McCall, a rustic resort tucked away in the mountains.

Shoshone Falls is located on the Snake River and offers the best viewing in the spring, as runoff from winter snow creates an awe-inspiring experience, Flick says. Groups can kayak, canoe and paddleboard in the Snake River or follow the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway, which offers incredible views of the river and natural springs flowing from cliffs into the river at Thousand Springs State Park.

To learn more, contact Flick at sarah.flick@tourism.idaho.gov or go to visitidaho.org. 



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Wild about Saskatchewan's wildlife

"Saskatchewan is a phenomenal destination for watching wildlife," says Tourism Saskatchewan's Amy McInnis. "With a rich diversity of landscapes—from the prairie vistas and rugged badlands of the south, to the immense northern boreal forest that blankets the province's north, dotted with 100,000 lakes and rivers—there is no end to the pristine environments that wildlife thrive in here."

Nature lovers have plenty of places across the province where they can see everything from loons and whooping cranes to antelope and elk. McInnis recommends the following parks and nature reserves as top choices:

Prince Albert National Park *National Geographic Traveler* named this regional gem one of Canada's 50 Places of a Lifetime. The park's boreal woodlands area is home to 195 species of birds along with elk, bear and the occasional wolf.

Grasslands National Park At one of the largest tracts of native prairie in North America, visitors can see endangered species such as the Plains bison, pronghorn antelope, ferruginous hawks and the greater short-horned lizard.

Cypress Hills Destination Area The Cypress Hills are part of a forested plateau in the southwest corner of Saskatchewan and the southeast corner of Alberta, an area where moose, pronghorn, thousands of birds and other wildlife thrive.

Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area Established in 1887, the wildlife area is North America's oldest bird sanctuary. Millions of waterfowl pass through each fall, and enthusiasts also may catch a glimpse of the elusive whooping crane.

Reach out to McInnis at amy.mcinnis@tourismsask.com or visit trade.tourismsaskatchewan.com to learn more.

CHRIS HENDRICKSON/TOURISM SASKATCHEWAN



Mule deer in Grasslands National Park



GLACIER SKYWALK | PURSUIT

Glacier Skywalk near Alberta's Columbia Icefields

In Pursuit of Alberta adventure

Pursuit is a multi-faceted company that owns and operates a collection of nature-based tour offerings in Alberta's Canadian Rockies; Vancouver, British Columbia; Alaska; Montana; and, as of 2019, Iceland.

"Our world-class attractions, distinctive lodges and travel experiences help adventurous people from around the world discover and connect with iconic locations," says Eliza Fair, the company's sales manager—North America, Australia and New Zealand.

Pursuit's Banff Jasper Collection, which many NTA members know as Brewster Travel Canada, includes a number of hotels and sightseeing excursions in Alberta. The company's adventure center along the Icefields Parkway is the starting point for many of the programs, including Glacier Skywalk and Glacier Adventure.

A shuttle takes guests from the center to the skywalk, which extends out from the side of the mountain, 918 feet above the canyon floor. "Taking a jaw-dropping walk along the glass-floored Glacier Skywalk at the cliff's edge is an unforgettable experience," Fair says.

As part of the Glacier Adventure, travelers board a massive Ice Explorer that transports them to Athabasca Glacier. During their time outside the specially crafted earth rover, guests get to walk on, feel and drink from a glacier.

Two other popular experiences, a Maligne Lake Cruise and a ride on the Banff Gondola, offer additional Alberta adventures in Jasper and Banff, respectively.

To find out more, contact Fair at efair@pursuitcollection.com or visit pursuitcollection.com.

Rolling at the River Rock

"For us, it's all about location, location, location," says James Fry, the director of sales and catering for the Richmond, British Columbia-based River Rock Casino Resort. "We are a three-minute train ride from Vancouver International Airport and 18 minutes from downtown Vancouver."

The full-service resort offers casino gaming, nightly live music in the lounge, performances in the Show Theatre, an award-winning spa, contemporary rooms, a waterslide and more. Groups also can enjoy a range of culinary experiences at its 10 dining spots.

