

Beyond the Borders

COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT and LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

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Building Communities

"Practical Tools and Information"

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This newsletter is meant to share practical tools and information to assist you in your important role in community and economic development work. We welcome comments on current letters plus encourage your advice for future articles.

Newsletter Topics

[Editorial -
Tourism in North
Dakota](#)

[Will It
Sell?](#)

[What's Dot and What's Not:
Domain Name Registration
Scams](#)

[Before Hiring
Employees!](#)

[Updated: Reports Forms
and Licenses Required in
North Dakota](#)

Tourism in North Dakota

Editorial

The North Dakota Division of Tourism recently completed a study of tourism that indicates we are becoming a tourism destination. The findings show us that most of our tourists drive to the state, not surprising with our limited air service, but telling nonetheless because that means that our primary market is within about 500 miles. People do come from further distances, but if I wanted to concentrate my marketing dollars in a target area for the tourism customer it would be within this distance but only to the east and south. That's because they also found that the North Dakota tourism product is much more unique to people who live east and south of the state. In other words, people from Montana, especially western Montana, are not likely to look at us as their vacation spot.

The study gave several interesting conclusions on who our tourists are and what they would come to see and do. It profiled our travelers as adults, age 35-54 with a female skew. The female skew is simply that most travel plans are made by the female in the household. They are married, have a high school education or higher, are employed and have a household income of \$35,000 or more. Joanne Olson, North Dakota Tourism, tells us that the top travel motivators to come to North Dakota are an adult atmosphere (translated – most tourists are not traveling with kids so theme parks are not what they are looking for), exciting, family atmosphere (even if they are not traveling with kids they want places that kids visit), popular sightseeing, and entertainment. People are looking for places with unique history and culture. Great examples for our state would include our heritage, Sakakawea, Teddy Roosevelt, Custer, American Indians and Lewis and Clark. They want soft adventure like hiking, biking and water sports and they want fun things to see and do and scenic beauty. Scenic beauty includes the prairies as well as places like the badlands and Pembina gorge.

What North Dakota Tourism found follows very closely what Ted Eubanks, a nationally known expert in experiential tourism, shared with participants in Bottineau on April 4 at the Alternative Enterprise and Rural Tourism Conference. Mr. Eubanks gave this top ten list of tourist activities.

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| 1. Shopping | 33% |
| 2. Outdoor Recreation | 17% |
| 3. Historical Places | 14% |
| 4. Cultural Events | 10% |
| 5. Beaches (might have a little trouble with this one) | 10% |
| 6. National and State Parks | 10% |
| 7. Theme Park | 9% |
| 8. Gambling | 8% |
| 9. Nighttime Entertainment | 7% |
| 10. Sports Events | 6% |

He also said that half of all adventure travelers prefer soft adventure like camping, biking, hiking, wildlife watching, horseback riding, canoeing, etc., and that 76 percent of all U.S. travelers want to go someplace where they have never been before and of those 48 percent prefer remote untouched destinations. Fifty-seven percent of the travelers are attracted by an area’s culture and 44 percent want to learn new skills or engage in a new activity.

If that is what people are looking for we certainly have the product, but selling it is not easy. We are told by Eubanks and others who work in the tourism industry that people come to an area to buy – good stories, – so we have to sell them – good experiences. – To do this we have to work together as regions and layer our stories of interest, creating themes. Stories would include historical events, famous figures, and everyday happenings to real people.

[Back to top](#)

Will It Sell?

Source: Wally Eide, Director of NDSU Institute for Business and Industry Development

What are the odds that a new product idea will be successful? Two hundred fifty thousand people attempt to introduce new products each year. It is estimated that between 500 and 1000 people are successful. Six million patents are in the patent depository library, but only about 2 percent of these are ever successfully commercialized.

For information on a product life cycle and steps in starting your business go to **Business Success Step By Step** at http://www.ndsu.edu/smallbiz911/biz_strategies.

To avoid patent scams go to the National Inventors Fraud Center at <http://www.inventorfraud.com/>.

[Back to top](#)

What's Dot and What's Not: Domain Name Registration Scams

Source: Federal Trade Commission

What's in a name? Plenty, if you want to register a website, according to the Federal Trade Commission. Evidently a new scam is targeting would-be website owners by offering the opportunity to pre-register new top level domain names. Domain names, such as `ftc.gov`, are the unique terms that enable Internet users to locate a specific website. The top level domain is the final extension, such as `.com` or `.org`. The FTC also says that the scam artists are taking advantage of the news that the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has made new top level domain extensions available. They include `.aero`, `.biz`, `.coop`, `.museum`, `.name`, and `.pro`.

Consumers are getting fax and e-mail solicitations that offer a chance at a new top level domain name, for a fee, as soon as it becomes available. Some registration services are guaranteeing new top level domain names or promising preferential treatment in the registration process. But, the FTC cautions, these offers may be misleading.

To protect yourself the FTC advises consumers to do the following:

1. Avoid any domain name preregistration service that guarantees particular top level domain names or preferential treatment in the assignment of new domain names.
2. Avoid doing business with people who send unsolicited faxes, regardless of the offer. Unsolicited faxes are illegal.

3. Stay on top of the news about top level domain names at the ICANN website, <http://www.icann.org/>.

[Back to top](#)

Before Hiring Employees!

Source: **Business Resource Guide, SBA**

Finding and hiring the right employees is important to any business, but small firms are less able to afford the time and cost involved in hiring the wrong person. To effectively manage the business a manager must apply basic staffing techniques.

The Small Business Administration recommends that when setting personnel policies you must know exactly what you are in, your own personal abilities and weaknesses, and try to anticipate how you will deal with the various personnel issues that will arise in the daily operation of the business. Put all of your policies in writing with a copy given to the employee upon hiring. Employment and training procedures must be established so there is no question as to how things should be accomplished. Your written policy should include issues such as hours, compensation, fringe benefits, vacations, time off and training, and terminations. Other issues may include retirement, grievances and promotions. The North Dakota Department of Labor has a sample employee policy manual available for viewing on the their web sit at www.state.nd.us/labor/

[Back to top](#)

Updated Business Reports, Forms and Licenses Required in the State of North Dakota

Need to know if you need a special license to operate your business in North Dakota? Find out in our updated publication, "Business Reports, Forms and Licenses Required in the State of North Dakota" on our website at: <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/ccv/ced/communitypage.htm> or call our office at 701-328-5134 and request publication number EC752.

[Back to top](#)

[Newsletter Homepage](#)

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