

Kudos

Our congratulations go out to travel partners who've been featured and recognized this past month. If we've missed you, please drop us a line at ksschmidt@nd.gov

- North Dakota Farmers Union restaurant "Founding Farmers" is featured on "The Best Thing I Ever Ate" on The Food Network
- Dickinson restaurant Stix 'n' Twigs is recognized in Midwest Living's "Best New Places to Play, Eat and Stay"
- Midwest Living had a big piece on the "Top 20 Reasons We Love North Dakota," with multiple destinations highlighted
- Fox Sports North aired host Marney Gellner's Top 10 North Dakota experiences
- Bears Den Mountain Ski Resort has a new website! <http://www.skibearsden.com/>

This issue



Tech Talk: Here are five keys to a successful social media presence. (Page 3)

Tourism Conference:

Make plans now to attend the Travel and Tourism Conference April 18-20 in Fargo. (Page 3)



By the numbers? How is tourism in North Dakota doing? See for yourself as the fourth-quarter stats for 2010 look good. (Page 2)

In the News: North Dakota was in the news in January. (Page 4)



Twenty tourism bills on docket

Tourism makes pitch to state legislators

The 62nd Legislative Session is in full swing and there are 172 bills and resolutions being tracked by the Department of Commerce, including 70 relating to commerce or related state agencies, 65 that are related to energy, 20 related to tourism and 17 relating to workforce development. Below is an update on some of the more relevant bills for our tourism partners.

HB 1018 – The Department of Commerce and Tourism Division's budget is being evaluated by the House Education and Environment Division of House Appropriations Committee. No formal action has taken place.

HB 1122 – The House of Representatives approved HB 1122, a bill introduced by Commerce to update and clarify Commerce-related statute. This included the state's tourism policy.

HB 1142 – The Agritourism Insurance Affordability Act has not yet been voted on by the committee. A subcommittee has been working with the industry and Legislative Council to clarify the intent of the bill. The proposed amendments would require an agri-tourism provider to register with the state in order to claim protection under this statute. There is an attempt to omit the protection language, which may dilute the bill but



Legislators enjoyed a breakfast with the tourism industry last week. The theme "Tourism: Your road to statewide impact (and fun!)" was well received with legislators who put their favorite tourist destinations on the map (above). Below, Terri Thiel, Director of the Dickinson Convention visits with Sen. Rich Wardner of Dickinson in the Great Hall, as Tourism Director Sara Otte Coleman and Tourism Alliance Partnership Director Dana Bohn, far right, discuss issues during a gathering in the Great Hall.



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LEGISLATURE: Bills being studied

provide a vehicle to continue discussions in the Senate.

HB 1403 – Appropriates \$500,000 to Tourism for providing a grant to the North Dakota Cowboy Hall of Fame.

SB 2132 – Appropriates \$250,000 to Commerce for providing a grant to the Dunn County Fair Association for the establishment of a High Plains Cultural Center.

SB 2295 – Expands recreation immunity for land owners (who do not charge for use of their land) to cover others using the land for other reasons.

HB 1288 – Eliminates the sunset clause put in last session and would allow booking agents to continue marketing North Dakota outdoor experiences without obtaining a guide or outfitting license. Received a unanimous do-pass from the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

HB1245 and SB2180 – Would eliminate the city lodging tax and state sales tax exemption for hotel, motel and tourist court stays of 30 days or more. The bills are in the Senate and House Finance and Taxation Committees.

HB1009 – Provides an appropriation for the North Dakota State Fair. Was heard before the House Appropriations Education and Environment Committee on January 26.

SB 2225 – Would have allowed non-resident hunters purchasing a combination small game and waterfowl license to hunt the entire applicable waterfowl season, except for the first week. The license would cost \$500, and \$300 of the fee must be allocated to the Private Land Open to Sportsmen (P.L.O.T.S.) program. This bill failed.

SB2235 – Would have established a non-resident waterfowl license that is valid for three four-day periods. This bill also failed.

SB2267 – Would provide \$50,000 to North Dakota Parks and Recreation to grant to the International Peace Garden for a memorial for victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center.

SB 2291 – Would provide a grant to the State Historical Society to use for operations at the Lawrence Welk Homestead. The money would help sustain operations while the society studies the feasibility of operating the site in the future.

HCR 3032 – Was introduced last week directing Legislative Management to study the needs of, economic values of, and methods to improve access roadways to recreational, tourist and historical sites in North Dakota.

SCR 4021 – Would direct Legislative Management to study the feasibility of developing a strategic partnership between the state tourism division and the tourism offices of American Indian tribes.

Digital Travel Guide is available

A digital version of the 2011 Travel Guide is now online at: <http://www.ndtourism.com/about/digital-travel-guide/>. This year's digital guide has some fun new features, including social media links and improved search ability. Live links from all ads and listings in the guide are a great feature – and one that you can use in your own social media posts and promotions.