Tramonto and Sea Harbour Seafood Restaurant are two of the property's top restaurants. Patrons can have gourmet meals and take in great views of the Fraser River at Tramonto, which is consistently rated as one of the Vancouver area's best restaurants. Sea Harbour serves up contemporary Cantonese fare, dim sum and fresh seafood dishes in a sophisticated setting.



BC's River Rock Casino Resort

RIVER ROCK CASINO RESORT

"A variety of discounts are available for operators, including food and beverage credits and gaming incentives. Plus, we offer easily accessible tour bus pick up/drop off as well as free parking," Fry adds.

Contact him at jfry@riverrock.com or go to riverrock.com to find out more.



Gimli's Íslendingadagurinn festival

ICELANDICFESTIVAL.COM

On the trail of small-town Manitoba

While travelers are very familiar with Manitoba's signature cities, Winnipeg and Churchill, the province also boasts a number of small towns where hospitality and local spirit shine. According to Michel LaRivière, Travel Manitoba's international marketing specialist, groups can enjoy that hometown feel at the following four destinations:

Dauphin Tucked between Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis at the edge of Riding Mountain National Park, the city is known for its arts and culture scene and sites pertaining to the area's Ukrainian heritage.

Gimli A haven for settlers who founded New Iceland on the shore of Lake Winnipeg in 1875, Gimli pays tribute to its Nordic roots at the Icelandic Heritage Museum and during Íslendingadagurinn, a summer festival.

Morden The city's largest resident, a 43-foot marine reptile named Bruce, who resides at the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre, is just one of the many historical figures groups can encounter in this Pembina Valley gem.

Wasagamung The main town site is home to the southern visitor center for Riding Mountain National Park. Visitors can enjoy the area's natural beauty and take part in a number of activities centered around the popular Clear Lake.

For more information, contact LaRivière at mlariviere@travelmanitoba.com or visit travelmanitoba.com.

Festivals feature Yukon's cultural riches

This month, more than 50 dog teams and their handlers will head out on the Yukon tundra for one of the most grueling competitions on the planet, the Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race. Beyond the renowned 1,000-mile race, Yukon is home to a gaggle of other annual festivals, including the following ones that showcase local cities and culture (2018 dates listed):

The Sourdough Rendezvous Festival

Feb. 16-25

Whitehorse residents and visitors celebrate the cold winter months in style with a week of mainstage concerts, snow-carving displays and unusual contests—everything from lip syncing and hair freezing to chain-saw chucking.



GOVERNMENT OF YUKON

The Adäka Cultural Festival

June 29-July 5

The talents and contributions of Yukon's First Nations people are showcased in Whitehorse through traditional and contemporary music, dance, art and storytelling, as well as interactive craft workshops.

Dawson City Music Festival

July 20-22

This summer celebration, which turns 40 in 2018, features six stages of music and dozens of bands, workshops led by performers, open jam sessions, an arts pavilion and a beer garden.

To learn more, contact Tourism Yukon's Stephen Reynolds at stephen.reynolds@gov.yk.ca or go to travelyukon.com. 

COMMUNITY

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM THE NTA FAMILY



1



2



3



4



5



6

With a camera at every event throughout Travel Exchange, it's difficult to act nonchalant for five days. Hamming (or cheesing) it up in San Antonio were ...

- 1 Jenna VanOort of Visit Denver, The Convention & Visitors Bureau
- 2 Morgan Maravich and Todd Probus of NTA
- 3 Jerry and Angie Varner of Making Memories Tours
- 4 Chris Babb of The Group Tour Company
- 5 Pam Inman of NTA
- 6 Anna Strange of Visit Helena Montana

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Hard Rock Cafe International

CHICAGO

NTA contact: Tara Hippensteel,
director, tour and travel, North America

Office phone: +1.773.412.0301

Website: hardrock.com

NTA member since: 1993

Tell me how the famous Hard Rock Cafe got its start.

In 1971, two businessmen traveling in London were seeking an American burger. Then came Eric Clapton followed by Pete Townsend and a football team that needed a logo and a sponsor, all making England's first "classless" restaurant! "All is One," "Love All - Serve All," "Save the Planet" and "Take Time to Be Kind" are still our mottos we live by daily.

