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NOVEMBER 2017

San Fernando Cathedral
in San Antonio



travel  exchange '17

Fourth-quarter fiesta

NTA assembles in San Antonio for December event

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FOR VETERANS**

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MORE, PLEASE**

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WHY WE

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Off we go, into the wild, blue Gander: Travelers who land in Gander, Newfoundland, can learn more about the area's storied aviation history, which dates back to the mid-1900s. Each August the city hosts the Festival of Flight as a nod to that part of its heritage. Turn to page 56 to learn more about Gander and other top destinations in Atlantic Canada.

Features



Clarksville charms

Courier's Kendall Fletcher took a road trip to Clarksville, Tennessee, to attend the city's annual Welcome Home Veterans celebration.



City Spotlight: New Orleans

Join editor Bob Rouse's journey to New Orleans to discover what he missed in 2015, when the city hosted Travel Exchange.



Travel Exchange '17 in San Antonio

See what's planned for NTA's upcoming convention in the Heart of Texas, Dec. 14-18.

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50 America's Historic East

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PLANNING AHEAD

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► JANUARY ISSUE

DESTINATIONS

West U.S.

Alaska, California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington

Belgium, France and the Netherlands

Ireland and the United Kingdom

City Spotlight: Toronto

SPECIAL COVERAGE

Preview to Charleston (Contact '18)

Casinos and Gaming

Guide: Casinos and Gaming

DEADLINES

Space: Nov. 3 | Material: Nov. 13

► FEBRUARY ISSUE

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Great Frontier U.S.

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SPECIAL COVERAGE

Travel Exchange - San Antonio Recap

Sightseeing, River and Big Ship Cruises

Guide: Sightseeing, River and Big Ship Cruises

DEADLINES

Space: Dec. 1 | Material: Dec. 11

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



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EMAIL IS AWESOME ... and maddening. At work I depend on electronic mail to exchange information and to stay in touch with colleagues, but with the welcomed notes come the unsolicited.

As the editor of a travel-industry magazine, I'm frequently asked to provide editorial coverage about a variety of topics. Some of these emailed letters and news releases are exactly what I would expect to receive: new travel product and programs, industry updates, new hires, etc. I file away the emails that I want to keep (info from NTA members, especially), forward those that are relevant to colleagues, and trash the rest.

"The rest" are those e-blasts that miss the mark: announcements from nonmembers, pitches for services and products that *Courier* won't cover—and anything in ALL CAPS.

Sometimes, though, an unsolicited email is from a real person and intentionally sent to me (another real person). Two individuals, a publisher and a publicist, discovered the *Courier* editorial calendar several months ago and knew we were covering San Antonio. They offered me books, and I accepted them as preparatory research for our upcoming Travel Exchange.

By reading "Goliad: The Other Alamo," I learned about the 1836 battles that shaped Texas. From "River City Dead," a murder mystery, I gained a surprising amount of information about modern-day San Antonio. And in digesting "San Antonio Classic Desserts," (featuring full-color, mouth-watering photos), I got hungry.

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Where in the World is COURIER?



On a recent trip to Germany, Doug Rentz, NTA communication and marketing manager, is a vision of solitude at Eagle's Nest in Berchtesgaden. And then he found the Hacker-Pschorr beer tent at Munich Oktoberfest.

This month's *Courier* is your preparatory research for Travel Exchange in San Antonio. Gabe Webb has assembled a hefty section, starting on page 28, that tutors you on all aspects of our December convention.

Kendall Fletcher reflects on her journey to Clarksville, Tennessee, for that city's Welcome Home Veterans celebration, pages 22 and 23. Pat Henderson covers an entire quadrant of North America: America's Historic East, starting on page 50, and Atlantic Canada, pages 56 and 57.

I think you'll like reading about the funding crisis faced by our friends in Wilmington, Delaware (only because it has a happy ending); it starts on page 18. In this month's City Spotlight (pages 24 to 27), I recap a trip to New Orleans, and in AfterWords on page 80, Gabe writes about his Tourism Cares experience in Providence, Rhode Island.

Before I let you go, I want to clarify my position on emails: I welcome yours. Tell me what you'd like us to cover, and let me know what you like reading in *Courier*. Do stay away from all caps in the subject line, though.

(And regarding desserts, San Antonio-made and otherwise: We in the *Courier* office value samples over recipes.)

Read on,



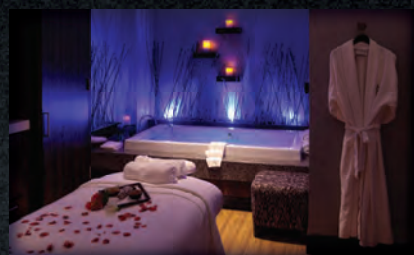
On the cover:

"The Saga," a video installation by Xavier de Richemont, tells a stylized history of San Antonio on the facade of the San Fernando Cathedral.
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IT'S ALMOST HERE! Our second Travel Exchange in 2017 will be the perfect complement to our fantastic event in St. Louis. Not only will we have a higher overall attendance, but we'll see plenty of fresh faces. At press time, at least 50 tour operators who didn't go to St. Louis are signed up for San Antonio. We also have more than 70 DMOs and 150 tour suppliers who will make their 2017 debuts at our convention in December.

If you've never been to San Antonio before, you're in for an amazing experience. When you see how the spectacular River Walk is decorated, it'll really put you in the holiday mood. And after a day of appointments and seminars, you'll appreciate our evening events, both for the fun and the networking.

To remind you of the value of belonging to NTA and attending Travel Exchange, I'm sharing more partnering stories from members of the executive committee of the NTA Board of Directors.

I'll see you in San Antonio!

Pam



Jay Smith
Sports Travel and Tours

I made a connection with Patti Culp from the Alabama Travel Council that was worth its weight in gold. This

past summer we had an issue with a program that was set to go to Rickwood Field in Birmingham, the oldest baseball park in the U.S. Two weeks prior to our group's arrival, I learned that the stadium had been condemned and we would not be able to enter. Needless to say, losing a highlight of our Southern Swing program, which included Atlanta, Birmingham and Huntsville, was a big problem.

On a Friday night, I got in touch with Patti, who had worked with me to build a program to include Alabama. By Tuesday morning, with Patti's help, we not only had an alternative to our Rickwood visit, but the new activities created with our friends in Birmingham ended up being better than the original plans.

We lined up some old timers who played in the Negro Southern League to visit the group, sign autographs, tell stories and pose for pictures with our travelers. We followed that session with a visit to a museum that had just opened near the stadium.

This is truly a networking success story that would not have happened had I not established a personal connection with Patti through NTA.



Chris Babb
The Group Tour Company

A few years back at Travel Exchange, Mark Kowalewski with Discover Prince William and Manassas invited me to spend a day exploring his area. That site inspection

grew into a partnership with Mark, the Fredericksburg CVB, Richmond Regional Tourism and Visit Norfolk. I became the receptive operator for their Virginia by Rail program, which focuses on the international inbound market. This convention conversation with an NTA member led to a great and profitable partnership!



Kelly Dean
Ottawa Tourism

I had worked for an Ottawa attraction for a couple of years before I ventured into the full-fledged tourism industry, taking a job as travel trade sales manager with Ottawa

Tourism. Preparing to attend my first NTA Conference, in Salt Lake City in the fall of 2000, I signed up for the Scavenger Hunt Sightseeing Tour.

At the beginning of the tour, I was nervous—I didn't know anyone—but after just a few items into the hunt, our team started to bond. I can't remember if we won or lost the hunt, but I do remember staying and chatting for hours at the Dead Goat Saloon. These new friends became my go-to team for the rest of my first NTA. I made so many contacts at that convention due to the people in that group, and one became an amazing client for me!

Whenever I mentor new delegates I tell them to get involved—and I always tell them to go on the sightseeing tours.

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COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

NTA launches career center

In search of your dream job in tourism? On the hunt for a top-notch employee to add to your staff?

Then look no further than the NTA Career Center, a new online jobs portal that NTA launched in late September. This center offers NTA members—and the larger travel industry—an easy-to-use tool to make online employment connections.

The new resource will help streamline the hiring process with:

- Unmatched exposure for job listings
- Easy online job management
- Resume searching access
- Company awareness

The site includes a section where job seekers can post their resume and browse for open positions and a section where employers can list jobs and access recruitment services. Its robust functionality allows both employers and potential employees to narrow their searches by details such as job location, industry segment, size of company and other job specifics.

The service is free for job seekers, and it allows them to post their resumes confidentially by creating a Job Agent.



Companies posting positions pay a per-listing fee, and NTA members receive a discounted rate.

To access the Career Center, go to careers.ntaonline.com.

2018 board of directors nominations, voting information

The NTA Nominating Committee has finalized the list of candidates for the 2018 board of directors election. The slate includes the following nine representatives from NTA-member companies:

Vice Chair – Paul Larsen, Ed-Ventures Inc.

Secretary – Dennis McDonnell, Alaska Coach Tours

Tour supplier director – Dan Flores, Maverick Aviation Group

Tour supplier director – Cory Mace, North Central Group

DMO director – Jennifer Adu, Wyoming Office of Tourism

DMO director – Dave Nitkiewicz, Experience Grand Rapids

Tour operator director – Debra Asberry,
Women Traveling Together

Tour operator director – Chase Poffenberger,
Academic Travel Abroad Inc.

Tour operator director – Jerry Varner, Making Memories Tours

For DMO and tour supplier director spots, the candidate with the most votes will fulfill a three-year term, while the other one will serve a two-year term.

At press time, the period for nominations from the floor was still open, so other candidates may be added to the ballot before it is distributed via email on Nov. 2. Early voting will be open through Dec. 8, then members will have the option of voting during the Talk Time on Dec. 15 at Travel Exchange in San Antonio.

Short biographies on each of the candidates are available at ntaonline.com/nta-board-slate.

Lori Erickson to headline FTA brunch at Travel Exchange



Join the Faith Travel Association in San Antonio at the FTA Breakfast and Networking Event, which will be held Dec. 16, at 7:30 a.m. during Travel Exchange. Lori Erickson will give the keynote address at this gathering of association members who focus on the faith-based travel market.

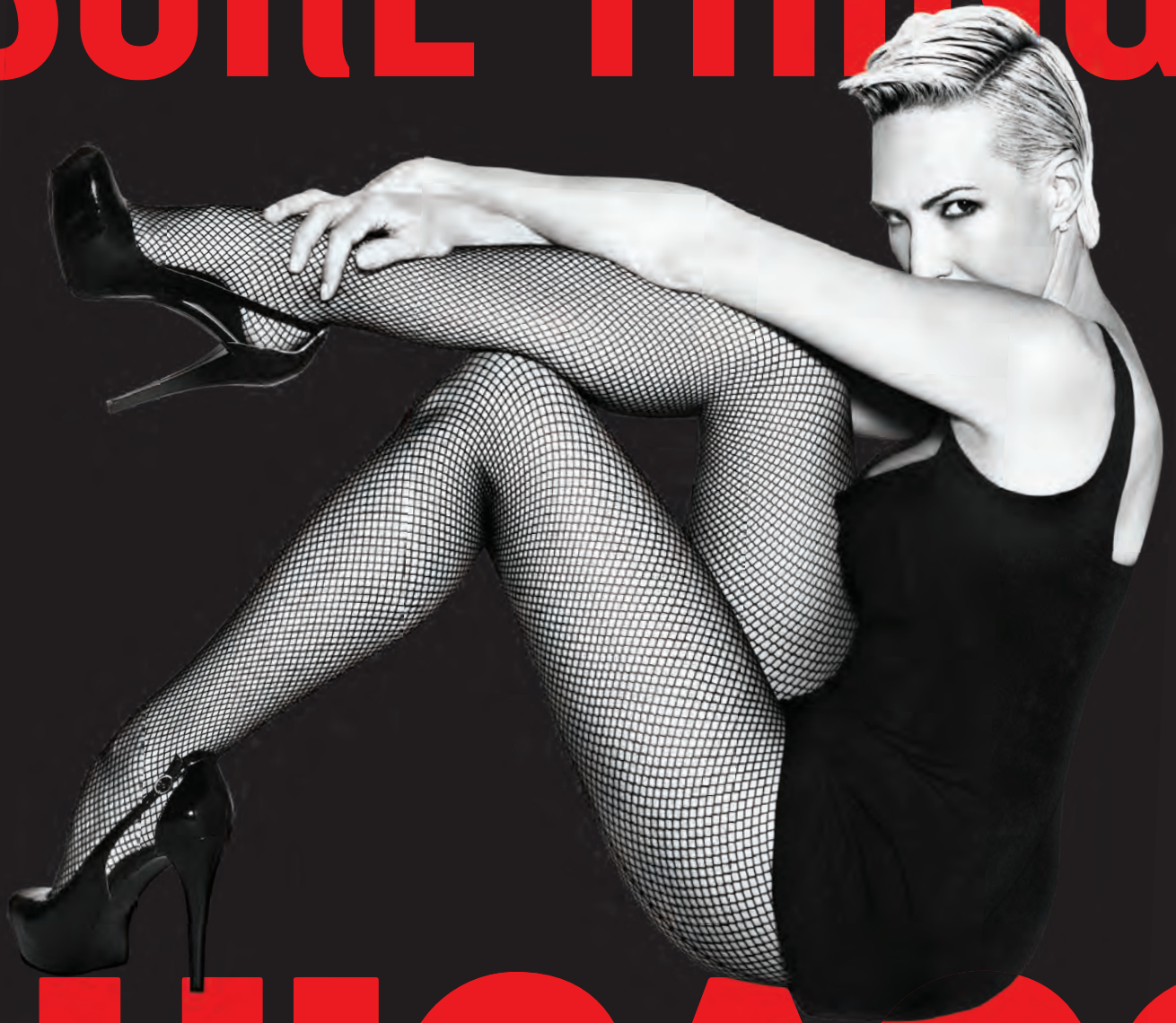
Erickson is one of the country's top travel writers specializing in spiritual journeys. Her recently published

book, "Holy Rover: Journeys in Search of Mystery, Miracles, and God," blends her personal narrative with descriptions of 12 pilgrimage sites she visited, ranging from Jerusalem and Machu Picchu to sacred places in the United States. Through her travels around the world, she has experienced a variety of religions, and those journeys have changed and molded her own spiritual views.

During her presentation, Erickson will share her spiritual travel story, her perspective on the importance of religious and spiritual tourism, and what trends she sees impacting faith travel.

To register for the breakfast, contact FTA's Kay Saffari at kay.saffari@faithtravelassociation.com. ☎

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TSA update: Leadership, funding and focus

DAVID PEKOSKE was sworn in as the seventh administrator of the U.S. Transportation Security Administration this August after appearing before both the Senate Commerce Committee and the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. He was unanimously approved by the entire Senate.

The TSA, which was created as a response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, has become a vital and prominent security component of the travel and tourism industry. During his congressional confirmation hearings, Pekoske stated that he hopes to improve the agency from top to bottom, with a focus on security innovation. Both Congress and the traveling

public want to ensure that security is addressed, and the new TSA administrator appears to be keenly aware of that.

During his confirmation hearings, Pekoske, who was vice commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard until 2010, cited his experience as perfect training for the job, pointing out that both positions rely on intelligence information to get ahead of threats and to employ risk-based management.

With the TSA's responsibilities for the security of the U.S. traveling public—and its annual budget of nearly \$8 billion—come a unique set of issues with staffing; long lines; criticisms over security checks, pat-downs and full-body scans; and rail security, among a multitude of

Both Congress and the traveling public want to ensure that security is addressed, and the new TSA administrator appears to be keenly aware of that.

other difficulties. A major concern for the travel and tourism industry is the long waits for TSA's security procedures that customers face while trying to get to their flights on time.

Staffing problems within the agency have caused these lengthy waits at



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security screening lines across the country. The TSA, which has been criticized for this issue, has recently been screening record numbers of passengers without many problems, but airline and airport leaders, along with aviation advocates, are worried that this success will not continue for long.

Airports Council International cited aging screening technology and an insufficient number of screeners as the cause of TSA's problems. TSA has attempted to reduce wait times by taking screeners from some airports and deploying them at other airports, which has led to new problems.

ACI has suggested that the best long-term solution is to increase funding for TSA. The 9/11 passenger security fee, which was originally established to help fund TSA, has been diverted for several years to help reduce federal debt. ACI says that \$1.28 billion in 9/11 security fees has been used not for TSA funding, but for subsidizing other federal programs.

A House-passed reauthorization bill for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security prevents the diversion of the 9/11 security fee. So far, though, there has been no willingness on the Senate side to make this change. Some Senate appropriators, including Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark., have criticized President Trump's proposal to increase TSA ticket fees by \$1, a plan that would help the TSA deal with its operational costs. However, this plan does not explicitly call for an end to the 9/11 security fee diversion.

On Sept. 28, following a week of multiple hearings in both chambers of Congress focusing on aviation security and the TSA, the Senate Commerce Committee introduced the TSA Modernization Act. Sponsors of the proposal say it would reform TSA's organizational structure, advance the development and acquisition of new security technologies, improve public-area security and mitigate frustrating security delays. The bill would reauthorize TSA aviation security policies and programs, and it would also authorize TSA funding for three years: \$7.81 billion in fiscal year 2018, \$7.85 billion in FY 2019 and \$7.89 billion in FY 2020. (The budget for TSA in FY 2017 was \$7.77 billion.)

With the recently passed six-month Federal Aviation Administration extension, many members of Congress are now focused on aviation and the security of the traveling public. This is evident through the introduction of the Senate TSA bill. Provisions within the bill, including stabilizing leadership through the establishment of five-year administrator terms, expansion of TSA PreCheck, real-time reporting of security wait times and deploying new security technology, clearly show that Congress

understands the importance of the travel and tourism industry.

With consistent engagement from NTA and other travel coalitions and industry groups, our elected officials will continue to pay attention to the needs of such a vital sector. ☪

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



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Find your trail and make your splash in 2018

BY LISA RONALD, COORDINATOR,
WILD & SCENIC RIVERS 50TH
ANNIVERSARY COALITION



River outfitters such as Northwest Rafting Company (below) help visitors enjoy the Rogue River in Oregon.

IN 2018 recreationists and conservationists in the United States will celebrate the 50th anniversary of public rivers and trails. Two pivotal laws, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the National Trails Act, were enacted at a time when outdoor enthusiasts and congressional champions demanded free-flowing rivers to balance America's policy of rampant dam building, and they asked for trails to connect people to the outdoors. These monumental acts of Congress brought rivers and trails to the forefront of the American consciousness.

The National Trails Act created what are now termed national scenic, historic and recreation trails. These trails provide outdoor recreation opportunities and promote resource preservation and public access. Using designated trails, the public can more easily connect with nature and identify the scenic, historic and recreational elements that the trails protect.

