

march 2008

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North Dakota
LEGENDARY

division of tourism

commerce matters

The Silly Season

North Dakota Tourism literally will go to the ends of the earth to promote the state as a vacation destination.

Fred Walker recently braved a northern Atlantic hurricane-like storm to work a tourism show in Iceland.

The Tourism Division's international marketing director came home long enough to say hello and repack a bag before taking off on a whirlwind sales mission of Australia, where he met with tour operators in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.

Walker reports North Dakota was very well received by Australians and the partnership with Montana and Wyoming was working very well.

After two days at home, Walker boarded another flight to Germany, where he is taking part in ITB in Berlin. It is the largest travel show in the world.

Partnerships with Rocky Mountain International and neighboring states of South Dakota, Montana, Idaho and Wyoming make the sales efforts more affordable and effective.

The months of February and March are important times for North Dakota Tourism. It's during those months that staffers meet with large numbers of travel service providers and when many trips to the state are planned.

Many of the largest events require travel, but the tourism staff can also be found throughout North Dakota, hosting regional tourism meetings and sharing information from industry specialists.

Through these efforts, we can keep tourism's impact on the North Dakota economy strong. ●

Register now for earlybird rate for Tourism Conference

The North Dakota Tourism Conference is your chance to network, learn and grow in the tourism sector. This annual conference is planned for marketers, attractions, events and tourism businesses and groups. It will be held April

20-22 at the Seven Seas Hotel and Water Park, Mandan. The 2008 theme, "The Tourism Puzzle: What's Your Piece," offers invaluable information on branding, research, hospitality, Web site strategies, group travel, free resources and much more. The earlybird registration is due by April 1. It's only \$109 for the first attendee from an organization and \$99 for each additional attendee. After April 1, registration will be \$135 per person. Register online: <https://registration.ndtourism.com/details.asp?ID=37>. Room reservations are \$69 for

the conference: <http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern/productInfo.do?propertyCode=35014> ●



More on Tourism
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Governor's Tourism Award nominations needed

Nominations are being accepted for the 2008 Governor's Awards for Tourism. Winners will be recognized during the 2008 North Dakota Tourism Conference, April 20-22 at the Seven Seas Hotel and Water Park in Mandan.

Complete award criteria and nomination forms are available at: <http://www.northdakotadestinations.org/awards.htm>.

Award categories: Travel & Tourism Industry Leader, Front-line Tourism Employee, International Tourism Award, Best Package, Behind the Scenes Tourism Employee, Tourist Attraction of the Year, Event of the Year and Tourism Organization of the Year.

Nominations must be received by April 1. For more information on the Governor's Awards for Tourism, contact Fred Walker at 701-328-2532 or fwalker@nd.gov. ●

Scholarships available for tourism conference

Interested in attending the 2008 North Dakota Tourism Conference but don't have it in the budget? Scholarships are available to cover registration costs. Scholarships are given once per person/business. The deadline for applications is April 4. The application is available at:

<http://www.northdakotadestinations.org/scholarships.htm>. ●

2008 Tourism Conference

The 2008 North Dakota Tourism Conference is quickly approaching. Register now and reserve your place as we delve into "The Tourism Puzzle: What's your piece?"



Deming

The 2008 conference will be held April 20-22 at the Seven Seas Hotel and Water Park in Mandan. For just \$109 (prior to April 1 registration), benefit from four influential keynote presentations, eight breakout sessions, industry exhibitors, networking with colleagues and much more! The conference hotel rate is \$69 per night. Call 1-800-597-7327 for reservations.

For information on the agenda, speakers, scholarships, registration and more, visit:

<http://www.northdakotadestinations.org/ndtourismconference.htm>

You won't want to miss the general session on "Turning Your Customers into Evangelists" presented by Scott Deming.

Deming started his own marketing and advertising company in 1983. He and his firm have a 20-plus year history growing businesses with what could be considered renegade branding, sales, customer service and communications programs.