What should travelers expect out of an experience at Hard Rock Cafe?

They can always expect an authentic experience that rocks! No two cafes

are the same—our memorabilia on the walls is different in all cities. Our dining offerings are fresh and made from a "scratch kitchen," and all cafes have local flavor influences. Don't miss our local legendary burger when visiting a Hard Rock Cafe. Our staff is excitable and our guests leave with a unique, memorable experience.

What destination is at the top of your travel bucket list?

I live in one of the greatest cities (Chicago), but am always seeking the spirit of aloha in Hawaii. I love the mystery and elegance of Europe, although I feel equally at peace in the mountains.

What do you like to do on the weekends?

Catch up on life, including my best friend, Fozzie, my cavapoo.



For more information, contact Hippensteel at tara.hippensteel@hardrock.com.

Dobbin House Tavern

GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

NTA contact: Rick Beamer,
general manager

Office phone: +1.717.334.2100

Website: dobbinhouse.com

NTA member since: 1987

What makes the Dobbin House such a special place?

A visit here is like stepping back in time. Built in 1776, Dobbin House Tavern is the oldest building in Gettysburg, and it is located directly across the street from Soldiers National Cemetery, where President Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address.

The home was a station on the Underground Railroad and also a hospital following the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863. Here, visitors are surrounded by the history of the house and the history of Gettysburg.

What are some of the options groups have when they visit?

The Dobbin House offers breakfast, lunch

and dinner for groups, both buffet style and served to the table. Guests can eat in bed—a table constructed within a canopy bed frame—on the second floor, or by one of the 13 fireplaces located throughout the building. We also have dining rooms with seating for 10 to 150. Plus, groups can include a period character, like Abraham Lincoln or General and Mrs. Lee, for entertainment following a meal.

What other special things do you offer for tour operators?

We enjoy sharing the history of the Dobbin House and the Dobbin family with our groups and encourage them to take a free tour of the home. Guests can also see the slave hideout that was part of the Underground Railroad.

If you have friends visiting from out of town, where is one place you always take them?

Definitely to view the cyclorama painting at the national park visitors center. I think it is the crown jewel of Gettysburg.



What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

My favorite thing is spending time with my grandson Brayden. Brayden is 3 1/2 years old and has a very rare genetic disease. He has given me a whole new perspective on the important things in life.

For more information, contact Beamer at rickb@dobbinhouse.com.

Introducing ... NTA's newest members

Voyages Inter-Missions

MONTREAL

Tour operator

Founded in 1990, Voyages Inter-Missions is recognized for its expertise in organizing pilgrimages and cultural tours around the world. The company also offers a discovery of Canada's historical and religious heritage for organized and ad hoc groups as well as FITs.



Valérie Massalaz
Tour coordinator
+1.514.288.6077
valerie@voyagesintermissions.com
voyagesintermissions.com

"Born in France—and Canadian for 25 years—I love sharing my passion for culture, gastronomy and people. I enjoy searching for little gems my guests could experience."

Fond du Lac Area CVB

FOND DU LAC, WISCONSIN
DMO

Nestled between Milwaukee and Green Bay, Fond du Lac and the Lake Winnebago region form an intriguing hub-and-spoke group tour destination. The area includes more than 70 attractions and activities, ranging from supper clubs and waterfront restaurants to historical and agricultural excursions.



Liz Engh
Group tour sales manager
+1.920.923.3010
lengh@fdl.com
fdl.com

"I am thrilled to work hand-in-hand with dedicated and solution-driven tour planners. In Fond du Lac, our tours are as much about the journey as the destination."

Travel Wallah

WINCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

Travel planner

Travel Wallah specializes in small group, customized travel to India and beyond, focusing on culture, food and luxurious accommodations. With client safety and comfort always in mind, energetic operators and in-country guides are at the ready with knowledge, experience and flexibility.



Maria Shepherd
Owner
+1.781.258.8823
maria@travelwallah.org
travelwallah.org

"After I toured India in 2005, customized, luxurious and safe travel there became my passion, and Travel Wallah was born." (Wallah is Hindi for a person who performs a specific task.)