The act put in place the initial components of the National Trails System, the Pacific Crest Trail and the Appalachian Trail. Over time, other trails have been added, such as the Continental Divide Trail, which was designated in 1978. The legacy of the National Trails Act has steadily grown

to include 11 national scenic trails, 19 national historic trails and more than 1,200 national recreation trails.

The passage of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 created a system that protects specific segments of free-flowing, undammed rivers for water-based recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and cultural and historical uses, and preserves those areas' scenery and geology. These rivers provide a wide variety of visitor experiences, ranging from wild and primitive to those in developed areas that are readily accessible by road.

As with the National Trails System, the Wild and Scenic Rivers System has grown steadily since its creation, and today it protects 208 rivers encompassing more than 12,000 river miles in 40 states and Puerto Rico.

Visiting trails and scenic rivers

Let's take a closer look at six of America's rivers and trails—some well known and others less traveled.

Pacific Crest Trail Zigzagging 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada, the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail spans three states and crosses national monuments, national parks, national forests,



ZACHARY COLLIER

Bureau of Land Management land, federally designated wilderness land, state and county parks, and tribal lands. The trail traverses some of the most iconic terrain that the West has to offer, from the highest vistas to the most splendid valleys. Accessing the Pacific Crest Trail in California, Oregon or Washington is typically quite easy, and there are many resources available to help with trip planning. Prior to making the journey, trail users should do research to determine what activities are allowed and whether permits are needed. pcta.org/discover-the-trail

Nez Perce Trail The Nez Perce (Nimiipuu or Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail stretches more than 1,100 miles from Wallowa Lake, Oregon, to the Bear Paw Battlefield near Chinook, Montana. The 1877 flight of the Nez Perce from their homelands—they were being pursued by the U.S. Army—is an incredibly sorrowful and fascinating event. Congress recognized that history by adding the path of the Nez Perce people to the National Trails System as a national historic trail in 1986. www.fs.usda.gov/npnht

Hellicat Interpretive Trail This national recreation trail is located within the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern Massachusetts. Largely consisting of boardwalks, the trail meanders 1.4 miles through freshwater marsh, shrub, vernal pools, dune and maritime woodland habitats, and it features 15 interpretive panels to educate visitors about the different ecosystems. fws.gov/refuge/parker_river

Middle Fork of the Salmon River One of the original eight rivers designated in 1968, the Middle Fork of the Salmon River flows through Idaho's remote Frank Church—River of No Return Wilderness. At this wild river site, visitors can enjoy quiet isolation, crystal clear water, wilderness hiking, natural hot springs and the challenge of its Class III and IV-plus whitewater. Trips can be booked through commercial outfitters, or private boaters can apply for permits through an annual lottery. bit.ly/2xE4p3H



KARL BIRKELAND/USFS

River Styx The only underground protected river, the scenic River Styx winds through Oregon Caves National Monument. To see the River Styx, visitors must take a 90-minute Discovery Cave Tour led by rangers along a boardwalk through the cave system. Stalactites, stalagmites and other unique rock formations compose this river's spectacular geology. nps.gov/orca/planyourvisit

Clarion River This Pennsylvania river is a success story in renewal. Trout and smallmouth bass now flourish in water once tainted by waste from tanneries and by acid drainage from mines. Most of the Clarion River is designated as recreational, and numerous access points make it easy for paddlers, inner tube floaters and fishermen to enjoy its sinuous, yet placid, waters. bit.ly/2hxmJCo

Rivers, trails and tourism

The tourism industry plays a critical role in public lands protection by introducing people to the outdoors. Historically and today, many people would not experience the outdoors without guided trips—everything from horse packers and guided hikes to river outfitters leading day and overnight trips. Outfitters and guides serve as interpreters for their customers and are in unique positions to inform and inspire.

The Wild & Scenic Rivers 50th Anniversary Coalition hopes that the tourism industry will use the anniversary year of 2018 to plan itineraries that highlight rivers and trails and to educate customers about the value of these unique places. Educating the public about nationally designated rivers and trails—as well as local ones—begins by training guides to convey information about the ecology, biology, natural and cultural history, stewardship responsibilities, and advocacy efforts for these special areas. ©

Lisa Ronald is coordinator of the Wild & Scenic Rivers 50th Anniversary Coalition, which celebrates the 1968 creation of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. For more information, visit wildandscenicrivers50.us.

Share your story

Rivers and trails offer limitless opportunities for recreation. Help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the National Trails Act in 2018 by sharing your stories, photos and favorite memories: Go to 5000miles.org to relate your river story, or visit trails50.org to talk about trails.

Faster, better, stronger!

Top tools for social marketing success

BY CATHERINE HEEG



DO YOU REMEMBER when a video recorder was as big as a shoe box? Or when photo editing involved a scissors and glue? Back in the day, we felt like pretty savvy travel marketers.

The tools of the trade have changed. Today we can carry nearly everything we need in our pockets; it's a matter of choosing which ones are the best fit for the job. Let's look at some tools that will save time, provide inspiration and help create even more compelling marketing stories.

Video tools

Fifty-two percent of marketing professionals worldwide named video as the content with the best ROI, and what we do with the video just after we shoot it is the key to its success. If you're recording video on your phone, here are some editing tools to use in addition to those already on your phone.

- **Movie Maker (Windows) and iMovie (Mac)** Both are free and easy to use. You can edit and add text, overlays, still images, music, animations, visual effects—even voice-overs.
- **VSDC Free Video Editor** With a bit of help from the tutorials, you can add text, special effects and image stabilization. Color correction and blending can improve video quality that's less than perfect.
- **Lumyer** Imagine adding confetti, lightning and lens flare to your group tour videos. It's a great way to capture attention, and Lumyer lets you do it for free.
- **Lumen 5** Want to create video from an article or blog you've written? This free (and really cool) tool takes your written copy and turns it into a video slideshow complete with your text and images.
- **Screencast-o-Matic** Do you want to create a video tutorial? This tool lets you record on-screen activity for short presentations or



demonstrations of your booking engine or other activities.

Photo tools

There's a popular saying among marketers: "Hear a piece of information, and three days later you'll remember 10 percent of it. Add a picture and you'll remember 65 percent." The same focus applies to your social marketing.

When we take the time to add a bit of pizzazz to photos we post socially, we're rewarded with increased reach and engagement. Here are some of my favorites filters and photo-effects tools.

- Social platforms now have onboard photo-editing tools. Most have filters and overlays, and some let you draw on the image freehand.
- Desktop image editing tools are everywhere. Here are some of my favorites: bit.ly/LiteUp1
- Did you capture a photo-bomber in your last snap? Using TouchRetouch or SnapSeed on your mobile device, run your finger over a face (or anything) to edit it out.

Turn lookers into bookers

Keeping in touch with your clients can transform them from lookers to bookers. Here are some cool ideas to help you stay top of mind.

- A new Skype plug-in lets you add a call link into an email, social post or a calendar invite. Clients simply click the link; they do not need a Skype account.
- Your Facebook inbox gives you the chance to create an appointment with your connections.
- Do your e-blasts get the open rate you want? Use Headline Analyzer to write stronger email subject lines and blog titles. Simply type in your text and the analyzer provides a relevance score. coschedule.com/headline-analyzer
- And if you lack inspiration, check out sample emails with great wording. goodemailcopy.com

We're all looking for faster, better, stronger ways to grow our businesses and expect to be able to carry all the tools in our pocket. Forget the glue and scissors and transform your marketing efforts with a few clicks, a bit of creativity and a splash of copywriting. ☺

Catherine Heeg, international speaker and trainer, focuses on social media marketing strategies for the tourism and hospitality industry. Join her sessions at Travel Exchange in San Antonio. And connect with her at cmsspeaking.com.



WASIN PUMMARIN

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"Contact is a great venue for networking with your fellow NTA operators at a much slower pace. You get to mingle with your friends in the business and understand how things are from different perspectives. NTA also selects great destinations for this event, which helps tremendously."

—Nish Patel, Mayflower Tours



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—Clayton Whitehead, CTP,
Sports Leisure Vacations



"I can meet with owners who have both similar and uniquely different business models. The exchange of information regarding challenges, opportunities and solutions often gives me new perspectives on current and future challenges our company will be facing."

—Jim Warren, CTP,
Anderson Vacations

What's New

All-member Reception & Icebreaker

Now on Wednesday, this social gathering allows attendees to reconnect or meet for the first time and get ready for a productive week in Charleston.

Opening Networking Session

This annual favorite has been revamped into an interactive networking session for all attendees—buyers and sponsors.

Two Dine-around nights

Charleston is known for its seafood (especially shrimp and crab dishes), barbecue and Lowcountry classics, and we'll have two opportunities to indulge.



Friday Grab & Go Breakfast

Grab a bite before seminars and sightseeing tours later that morning.

Educational sightseeing outing

This is your chance to see Charleston based on specialty market interest: agri-tourism, historical/heritage or faith travel.

Government Relations Silent Auction

Be sure to check out our silent auction items, and get your bid in early (and often)! All items have been donated by fellow NTA members with funds raised going to NTA's advocacy efforts on your behalf.



Contact '18 at a Glance

When

April 18–21, 2018

Where

Embassy Suites by Hilton Charleston
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5055 International Blvd.
North Charleston, SC 29418

Web

NTAonline.com/contact

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The Interview

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS FROM NTA MEMBERS

Defunded in Delaware?

BY BOB ROUSE

Last summer was panic time for Sarah Willoughby. The executive director of the Greater Wilmington (Delaware) Convention and Visitors Bureau faced the imminent closure of her office when the state legislature's Joint Finance Committee cut all support for the CVB. With only weeks to work a miracle, Willoughby enlisted the help of the travel and tourism community to preserve funding for all three of Delaware's state-funded CVBs. *Courier* connected with Willoughby to get the whole story.

Courier: How did your funding nightmare begin?

Willoughby: In Delaware there are three counties, and each has a tourism bureau. We are funded with one-eighth of an 8 percent public accommodation (lodging) tax. On May 30, I received a

text from our lobbyist, telling me that our funding had been eliminated. No questions, no discussions—just eliminated as part of a move to shore up the state budget. There was not even an opportunity for us to testify before the Joint Finance Committee.



Pictured top right with the Greater Wilmington CVB staff is Sarah Willoughby, executive director. Jennifer Arrigo, tourism sales manager, is top row, second from left.

Courier: What would a loss of tax dollars mean to Wilmington—and to other Delaware communities?

Willoughby: The one percentage point from the accommodation tax represents 92 percent of our funding. If you eliminate funding for these CVBs, you will eliminate all of the marketing—plus all the destination knowledge—in each county. The offices in the three counties help bring in over \$4 billion a year in visitor spending, with more than \$2 billion of that spent here in Wilmington and New Castle County.

You would also lose the targeted destination marketing we provide for our attractions, hotels and restaurants. Our county gets 2.7 million visitors a year, and many businesses and their employees depend on us for the marketing we do. For tour operators, it would mean that the personal touch and special attention they receive would no longer be there. We heard this loud and clear from the many tour operators who wrote letters of support for us.

Courier: What would the cuts mean to you and your staff?

Willoughby: The hardest part for me was having my staff experience this, but they wanted to be a part of the solution. The GWCVB has eight full-time and three part-time employees. I've been here for 13 years, and one member of our staff has been here for 20 years. We all would have lost our jobs within six months.

I worked through various scenarios and considered rent options and other ways we could reduce spending so that we could strategically use our reserves and remaining funds. It would be very difficult, though, to continue to operate and follow our mission as a destination marketing organization without our allocation of the public accommodations tax.

Courier: What steps did you take to salvage funding, and who helped you?

Willoughby: The three CVBs engaged our members and partners: We sent emails, made phone calls and scheduled

one-on-one meetings. My peers and I went to Dover every day from May 30 to June 30.

The one amazing, feel-good thing through all this was how our members, partners and industry friends rallied. Within Delaware, we were supported by many chambers of commerce, big and small businesses, the Delaware Hotel Lodging Association and the Delaware Restaurant Association. The governor was very supportive, as were our county executive and the mayor of Wilmington.

NTA and ABA were right there when we asked for support, and AAA came out very strong for us, too. Tour operators, meeting planners and travel writers all stepped up and described the need for the CVBs, explaining that tourism business would go elsewhere.

From the copies of letters and emails I received, I can say with confidence that more than 500 letters of support were sent.

Courier: What was the resolution?

Willoughby: The state budget was to be balanced on June 30, but it took until July 3. In the early hours of that Monday, one move led to another, and then my phone lit up. I got word that our allocation of the public accommodations tax was restored 100 percent. It felt great, but it wasn't a total celebration. Those in our nonprofit community, which comprise many of our members, received a 20 percent cut. And the scariest part of it all is that nothing was fixed in the budget.



Pictured above are some of the name tags Sarah Willoughby collected from her daily visits to the Delaware state capitol last June.

Courier: What lessons can you offer other DMOs?

Willoughby: We are so thankful that we have a lobbyist! We heard many times from legislators and others in the process that our offices are included in legislation for a reason, and we should make sure we explain our role in economic development.

So I would tell any DMO colleague to communicate with legislators to describe what you are doing. We have always sent legislators our annual visitor guide, but now we are sending them our monthly consumer e-newsletter—with a tracking report of opens and clicks. We're also

inviting state legislators to more of our events. And very important: We are getting to know more legislative aides.

The biggest take-away is that I never want to be back in this situation again; it's the worst House-of-Cards feeling. But in reality, we very well could be back on the chopping block again. ☹

Sarah Willoughby, CTP, is executive director of the Greater Wilmington CVB; her email address is swilloughby@visitwilmingtonde.com. For information about visiting the area, contact Jennifer Arrigo, the bureau's tourism sales manager, at jarrigo@visitwilmingtonde.com.

Support from NTA

When Jennifer Arrigo, tourism sales manager of the Greater Wilmington CVB, asked NTA President Pam Inman for support in the DMO's battle for funding, Inman responded immediately with a letter to Delaware's Joint Finance Committee. Below are excerpts from that June letter (bullets added):

- You should know that while the travel and tourism industry is thriving, destinations are faced with unprecedented competition for visitors.
- Even though Delaware is facing financial challenges, you cannot expect to fill your budgetary bucket by turning off the revenue spigot.
- Tourists—and the dollars and tax revenues they bring—will not simply wander into your state. They must be enticed by marketing experts who can also nurture relationships with tour operators and other travel planners.
- For Wilmington to stand out and draw visitors to Delaware, the city needs a team of professionals who can promote the city and the state to the traveling public as well as to tour operators and meeting planners.
- You might not know the language of the travel industry, but your Wilmington CVB staff does, and their voices are ones that travel planners trust.
- When Wilmington no longer connects with NTA tour operators, those operators—and the busloads of travelers they represent—will no longer connect with Wilmington. ☹

COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON



Sydney Opera House

DESTINATION NEW SOUTH WALES

In living color

Each year, the buildings around Australia's largest city get a lot brighter during Vivid Sydney. This festival, which is the world's largest light-centric event, is a magnet for creative types.

The three-week-long event, scheduled for May 25–June 16, 2018, will use a number of local landmarks as backdrops for hundreds of colorful displays. The incredible installations are centered around the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the iconic Opera House, as well as Darling Harbour, Taronga Zoo and the Royal Botanic Garden. Groups can check out the illuminated exhibits as part of Vivid Light Walks, a group of short, self-guided routes in different areas of the city.

In addition to seeing the light installations, groups can enjoy two of the festival's other components: Vivid Music and Vivid Ideas. Vivid Music hosts an eclectic range of live

performances and groundbreaking musical collaborations at venues across the city. As part of FEEDBACK: A Music Conference for Young People, students can learn how to release music, get gigs and airplay, build a fan base and much more as they meet and get advice from performers, managers, producers, publicists and other industry insiders.

Other personal and professional development sessions, led by speakers from many creative fields, are available through Vivid Ideas. At the 2017 event, topics ranged from "Smartphone Filmmaking" and "Performance for Social Change" to "Gen Xi: Educating the Next Generation of Innovators" and "Ten Unsexy Things You Need to Know to Run Your Creative Business."

To learn more, call [+61.2.9931.1111](tel:+61299311111) or go to vivid Sydney.com.

Cuts like a knife (river)

The Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site in central North Dakota, preserves and interprets the historical and archaeological remnants of the culture and agricultural lifestyles of the Plains Indians. The National Park Service-managed site includes traditional earthlodge dwellings and a cultural village, as well as native short grass prairie, exotic grasslands, wetland areas and 450 acres of hardwood forest.

During a visit to the attraction, which is located about an hour northwest of Bismarck near Stanton, groups can learn more about the area's significance as a trade center and its tie to Sakakawea.

A typical tour includes viewing the exhibits at the museum, visiting a full-scale reconstructed earthlodge, exploring the Hidatsa Garden and taking a walk along the Village Trail that goes past the remains of the Awatixa Xi'e Village and the Awatixa Village.

The latter village is of great significance, as it is where Sakakawea was living when she met Lewis and Clark. She played a vital role in helping the explorers and their party



Reconstructed earthlodge

CC BY-WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/XERXES2004: bit.ly/2yovv3E

stay safe, which allowed them to continue on west as part of their influential journey.

Visits to the Knife River Indian Villages often are combined with stops at the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center and the Fort Mandan site in nearby Washburn. Those attractions provide a more complete look at the Corps of Discovery's time in North Dakota, which included the influential meeting with Sakakawea.

Call [+1.701.745.3300](tel:+17017453300) or go to nps.gov/knri to find out more.

Welcome to the boomtown

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978, Las Vegas' Springs Preserve is a 180-acre site that sits approximately three miles west of the Strip. The multifaceted attraction includes everything from museums, period buildings and an amphitheater to a botanical garden, trails and wildlife exhibits. Springs Preserve celebrated its 10th anniversary this year



GULLIVER'S GATE

by opening several new exhibits including WaterWorks and Boomtown 1905. WaterWorks offers a look at the journey water takes from an on-site pump station to the taps of residents in the Vegas Valley. The exhibit takes guests inside the Charleston Heights Pumping Station, an active production facility that's operated by the Las Vegas Valley Water District.

The interactive Boomtown 1905 area recalls the early days when Las Vegas was a fledgling desert community. The re-created streetscape features representations of businesses that developed between 1905 and 1920, including the Arizona Club, the Majestic Theatre and the Lincoln Hotel. Groups can enjoy activities such as a Morse Code challenge at the Las Vegas Train Depot, using a vintage cash register to make change at the Las Vegas Mercantile and weighing precious metals at the First State Bank.

A variety of guided tours and special events are offered throughout the year. Annual festivals such as Mardi Gras Vegas (February), the 'Ohana Festival (May), the Grapes & Hops Festival (September) and the Haunted Harvest (October) are popular with groups, as are the Botanical Garden Guided Walk or the Springs Preserve Mining Camp that are offered each weekend.