Deming's new book, *The Brand Who Cried Wolf - Deliver on your Company's Promise and Create Customers for Life*, stresses that customer service is simple when we treat customers with the same sort of values we appreciate. ●

In the News

(Go to the links below each item for a complete news release)



North Dakota Tourism was in the news in February

February 6: Rekindle the romance this Valentines Day by booking one of North Dakota's romantic getaway packages. If that won't work, celebrate the holiday later this year and schedule a summer vacation package ahead of time. Choose from the classic dinner and a movie date to a weekend escape at a working cattle ranch. A variety of special trips are available to choose from right here in North Dakota. <http://www.ndtourism.com/smartmail/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=222>

February 26: Bundle up this February and head to one of the many events in North Dakota. Cheer on the Sioux Hockey team, listen to jazz while enjoying authentic Cajun food, or sing along to your favorite song from Disney's High School Musical. Women can embrace the outdoors with classes at Lake Metigoshe and later join the family to watch the awe-inspiring performances of the aerialists and contortionists from Cirque Dreams.. <http://www.ndtourism.com/smartmail/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=223> ●

Tourism Congress meetings

Statewide Tourism Congress meetings are an important time for tourism partners to voice their concerns, identify industry challenges and opportunities, and assist in the development of strategies to advance tourism in North Dakota.

Each meeting is free, and expected to last two hours. Advance registration is requested at: <https://registration.ndtourism.com>

March 11

- Devils Lake, Lake Region State College, 9 a.m. CST
- Grand Forks, Alerus Cente, 3 p.m. CST

March 12

- Fargo, Doublewood Inn, 9 a.m. CST
- Jamestown, Gladstone Inn & Suites, 3 p.m. CST ●

Meetings also took place this week in Minot, Williston, Dickinson and Bismarck. Stakeholders will have an additional opportunity to learn more at the North Dakota Tourism Conference.

ND Tourism campaign honored

Several pieces in the 2007 North Dakota Tourism advertising campaign were recently recognized during statewide Advertising Federation (AdFed) awards ceremonies.



The 36th annual Bismarck-Mandan AdFed awards were held February 23. The 2007 North Dakota Travel Guide and the North Dakota International Video/DVD were both awarded Gold Addy Awards – recognizing the most creative entries in their categories. The Legendary newspaper insert received a Silver Addy.

The Advertising Federation of Fargo-Moorhead held their annual Addy Awards Night on February 29. The Tourism television spot “Wake Up” won a Gold Addy, and the 2007 television

campaign received a Silver Addy. ●

TLS 2008 dates announced

Mark your calendars for the third annual Travel Leadership Summit, September 24-25, 2008, in Washington, DC. The final details are being worked out and more information will be available soon. A North Dakota delegation has held Capitol Hill visits and hosted functions for the ND delegation the last two years. ●

DOT survey ongoing

The North Dakota Department of Transportation is conducting a four-question survey regarding future transportation needs as they relate to tourism in North Dakota. Please take a few moments to fill out the survey at

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=gdX3a9Siu_2b3ZqNIH96dr8w_3d_3d ●

Otte Coleman attends Spring Forum

Tourism Director Sara Otte Coleman recently attended the National Council of State Tourism Directors Spring Forum in Washington, D.C.

Thirty-five state tourism directors participated in the three-day event.

Items discussed included research initiatives and marketing outlook forums, domestic and international traveler data and promotional strategies. ●

Foreman Travel Show

Deanne Felchle, group travel marketing director for North Dakota Tourism, attended the Foreman Travel Show.

The show rolled out a new format in which attendees visited with tour operators and travel planners. Seminars then followed.

Sixty-five scheduled travel planners from Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Texas and South Dakota were in attendance on Friday. Saturday was an open-day exhibit for travel planners and general public and a great opportunity to hand out



A cowboy at the Opera

Fred Walker found time, albeit briefly, to walkabout the Sydney Opera House in Sydney, Australia. Walker distributed hundreds of North Dakota Tourism CDs to media and travel professionals in North Dakota's first marketing blitz of Australia. The Australian market was added after years of research by Tourism international consultant Rocky Mountain International.

materials and create awareness of North Dakota's quality attractions, special events, family fun, water parks, accommodations, National Park, state parks and scenic drives.