Dragon Trail Interactive

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY
Associate

Dragon Trail Interactive was one of the first digital marketing agencies to recognize the significance of the Chinese outbound travel market. The company's mission is to help global travel and tourism organizations engage with affluent Chinese consumers through outstanding digital initiatives.



Matt Grayson
President, Americas
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dragontrail.com

"I'm excited to be back in the travel industry and a member of an organization I love. It's especially gratifying to help NTA members get more visitation from China."

Silver, Golub & Teitell

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Associate

For more than 25 years, Jeffrey Ment, a partner at Silver Golub & Teitell, has represented travel industry clients—tour operators, vendors, suppliers and travel agents—myriad legal needs. He also speaks to groups about topics involving travel.



Jeffrey Ment
Attorney
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jment@sgtlaw.com
sgtlaw.com

"Representing travel companies allows me to combine my legal training with my industry experience as a travel agent, tour guide and sales manager for two airlines."

Legends Casino Hotel

TOPPENISH, WASHINGTON
Tour supplier

Legends Casino Hotel offers Vegas-style slots and table games with hometown flair. The 200 guest rooms and suites feature Native American accents and include posh furnishings, efficient work spaces, HD televisions and free Wi-Fi. Complimentary valet and ample charter bus parking are always available.



Trena Cloyd
Hospitality sales manager
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(ext. 5237)
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legendscasino.com

"I have worked in the hospitality industry for almost 20 years and now represent the Yakama Nation's Legends Casino Hotel in Washington's beautiful Yakima Valley." 🍷



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March 27-30, 2019



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CONTACT

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Anchorage, Alaska
March 18-21, 2020

The best job(s)

BY TAMMY GUILL



I HAVE THE BEST job in the world. As director of sales at Ride the Ducks of Seattle for the past seven years, I'm living the dream of connecting groups with our

amphibious and entertaining adventure tour of Seattle.

I have another "best" job, too, that I'll tell you about later.

I used to work for the Washington State Tourism Office, where I created itineraries and led Fam groups all over Washington. And for five years prior to that, I owned and operated a tour company, Bravo Tours, where we focused on senior groups and military reunions. Working with seniors was very rewarding and, honestly, one of my absolute favorite types of traveler.

One of my clients was a reunion group of nurses who, during World War II, accompanied wounded soldiers on flights from Paris to London. While holding the lives of patients in their hands during each harrowing journey, the nurses also had to deal with the possibility of being shot down. They were so young—and so courageous.

People in our industry say "once a tour operator, always a tour operator," and in my current role with Ride the Ducks, I'm



happy to help operators with their state-wide routing and to offer ideas for new and off-the-beaten-path tours.

That saying also applies to the job I do in my spare time; I lead senior tours for my church, CenterPoint, out of Eatonville, Wash. We've done a trip to Snoqualmie to take in the Northwest Railway Museum and a train ride, to Naches for a winter tour to watch hundreds of elk, to Federation Forest for a summer hike, and to Olympia in autumn for the farmers market combined with a pumpkin farm in Yelm. And yes, of course I took my seniors on a Duck tour—they absolutely loved it!

We keep the costs of the church tours low, which helps seniors on limited incomes, and we encourage them to invite their friends and family to create even better memories. We're helping the destinations we visit because there aren't a lot of groups that make it to some of the less-traveled areas of Washington.

Washington no longer has a state tourism office, so many of these gem destinations get overlooked because they have no budget to reach tour operators directly. I love being able to help small businesses by bringing our seniors to their establishments.

There's a certain kind of magic in seeing the joy our seniors experience on the tours, especially for those who may have wondered if they could still travel and explore. The light in their eyes touches my heart every time, and knowing they can share their new experiences with friends and loved ones is what it's all about.

Being able to lead tours for my church—while also truly enjoying my job and work family at Ride the Ducks—makes me think that my life and work balance is the best of both worlds in the tourism business that I love. 🍷

Tammy Guill is director of sales at Ride the Ducks of Seattle. You can email her at tammy@ridetheducksofseattle.com.



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