For more information, visit springspreserve.org or call +1.702.822.7746. 📍

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A weekend to remember

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KENDALL FLETCHER

A HIGHLIGHT of my September was a road trip to Clarksville, Tennessee, to attend the city's Welcome Home Veterans celebration, an annual week-long event recognizing Vietnam War veterans and serving as their never-received homecoming.

I was excited to have my mom along for the trip. Neither of us are very good at navigating new places, so I suspected that three days in a town we'd never visited would turn into a story of its own.

We stayed at the Riverview Inn on the edge of downtown Clarksville. Many veterans stayed there as well, and each time I walked through the lobby, I enjoyed hearing the talk of days long past between war buddies.

On our first night, we attended the Remembrance Ceremony at First Baptist Church downtown. Hearing the lovely voices of a large high school choir singing "America the Beautiful" and my Mamaw's favorite, "Battle Hymn of the Republic," whooshed me back to my years of high school chorus, and the remainder of the evening followed nostalgic suit.

We heard from Cindy Stonebraker, a Hopkinsville, Kentucky, native whose

father has been missing in action since 1968. She talked about the many people she's met along the way, including the air traffic controller who gave her father's plane permission to take off, and a stranger wearing a POW bracelet with his name on it. More potently, she played a recording for us of her father talking to her on her sixth birthday just before he went missing. I don't believe there was a dry eye in the room.

The next day was a busy one. We attended a luncheon where we sat next to Vietnam-era veteran Joe Britton. He served as a dentist and helped physicians care for wounded soldiers on bases from Texas to West Germany. Britton retired as an army officer after 20 years and now runs a private practice. It was his first time at the event, and said he was honored to be part of something that symbolized the sacrifices made by Americans during a war that was so unpopular.

The guest speaker was Bill Robinson, the longest-held prisoner of war in American history. Robinson and his U.S. Air Force crew were shot down in a helicopter while on a rescue mission and



Bill Robinson is the longest-held prisoner of war in American history, held captive in Vietnam for seven years. He will share his story at the Government Relations Breakfast Bistro at Travel Exchange.

captured. He was held in North Vietnam for seven years, enduring torture and the loss of his friends, before his release at the end of the war.

"I can truly say I'm the luckiest man alive," he said. "One of the continuing

thoughts I had while in captivity was how fortunate I am to be an American. Our basic ideas and principles are honorable."

Robinson, who will speak at the Government Relations Breakfast Bistro at Travel Exchange, said the welcome home he received belonged to all Vietnam veterans.

"They were asked to remove their uniforms when they came home so as not to offend anyone," he said. "I was still spat upon like the rest, but I represented the end of something they'd been seeking."

Robinson continued his service in the military for 12 years after his release, retiring as a captain in 1984.

"I want to give back and show appreciation for those willing to put everything on the line for me. I don't want their sacrifice to go unnoticed," he said, explaining why he took part in this year's celebration.

We toured the USS Landing Ship Tank 325, the last fully operational landing ship from World War II. We also visited Beachaven Vineyards & Winery, which hosted an 80-percent scale model of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall and a wreath-laying ceremony. I watched brave souls jump from an airplane and deploy giant flags to kick-start the event. I heard the always-poignant "Taps" and watched men and women, young and old, stand proudly at attention as the colors were presented, as the national anthem was sung and as they placed a wreath near the soldier's cross at the foot of the Vietnam Wall. It was a beautiful sight to behold.

It was there I met Ernesto Rodriguez, a 15-year army vet who served tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Vietnam vets didn't get a lot of fanfare. I feel we turned our backs on them," he said. "This was nice to see the community come together (for the celebration). They deserved this. They also paved the way for future vets to get the care they needed."

Rodriguez, a Clarksville resident, recently finished walking cross-country to bring awareness to veteran suicide, marching from his hometown to Santa Monica, California.

"I have a lot of friends that I've lost to suicide and in battle. As this (event) progresses, I hope people realize that they're not forgotten," he said.

That evening, we attended a Bob Hope tribute show, staged to replicate one of the variety shows he put on for Vietnam soldiers. There was an impersonator who looked and sounded just like the late comedian (or so my mom says) along with performers imitating the era's stars like Anita Bryant and, much to my mom's delight, comedian Phyllis Diller. There was also a glamorous blonde named Michelle Dellafave who captivated the room. As it turns out, she performed with Bob Hope during his tours to Vietnam. What neat stories she told!

Frances Manzitto, director of tourism sales with Visit Clarksville, acts as a receptive operator and helps incoming tour operators get their groups booked in hotels, arranges seating at the events and provides itineraries and guides for their stay.

"We take care of all their needs when (groups) come," she said. "If people work with the senior market, they work with veterans and their spouses. We're willing to put some effort into helping a tour operator get some leeway with veterans groups, which can lead to future business for them if these people have never traveled by motorcoach."

Frances said she's pleased with how smoothly the events went this year—not to mention the beautiful weather—and she said next year's celebration, scheduled for Sept. 12-16, will be similar.

We attended a downtown parade on Saturday morning before heading home. It was heartwarming to watch the people I'd met over those short couple of days riding along or marching and being applauded for their service. We had to make a stop at some of the unique shops and the booming downtown market for some Amish-made bread and handcrafted goods.

So how did my mom and I handle ourselves in a new place? We locked ourselves out of our hotel room once, I thought I got stuck in the hotel elevator and my phone's GPS took us down a backroad—one you see in movies that leads to certain death. We made it home, though, with a bottle of wine from Beachaven and, more important, a deeper appreciation for America's heroes who fought for our freedoms. ☺



Cindy Stonebraker locates the name of her father, missing in action since 1968, on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.



CITY SPOTLIGHT New Orleans

For more information, contact Thu Tran at ttran@neworleanscvb.com or visit neworleanscvb.com.

More, please

BY BOB ROUSE

WHEN WE WERE IN NEW ORLEANS for Travel Exchange '15, all I could think about was going back. I wanted to eat more shrimp, stroll more streets, meet more people and experience more places.

I just wanted more New Orleans.

So after I moved into the *Courier* office and needed cities to write about, I dialed up my friend Tara Letort, who's with the New Orleans CVB, and sort of invited myself to visit her city.

I wanted more of New Orleans, and I got it. During three days of strolling around the French Quarter, I saw a dozen people on a Segway tour, Darth Vader walking to work, two mostly nude ladies and a gold man.

Hola, NOLA.

I saw lots more, of course. Staying at Maison Dupuy in the French Quarter, I could easily walk to the restaurants and attractions I wanted to visit, and for those attractions located well outside the Quarter, I could walk to a streetcar stop.



Nancy Landry at the Royal Carriages stable

Attractions listed in bold type are NTA members.



NEW ORLEANS STEAMBOAT COMPANY

By mule and by paddlewheel

While there's much to be said for walking (see the aforementioned Darth Vader, mostly nude ladies, etc.), a New Orleans visitor will gain a lot by riding.

I spent a wonderful morning with Nancy Landry of **Royal Carriages**, who showed me around the sightseeing company's stable. Thirty mules call it home, and all are ready to pull a wagonload of visitors.

"We've got wagons to match the group size, and we'll use as many as we need," Nancy said. "We normally operate 13 carriages, and we can tour 150 people over the course of two hours." She told me they can also add a jazz musician to carriages.

The hour-long mule-drawn carriage tour was fantastic. Mark Orfila (human) and Cole (mule) led eight of us on a leisurely ride up and down French Quarter streets, and we got out to explore one of the city's 40 cemeteries. As a native New Orleanian, Mark proved to be a passionate advocate for the city and a gifted raconteur of its history—and oh, my, does that town hold some stories! neworleanscarriages.com

Another gratifying ride I took was aboard the Steamboat **Natchez**, part of the **New Orleans Steamboat Company**. The paddlewheeler is 26 tons of white oak and steel, and the Dinner Jazz cruise was grand. The Mississippi River is a busy place with lots of ships plying its waters, and the riverfront is lined with interesting industries.

I joined a couple from Australia in the dining room, and we enjoyed a feast of local cuisine. I had been aboard **Natchez** before, when our Travel Exchange crew filled the ship. It was much quieter with the Australians. steamboatnatchez.com

NEW ORLEANS

Something new to discover everyday.



In New Orleans, there is something to amuse and delight visitors around every cobblestoned corner. Enjoy dishes like seafood gumbo or listen to live music every day of the week. We don't need a weekend to have a good time, because our Tuesdays have just as much going on as our Saturdays.

To start planning a trip contact **Thu Tran** at: TTran@NewOrleansCVB.com or 800-748-8695 x.5053, or visit www.NewOrleansCVB.com today.



NEW ORLEANS
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Two half-day spots

I needed more ... time. I visited two attractions that both warranted at least a half-day's stay, but I could give each only a couple of hours.

The **Audubon Nature Institute** encompasses a zoo, aquarium and butterfly garden insectarium. Jeannine Becker, group and tourism sales manager, told me that the aquarium draws visitors of all ages.

"We have a fantastic education department, and you can add on a great class—even dissecting sharks," she said. "The aquarium is ideal for seniors because of easy access and air conditioning. It's very cool inside."

Note: It gets hot outside.

Jeannine also told me about the insectarium: "It's absolutely beautiful—if people can get past the bug thing," she said. "Small groups can go out at night, led by experts, to catch and identify bugs."

I opted for larger, more readily identifiable animals and visited the zoo. Three things I took special note of: Cool Zoo, a splash park add-on, open April through Labor Day; the lush plants and trees, some as old as 300 years; and Louisiana Swamp, an exhibit that features animals, of course, and also examples of human interactions with the swamp—camps and boat docks.

audubonnatureinstitute



Louisiana Swamp exhibit at the Audubon Zoo

BOB ROUSE



National WWII Museum

NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM

A second attraction I wanted to spend more time with is the **National WWII Museum**. I am not a warlike guy, but I like heroes and I appreciate a good story, and this massive attraction is loaded with both. This museum—ranked No. 2 in the world by TripAdvisor—provides just as much memorabilia, information and inspiration as you're willing to take.

The six-acre campus includes buildings that house vast exhibits of the war's European and Pacific theaters, machines of war, a restoration facility and a 4D theater, which shows "Beyond All Boundaries," a stirring film narrated by Tom Hanks.

Ruth Katz, the museum's director of group sales, explained the variety of groups that help make the museum New Orleans' No. 1 attraction.

"Nearly half of our group business is students, and 28 percent are seniors," Ruth said. "We also get a lot of corporate and military groups."

New this fall is a permanent exhibit that tells the story of Americans on the home front, including the political discord of the prewar years, the terror of the Pearl Harbor attacks and the massive mobilization in personnel and manufacturing. nationalww2museum.org

Breakfast, lunch and dinner

I did *not* take a picture of every meal I ate in New Orleans, but I did snap a few: breakfast at Café Beignet, seafood gumbo for lunch and baked oysters for Pelican Club for dinner (well, for an appetizer).



BOB ROUSE



NEW ORLEANS CVB



BOB ROUSE

Whatever floats ...

I missed it on this trip, but **Mardi Gras World** holds great memories from our Travel Exchange '15 icebreaker. More than 500 floats are built and decorated there each year, according to Brooke Pickett, and groups can visit year-round.

"Every tour includes a guided walk through our float den, a short film, a slice of king cake, a tour of our artists' workshop, and the opportunity to try on costumes and take pictures with our spectacular floats," she says.

Tours last about an hour and a half, and Brooke can organize lunch or dinner and can add on creative workshops like mask making and mini float building. mardigrasworld.com



MARDI GRAS WORLD

Oh, yeah ... food

I don't know if people visit New Orleans just for the food, but I wouldn't blame them.

I got a full serving of local fare—gumbo, jambalaya, bread pudding and pralines—at the New Orleans School of Cooking. Pat Hirsch was the chef who demonstrated how to make those dishes, and while I still can't cook, I'll never forget the healthy serving of regional history and Louisiana lore that Pat dished up. The key to appreciating the incredible roots—and indelible flavors—of Creole and Cajun food is understanding the heritage of the people who created and adopted it.

One morning I met Tara for coffee, and she told me that even though she works for the CVB, she has to keep a restaurant guide in her car so she and her husband can keep up with the city's many and diverse restaurants. But that's how you get more New Orleans.

"It's a total sensory experience," Tara said. "You eat well and you drink well, and you soak up everything—every feeling—as you go through the city."

My very first stop in the city was **The Court of Two Sisters**, a rambling restaurant in the French Quarter with a courtyard nearly covered by a century-old wisteria. Sherry Constance, events sales manager, told me they are group heavy.

"We do a ton of tour groups: three to seven a day," she said. "Our owners view groups as premium business; they really get it."



BOB ROUSE

Demonstration at the New Orleans School of Cooking

And each group gets a taste of New Orleans—shrimp étouffée, crawfish Louise, andouille sausage—whether they're enjoying dinner or the daily brunch with live jazz. courtoftwosisters.com

The Court of Two Sisters was the perfect introduction to New Orleans. I went there for more, see, and the city provided it. When I expressed surprise at the size of the place despite a very normal-looking entrance, she summed up the city:

"A lot of New Orleans spaces are deceptive. They might look small on the street, but you get inside and they keep going and going."

And all I can think about is going back. For more. ☞

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WWII
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travel**exchange** SAN ANTONIO

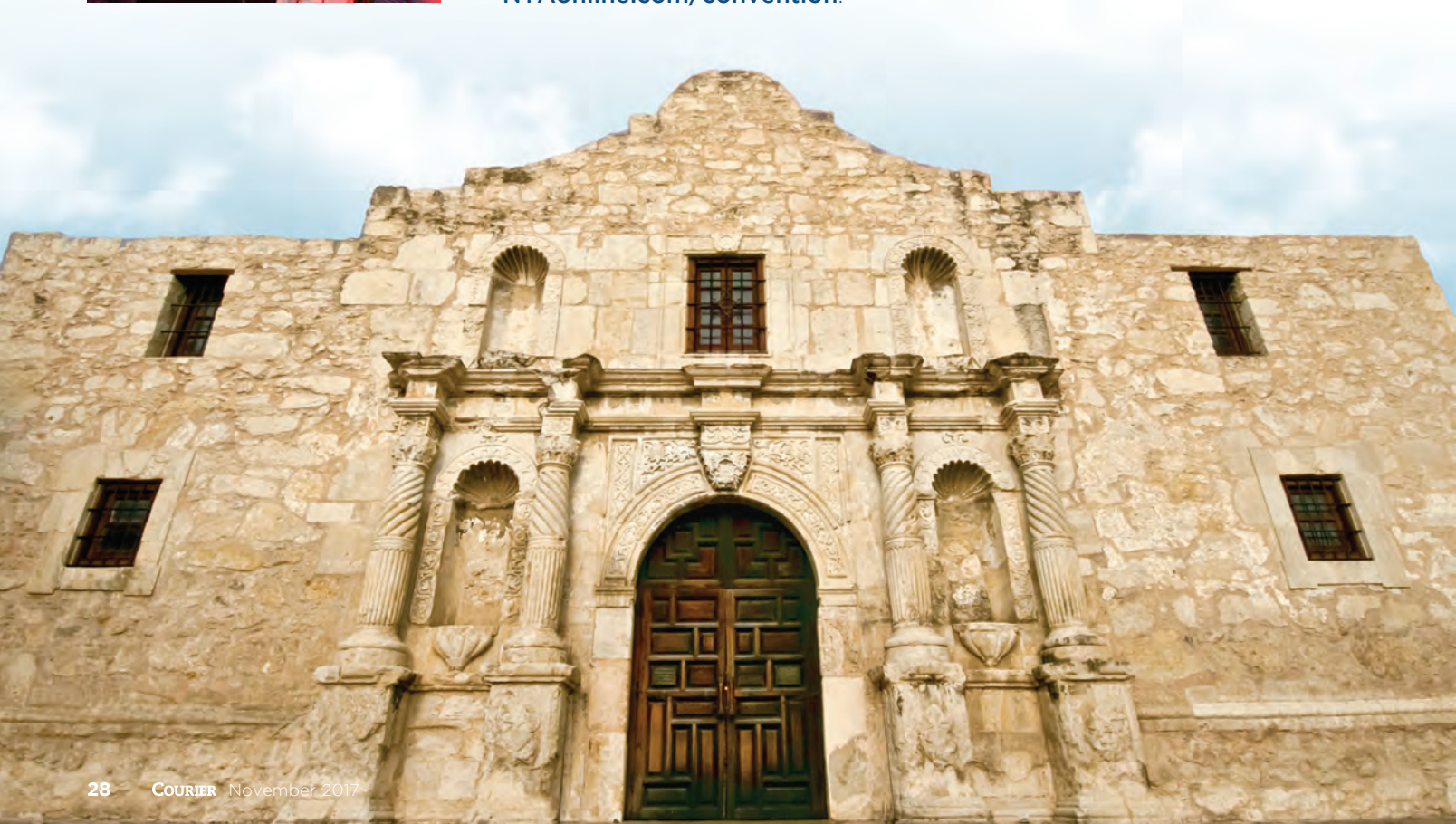
ON A MISSION

Travel Exchange '17 in San Antonio offers a second opportunity to attend NTA's annual convention

The history of San Antonio, Texas, is marked with many monumental shifts. One of the more recent is the one billionth DVD rental from Netflix: a copy of "Babel" was delivered to a San Antonio resident in 2007. And while the event was a harbinger for the end of video stores, we can also remember fondly the days when Netflix did most of its business mailing movies to homes.

But there's another titanic shift coming to San Antonio: Travel Exchange, NTA's annual convention, is returning to the fourth-quarter dates, Dec. 14-18. On the following pages, you'll find out what's in store for the event and read about some of the city's compelling attractions.

To register for the event and see a full schedule, go to NTAonline.com/convention.



SCHEDULE

Thursday Dec. 14	Friday Dec. 15	Saturday Dec. 16	Sunday Dec. 17	Monday Dec. 18
Tour Operator Day	Destination Pavilion DMO Appointments		Supplier Exchange Tour Supplier Appointments	
	Opening Ceremony and Breakfast <i>Sponsored by Visit Clarksville</i>	Grab and Go Breakfast	Government Relations Breakfast Bistro <i>Sponsored by The Group Tour Company and Visit Clarksville</i>	Grab and Go Breakfast
	Sightseeing Tours <i>Sponsored by Visit San Antonio</i>	NTA Annual Business Meeting and Talk Time Education Sessions	DMO Appointments Education Sessions	Tour Supplier Appointments Education Sessions
	Lunch on your own	NYC Center Stage Luncheon <i>Sponsored by Broadway Inbound and NYC & Company</i>	Luncheon <i>Sponsored by Tennessee Tourism</i> Distinguished Dozen Awards <i>Presented by Courier magazine</i>	Luncheon
	Education Sessions	DMO Appointments Education Sessions	Tour Supplier Appointments Education Sessions	Tour Supplier Appointments Education Sessions
Icebreaker at Witte Museum <i>Sponsored by Visit San Antonio</i>	Deep in the Heart of Texas Party at The LDR & Grotto at the Henry Gonzales Convention Center	Happy Hour <i>Sponsored by Aon Affinity and Hilmar Cheese Company Visitor Center</i> Dine-around	Hispanic Travel Market Fiesta <i>Sponsored by Norwegian Cruise Line and Mexico Tourism Board</i> Dine-around	Closing Night Party at Six Flags Fiesta Texas <i>Sponsored by Six Flags Fiesta Texas</i>

BEFORE YOU GO

Best advice for business appointments

Travel Exchange offers you the opportunity to meet face-to-face with colleagues during the Supplier Exchange and Destination Pavilion sessions. To maximize this benefit, make sure you know how to get the most out of NTA's online appointment system and networking on the Travel Exchange floor.

