

November 2004
this issue

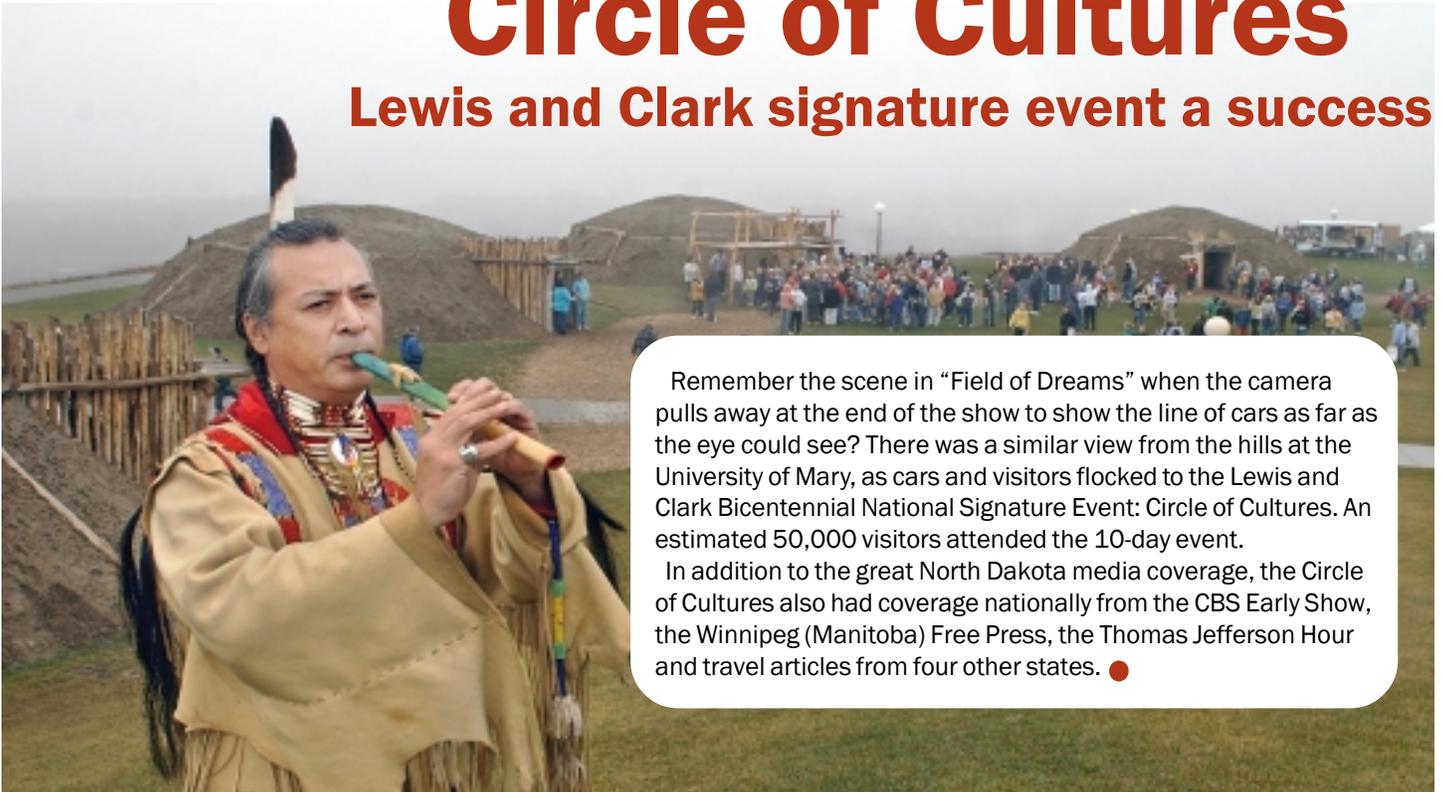
Circle of Cultures
Quarterly Statistics
FlyAway Contest
What's New?
Where's Scooter

division of tourism

commerce matters

Circle of Cultures

Lewis and Clark signature event a success



Remember the scene in "Field of Dreams" when the camera pulls away at the end of the show to show the line of cars as far as the eye could see? There was a similar view from the hills at the University of Mary, as cars and visitors flocked to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial National Signature Event: Circle of Cultures. An estimated 50,000 visitors attended the 10-day event.

In addition to the great North Dakota media coverage, the Circle of Cultures also had coverage nationally from the CBS Early Show, the Winnipeg (Manitoba) Free Press, the Thomas Jefferson Hour and travel articles from four other states. ●

Photo courtesy of TOM STROMME of the Bismarck Tribune

Keith Bear provided music and stories of Mandan Indian life to visitors at the Circle of Cultures event at the University of Mary in Bismarck.

A combination of out-of-state visitors, North Dakota residents and thousands of school kids resulted in an estimated 50,000 people attending the 10-day "Circle of Cultures" Lewis and Clark National Signature Event in Bismarck.