North Dakota was represented by Kristen Davis, Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation; Sandy Dobmeier, Greater Grand Forks CVB; Deb Berggren, Tharaldson's Lodging; Yvonne Thompson and Felicia Graywater of Spirit Lake Casino and Resort, St. Michael; and Felchle. ●

ABA Convention

The American Bus Association conference was held in Virginia Beach, VA, February 2-6. Deanne Felchle attended the event, which brings together DMO's and travel providers.

Each delegate has pre-scheduled appointments and is given the opportunity to pick up additional appointments, attend seminars and network through social activities.

North Dakota was represented by Darrell Dorgan, ND Cowboy Hall of Fame; Jim Stellick, Lewis and Clark Riverboat; Sheri Grossman, Bismarck-Mandan CVB; Sylvia Garcia, Fargo-Moorhead CVB; Kristen Davis, Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation; Amy Krueger, Williston CVB; Sheryl Persons, Tharaldson's Lodging; and Felchle. ●

ABA Statistics

- 3302 Final Delegate Count
- 717 Buyers Delegates (Tour Operators & Motor Coach Companies)
- 713 DMO (Destination Marketing Organization)
- 657 Lodging Delegates
- 864 Attractions/LRO Delegates
- 238 Associates Delegates

North American Journey Summit

North American Journey Summit in Los Angeles, Feb. 11-12, focused on international tourism markets of China, Japan and Germany. This was the first time North Dakota was represented in this summit and Deanne Felchle met with 23 international delegates. ●



Online State Park Reservations Available April 1

North Dakota State Park visitors will be able to reserve a campsite or cabin, or purchase an annual park entrance permit either online or by phone beginning April 1, at 8 a.m. CDT.

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department's new online management system will be available either at www.parkrec.nd.gov, or by calling toll-free, 800-807-4723.

"This online management system makes it easier than ever for North Dakotans and out-of-state visitors to enjoy our state park system," said Doug Prchal, director of the department.

While the new system will not be going "live" until April 1, users can get a sneak preview on March 24, by logging onto www.parkrec.nd.gov and clicking on the "Online Services" link. Those visiting the site early are encouraged to sign up for a North Dakota Login ID at that time.

Individuals will be able to make a campsite reservation 90 days in advance of their arrival date. Cabin reservations may be made up to a year in advance. In addition, beginning April 1, cabin reservations will no longer be made by calling the park directly, but must be made online or through the call center.

The online management system has a number of other

features that will make it useful to both those making a reservation and visitors wanting a "first come, first served" campsite. Those browsing the online system will be able to order an annual state park permit, view maps and tables showing availability system-wide, check individual campsite features such as type and length of camping pad, location of park amenities, upcoming special events and more.

Once the service goes live, it will be available 24 hours a day, year-round, for both call center and internet users, within the reservation window timelines. ●

Check Blogs!

This is a reminder to everyone of the importance of monitoring online reviews (good or bad) about your properties and working diligently to resolve any contentious issues. Please check online reviews, particularly at major sites like TripAdvisor.com and Yahoo! Travel. It may also be helpful to visit Yelp's Business Owner's Guide, an online document designed to help businesses manage their online presence. It can be found at <http://www.help.com>. ●

Museums are great places to learn about the history of North Dakota and its people.



Where Am I?

Janinne Paulson of Stanley correctly placed me at Writing Rock State Historic Site near Grenora last month. This month, I was fascinated by ranchers and horses and cowboys and Indians. Here, I can find out all about them. Where am I? Please E-mail your answers to jpursley@nd.gov by March 23. In the event of a tie, a drawing will be held to determine who receives the Legendary item. ●