Prescheduled appointments: Research pays off

NTA's online request system enables you to develop a list of the companies you hope to meet with during your business appointments, and it provides information on appointment-taking attendees. Appointment scheduling opened Oct. 11, and you have until Nov. 11 to finalize and submit your requests. After the system does the matching, you'll receive your list of meetings by email.

Direct request scheduling: Your first follow-up

After you receive your appointment schedule, you can add more meetings before you arrive in San Antonio by again using the online request system. Reach out to colleagues who have the same open time slots as you and see if you can schedule a meeting. Each request that's accepted will be automatically added to your schedule—and theirs. Direct request scheduling closes Dec. 8.



More appointments: Work the floor

You might have requested companies and missed getting an appointment with their representatives. Those are the members you can seek out on-site. (You can download a list of your unscheduled requests). Your best option is while tour operators are seated during the Supplier Exchange. Approach a company's representative who is not engaged in a meeting and ask if you can schedule an appointment during a time you both have open. If one's not available, you can introduce yourself and leave your profile form and business card—and chat with them later at a meal or social function.

Need an intro—or refresher—course?

NTA has many resources to prepare you for your time at Travel Exchange.



First is the Travel Exchange 101 seminar and tour of the convention floor in San Antonio. This session, which will be offered Thursday at 3:15 p.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m., will be followed by a convention floor tour to help you get the lay of the land.

NTAonline.com/convention contains everything you need, ranging from the full schedule and information on seminars, evening events, appointment scheduling and sightseeing tours. You also can listen to an archived recording of the Travel Exchange 101 webinar and find links to seminars from previous conventions at NTAonline.com/education.

The Travel Exchange First-timers page (NTAonline.com/travel-exchange-first-timers) features tips from members who were recent Travel Exchange newcomers, as well as information on this year's **Travel Exchange Ambassadors**. If you have a question as you get ready for San Antonio, you can reach out directly to any of the veteran NTA members in this group for peer-to-peer advice about the show. Photos and bios of each of the following ambassadors are available on that page:

Jim Coggin, Virginia Beach Convention & Visitor Bureau

Laura Elkin, Crescent Hotels & Resorts

Scott Hartcorn, Shilo Inns Suites Hotels

Melody Johnson, Falcon's Crest

John Shaffer, Luray Caverns

Mindy Shea, Visit Savannah

Suzanne Slavitter,

Sports Empire & Authentic California Vacations

Christian Utpatel, Terra Lu Travel & Consult GmbH

Michael Weinberg, Hiltons of Chicago

Clayton Whitehead, Sports Leisure Vacations



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605-224-7361 • PIERRE.ORG

Tours of the Capitol building, memorials, Governor's mansion, Trail of Governors and the Oahe Dam are available. The Pierre area offers a plethora of outdoor recreation and museums to visit.



RAPID CITY – DO BIG THINGS!

800-487-3223 • TOURRAPIDCITY.COM

Enjoy shopping, dining, events and local favorites like Main Street Square, City of Presidents and more. Nearby, explore Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Crazy Horse Memorial and other Black Hills treasures.



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SOUTHDAKOTASculptureTrail.COM

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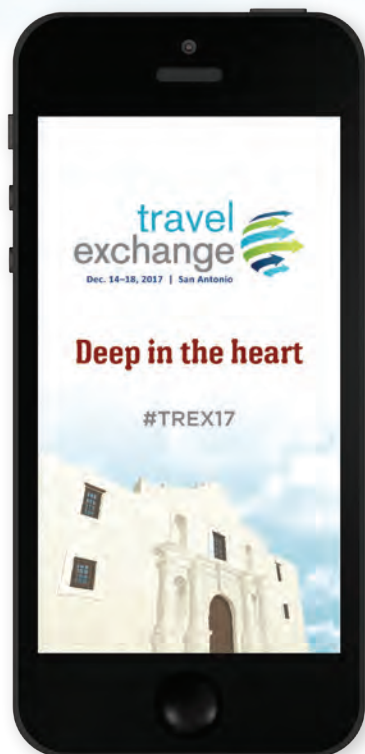
GROUP TOUR PLANNING ASSISTANCE

VICKY ENGELHAUPT
South Dakota Department of Tourism
www.TourSDakota.com
vicky.engelhaupt@travelsouthdakota.com
800-952-3625

South Dakota

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM





Increase your TREX app-titude

Registered delegates will receive an email before the show with steps for downloading and logging into the Travel Exchange mobile app. And you should. It contains tons of useful information about the event, including:

- Full schedule
- Your personalized appointment schedule
- List of event registrants with messaging function
- Push notifications for announcements and schedule changes
- Social chatter from your friends and colleagues who use #Trex17 on social media

The app is compatible with iOS and Android devices, and it's accessible from a web browser, too. Search for "Travel Exchange '17" in your respective app store. If your login details have gone to your spam folder—literally or mentally—email headquarters@ntaonline.com for troubleshooting.

Volunteer: Make connections while lending a hand

Volunteering at Travel Exchange is a big help to the NTA staff, and it also gives you another way to meet more members. Here are the different ways you can volunteer in San Antonio:

Registration Assistant Working at the registration counter gives you the chance to greet attendees when they first arrive, while handing out name badges and registration bags.

Seminar Monitor You'll be a VIP when your role in the room is to greet, assist and maybe even introduce the featured speaker.

Tourism Cares student mentor Share your knowledge and experience by allowing a student to shadow you during your appointments. Tourism Cares is seeking mentors for its scholarship recipients who will attend Travel Exchange in San Antonio.

Greeter You can provide a morning welcome—and a copy of the *Travel Exchange Daily* newsletter—to your fellow members as they enter the convention hall.

The Travel Exchange online volunteer registration system is scheduled to open Nov. 15, so you can sign up then to find the opportunity that works best for you. If you have any questions about volunteering, contact Todd Probus at +1.859.264.6578 or todd.probus@ntastaff.com.

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 **MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN**

WHILE YOU'RE THERE

Fam tours offer a look at the Lone Star State

Before Travel Exchange begins, tour operators will be able to see some of Texas' best on one of two Fam tours near San Antonio. Both tours depart from the convention center on Sunday, Dec. 10. For full details and registration information, go to NTAonline.com/convention/fam-tours.

Forts, frontiers and fixer-uppers

December 10-13

Waco, Abilene and San Angelo

Waco has long been known as the Heart of Texas. It's home to a lively cultural district, shopping, and the famous Magnolia Market, owned by Chip and Joanna Gaines, hosts of the popular HGTV show "Fixer Upper." Abilene is a place where Western heritage is both a birthright and a pastime. A must-see is Frontier Texas!—one of only a few museums in the world to feature life-size holographic figures—to experience the dramatic story of the Texas frontier. In scenic San Angelo, discover a West Texas oasis full of wonderful surprises. Enjoy an evening with dinner and authentic Western entertainment at Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. Then explore downtown's unique shops and meet its friendly folks.

Texas-sized Flavor: Music, shopping and more

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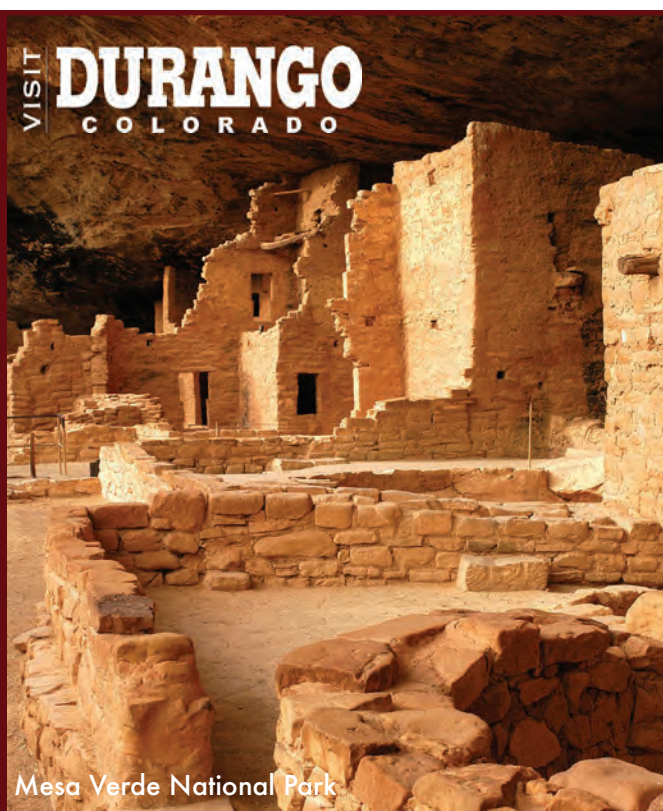
December 10-13

San Marcos and Austin

Enjoy the serenity and local flavor of San Marcos as you explore its exceptional boutiques, shops entertainment venues and the largest outlet shopping center in the U.S. Nature lovers can see the beauty and feel the adrenaline rush of the San Marcos River. This city offers a unique alternative to the mainstream. Austin, Texas' capital city, has a soundtrack all its own. During your tour of the Live Music Capital of the World, you'll enjoy Austin's many walkable entertainment districts, each featuring local shopping, live music and vibrant culture. You'll also visit the Texas State Capitol, a testament to the history of the Lone Star State. You'll end the evening at one of Austin's iconic performance venues.



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Sightseeing tours

Before you dive into business appointments, you can get to know your host city and meet fellow delegates on a Thursday morning sightseeing tour in San Antonio. For full descriptions and to sign up (all tours are first-come, first-served), go to ntaonline.com/convention/sightseeing-tours.

Natural Bridge Caverns

The attraction's Discovery Tour will take you 180 feet below the ground for a cave tour, to the treetops where you zip line above scenic Texas Hill Country, and alongside a wooden sluice as you sift through natural waters looking for fossils and gems.



VISIT SAN ANTONIO

Iconic Sites of San Antonio

A visit to the Tower of the Americas and its Flags Over Texas Observation Deck offers amazing views of the city. Stops at Buckhorn Saloon & Museum, the Alamo, San Fernando Cathedral, the Spanish Governor's Palace and Market Square will give you a primer on San Antonio's history and culture.

Broadway Cultural Corridor

You'll see many of the city's top museums and cultural venues on this in-depth look at the Broadway Cultural Corridor. This tour includes a visit to the Witte Museum, a giraffe feeding experience at the San Antonio Zoo, a tour of McNay Art Museum, and a walk through San Antonio Botanical Gardens.



VISIT SAN ANTONIO

San Antonio's Old and New Neighborhoods

San Antonio's vibrant neighborhoods are the focus of this excursion. You'll tour the Pearl District (founded in 1881), La Villita (founded in 1939), the King William District and Southtown. In each area, you'll find a distinctive flair and local boutiques, eateries and markets.

Texas Hill Country Tour

This excursion will take you to Fredericksburg, where there are more than 30 vineyards and wineries. You'll enjoy a wine tasting and then head downtown to the National Museum of the Pacific War, the only U.S. institution dedicated to the Pacific Theater battles of World War II. The downtown historical district also has shops and boutiques that will be decked out for the holidays.

World Heritage and River Walk

You'll start your tour with the UNESCO World Heritage site San Antonio Mission San Jose, the largest of the city's missions. You'll see the film "Gente de Razon" before heading to Mission San Juan and walking its Yanaguana Trail. The tour concludes with a cruise on the River Walk, the largest urban ecosystem in the U.S.



ADOBE STOCK

Evening events offer ways to unwind and connect

Each night at Travel Exchange, you can enjoy food, drinks and entertainment at some of San Antonio's top attractions and venues. You'll have successful business appointments during the day, but have you *really* made a connection with someone if you haven't raced armadillos?



WITTE MUSEUM

Thursday | Icebreaker at the Witte Museum

Sponsored by Visit San Antonio

Founded in 1926, the museum boasts a collection that focuses on natural history and science and how those disciplines intersect with South Texas culture. The museum recently underwent a massive renovation and expansion of its exhibit spaces following a campaign to raise \$100 million to improve the 10-acre campus. The Witte's new main building opened in March.

Friday | Deep in the Heart of Texas Party

The Grotto on the River Walk

The LDR & Grotto at the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center will provide the perfect setting for Texas-sized fun at Friday night's reception. You can expect great food and music, pose for a photo with a Texas Longhorn (yes, a real one), learn to line dance and race armadillos. Wear your favorite Lone Star State attire as we celebrate being Deep in the Heart of Texas.



Sunday | Tourism Rocks

Hard Rock Cafe

Sponsored by Hard Rock Cafe International, Las Vegas CVA, Best Western Hotels & Resorts

During this annual Travel Exchange favorite, you can dance into the evening—and know the next morning that it was all for a good cause. Proceeds benefit Tourism Cares, which undertakes restoration projects at tourism sites around the world and provides scholarships for rising travel and hospitality professionals. Tour operators attend as guests of the sponsors, and DMOs and suppliers may purchase tickets by emailing headquarters@ntastaff.com. If the event is not sold out, remaining tickets will be available at the Tourism Cares booth on the convention floor.



VISIT SAN ANTONIO

Monday | Closing Night Party

Six Flags Fiesta Texas

Sponsored by Six Flags Fiesta Texas

Monday's closing night party at Six Flags Fiesta Texas will bring some holiday spirit to Travel Exchange. The park will be decorated with thousands of Christmas lights, and you will enjoy rides, food and drink, along with a special performance of the attraction's popular holiday show, "The Majesty of Christmas," in the Zaragoza Theater. The show brings to life the biblical story of the Nativity, with live animals, flying angels and vocal performances.



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In addition to your business appointments, check out these daytime events where you can meet your fellow NTA members and hear industry updates.

All-delegate Networking Reception

Thursday, Dec. 14

Following Thursday morning's sightseeing tours, you can get a first peek at the convention mall during this reception. Drinks will be served, and you will be able to visit sponsor booths and see product demonstrations in the Associate Pavilion.



NYC Center Stage Luncheon

Sponsored by Broadway Inbound and NYC & Company
Friday, Dec. 15

The convention center's Stars at Night Ballroom will have plenty of stars on Friday at Travel Exchange. Singers and dancers from many of Broadway's current hits will perform selections from "Phantom of the Opera," "Kinky Boots," and "Anastasia," along with other popular shows.



Happy Hour

Sponsored by Aon Affinity & Hilmar Cheese Company
Visitor Center

Saturday, Dec. 16

The show floor gets a little extra style—maybe 10 gallons extra—during this all-member gathering on Saturday afternoon. Wine and cheese will be served after the day's business appointments, and we'll help you dress like a Texan by providing cowboy hats, bandanas and stick-on mustaches.

FTA Breakfast and Networking

Sponsored by Ed-Ventures

Saturday, Dec. 16

For Faith Travel Association members only, the FTA Breakfast and Networking session on Saturday morning features keynote speaker is Lori Erickson, a religious travel writer and author of more than 1,000 published articles. Her most recent book, "Holy Rover: Journeys in Search of Mystery, Miracles, and God," outlines her own spiritual journey as she went on 12 pilgrimages both near and far.

To learn more about FTA benefits and to join, contact Kay Saffari at kay.saffari@ntastaff.com.

Government Relations Breakfast Bistro

Sponsored by The Group Tour Company and Visit Clarksville

Sunday, Dec. 17

If you're worried that Travel Exchange will interfere with your years-long streak of watching "Meet the Press," curious about the legislative issues affecting travel and tourism, or even just like a hot breakfast, attend the Government Relations Breakfast Bistro on Sunday morning. You'll learn about the significance of NTA's government relations efforts, and the event will benefit the association's Government Issues Fund. There will also be a keynote address by Bill Robinson, the longest-held prisoner of war in American history. Email headquarters@ntastaff.com for tickets, or purchase them at the registration desk in San Antonio.



Hispanic Travel Market Fiesta

Sponsored by Norwegian Cruise Line and Mexico Tourism Board

Sunday, Dec. 17

NTA continues to expand its reach in the Hispanic travel market, which represents one of the fastest-growing demographics in the U.S. Make plans to attend this informal networking session on Sunday afternoon to learn more about connecting with this valuable customer base.

Get the details on appointment scheduling

Business appointments at Travel Exchange are your one-on-one meetings for making new connections, sharing information and building itineraries. The Destination Pavilion appointments take place Friday and Saturday, and the Supplier Exchange appointments are held Sunday and Monday.

Destination Pavilion

DMO delegates are seated, and tour operators walk between booths for these 10-minute meetings. Booths are arranged by region, and appointments are grouped into three sessions.

Friday, 2–5:30 p.m. | Saturday, 8:45 a.m.–12 p.m. | Saturday, 1:30–5:30 p.m.

Supplier Exchange

Tour operators are seated in the booths for these seven-minute appointments with sellers. Appointments are slated for Sunday and Monday and scheduled depending on a tour supplier's membership category:

Sunday

9:15 a.m.–12 p.m.
1:30–5:30 p.m.

Casinos
Hotels
Multiple Services
Railroads
Restaurants
Passenger Vessels

Monday

8–11:45 a.m.
1:30–5:30 p.m.

Airlines
Attractions
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DMCs
Motorcoaches
Sightseeing Companies
Tour Operators (registered as sellers)



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NYC Center Stage Luncheon



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Mexico Tourism Board
Luncheon & Fiesta



Norwegian Cruise Line
Luncheon, Fiesta & China
Inbound Operator Dinner



NYC & Company
NYC Center Stage Luncheon



Six Flags Fiesta Texas
Final Night Party



Tennessee Tourism
Luncheon



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Maryland Office of Tourism
Profile Form Notebook



Newseum
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Ocean City, MD CVB
Profile Form Notebook &
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Space Camp at U.S. Space & Rocket Center
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Sports Travel & Tours
Owners Network Reception

SPEAKERS AND SEMINARS

Jay Baer to speak at Opening Ceremony and Breakfast



At Friday's Opening Ceremony and Breakfast, sponsored by Visit Clarksville, entrepreneur and marketing expert Jay Baer will speak. Digital marketing and online customer service are broken, and Jay brings the repair kit. He has created five multimillion-dollar companies, and he was recently inducted into the Word of Mouth Marketing Hall of Fame.