"From day one, when the opening ceremony and all of the general sessions were standing room only, we knew we'd exceed attendance expectations," said event coordinator Marion Houn. "We couldn't be more pleased with attendance and how smoothly the event ran."

Based on attendance at breakout sessions

➡ **Event Page 3**

Statistically speaking ...

A strong finish to the summer season and good numbers to start the fall season has the North Dakota tourism industry looking toward another year of growth.

"In my discussions around the state, it appears that August was an excellent month for business and it appears September was also strong," said Sara Otte Coleman, director of the N.D. Tourism Division. "With strong event attendance numbers in October, I am confident that 2004, despite poor summer weather and high gas prices, will be another growth year for tourism in North Dakota."



Tourism Director Sara Otte Coleman

➡ **Numbers Page 2**

Numbers from Page 1

A leading indicator of visitors to the state is the lodging tax, which showed a third-quarter increase of 16 percent over the same period last year, and a 9 percent increase so far this year compared to the first nine months of 2003.

Another strong indicator is the statewide hotel occupancy rate, which is up 4.1 percent for the quarter over last year, and 3.1 percent for the year when compared with the same period last year. The occupancy rate is measured by Smith Travel Research.

Coleman said unseasonably cool weather over most of the summer did play a role in lower attendance at the state's major attractions, including outdoor-based attractions like state parks and national park sites.

There are indications that interest in the state continues to grow. For example, visitors to the North Dakota Tourism Web site are up dramatically. In July, there were 76,188 visitors to the site, compared with 45,382 in July 2003, or a 68 percent increase. There was an 18 percent increase in August and an 11 percent increase in September.

Coleman said the 2004 return-on-investment research is currently under way. Results are expected to be released early next year.

"We also will be doing more detailed visitor profile research in 2005 that will allow us to compare how the Legendary branding campaign has impacted our visitor statistics and demographics," Coleman said.

North Dakota Tourism's Legendary brand focuses on what makes North Dakota unique: A rich culture and history against a backdrop of scenic beauty with fun things to see and do.

Lewis & Clark posters available

North Dakota Lewis & Clark Bicentennial posters are available free of charge to businesses, educators or individuals and at wholesale to retailers. Please call 1-800-HELLOND (1-800-435-5663) to request a poster or more information.

Tourism Quarterly Report

Area of Travel	2004 Third Quarter	2003 Third Quarter	Percent Change 04-03	2004 YTD Total	Percent Change 04-03
State Park Visitors	474,576	500,452	-5%	807,622	-11%
National Parks	310,110	315,914	-2%	448,365	-4%
Web Visits	July: 76,188 Aug: 60,417 Sept: 69,173	July: 45,382 Aug: 51,095 Sept: 62,246	July: 68% Aug: 18% Sept: 11%	565,162	NA
Major Attractions	468,665	512,250	-9%	761,871	-7%
Local Visitors Centers	38,726	37,490	3%	82,186	.2%
N.D. Airport Passengers	151,664	144,654	5%	434,529	6%
Cumulative Lodging Tax	\$658,978.64	\$570,390.01	16%	\$1,603,012.78	9%
1 percent Lodging Tax	July \$114,511.90 August \$155,528.45 September \$136,352.21	July NA August NA September \$122,505.23	July NA August NA September 11%	\$951,537.34	NA
Statewide Hotel Occupancy Rate	July: 75.6% Aug: 74.9% Sept: 66.8%	July: 71.9% Aug: 72.2% Sept: 64.4%	July: 5.1% Aug: 3.7% Sept: 3.7%	62.3%	3.1%
Statewide Average Room Rate	July: \$56.22 Aug: \$55.20 Sept: \$52.74	July: \$53.31 Aug: \$53.07 Sept: \$50.99	July: 5.5% Aug: 4% Sept: 3.4%	\$53.24	2.9%

The above chart shows the visitation stats for third quarter 2004. Listed are the participating entities: **State Parks:** Cross Ranch, Fort Ransom, Fort Stevenson, Grahams Island, Icelandic, Lake Metigoshe, Lake Sakakawea, Lewis & Clark, Turtle River, Fort Lincoln, Beaver Lake and Little Missouri. **National Parks:** Teddy Roosevelt National Park, Fort Union. **Major Attractions:** Bonanzaville USA, Chateau de Mores, Confluence Center/Fort Buford, Custer House/On-A-Slant Indian Village, Dakota Dinosaur Museum, Frost Fire Theatre, Heritage Hjemkomst Interpretive Center, International Peace Garden, Knife River Indian Villages, Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center/Fort Mandan, Lewis & Clark Riverboat, Lawrence Welk Home, Medora Musical, National Buffalo Museum, State Capitol, North Dakota Heritage Center, Pembina State Museum, Plains Art Museum, Three Affiliated Tribes Museum and Yunker Farm/Children's Museum. **Local Visitor Centers:** Beach Information Center, Bismarck, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Fargo/Moorhead, Grand Forks, Jamestown, McKenzie County, Minot, Rugby, Wahpeton and Williston.