He is the president of Convince & Convert, a consulting firm that

helps the world's most iconic companies and organizations, including the United Nations, Nike, 3M and Oracle, use technology to gain a competitive advantage. A *New York Times* best-selling author of five books, Jay is the host of the Social Pros podcast, an avid tequila collector and a certified barbecue judge.

Jay's session is made possible by NTA's partnership with U.S. Travel Association's Experience Network. This partnership provides each association's members access to high-quality educational content and information sharing.



Featured seminars and sessions

More speakers will be added in the coming weeks. For the most up-to-date information on speakers and seminars, go to ntaonline.com/convention.



Power Hour and Ask the Operator sessions

The crackerbarrel sessions from previous conventions have a new name and a new format, but the goal remains the same. We're calling them Power Hours, and on Thursday, Dec. 14, there will be a combined session for DMOs and suppliers, with another for tour operators. You'll be able to ask questions of peers from your membership category and learn how they've tackled the challenges you face.

Tour suppliers and DMOs can also attend the Ask the Operator panel discussions to learn more about doing business together. This year's Ask the Operator for DMOs seminar will take place on Thursday, the first day of convention, which will allow them to use what they learn in the session during their appointments. The session for suppliers will be Saturday, before supplier appointments start on Sunday.

NAM HASAN PHOTOGRAPHY

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For information about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, visit mormon.org

Featured seminars and sessions continued

The ABCs of Sales:

Sell More than Your Competition

Thom Singer, The Conference Catalyst

This is the message your competitor does not want your people to hear. In our social media-dependent society, too many sales professionals are forgoing personal contact for the ease and safety of email and online communication. Those who are winning more business are not hiding behind online "social selling," but instead are putting the "social" back in selling! All opportunities come from people, and getting face-to-face with clients, prospects and others makes a real difference.

How to Win with Video

Catherine Heeg, Customized Management Solutions

Accelerate your engagement to create extraordinary visuals using the tools and techniques you'll learn in this interactive session. We'll explore visuals and video for an integrated marketing plan, and you'll walk away with a collection of visual tips and trends that will optimize your own integrated marketing strategies across social platforms, e-blasts, blogs and e-newsletters.

Killer Apps for Professionals

Beth Ziesenis, Your Nerdy Best Friend

Take a deep dive into free and bargain apps that will help you move up the ladder. Learn the skills you need for personal organization as well as game-changing tech tools to help your organization function more efficiently and support team collaboration. Showcase your leadership ability by capitalizing on the technology tools that will keep you organized, productive, informed, innovative and ahead of the crowd.



Thom Singer

Lasting Travel Industry Relationships

Thom Singer, The Conference Catalyst

In St. Louis you learned how to begin to build an enduring relationship with your potential clients and partners in the travel industry. And in a July webinar, Thom walked you through the steps of maintaining those new relationships between conventions and the next time you'd meet face-to-face. Join Thom in the last of his Travel Industry Relationships workshops to see how you too can creating lasting connections that help grow your business and expand your circle.



Resolving Team Conflict Effectively

Paul Vitale, Vital Communications

Resolving conflict within a team is crucial for optimal results in the areas of productivity, growth and morale. When continued struggles, animosity or disagreements become the focal point of various individuals' attention, the entire organization is affected. During this session ideas will be introduced on how to isolate and effectively resolve conflict. Properly executed conflict resolution causes people to listen to and consider different perspectives, contributing to a positive culture rather than a hostile environment.

Time Management-Harnessing Your Power at Hand

Paul Vitale, Vital Communications

Insufficient time management is one of the largest productivity deterrents in the workplace. Developing effective time-management skills not only increases efficiency, it lessens stress and improves the overall quality of both your personal and professional life. Effective time management is made up of a combination of good practices, such as learning to recognize and manage distractions, making continual adjustments and disciplining yourself to remain committed to proven habits.

Your Virtual Staff: Building a Team with AI Technology

Beth Ziesenis, Your Nerdy Best Friend

Sometimes we feel like we need a clone to help us carry out everything we have to do for our companies and organizations. Artificial intelligence technology can act as your virtual staff, handling tasks and challenges that overwhelm your to-do lists. This session introduces you to AI tools that organize your tasks, set your appointments, make your travel plans, find time for your workouts, manage your personal budget and much, much more.



NAIM HASAN PHOTOGRAPHY

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Featured speakers



Catherine Heeg

Customized Management Solutions

Catherine is a tourism, travel and hospitality industry expert with more than three decades of experience. Based in Calgary, Alberta, Catherine works with professionals to enhance their marketing knowledge, and she is the social media columnist for *Courier* magazine. She delivers tools that help companies differentiate their products from the competition, reach target audiences and achieve visibility for winning results.



Thom Singer

The Conference Catalyst

Thom has more than 20 years of sales and marketing experience. He is an expert in branding, positioning and networking and has trained thousands of professionals in the art of building contacts that lead to increased business.

He is an author and entrepreneur who has written eight books and numerous articles for business and marketing publications.



Paul Vitale

Vital Communications Inc.

Paul speaks worldwide about the significance of optimism, a strong work ethic, and concepts vital to personal and professional growth. Prior to founding Vital Communications Inc., he was director of the convention and visitors bureau in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and started his professional career with the largest marketing firm in Arkansas, Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods. His team was responsible for all of the Natural State's tourism promotion.



Beth Ziesenis

Your Nerdy Best Friend

Beth is an author, speaker, technology consultant, self-proclaimed nerd and the founder of Your Nerdy Best Friend. She keeps up with all the new online applications and downloads that help you look like you're working with a team of marketing, computer and productivity experts, even if you suffer from a shrinking staff and a disappearing budget. ☎

Named a Top 12 Global Wine Region to Visit, *Forbes*, 2017



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BRUCE MUNRO PHOTOMARK PICKTHALL

If you light it, they will come: The Field of Light installation near Australia's Uluru (Ayers Rock) allows guests to see thousands of solar-powered stems that cover the wide-open spaces around the famous monument. Special tour packages are available each evening, including one that adds in a three-course dinner and extended viewing time.

America's Historic East	50
Atlantic Canada	56
Caribbean	58
South Pacific	60

America's Historic East

COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

Capitalize on D.C.'s spectacular attractions

From a theater company and a historical home to a diverse set of attractions including the soon-to-open Museum of the Bible, the NTA membership includes six suppliers in Washington, D.C., that provide a range of programs and experiences for groups. Tour operators can contact Lindsay Hill of Destination DC at lindsay.hill@destinationdc.com or reach out to the NTA contacts at the respective attractions for assistance with D.C. itineraries.



TERESA WOOD

Arena Stage

NTA contact: Isaac Evans
ievans@arenastage.org
arenastage.org

Since it was founded in 1950, Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater has brought to the stage a wide array of works. The organization's intentional focus on plays by American writers is revealed through the many shows each season that highlight contemporary issues and reflect the nation's diversity and challenges.



HILLWOOD ESTATE MUSEUM AND GARDENS

Hillwood Estate Museum & Gardens

Meredith DeSantis
groupstours@hillwoodmuseum.org
hillwoodmuseum.org

Groups have no shortage of things to see and do at this multifaceted attraction. During visits to the estate and museum, they can see hundreds of artifacts and personal effects that belonged to owner Marjorie Merriweather Post, as well as her renowned art collection. They also can explore 13 acres of gardens.



INTERNATIONAL SPY MUSEUM

International Spy Museum

Lori Scott
lscott@spymuseum.org
spymuseum.org

Interactivity is the name of the game at the world's only museum dedicated solely to global espionage and intelligence. In addition to housing thousands of artifacts, the museum offers immersive activities and programs such as "Spy in the City" and "Operation Spy" that require participants to use their detective skills.



WASHINGTON.ORG

Museum of the Bible

Kelly Martin
kelly.martin@mbible.org
museumofthebible.org

Located two blocks from the National Mall and three blocks from the U.S. Capitol, this 430,000-square-foot attraction will open this month. Hundreds of artifacts and exhibits—spread across the Narrative Floor, the History Floor and the Impact Floor—will tell the stories of the Bible, from Genesis through the New Testament.



MARIA BRYKNEWSEUM

Newseum

Roxana Rivera
rrivera@newseum.org
newseum.org

The attraction promotes, explains and defends free expression and the five freedoms of the First Amendment: religion, speech, press, assembly and petition. An ever-changing list of temporary exhibits—such as "1968: Civil Rights at 50," which debuts in January 2018—add to Newseum's vast permanent collection.



CC FLICKRKEN LUND: bit.ly/2YJW3w

Smithsonian Institution

Pauline Bonilla
groupsales@si.edu
si.edu/groupsales

The Smithsonian's collection of attractions includes 11 museums and galleries on the National Mall and six other museums and the National Zoo in the greater Washington, D.C., area. Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more for paid exhibits, IMAX movies, meal packages and more.

Of Moravians, Mack trucks and Martin guitars

"Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley is easily accessible by major highways, making it an attractive destination for tours," says Kaitie Burger, social media and communications manager for Discover Lehigh Valley. "Home to a few of the world's favorite brands such as Crayola, Martin Guitars and Mack Trucks, the region boasts an impressive range of attractions that are sure to delight groups of any size."

She says programs can be built around a one-day visit or a multiple-night stay, and that her area just north of Philadelphia works well for hub-and-spoke itineraries of the Mid-Atlantic states. Top attractions in the Lehigh Valley include:

Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites During tours, visitors learn more about the impact the Moravian Church has had on Bethlehem and eastern Pennsylvania for more than 300 years.

The National Museum of Industrial History This Smithsonian-affiliated attraction, located in the century-old Bethlehem Steel facility, preserves America's industrial heritage.

The Mack Trucks Historical Museum The history of one of America's leading truck manufacturers is celebrated through displays and exhibits.

C. F. Martin & Co. On a tour of the factory floor, groups learn about the more than 300 steps that each Martin guitar goes through to be transformed from rough lumber to a well-crafted instrument.



DISCOVER LEHIGH VALLEY

For more information, contact the CVB's Jamie Quinby at jamie@discoverlehighvalley.com or go to discoverlehighvalley.com.



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Go for adventure at Go Ape

Founded in 2010, Go Ape USA takes nature enthusiasts up into the forest canopy for a series of aerial activities and challenges. The company's adventure courses allow participants to have some fun and perform physical tasks as part its Treetop Adventure programs.

"Our courses are filled with many more exhilarating obstacles to conquer," says Cristina Izurieta, Go Ape's public relations coordinator. "Guests test their wit with exciting crossings like the Tibetan bridge and navigating suspended rings, and they challenge their balance with the wobbly ladder. They also climb as high as 48 feet and enjoy gorgeous views of nature while zip lining as long as 700 feet."

The company has 16 locations in the East and Midwest, including four in the Mid-Atlantic region—the original center in Rock Creek Regional Park (Rockville, Maryland) and ones at South Run Park (Springfield, Virginia), Freedom Park



Zip line at Go Ape

GO APE USA

(Williamsburg, Virginia) and North Park in Pittsburgh.

Contact Go Ape's Lee Robinson at lee.robinson@goape.com or visit goape.com to learn more.

Welcome to geology's hall of fame.

Baseball has one. Rock and roll has one. And although it took millions of years, the earth has one, too. And with well-lit, well-paved walkways stretching throughout, you can easily stroll through rooms 10 stories high, marvel at the enormous columns and crystal-clear pools, and of course, hear the world's largest musical instrument, the Great Stalacpipe Organ.

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What will you discover?



The Capital Wheel at National Harbor

THE CAPITAL WHEEL

For those wheeler, dealer types

One of the centerpieces of the Maryland's National Harbor development is The Capital Wheel. Located just 10 miles from the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the ride is part of a 350-acre mixed-use development along the Potomac River that includes shops, restaurants, hotels and residences.

"The Capital Wheel is a new, unique way to see a very historic part of our country," says Melissa Norris, the attraction's sales and marketing manager. "After a long day of touring museums and monuments, visiting The Capital Wheel and

seeing the sights and lights from our fully enclosed, climate-controlled gondolas is the perfect way to reflect, relax and take in great views."

Tour operators receive exclusive rates for The Capital Wheel and carousel, including generous comps. Norris says tickets aren't dated or timed, which gives groups more flexibility to explore many of the other attractions in the National Harbor area.

For more information, reach out to Norris at mnorris@iconattractions.com or go to iconattractions.com.

Discover the riches of Richmond

"Richmond, Virginia, is known world-wide for its food, craft beer, art, music and outdoor activities, and the region celebrates these year-round with many exciting festivals and events," says Toni Bastian, group tour and visitor center manager for Richmond Regional Tourism. "These festivals, many of which are free to the public, showcase the local culture and spirit of RVA."

Here are profiles of three of the events she recommends:



BRANDON HAMBRIGHT

Dominion Energy Riverrock (May 18-20, 2018)

The weekend-long event, which is the largest outdoor sports and music festival in the United States, features mud runs, kayaking, bouldering and the ultimate air dog competitions.

Fire, Flour and Fork (October or November 2018)

This four-day food festival showcases the best of Richmond's thriving culinary scene. Chefs, bakers and bartenders from local restaurants—along with their friends from around the country—headline dining events, lead behind-the-scenes tours, provide demonstrations and offer seminars.

Richmond Folk Festival (October 2018)

One of Virginia's largest annual events, the Richmond Folk Festival celebrates the roots, richness and variety of American culture through music, dance, crafts and food.

For more information on these and other annual events in Richmond, contact Bastian of Richmond Regional Tourism at tbastian@visitrichmondva.com or go to visitrichmondva.com.



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Riverside Center for the Performing Arts

On with the show, this is it

Since the Riverside Center for the Performing Arts opened in 1998, more than half a million people have seen live performances on its stage. The theater is located in Fredericksburg, Virginia, halfway between Richmond and Washington, D.C.

"Groups love Riverside Center, as it's a delightful retreat from real life," says Nancy Huffine, group sales manager. "The magic of music and theater, the intimate venue and a plated dinner served by members of the production make for a fabulous evening."

The Riverside's resident company stages its own productions of Broadway classics, top musicals and regional plays. A typical autumn-to-spring season includes six main-stage shows and another six performances through its children's theater series.

Once the motorcoach arrives, groups are greeted and ushered to a lounge area with a bar. Dinner follows, and it includes a salad, choice of entrée and dessert. Once the plates are cleared, the curtain comes up for the show that Huffine says features "Broadway-quality talent, costumes, direction and production values that help take viewers away to another place and time for a couple of hours."

In addition to seeing a performance, Huffine says groups have plenty of options, including a behind-the-scenes tour that goes backstage and to the costume shop, the prop shop and the scenery shop. "Particulars depend on timing of arrival, availability and the production, and we've offered per-

formance options for smaller ensembles and choral groups, or a chance to join the cast to sing during the final curtain call," she says. "An actor talk-back session can often be arranged as well."

To learn more, contact Huffine at groupsales@riversidedt.com or go to riversidedt.com.

Christmas in Fairmount Park



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Philadelphia
 Museum of
Art

Upcoming show schedule at the Riverside Center

Here is the theater's main stage schedule for the rest of this season, as well as the dates for the 2018-19 season:


2017

"Riverside Christmas Spectacular,"
 Nov. 29-Dec. 31

2018

"MAMMA MIA!," Jan. 10-March 4
 "The Hunchback of Notre Dame,"
 March 14-May 6
 "Always...Patsy Cline," May 16-July 15
 "A Chorus Line," July 25-Sept. 16
 Disney's "Beauty and the Beast,"
 Sept. 26-Nov. 25
 "Rockabilly Christmas," Dec. 5-31

2019

"La Cage aux Folles," Jan. 9-March 3
 "The Color Purple," March 13-May 5 

HURRY!
Appointment
scheduling
open until
Nov. 10.



Timing is everything.

Remember when the NTA convention was held in the fourth quarter and it kick-started your business for the year ahead? Well, we're baaack!

"The Maine Office of Tourism attends Travel Exchange for the quality appointments that result in meaningful follow-ups, lasting relationships and ultimately, more trips to our wonderful state!"

—Hannah Collins, Maine Office of Tourism,
Trex17 St. Louis and San Antonio attendee



SAN ANTONIO DEC. 14–18

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Atlantic Canada

COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

Take a Gander at Newfoundland and Labrador's top cities

Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism's Cathy Anderson knows there are a lot of factors that have spurred her destination's recent record tourism growth.

Her short list includes the islands' UNESCO World Heritage sites, natural beauty, Viking culture and Old-World charm. "Plus," she adds, "we are good at exceeding the expectations of today's discerning travelers who seek off-the-beaten track, once-in-a-lifetime experiences."

The province's cities also are a vital part of its appeal, and Anderson recommends the following three for travel planners:

Corner Brook Located on the western shores of Newfoundland at the mouth of the Bay of Islands, Corner Brook offers a spectacular combination of ocean and mountain scenery. It is the gateway to the Viking Trail and Gros Morne National Park, two popular destinations for groups.



Gander The city in the central part of the province has a rich history with aviation, dating back to the time during the mid-1900s, when it was as a key stopover for transatlantic flights. Gander is receiving recent notoriety from the award-winning Broadway musical "Come From Away," which details how the city became the unexpected haven for 7,000 passengers following the 9/11 tragedy.

St. John's Visitors can discover the coastal charms of the provincial capital that's situated at North America's easternmost point. The city includes a thriving urban center that blends centuries-old traditions and colorful buildings with eclectic sophistication and a noteworthy culinary scene.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TOURISM/BARRETT & MACKAY PHOTO

Contact Anderson at cathyanderson@gov.nl.ca or visit newfoundlandlabrador.com to learn more.

Banking on PEI's Acadian culture

"Prince Edward Island is such an interesting place to visit because you'll feel at home upon arrival, whether you've been here a hundred times or it's your first trip," says Tourism PEI's Grant MacRae. "I think that has a lot to do with how friendly the people are here. Locals are so willing to share their experiences, traditions and lifestyle with visitors."



TOURISM PEI/HEATHER OGG

MacRae says two top spots to get a cultural lesson are the Farmers' Bank of Rustico museum and Village Musical Acadien.

Located 15 miles north of Charlottetown in Rustico, the bank is a symbol of Acadian survival. As groups tour the bank, which operated from 1864 to 1894 and is a National Historic Site, they can learn more about the Acadians' settlement of the area and how the bank provided loans to island farmers at reasonable interest rates to help them through hard times.

During the summer high season at Village Musical Acadien in Abram Village, groups can enjoy daily musical programming, experiential workshops, and the French and English dinner theaters—each of which detail Acadian traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation.

MacRae says no visit would be complete without seeing "Anne of Green Gables—The Musical" at the Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown. "Plus, in 2018 the center will also be featuring 'Jesus Christ Superstar,' 'Dutch Mason,' a musical about the famous Canadian blues icon, and 'Stories from the Red Dirt Road,' which features four Island stories woven together through song."

For more information on PEI vacations, contact MacRae at rgmacrae@gov.pe.ca or go to tourismpei.com.

Noshing around Nova Scotia

While fresh lobster remains Nova Scotia's signature dish, the province boasts a diverse list of local products that range from wine and hard ciders to truffles and handmade chocolates. In addition to getting a taste of the province as they explore the Seafood Trail and the Good Cheer Trail, groups can enjoy the following five culinary adventures (some may have limited dates in 2018; check with providers):

Cooking on the Farm with the Kilted Chef

Chef Alain Bossé takes guests on a quest for local ingredients before bringing them back to his farm for a personalized cooking class and lunch.

Best of Halifax Foodie Adventure

Local Tasting Tours takes groups to top foodie spots in Halifax's trendiest neighborhoods for samples, including a private tasting inside Halifax Citadel National Historic Site.

Lobster Bay Culinary Adventures

Following a private garden tour and samples of fresh herbs, groups head to the shores along Lobster Bay to build a wood fire and boil their own fresh lobster dinner.

Devour! The Vines

Guests take a seat at the harvest table at Le Caveau Restaurant at Domaine de Grand Pré Winery to enjoy an intimate vineyard dinner overlooking the Bay of Fundy.

Lighthouse Bites Full Moon Adventure

This adventure includes a kayaking excursion to Kidston Island, locally sourced hors d'oeuvres, beer and wines, and songs from guide/musician Angelo Spinnazola.



KILTEDCHEF.CA

Cooking with the Kilted Chef

For more information, contact Nova Scotia Tourism's Linda Murphy at linda.murphy@novascotia.ca or go to novascotia.com.

Sky-high adventure on the SkyWalk

SkyWalk Saint John, which opened last month in Saint John, New Brunswick, is one of only three skywalks in North America. The attraction is a glass and stainless-steel rooftop observation platform that extends 28 feet over the edge of a 110-foot-tall cliff above the Reversing Rapids.

"We are really excited to have this new experience in New Brunswick," says Lynn Meehan of New Brunswick Tourism,

Heritage & Culture. "SkyWalk Saint John is a very unique way to experience the power of the world's highest tides as the Bay of Fundy collides with the Saint John River at the Reversing Rapids below. Standing on a glass platform, visitors are up close and personal with the whirlpools and rapids created with the ever-changing tides."

Twice a day the Bay of Fundy's tides rise 28.5 feet, complete a high tide and a low tide cycle, and the Saint John River then flows backwards, thus creating the Reversing Rapids.

From atop the platform, visitors can also see where 1.2-billion-year-old marble from South America collided with a 515-million-year-old igneous rock from Africa, view the fault line that separates the two, and learn the extensive history on the Cambrian and Precambrian-aged rocks, the terrane contact they've formed and their movements.

Groups can also visit the Reversing Rapids Visitor Information Centre and enjoy a meal at the Reversing Falls Restaurant, which has floor-to-ceiling windows for optimal views of the water.

To find out more, contact Meehan at lynn.meehan@gnb.ca or visit discoversaintjohn.com or tourismnewbrunswick.ca.



NEW BRUNSWICK TOURISM, HERITAGE & CULTURE

SkyWalk Saint John

Caribbean

COMPILED BY BOB ROUSE

After being battered by a double dose of hurricanes—Irma and Maria—in September, Caribbean residents have worked to restore their homes, lives and livelihoods. NTA members who live in or conduct travel to the area are part of that recovery effort, and *Courier's* coverage of the region focuses on them.

Taking care of clients—and neighbors

Based in Puerto Rico, the staff of Vámonos Tours has weathered the worst of the 2017 storms. Despite facing personal and business-related challenges, Vámonos owner Jorge Pardo and his colleagues are moving forward with scheduled—and redirected—tours.

Vámonos Tours specializes in providing student groups with cultural and language-immersion programs throughout the Caribbean, as well as in Latin America, Spain and the U.S. By continually assessing and reassessing the damage to Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands, Pardo says Vámonos has worked to accommodate its clients.

"We will resume our Puerto Rico tours beginning Nov. 7," Pardo says. "We expect all of our hotel properties to have water and power, and the vast majority of tourist attractions will take precedence in terms of restoration of power." He is quick to add that the company puts a priority on safety and will only use hotels that are fully operational.

Along with cultural, nature and adventure excursions in Puerto Rico, the company's tours have always included a service project, a feature Pardo says will be especially timely in the months ahead.

"More than ever, I want my students to help with hurricane-relief efforts, to chat with locals about their experiences during the storm, and, certainly, to still enjoy the beauty of our island."

Vámonos also offers five- and seven-day programs in Martinique for French language students, and those tours have already resumed. "Martinique is fully functional, and it's the ideal place for students to study French in a warm, tropical setting," Pardo says.

Itineraries on that island include sailing lessons, dance instruction, a Creole cooking class and guided tours of Martinique's rainforests and waterfalls.

The company's programs to Cuba, set to resume in October, were complicated by a statement from the U.S. Department of State warning citizens not to travel to Cuba due to illnesses



Vámonos staff members with the groceries they purchased for Puerto Ricans in need.

suffered by U.S. diplomats. Pardo is offering alternative destinations.

"We are advising all of our groups booked for Cuba to consider Costa Rica, which is one of the safest and most peaceful countries in the Western Hemisphere," he says. "If you would prefer a destination other than Costa Rica, we have Spanish-immersion tours to Spain, Panama, Mexican-heritage San Antonio, Cuban-heritage Miami and Puerto Rico."

Along with attending to Vámonos staff members and clients, Pardo has also focused on helping the people of Puerto Rico.

In late September he set up a GoFundMe page to provide food and supplies to the island's orphanages, rural schools, nursing homes and soup kitchens. Donations to the Vámonos Hurricane Relief Fund are administered by Pardo and his staff.

"Nothing will be handled by any third party," Pardo writes on the page. "We don't play around. Your funds become supplies delivered personally by Vámonos."

To get updates on the company's programs, visit **vamonostours.com** or email Pardo at jorge@vamonostours.com. To make a donation to the company's relief fund, visit [gofundme.com/vamonos-hurricane-relief-fund](https://www.gofundme.com/vamonos-hurricane-relief-fund).

Safe haven in Jamaica

Not every island in the Caribbean was damaged by the hurricanes of September. June Wright, a marketing consultant for SeaGarden Beach Resort in Montego Bay, Jamaica, wants her NTA colleagues to know that the 140-room, all-inclusive property is operating as normal.

"I hasten to assure you that the countries in the Western Caribbean, including Jamaica, were spared from the ravaging effects of the bad weather," Wright says. "Our location makes us a safe haven that is impacted only when storms originate off the West African coast and pass over the Gulf of Mexico."

Wright says that Jamaica's primary market is the United States, where many people mistakenly believe that the entire Caribbean was affected by the hurricanes. As a result, the hotel has been less crowded than normal during the fall season.

Wright is quick to add that the staff of SeaGarden sympathizes with the plight of Caribbean residents and businesses that did not escape storm damage.

For more information, visit seagardenjamaica.com or email Tricia-Ann Bicarie at tbicarie@seagardenjamaica.com.

How to help

Tourism employs 2.4 million citizens of Caribbean nations, and because of recent hurricanes many industry professionals are unemployed or working reduced hours. Coordinated by Tourism Cares, the Caribbean Tourism Recovery Fund is helping restore resources and infrastructure in order to maximize the destination's appeal—and get people back to work.

The fund focuses on the islands directly affected by hurricanes, complementing relief efforts and empowering the tourism sector to combine resources. Economic recovery for this region, which hosts millions of visitors, depends on restoring the travel-related businesses, and Tourism Cares is working to leverage the industry's resources, expertise, influence and compassion.

To make a contribution, visit tourismcares.org/caribbean or mail a check (payable to Caribbean Tourism Recovery Fund) to Tourism Cares, 20 Vernon Street, Norwood, MA 02062 USA.

Cruise company compassion and updates

Following hurricanes Irma and Maria, the NTA-member cruise companies that sail the Caribbean were quick to respond, both to their customers and to the people of the islands who were hurt, hungry or homeless.

- **Oceania Cruises** will make a donation of \$500 per stateroom for new bookings on select Caribbean voyages sailing from December 2017 through April 2018. See oceania.com for details.
- **Norwegian Cruise Line**, along with sister brand Oceania Cruises, set a goal to raise \$2.5 million through the Hope Starts Here hurricane relief program (ncl.com/hope-starts-here). NCL deployed cruise ships to deliver supplies and to house thousands of displaced guests.
- **Royal Caribbean Cruises** dispatched several ships to impacted islands and evacuated people and pets. The company also provided water, ice, milk, generators and medical supplies. See more at royalcaribbean.com.
- **Holland America Line** offers information about itineraries and a portal for donations. Click on "Caribbean Update" on hollandamerica.com.
- For the latest on **MSC Cruises** itineraries, visit the company's website, msccruisesusa.com, and click on "Caribbean Sailings Updates." 📍



ROYAL CARIBBEAN



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SeaGarden Beach Resort is a family owned and operated all-inclusive resort in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Centrally located within 5 minutes of Donald Sangster International Airport (MBJ) and walking distance from Montego Bay's exciting Hip Strip.

Private beach club, conference & meeting rooms, tennis courts, gym, tropical gardens, and other resort amenities make SeaGarden the ideal getaway for groups and individual travel

GREAT FOOD....
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FAMILY FUN...



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South Pacific

COMPILED BY KENDALL FLETCHER

Welcome to the jungle

Pacific Island Holidays is a 5-year-old, Tamuning, Guam-based tour operator offering packages for company business trips, family vacations, training and educational trips, and honeymoons. Steve Querimit, operations coordinator with PIH, says they customize ground arrangements, restaurant reservations, accommodations and transportation for groups.

“Guam is a great destination because of its diverse culture and natural beauty,” he adds.

Pacific Island Holidays is part of Kloppenburg Enterprises, one of the pioneers in the tourism industry on the island since the 1950s. It also operates PIH’s sister company, Turtle Tours, which sells tours through PIH.

“Turtle Tours has developed five optional tours, including the newly opened attraction, Valley of the Latte Adventure Park, which features ancient Chamorro village ruins, a botanical garden, a mini zoo, carabao rides, fishing, local leaf weaving and a fire-starting demonstration,” Querimit says.

These tours allow travelers to interact directly with the native Chamorro people. Visitors can also experience the Guamanian jungles on the Talofofo River during the Adventure River Cruise and Kayak Adventure Tour.

“Our staff is diverse, and all are experts in customizing tours to our visitors’ itineraries. We serve each traveler according to



VALLEYOFTHELATTE.COM

Adventure River Cruise

their unique needs,” Querimit says. “Pacific Island Holidays is a perfect company for North American groups because, unlike other tour companies on the island, ours is locally owned and we know what our clients are looking for in a tropical getaway.”

For more information, contact Querimit at pihoperations@pihguam.com or visit pihguam.net.

Adventures down under

“On everyone’s bucket list, Australia is a paradise in the southern hemisphere that is simply unmatched,” says Nayaz Noor, CEO of Safir Tours, a Fountain Gate, Australia-based tour operator that’s been in business for five years.

Safir Tours offers a five-day trip to the heart of the outback—known as the Red Centre—which Noor calls “an unforgettable experience.”

“The ruggedness of the terrain, the desolate bushland, the changing colors of the landscape as the sun rises or sets, and its indigenous culture are all something to behold,” he says.

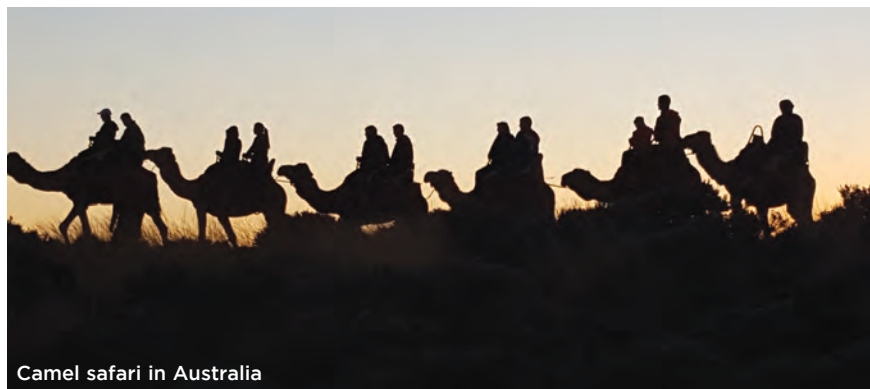
The tour shows travelers the town’s communication center

between the British and Australian governors; the Royal Flying Doctors Service, which serves Australians in remote areas; and a reptile center. They can look for rare rock wallabies in Simpsons Gap or the Ormiston Gorge.

On the tour, groups can cross the outback’s plains and sip champagne while watching the sunset. They can take Segway tours to see Uluru, a massive sandstone monolith, and see the morning views on a sunrise camel ride. At night, they can experience “Tili Wiru Tjuta Nyakutjaku,” an art exhibition of more than 50,000 stems topped with frosted-glass spheres illuminating an area the size of seven football fields.

“Our company’s strength lies in the diverse experience of our founders—spanning over three decades, including 15 years in the U.S.—and the strong relationships with our partners and suppliers, enabling us to offer reliable and quality services consistently,” Noor says. “Our core values are the reason why a few North American companies book with us, and [we] hope that many more will in the future.”

For more information, contact Noor at nayaznoor@safirtravels.com.au or visit safirtravels.com.au.



SAFIRTOURS.COM.AU

Camel safari in Australia

A hula holiday

Based in Oahu, EMI Hawaii specializes in receptive services exclusively for tour operators and groups, both student and adult.

"For over 15 years, EMI Hawaii has assisted our tour operator partners in providing unique experiences for group travelers," says David Adkins, the company's owner.

History tours take travelers to the USS Arizona Memorial and the USS Battleship Missouri to learn details of the Pearl Harbor attack. The tours showcase Pali Lookout, an ancient battlefield with breathtaking views and remarkably strong winds; Iolani Palace, where visitors can learn about the Hawaiian monarchy and see the royals' artifacts; and the site where the Great Polynesian Migration of 600 AD occurred.

Travelers can also attend an authentic Hawaiian luau, where they'll hear stories of the Polynesian people who inhabited the islands before Captain James Cook produced the first written document in Hawaii in 1778. Stories are told through chanting and, of course, hula dancing.

EMI's Rainforest Waterfall Hiking Tour takes guests through Hawaii's lush rainforests to discover the giant native ferns, streams, unique animal species and tropical waterfalls. The trail, a site where Steven Spielberg filmed part of "Jurassic Park," leads to Oahu's tallest accessible waterfall, which is surrounded by a towering prehistoric landscape created by a volcano in the Koolau Range.

"Whether you're young, middle-aged or a mature world traveler looking for new experiences, Hawaii is one of the most magical places on earth," Adkins says.

To learn more, contact him at dadkins@emihawaii.com or visit emihawaii.com.



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Manoa Falls

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Courier's GUIDE TO NTA-MEMBER HOTELS

The NTA membership includes hundreds of hotels and resorts that offer a number of great amenities for groups—welcome receptions, special room rates, dining discounts and savings on other services. The companies on the following list represent many types of accommodations, ranging from national park lodges, quaint rural inns and oceanfront hotels to chic downtown properties and luxurious casino resorts.

** Listings in this guide are based on a company's membership category or profile selections. The information was provided by the member contact and was current as of Sept. 22. Companies with more than one property are indicated by M (for multiple members—2 to 25 properties) and C (for corporate members—26 or more properties). Please check NTAonline.com for updated information on these members and to learn more about the variety of services they offer.*

CANADA

ALBERTA

The Crossing

Mike Fikowski
Lake Louise, AB
mike@thecrossingresort.com
thecrossingresort.com

Mountain Park Lodges M

Bernhard Schneider
Jasper, AB
bernhard.schneider@mpljasper.com
mpljasper.com

PURSUIT

Eliza Fair
Canmore, AB
efair@pursuitcollection.com
pursuitcollection.com

Ramada Inn & Suites, Canmore

Rose Chobaniuk
Canmore, AB
sales@ramadacanmore.com
ramadacanmore.com

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Blue Horizon Hotel

John Pritchard
Vancouver, BC
info@bluehorizonhotel.com
bluehorizonhotel.com

Century Plaza Hotel & Spa

Bob Snowdon
Vancouver, BC
bsnowdon@century-plaza.com
century-plaza.com

Hallmark Hospitality M

Danny Najdovski
Vancouver, BC
danny@hallmarkhotels.com
hallmarkhospitality.com

Mayfair Hotels & Resorts M

Cecilia Lau
Vancouver, BC
cecilia@mayfairhotels.ca
mayfairhotels.ca

PHI Hotel Group M

Cecilia Guerrero
Kamloops, BC
regionalsales@phihotelgroup.com
phihotelgroup.com

River Rock Casino Resort

Janice Mak
Richmond, BC
jmak@riverwalk.com
riverrock.com

Royal Scot Hotel & Suites

Greg Greene
Victoria, BC
ggreene@royalscot.com
royalscot.com

Sandman Hotel Group and Sutton Place Hotel Company C

Lou Yu
Vancouver, BC
lyu@sandman.ca
sandmanhotels.com

Sun Peaks Grand Hotel & Conference Centre

Valerie Hunter
Sun Peaks, BC
vhunter@sunpeaksgrand.com
sunpeaksgrand.com

NOVA SCOTIA

Giseles Country Inn

Helen Sievers
Baddeck, NS
hsievers@ns.sympatico.ca
giseles.com

Old Orchard Inn Ltd.