Year-to-date (YTD) Web site visits reflect totals from January-September, 2004. North Dakota Tourism uses Webtrends to gather visitor data from www.ndtourism.com. The statewide hotel occupancy rate is measured by Smith Travel Research.

If you have any questions, or would like to be included in the survey, please contact Tricia Miller, data coordinator at North Dakota Tourism, at 1-800-435-5663.

← Event from Page 1

and the number of vehicles in parking lots and overflow parking, an estimated 50,000 attended the event. That far exceeds the 30,000 people organizers had originally hoped would attend.

Sara Otte Coleman, director of the Tourism Division, said, "We're thankful that so many North Dakotans attended the event, but we're also pleased that people from out of state were able to experience our Legendary culture, history and hospitality."

Visitors from 38 states and seven countries signed the guest book and 10,000 school children from the state took in the event.

Many attending "Circle of Cultures" also stopped at other Lewis and Clark attractions.

Visitation was up for the month of October at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park and Five Nations Arts in Mandan, the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center and Fort Mandan near Washburn, as well as Knife River Indian Villages near Stanton.

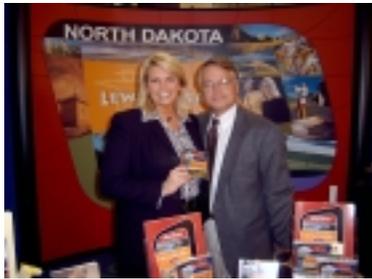
A legacy of the signature event, which ended Oct. 31, will be around for many years. The four earthlodge replicas will have a new home, one each going to the cities of Mandan, Twin Buttes, Mandaree and White Shield, where they will be reconstructed. And the "virtual village" 3-D movie will be converted into an interactive computer format to be on display at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park.

The Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation will host North Dakota's next signature event, "Reunion at the Home of Sakakawea," Aug. 17-20, 2006, at Fort Berthold Reservation and New Town. The event will mark the 200th anniversary of the Corps of Discovery's return to the Knife River Indian Villages. ●



Lewis and Clark audio CDs available

A 68-minute CD covering the historical background of the Lewis & Clark Expedition and how it ties to North Dakota today is now available. It also covers other regions in North Dakota that are tied to the Lewis & Clark Trail. A map that accompanies the CD will help listeners visualize the adventure and includes historical campsites and interpretive sites



North Dakota Tourism Lewis and Clark Coordinator Annette Schilling and nationally renowned Lewis and Clark scholar Clay Jenkinson were on hand for the debut of the Lewis and Clark audio CD.

along the trail and shows other regions that can be linked to the Lewis and Clark story.

Clay Jenkinson, a North Dakota native and a Thomas Jefferson and Lewis and Clark scholar, is your guide, along with

North Dakota Lewis and Clark coordinator Annette Schilling.

The audio adventure retails at \$4.95 and will be available throughout North Dakota at visitor centers, gift shops and at www.ndtourism.com. If you are interested in carrying this CD in your retail outlet, please contact Schilling with North Dakota Tourism at 800-435-5663 or aschilling@state.nd.us. ●

What's new ...

COOP ADVERTISING PROGRAM: Take advantage of the coop advertising opportunities available through North Dakota Tourism. Contact Rachel Retterath for more information at 701-328-2532 or rretterath@state.nd.us.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS: A few opportunities still exist for partnerships in upcoming sport shows. The response for brochure distribution, as well as staffing in booths, has been encouraging. From the Pheasant Forever Pheasant Fest in Omaha in January to the Northwest Sport Show in Minneapolis in early April, North Dakota Tourism has reserved booth spaces in 10 different shows. Contact Mark Zimmerman at 701-328-2509 or mzimmerman@state.nd.us.

COMING TO AMERICA: Hazel Selnes, supervisor of ticket travel in Stavanger, Norway, came to America for the Circle of Cultures event, courtesy of Oslo-based FlyAway Tours and the cooperative partnership of North Dakota Tourism, the Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Circle of Cultures National Signature Event committee.

While in North Dakota, Selnes and her spouse took in events at the Circle of Cultures, toured the city of Bismarck, attended "The Encounter" ballet and "The Edge of the Unknown" play and rented a car for travel to Minot to tour the Scandinavian Heritage Park and the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Washburn.

BYWAY CONFERENCE: Mark Zimmerman participated in the third annual North Dakota State Scenic Byway conference on October 6. Hosted by the Turtle Mountain Scenic Byway Association, the conference drew seven of the eight state byway associations, along with representatives from North Dakota Tourism, North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and the North Dakota Department of Transportation. ●

WHERE'S SCOOTER?

Oh, come on now

It was awful quiet around here last month, as nobody knew where I ran off to in October. So, to give folks a chance, I went back again in November. Granted, it might be near the "edge" of the state, but someone must have a clue where I am.

Please E-mail your answers to jpursley@state.nd.us by November 24. In the event of a tie, a drawing will be held to determine who receives the Legendary or Lewis & Clark item. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number so I can contact you if you are the winner. ●



Joy Power photo

What town in North Dakota could now be called the Windy City?