Jane Manning
Wolfville, NS
janemanning@oldorchardinn.ns.ca
oldorchardinn.com

ONTARIO

Comfort Inn Niagara South

Anne Matiuschuk
Fort Erie, ON
gm@comfortinnforterie.com
comfortinnforterie.com

Courtyard by Marriott Niagara Falls

Heather Wolbert
Niagara Falls, ON
hwolbert@n21inc.com
nfcourtyard.com

Holiday Inn by the Falls

Teresa Adams
Niagara Falls, ON
tadams@holidayinnniagarafalls.com
holidayinnniagarafalls.com

Holiday Inn Toronto Downtown Centre

John Laabs
Toronto, ON
j.laabs@hitortontodowntown.ca
holidayinn.com/torontocentre

Lord Elgin Hotel

Amber Van Der Hoeven
Ottawa, ON
avanderhoeven@lordelgin.ca
lordelgin.ca

Rodeway Inn Fallsview

Robert Bignucolo
Niagara Falls, ON
rwayinn@cogeco.ca
rodewayinnfallsview.com

Silver Hotel Group

Marisol Pena
Mississauga, ON
mpena@silverhotelgroup.com
silverhotelgroup.com

Travelodge Hotel by the Falls

Jonathan George
Niagara Falls, ON
jonathan@travelodgebythefalls.com
travelodgebythefalls.com

QUÉBEC

Atlific Hotels ☉

Chantal Cardinal
Montréal, QC
c.cardinal@atlific.com
atlific.com

Best Western City Centre Centre-ville

Denis Cote
Québec City, QC
dcote@hotelquebec.com
hotelquebec.com

Hilton Montréal/Laval

Joel Caron
Laval, QC
jcaron@hilton-laval.com
hilton-laval.com

Hilton Québec

Guy Godin
Québec City, QC
guy.godin@hilton.com
hiltonquebec.com

Hotel le Concorde

Jackie Dussault
Québec City, QC
jdussault@hotelleconcorde.com
hotelleconcordequebec.com

Hotel Universel Québec

Pascal Pineault
Québec City, QC
ppineault@hoteluniversel.qc.ca
hoteluniversel.qc.ca

Québec's Casinos 🎰

Anie Beauchamp
Montréal, QC
anie.beauchamp@casino.qc.ca
casinos.lotoquebec.com

JAMAICA

SeaGarden Beach Resort

Tricia-Ann Bicarie
Montego Bay (St. James), Jamaica
tbicarie@seagardenjamaica.com
seagardenjamaica.com

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA

Westin – Sheraton Birmingham 🏨

Kim Jackson
Birmingham, AL
kim.jackson@starwood.com
sheratonbirmingham.com

ALASKA

Alyeska Resort

Mark Weakland
Girdwood, AK
mweakland@alyeskaresort.com
alyeskaresort.com

The Hotel Group – Alaska 🏨

Tiffany Brooks
Anchorage, AK
tbrooks@thgalaska.com

The Lakefront Anchorage

Carol Fraser
Anchorage, AK
carol.fraser@millenniumhotels.com
millenniumhotels.com/anchorage

ARIZONA

Best Western Hotels & Resorts ☉

Michelle Zajac
Phoenix, AZ
michelle.zajac@bestwestern.com
bestwestern.com/groupsonline

Best Western Premiere Grand Canyon Squire Inn

Freda Rahnenfuehrer
Grand Canyon, AZ
freda@grandcanyonsquire.com
grandcanyonsquire.com

Cliff Castle Casino Hotel

Nita Neasbitt
Camp Verde, AZ
jneasbitt@cliffcastlecasino.net
cliffcastlecasinohotel.com

Desert Diamond Casino Hotel

Denys Marquez
Tucson, AZ
dmarquez@ddcaz.com
ddcaz.com

Forever Resorts 🏨

Michelle Kien
Scottsdale, AZ
mkien@foreverresorts.com
travel-forever.com/17cjan

Grand Canyon National Park Lodges by Xanterra South Rim LLC 🏨

Bruce Brossman
Flagstaff, AZ
bbrossman@xanterra.com
grandcanyonlodges.com

Grand Canyon Plaza Hotel

Rich Milliron
Grand Canyon, AZ
guestservices@cprgc.com
grandcanyonplaza.com

Hampton Inn Hotel

Rich Rivers
Kayenta, AZ
rich.rivers@hilton.com
kayenta.hamptoninn.com

Holiday Inn Express & Suites Tempe

Heather Nutt
Tempe, AZ
heather.nutt@rarhospitality.com
hiexpress.com/tempeaz

InnSuites Hotel & Suites 🏨

Beth Macnow
Phoenix, AZ
bmacnow@innsuites.com
innsuites.com

Red Feather Lodge

Sue Finley
Grand Canyon, AZ
sjfinley@aol.com
redfeatherlodge.com

ARKANSAS

Best Western Inn of the Ozarks

Cathy Handley
Eureka Springs, AR
cathy@innofthozarks.com
innofthozarks.com

DeGray Lake Resort State Park

Linda Hodges
Bismarck, AR
linda.hodges@arkansas.gov
degray.com

The Lodge at Mount Magazine/ Mt. Magazine State Park

Heidi Ryan
Paris, AR
heidi.ryan@arkansas.gov
mountmagazinestategov.com

CALIFORNIA

The Anaheim Hotel

Roxane Cornell
Anaheim, CA
rcornell@theanaheimhotel.com
theanaheimhotel.com

Apple Farm Inn & Trellis Court

James Leigh
San Luis Obispo, CA
jamesl@applefarm.com
applefarm.com

Beach Retreat & Lodge at Tahoe

Stephanie Hannah
South Lake Tahoe, CA
shannah@tahoebeachretreat.com
tahoebeachretreat.com

Best Western Sutter House

Doris Gray
Sacramento, CA
doris@thesutterhouse.com
thesutterhouse.com

Embassy Suites by Hilton Anaheim South

Erica Perez
Garden Grove, CA
erica.perez@hilton.com
embassysuitesanaheimsouth.com

Fantasy Springs Resort Casino

Juliett Valencia
Indio, CA
jvalencia@fantasysprings.net
fantasyspringsresort.com

Hilton Garden Inn Bakersfield

Marcia Taylor
Bakersfield, CA
marcia.taylor@hilton.com
bakersfield.hgi.com

Holiday Inn Buena Park Hotel & Conference Center

Lafleche Barbeau
Buena Park, CA
lafleche.barbeau@hibuenapark.com
hibuenapark.com

Holiday Inns of Fisherman's Wharf

David Howarth
San Francisco, CA
david.howarth@ihg.com
hifishermanswharf.com

The Hotel at Black Oak Casino Resort

Amanda Short
Tuolumne, CA
ashort@blackoakcasino.com
blackoakcasino.com

Hotel Corque

Stormie Strickland
Solvang, CA
stormie.strickland@hotelcorque.com
hotelcorque.com

Hotel Irvine

Megan Martin
Irvine, CA
mmartin@hotelirvine.com
hotelirvine.com

Hotel Zephyr at Fisherman's Wharf

Jill Plemons
San Francisco, CA
jill.plemons@hotelzephyrsf.com
hotelzephyrsf.com

Hyatt Palm Springs

Ladona Canevaro
Palm Springs, CA
lcanevaro@hyattpalmsprings.com
hyattpalmsprings.com

Marriott Southwest Hotels & Resorts Southern California, Arizona & Nevada

Susan Weander
Irvine, CA
susan.weander@marriott.com
marriott.com

Park Central Hotel

Henrietta Weiner
San Francisco, CA
hweiner@parkcentralsf.com
parkcentralsf.com

Pechanga Resort & Casino

Freddy Bi
Temecula, CA
fbi@pechanga.com
pechanga.com

The Queen Mary

Sandra Richardson
Long Beach, CA
sandra.richardson@queenmary.com
queenmary.com

Red Lion Hotel Anaheim Resort

Jasmin Vyas
Anaheim, CA
jasmin.vyas@redlion.com
anaheimredlion.com

Santa Barbara Hotel Group

Millie Matz
Santa Barbara, CA
mmatz@sbhotels.com
sbhotels.com

UC Santa Barbara Conference Services

Whitney Morris
Santa Barbara, CA
wmorris@housing.ucsb.edu
conferences.ucsb.edu

Wyndham Anaheim Garden Grove

Donna Coins
Garden Grove, CA
donnacoins@anaheimwyndham.com
anaheimwyndham.com

COLORADO

Clarion Inn of Grand Junction Colorado

Jessica Wallace
Grand Junction, CO
jwallace@clariongj.com
clarioningrandjunction.com

Comfort Inn & Suites Durango

Patti Reavis
Durango, CO
preavis@sjrlp.com
comfortinndurango.com

Grand Vista Hotel

Phyllis Veale
Grand Junction, CO
phyllis@grandvistahotel.com
grandvistahotel.com

Hampton Inn Durango

Barb Richter
Durango, CO
jenny.roberts@hilton.com
hamptoninn.com

Sky Ute Casino Resort

Jeffrey Lyman
Ignacio, CO
jeff.lyman@skyutecasino.com
skyutecasino.com

Southwest Hospitality Management LLC

Brian Bartlett
Cortez, CO
griglak@msn.com
baymontinns.com/81321

Strater Hotel

Michelle Martinez
Durango, CO
mmartinez@strater.com
strater.com

CONNECTICUT

Foxwoods Resort Casino

George Yerger
Mashantucket, CT
gyerger@foxwoods.com
foxwoods.com

Mohegan Sun

Stephen Olender
Uncasville, CT
solender@mohegansun.com
mohegansun.com

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Hiltons of Washington, DC

Renee Youngs
Washington, DC
renee.youngs@hilton.com
washington.hilton.com

Holiday Inn Capitol

Eric Pittfield
Washington, DC
eric.pittfield@hicdc.com
hicapitoldc.com

DELAWARE

Dover Downs Hotel & Casino

Gordon Basht
Dover, DE
gbasht@doverdowns.com
doverdowns.com

FLORIDA

Banana Bay Resort and Marina

Anthony Dellinger
Marathon, FL
anthony.dellinger@bananabay.com
bananabay.com

Best Western Orlando Gateway Hotel

Tracey Sartini
Orlando, FL
tracey@bworlando.com
bworlando.com

Champions World Resort

Larissa Vieira
Kissimmee, FL
lvieira@championsworldresort.com
championsworldresort.com

Holiday Inn & Suites Across from Universal Orlando

Bob Renka
Orlando, FL
bob.renka@dimdev.com
hiuniversal.com

Holiday Inn Resort Lake Buena Vista

Lisa Ann Kukelka
Orlando, FL
lkukelka@hiresortlbv.com
hiresortlbv.com

Holiday Inn Resort Orlando Suites Waterpark

Michelle Hoehns
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hisuitesorlando.com

Holiday Inn Resort/Holiday Inn

Connie Miller
Panama City Beach, FL
connie.miller@paradisefound.com
hipcbeach.com

**Inn at Calypso Cay
Lake Buena Vista South**
Amy Hart
Kissimmee, FL
amy@calypsocayorlando.com
calypsocayorlando.com

**International Palms Resort
& Conference Center**
Michaela Winter
Orlando, FL
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internationalpalms.com

Loyalty Inc.
Yvonne Kirby
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loyaltyusa.com

Newport Beachside Resort
Giovanna Bello
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gbello@newportbeachsidesort.com
newportbeachsidesort.com

Outrigger Beach Resort
Eric Hoogstins
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Rosen Hotels and Resorts Inc. 📍
Angelina Motley
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rosenhôtels.com

Sound Hospitality Management 📍
Michele Drucker
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soundhospitality.com

staySky Hotels & Resorts 📍
Kelly Deremiah
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staysky.com

GEORGIA

Historic Savannah
Kai Williams
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bhistoricsavannah.com

**Best Western in Savannah's
Historic District 📍**
Maggie Harley
Savannah, GA
mharley@vestahospitality.com
promenadesavannah.com

Hotel Equities 📍
Roger Miller
Atlanta, GA
rmiller@hotelequities.com
hotelequities.com

Hotel Indigo Savannah
Morgan Stincer
Savannah, GA
morgan.stincer@ihg.com
hotelindigo.com/savannah

Jekyll Island Club Hotel
Patty Henning
Jekyll Island, GA
sales@jekyllclub.com
jekyllclub.com/?nck=nta

North Point Hospitality
Stacy Sturgis
Savannah, GA
stacy.sturgis@hilton.com
northpointhospitality.com

**Savannah Lodging
(Savannah Historic District)**
Janet Finnegan
Savannah, GA
janet.finnegan@savannahlodging.com
savannahlodging.com

HAWAII

Aqua Hospitality LLC 📍
Myna Eheler
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meheler@aquahospitality.com
aquaresorts.com

Hawaiian Hotels & Resorts 📍
June Pagdilao
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june.pagdilao@hawaiianhotels.com
hawaiianhotels.com

Kaanapali Beach Hotel
Tiffany Rosenthal
Lahaina, HI
trosenthal@kbhmaui.com
kbhmaui.com

IDAHO

Coeur d'Alene Casino Resort
Dee Dee McGowan
Worley, ID
wmcgowan@cdacasino.com
cdacasino.com

Silver Mountain Resort
Cathryn Jerome
Kellogg, ID
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silvermt.com

TNB Hotel Management 📍
Amber Rodriguez
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tnbhôtels.com

ILLINOIS

Cambria Chicago Magnificent Mile
Brady Stroot
Chicago, IL
bstroot@cambriachicago.com
cambriachicago.com

Crowne Plaza Chicago Metro
Justine Egert
Chicago, IL
jegert@thechicagometro.com
thechicagometro.com

Hilton Lisle/Naperville
Joni Augustine
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hiltonlisle naperville.com

Hiltons of Chicago
Michael Weinberg
Chicago, IL
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palmerhousehiltonhotel.com

Jumer's Casino & Hotel
Hollie Myers
Rock Island, IL
holliem@jumerscri.com
jumerscasinohotel.com

**Marriott International
Midwest and Texas 📍**
Cheryl Hannemann
Rosemont, IL
cheryl.hannemann@marriott.com
marriott.com

Oakbrook Terrace Hotels 📍
Miriam Blumenthal
Oak Brook, IL
miriam@discoverdupage.com
oakbrookterracehotels.com

LOUISIANA

Blake Hotel-New Orleans
Andy Le Bouef
New Orleans, LA
alebouef@nolahotelgroup.com
blakehotelneworleans.com

Carmel Inn & Suites
Peggy Benoit
Thibodaux, LA
pegbenoit@hotmail.com
carmelinnofla.com

Cypress Bayou Casino Hotel
Germaine Yarber
Charenton, LA
germaineyarber@cypressbayou.com
cypressbayou.com

Hampton Inn Hotels of New Orleans 📍
Sara Bartlett
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Hotel 504
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Hotel Provincial
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Le Meridien New Orleans
Nikki Jackson
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lemeridienneworleanshotel.com

Nottoway Plantation

Susan Ringwald
White Castle, LA
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nottoway.com

MAINE

Lafayette Hotels

Donald Haggett
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Meadowmere Resort

Allyson Cavaretta
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allyson@meadowmere.com
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Witham Family Properties/

Acadia Area Hotels

Dede Daigle
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MARYLAND

B.F. Saul Company Hospitality Group

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Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center

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Hilton Ocean City Oceanfront Suites

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National 4-H Conference Center

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MASSACHUSETTS

Cape Codder Resort & Spa

Lynn Williams
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Constitution Inn

Beth Benner
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DoubleTree by Hilton Boston Downtown

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Four Points by Sheraton Boston Logan Airport

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Hilton Garden Inn Lenox/Pittsfield

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Main Street Hospitality Group at The Red Lion Inn – Independent Hotels in The Berkshires

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The Midtown Hotel

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Nantucket Inn & Conference Center

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Red Jacket Resorts

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MICHIGAN

Best Western Greenfield Inn

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Grand Hotel

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Island Resort & Casino

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Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort

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MINNESOTA

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MISSISSIPPI

Beau Rivage by MGM Resorts International

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MISSOURI

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Best Western Branson Inn & Conference Center

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Myer Hotels

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Westgate Resorts

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Best Western Butte Plaza Inn

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Town Pump Hotel Group

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NEVADA

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Mesquite Gaming

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Montbleu Resort Casino & Spa

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Silver Legacy Resort Casino

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Station Casinos

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NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW JERSEY

BookMyGroup

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Hampton Inn & Suites Newark-Harrison Riverwalk

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Resorts Casino Hotel

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Tropicana Casino and Resort

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Wyndham Hotel Group USA

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NEW MEXICO

Best Western Rio Grande Inn

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Inn of the Mountain Gods Resort & Casino

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NEW YORK

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EVEN Hotel Midtown East

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Sheraton New York Times Square Hotel

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The Watson Hotel

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NORTH CAROLINA

Blue Star Hospitality

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La Quinta Inns & Suites

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OHIO

Hilton Columbus at Easton

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OREGON

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DoubleTree by Hilton Portland

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Elizabeth Street Inn

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Inn at the Commons

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The Mill Casino Hotel & RV Park

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Monarch Hotel & Conference Center

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Rogue Regency Inn & Suites

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Shilo Inns Suites Hotels

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Growth Properties Hotels of Philadelphia

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The Inn at Pocono Manor

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Lancaster Arts Hotel

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Omni William Penn Hotel

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**Quality Inn Gettysburg Battlefield/
Best Western Gettysburg**

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RHODE ISLAND**Newport Hotel Group**

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SOUTH CAROLINA**Hampton Inn & Suites Oceanfront**

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**Homewood Suites by Hilton Charleston
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**Hyatt Place & Hyatt House
Charleston-Historic District**

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Lowcountry Hotels of Charleston

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Strand Hospitality

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SOUTH DAKOTA**Deadwood Gulch Gaming Resort**

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Howard Johnson Inn & Suites Rapid City

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Mount Rushmore Lodge at Palmer Gulch

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**Mt. Rushmore's White House Resort
& Presidents View Resort**

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TENNESSEE**Clarion Inn Pigeon Forge**

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Fairfield Inn Properties of the Smokies

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Graceland & Guest House at Graceland

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Greystone Lodge at the Aquarium

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**Hampton Inn & Suites
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**Hilton Worldwide
Focused Service Division**

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The Park Vista-A DoubleTree Hotel

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Holiday Inn Northwest SeaWorld

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Holiday Inn Riverwalk

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Pillar Hotels & Resorts

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UTAH**Conestoga Ranch Glamping Resort**

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Crystal Inn - Downtown Salt Lake City

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**Moab Lodging & Adventure,
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Moab Marriott Hotels and Activities

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VIRGINIA

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Staybridge Suites

Tysons McLean Hotel

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WASHINGTON

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Embassy Suites Seattle/North Lynnwood

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Emerald Queen Hotel & Casinos

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Red Lion Hotels

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Warwick Seattle Hotel

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WEST VIRGINIA

Oglebay Resort & Conference Center

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WISCONSIN

North Central Group – Hilton & Marriott Hotels

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Potawatomi Hotel and Casino

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Radisson Hotel & Conference Center – Green Bay

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WYOMING

Blair Hotels

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Painted Buffalo Inn

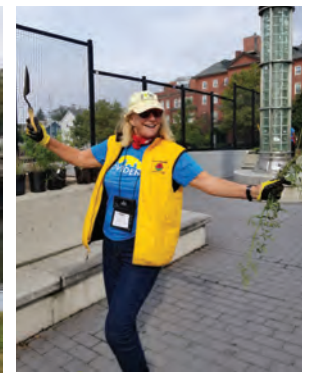
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COMMUNITY

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM THE NTA FAMILY



TOP, MIDDLE LEFT, MIDDLE RIGHT: DOUG RENTZ; ALL OTHERS: TOURISM CARES

Volunteers from travel and tourism companies, including representatives from several NTA members and the association staff, joined Tourism Cares in Providence, Rhode Island, for a day of beautifying city parks and landmarks. To read more about the event, turn to page 80.

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Meet the Members

PRESENTED BY **VISIT**
Clarksville™

Visit Indy

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

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Office phone: +1.317.262.8223

Website: visitindy.com/grouptravel

NTA member since: 1985

What's new in Indianapolis?

There are so many developments happening in Indy, it's hard to keep up! Our zoo and children's museum just added new permanent world-class exhibits; our art museum's campus and gardens have been reimagined as Newfields: A Place for Nature & the Arts; and many of our incredible performing arts organizations are celebrating milestones and introducing new venues in 2018. It's really an exciting time to be in Indy.

What are some of the must-sees in your area?

Indy is known across the globe as the Racing Capital of the World and a

premier sports destination. A visit to the iconic Indianapolis Motor Speedway is a must. Sports fans should also make sure to tour Super Bowl XLVI's host, Lucas Oil Stadium, along with the NCAA headquarters.

What are some amenities available for groups traveling to Indianapolis?

Many of Indy's group-friendly hotels are new or recently renovated. Our attractions and restaurants are accustomed to exceeding groups' needs, from parking to the guest experience. And our team at Visit Indy is a valuable complimentary resource for planners to ensure they organize the best possible tour in Indy.



What is your favorite vacation spot?

When I'm not being a tourist in my own city, as they say, I love getting away to the beach.

Do you have a favorite TV show?

I love all things murder mystery, but especially "Law & Order."

For more information, contact Godsey at bgodsey@visitindy.com.

Conestoga Ranch Glamping Resort

GARDEN CITY, UTAH

NTA contact: Keith Battaglia,
sales and marketing consultant

Office phone: 844.464.5267

Website: conestogaranch.com

NTA member since: 2017

How did Conestoga Ranch Glamping Resort come to be?

Eager to acquaint more families with Garden City, Utah's natural beauty and recognizing the growing popularity of "glamping" around the world, five partners developed a luxury camping resort overlooking the vivid blue waters of Bear Lake. They set out to design a glamping destination where families, groups and couples could camp in complete comfort, without having to sacrifice precious vacation time prepping for their outdoor vacation. The partners decided to custom manufacture the unique tents and wagons themselves. The wagons are designed

to be the staple of the resort's Old West ambiance.

What makes glamping different than camping?

Glamping is a growing trend in the U.S. and has already been established in many international markets, including Europe. Glamping is derived from the words glamorous and camping. Glamping at Conestoga Ranch is more like staying in a resort versus a campground. We offer the American Safari experience with all the amenities of a full-service hotel, including daily maid service, a restaurant, a front desk, and concierge and valet services.

Tell us about your meeting, event and group accommodations.

The Ranch has a dedicated event tent located at one of the highest points with beautiful views of Bear Lake. It can hold up to 100 people and can be set up for wedding ceremonies,



banquet receptions and conferences. The Ranch's signature restaurant, The Campfire Grill, is available for buyouts and can hold up to 150 people.

What's your favorite weekend activity?

Finding amazing produce at the local farmer's market.

For more information, contact Battaglia at keith.battaglia@conestogaranch.com.

Québec Copper Art Studio & Museum Albert Gilles

CHATEAU-RICHER, QUÉBEC

NTA contact: Palmyre Gilles; vice-president, public relations and marketing

Office phone: +1.418.824.4224

Website: albertgilles.com

NTA member since: 2014

What makes your attraction such a special place?

Repoussé work (copper embossing) is becoming a dying art, and we are the only ones in North America mastering the craft at this level and, at the same time, sharing our passion for the work with our groups and FITs. Maybe what visitors most enjoy, and admire, is to see our family carrying on the tradition, from father to daughter and granddaughter. This year we've celebrated the 90th year of our Copper Art Studio & Museum.

Talk more about your family's history with the attraction.

My father, Albert Gilles, who founded our company in 1927, had a very full and uncommon life. He designed and crafted commissioned works at the request of everyone from Mae West to Pope Pius XIII! He passed away in 1979 at the age of 84, and the women of our family are carrying on.

My mom still does the enamel on our creations, and my sister Diane and my niece Sophie design our new models. My sisters Monique and Solange come to help us when needed, as does my aunt. And I keep the spirit of my dad and our achievements alive by promoting and marketing everything.

What group programs do you offer?

Our hands-on Copper Art Workshop is a must for adults and students. They go



back home with unique memories and have their own copper art creation. The program is combined with the guided tour of our museum.

If you could perform with any singer or band—past or present—which one would it be?

ABBA or Pharrell Williams ... or Nat King Cole. Sorry, I can't decide!

For more information, contact Gilles at museum@cuivres-albertgilles.com.

Greater Green Bay CVB

GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN

NTA contact: Julie Gerczak, director of tourism and bureau services

Office phone: +1.920.405.1154

Website: greenbay.com

NTA member since: 2016

How long have you been with the CVB?

I have been in the travel industry for 32 years, and all of them have been here at the Greater Green Bay CVB.

What do travelers experience when they visit your area?

Green Bay is a friendly, safe and clean city to explore. We have such a variety of family friendly and reasonably priced attractions, as well as arts and culinary activities, and of course sports!

What are some of Green Bay's can't-miss sites?

Definitely legendary Lambeau Field. The Packers are the only team in the NFL that is owned by the fans. They offer

entertaining behind-the-scenes tours of the stadium with an opportunity to walk through the tunnel and onto the field like the players do on game day.

We also have a newer attraction, The Automobile Gallery, where the automobile is the art. Visitors can see more than 60 unique automobiles spanning over 100 years. The other attraction that draws groups to Green Bay is the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. It's the only official Marian shrine in the United States and is a quiet, beautiful place of prayer.

What is your favorite vacation memory?

When I was 10, we did a family trip to the Black Hills and Mount Rushmore. I



went there again on a class trip in high school and had a whole new experience with friends and classmates. Then my husband and I took our children there when they were younger, and they loved it. Lots of great memories.

For more information, contact Gerzack at julie@greenbay.com.

Visit Clarksville
Frances Manzitto
+1.931.245.4345 | 800.530.2487
frances@visitclarksvilletn.com
visitclarksvilletn.com

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

COMMUNITY NEWS

NTA members are indicated in bold text. Do you have news you'd like to share with the NTA membership? Please send it to Gabe Webb, *Courier* writer, at gabe.webb@ntaservicesinc.com.

Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB hires new domestic sales associate

The Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB hired **Gonzalo Rubio** as a new domestic sales associate. Rubio works with travel agents, airlines and cruise lines to promote the city, and he represents the organization on sales missions and at trade shows.

"We're really excited to have Gonzalo join our tourism sales team in this newly created role," said **Fernando Harb**, vice president of tourism and sales for the CVB. "His strong background and experience in sales and the hotel industry will be paramount to helping further grow our domestic sales."

Prior to joining the CVB, Rubio held sales positions with the Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica and the St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort. He has also worked for the Hyatt Place Orlando/Universal and the Westin Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort.

Travel Oregon awards \$400,000 for tourism projects

Travel Oregon has announced the recipients of \$400,000 in matching grants for tourism projects throughout the state. The DMO awarded its Travel Oregon Competitive Small Grant funds to causes that, according to its website, offer "a better life for Oregonians through strong, sustainable local economies." More than \$1.5 million has been distributed through the program in the past nine years, which has helped fund 125 projects.

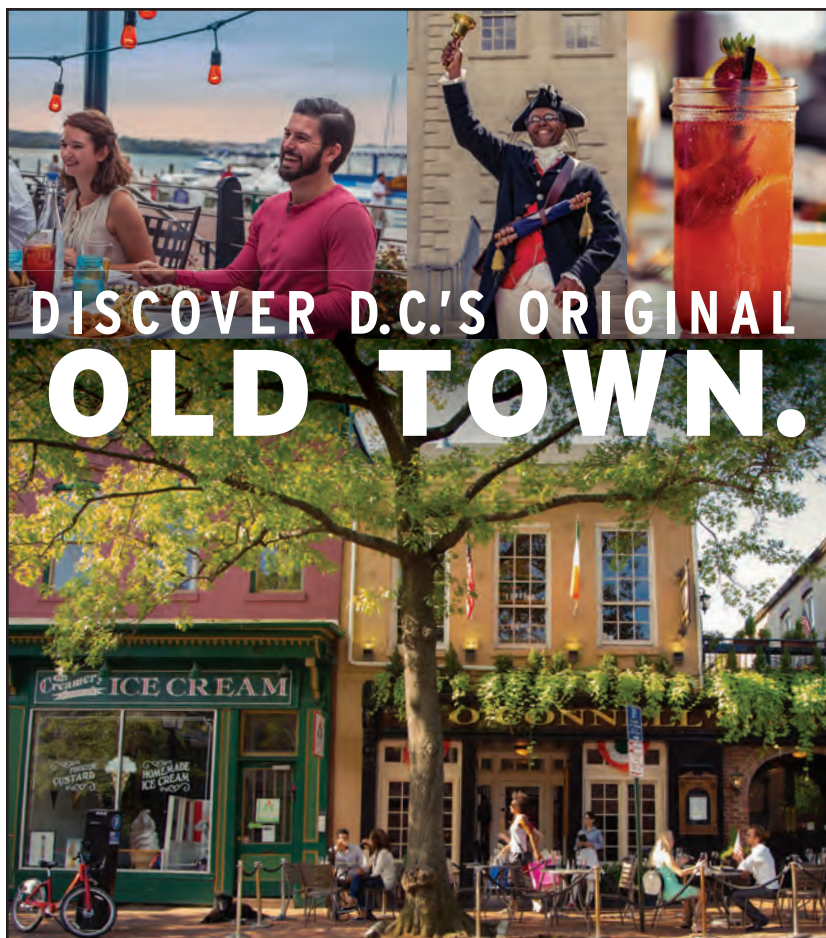
"The grants we awarded this year help us to fulfill Travel Oregon's mission," said **Todd Davidson**, CEO of Travel Oregon. "By supporting these innovative projects, we are better able to share the stories of Oregon's people and places, deliver world-class experiences, strengthen the industry and ensure the preservation of Oregon's way of life and its natural places."

This year's 29 recipients include the Applegate Trails Association; the Association of Oregon Counties, which seeks to develop unfinished segments of the Oregon Coast Trail; the Oregon State Parks Foundation; and Portland Playhouse.

Visit California wins industry engagement award

Visit California won the award for Most Engaged Tourism Board—Global at the Virtuoso Awards. The DMO was recognized at the 29th annual Virtuoso Travel Week conference in late August. The awards are given to outstanding members among the luxury travel network's 1,700 partner organizations.

"California's unparalleled luxury is refined, authentic, exclusive and experiential," said **Caroline Beteta**, president and CEO of Visit California. "Participating in events like Virtuoso Travel Week allows us to share those experiences with key



Discover the town that George Washington called home, long before there was a Washington, D.C. A nationally designated historic district founded in 1749, Old Town Alexandria has everything a group could ask for: value-priced hotels, group-friendly restaurants, and memorable attractions and activities. Plus you'll find knowledgeable professionals and local group tour guides to help make the experience a delight—both for those planning and those enjoying every event.

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Contact **Jen De Luca**

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partners. Being recognized by Virtuoso as a global leader is an incredible honor.”

McGlade named general manager for CroisiEurope River Cruises

John McGlade was named the general manager, U.S. and Canada, for CroisiEurope River Cruises. In his new role, he focuses on expanding the company's presence in North America, and he manages its U.S. call center, national sales team and public relations.

McGlade has nearly 40 years of travel industry experience. He has been with CroisiEurope since 2001 and serves on the NTA Board of Directors.

CroisiEurope moved Nicola Ianonne into the role of marketing director. He creates and oversees strategic marketing initiatives.

Goway Travel brings Combrink on board

Belinda Combrink has joined tour operator Goway Travel as its new product

and marketing manager for the Asia by Goway brand. Combrink joined Goway's team in 2008 as its marketing manager for Africa and the Middle East. Prior to that, she worked for an inbound tour operator in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Collette launches Impact Travel line

Pawtucket, Rhode Island-based tour operator Collette launched its Impact Travel program in September. The new initiative comprises tours that combine sightseeing with volunteer work in the communities travelers visit.

The inaugural tour was a 13-day experience in South Africa. Participants prepared lunches for schoolchildren, decorated classrooms and distributed “hippo rollers” for manually transporting fresh water.

“It is our passion to give back, connecting travelers to diverse cultures and making a positive impact on the world,” said John Sutherland, manager of corporate responsibility. “Our guests

will experience the best of both worlds on these tours by seeing the beauty in the destination, while engaging in volunteer work to give back to the local community.”

Barger joins VisitLEX as destination sales manager

VisitLEX, the CVB for Lexington, Kentucky, hired Douglas Barger as its new destination sales manager this summer. Barger works with corporate, medical, religious and fraternal organizations to bring meetings and events to the city.

“Doug's experience is a great fit for Lexington and will provide a strong foundation for success,” said Marci Krueger-Sidebottom, vice president of sales and services for VisitLEX. “He understands the meeting industry from many angles, which will be instrumental in building on our achievements in recruiting top conventions and events to our community.”

Barger previously worked for Visit Jacksonville. ☺



THE FUTURE IS IN GOOD HANDS.

Congratulations Melissa, from your colleagues at Visit Fairfax, on becoming one of the 2018 NTA Top Five Young Professionals. You are a true rockstar in our industry and it has been an absolute pleasure to watch you become both a role model and a leader as you take your peer group in new, positive directions and continue to introduce Fairfax County to new audiences.

**MELISSA McCLURE, DESTINATION SALES MANAGER,
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NEW MEMBERS

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

DMOs

Door County Visitor Bureau

Laura Bradley
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235-0406 USA
doorcounty.com

Talk AG

Livia Wyssen
Kandersteg, 3718 Switzerland
kandersteg.ch

Setouchi Tourism Authority

Richard Tobin
Hiroshima, 730-0011 Japan
setouchitourism.or.jp/en

TOUR OPERATORS

Gary Express Inc.

Lynn Li
Alhambra, CA 91801 USA
garyexpress.com

Good Shepherd Travel

Tony Abuaita
Fort Worth, TX 76123 USA
goodshepherdtravel.com



Linson USA Inc.

Andy Lin
Yorba Linda, CA 92887 USA
57us.com

Sugar Tours Inc.

Chris Donnelly
West Dover, VT 05356-0873 USA
sugartours.com

World of Travel

Ron Hersh
Columbus, OH 43220 USA
worldoftravel.com

TOUR SUPPLIERS

Bowers Museum

Julie Custer
Santa Ana, CA 92706 USA
bowers.org

Colonial Williamsburg Hotels

Julie Fountain
Williamsburg, VA 23185 USA

Comfort Inn Niagara South

Anne Matiuschuk
Fort Erie, ON L2A 6G1 Canada
comfortinnforterie.com

Crossroads Heritage Museum

Corinne Tetz
Hamburg, PA 19526 USA
crossroadsheritagemuseum.com

Fare Buzz

Don Newton
New York, NY 10020 USA
farebuzz.com

Grand Canyon Plaza Hotel

Rich Milliron
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023 USA
grandcanyonplaza.com

Hilton Houston Post Oak by the Galleria

Kimberly Hain
Houston, TX 77056 USA
houstonpostoak.hilton.com

Hotel Corque

Stormie Strickland
Solvang, CA 93463-3741 USA
hotelcorque.com

Kentucky Derby Museum

Jennifer Riddell
Louisville, KY 40208-1212 USA
derbymuseum.org

Meteor Crater

Nicol Candalaria
Flagstaff, AZ 86003-0940 USA
meteorcrater.com

Potawatomi Hotel and Casino

Lisa Pederson
Milwaukee, WI 53233-2662 USA
paysbig.com

Rogue Regency Inn & Suites

Maggie Groves
Medford, OR 97504-4105 USA
rogueregency.com

ASSOCIATES

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getchute.com

Omnyway

Aiko Fushida
San Francisco, CA 94104 USA
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NTA EVENTS

Save these dates in 2017 and beyond to connect with new partners and destinations.

For more information on these events, click the EVENTS tab on NTAonline.com.

travel exchange



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Dec. 14-18, 2017



Milwaukee
Nov. 4-8, 2018



Washington, D.C.
March 21-22, 2018



Charleston, SC | April 18-21, 2018

Charleston, S.C.
April 18-21, 2018



Tucson, Arizona
March 27-30, 2019



Anchorage, Alaska
March 18-21, 2020

Providence? Divine.

BY GABE WEBB

IF ROGER WILLIAMS, the founder of Providence, Rhode Island, had asked me in 1636 what I thought of the name for his new city, I would almost certainly have said, “Bold move, dude.”

I describe myself as a cautious optimist: Hope for the best and prepare for the worst. So the act of Williams, a 17th-century theologian exiled from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, bestowing a name synonymous with divine protection and good fortune, seems lofty to me.

But after the Tourism Cares for Providence volunteering event, Sept. 14–15, I’m a believer in Providence. Here’s why.

In the week leading up to the event, the forecast was dire. It seemed that every few hours, one of my NTA colleagues scheduled to join me for the trip would lean in and declare that the predicted likelihood of rain had increased. A 50 percent chance of showers gradually became a 100 percent chance of torrential downpours.

I remembered these warnings as Laura Scott, June Calk, Doug Rentz and I arrived in Rhode Island the afternoon before the our work day. We had planned to spend our evening taking a ferry to Newport to see some the mansions that are under the care of the Preservation Society of Newport County, a long-time NTA member. As our catamaran headed into open water, we encountered heavy fog, only for it to pass and reveal a clear, golden evening when we docked at Newport. This perfect weather would stay with us for the rest of our time in Rhode Island, as if Providence were flouting the meteorological naysayers.

The next day, we joined 175 volunteers from the travel industry, who were spread between India Point Park, Burnside Park and Scialo Bros. Bakery. Tasks included planting, painting fences and railings, spreading mulch and decorative rock, and creating a mural. I was in Burnside Park, removing dirt from brick planters containing small trees. Masons then repaired the spots where tree roots had displaced the bricks. If no repairs were needed, our team would



Gabe Webb, June Calk, Doug Rentz and Laura Scott of the NTA staff and Jay Smith, chair of the NTA Board of Directors, at Tourism Cares for Providence

DOUG RENTZ



TOURISM CARES



TOURISM CARES

even out the soil and spread decorative gray and red rock around the base of the tree.

It quickly became clear that my dirt-digging cohort came to work—and so did the railing painters, planters and weed-pullers. As the day wore on and the to-do list grew shorter, we were directed to the perimeter of the park for fence painting. When it was time to clean up, our human capital had yielded significant dividends: 900 new plants at India Point and Burnside parks, a new mural celebrating Scialo Bros.’ 100th year on Federal Hill, and the equivalent of seven weeks of labor for the city of Providence.

Throughout the work day, locals passing by the park stopped and asked

us about our project, and almost all of them seemed genuinely appreciative of the scores of volunteers who donated their time and energy. (The lone dissenter had a lot to say about the mayor.)

And this might be what was most providential about this and all other Tourism Cares projects: that, from an outsider’s perspective, hundreds of people would materialize from around the region and the country for a day of hard work. While I hesitate to call any part of my experience divine (although I did have an amazing seafood paella), when a community—be it geographical, professional or personal—unites to protect shared spaces, we all enjoy good fortune. That’s Providence. ☺



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