Tourism Quarterly Report

Area of Travel	2010 Fourth Quarter	2009 Fourth Quarter	Percent Change 10-09
State Park Visitors	110,286	91,327	21%
National Park Visitors	132,712	121,561	9%
Web Views (www.NDtourism.com)	35,977	35,996	0%
Major Attractions	1,286,280	1,211,055	6%
Local Visitor Centers	10,913	8,535	28%
Cumulative Lodging Tax	\$1,407,931.44	\$1,206,717.17	17%
Canadian Border Crossings	182,928	159,025	15%
N.D. Airport Passengers	204,262	183,627	11%
Statewide Hotel Occupancy Rate	Oct.: 75.3% Nov.: 66.5% Dec.: 56.7%	Oct.: 71.3% Nov.: 58.7% Dec.: 48.5%	Oct.: 5.5% Nov.: 13.4% Dec.: 16.8%
Statewide Average Room Rate	Oct.: \$79.01 Nov.: \$80.49 Dec.: \$81.02	Oct.: \$72.84 Nov.: \$72.03 Dec.: \$70.26	Oct.: 8.5% Nov.: 11.7% Dec.: 15.3%
Taxable Sales and Purchases	Arts, Entertainment Recreation \$30,367,922 3rd Quarter 2010 Food Services, Accommodations \$344,769,575 3rd Quarter 2010	Arts, Entertainment Recreation \$27,873,228 3rd Quarter 2009 Food Services, Accommodations \$320,879,385 3rd Quarter 2009	8.95% 7.45%

State Park: Cross Ranch, Ft. Ransom, Ft. Stevenson, Grahams Island, Icelandic, Indian Hills, Lake Metigoshe, Lake Sakakawea, Lewis & Clark, Turtle River, Ft. Lincoln, Beaver Lake, and Little Missouri, Sully Creek.

National Park: Theodore Roosevelt National Park, Knife River Indian Villages, Fort Union.

Major Attractions: Alerus Center, BAGG Bonanza Farm, Bismarck Civic Center, Bison Sports Arena, Bonanzaville USA, Bully Pulpit Golf Course, Camp Hancock, Chahinkapa Zoo, Chateau de Mores, Missouri Yellowstone Confluence Center/Fort Buford, Custer House/Indian Villages, Dakota Gasification, Antelope Valley, Coteau, Dakota Zoo, Edgewood Municipal Golf Course, Rose Creek Golf Course, El Zagal Golf Course, Osgood Golf Course, Prairiewood Municipal Golf Course, Des Lacs NWR, Fargo Air Museum, Fargo Civic Center, Fargodome, Fargo Theatre, Former Governors Mansion, Gateway to Science, Heritage Center, Historical & Cultural Society, L&C Riverboat, L&C Interpretive Center/Fort Mandan, Maah Daah Hey Trail, National Buffalo Museum, Norsk Hostfest, ND State Capitol, Painted Canyon Overlook, Pembina State Museum, Pioneer Trails Regional Museum, Plains Art Museum, North Dakota State Fair Center, North Dakota Museum of Art, Papa's Pumpkin/Polar Patch, Prairie Fire Pottery, Ralph Engelstad Arena, Red River Fairgrounds, Red River Zoo, Roosevelt Park Zoo, Ronald Reagan SHS, Sully's Hill National Game Preserve, Superslide Amusement Park, Toy Farmer Museum.

Local Visitor Center: Bismarck, Buffalo City Tourism, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Fargo/Moorhead, Grand Forks, McKenzie County, Minot, Rosebud Visitor Center, Wahpeton, and Williston.

The statewide hotel occupancy rate and average room rate is measured by Smith Travel Research. North Dakota Tourism uses Google Analytics to gather visitor data from www.ndtourism.com. If you should have any questions, or would like to be included in the survey, please contact Tricia Miller, Data Specialist North Dakota Tourism, 1-800-435-5663.

Tech Talk



Each month, the Tourism Division Newsletter will feature technology tips or best-practices for utilizing new tools and Web 2.0. Please share your success stories, or your questions and suggestions, via e-mail to hlemoine@nd.gov.

Five keys to successful use of social media

The travel market research firm PhocusWright, recently announced that social networking “is one of the most powerful forces driving travel planning today.” Use of social media by travelers is growing faster than the travel industry itself. TripAdvisor, currently the #1 most popular travel website, has 35,382,000 unique monthly visitors.

Online marketing firm AXSES has five keys to success with social media for tourism:

1. SEO (search engine optimization) – using social media helps your search ranking
2. New marketing channels – there are more potential clients
3. Effective communications medium – one-to-one dialogue
4. New way to engage – with consent marketing and word of mouth
5. Fun and easy-to-use technology – photo albums, videos, newswire, events, discussions, groups – marketing becomes multi-dimensional

In the full article, AXSES details the most popular social media channels with some tips on using them. It also talks about the five distinct types of social users. These brief and easy-to-read notes can help understand social behavior and start your planning for online social media travel marketing strategies. <http://www.axses.com/encyc/archive/arces/Social-Media-Travel-Marketing.cfm>

Travel Conference – register, nominate

Online registration is open for the 2011 Travel Conference April 18-20 at the Holiday Inn of Fargo. This year’s conference features industry renowned speakers, including new-age journalist Tanner Latham (@TannerLatham), motivational speaker Bryan Dodge (@bryandodge), multi-media marketing expert Ted Sullivan (@Ted_Sullivan) and customer service specialist Steve Curtain (@enthused) for special hospitality-focused breakouts. For updates, you can also follow North Dakota Tourism (@TravelND) and the host city Fargo (@fargomoorhead) on Twitter.



For more information and online registration, visit: <http://www.ndtourism.com/industry/2011-nd-travel-conference/>. The 2011 scholarship application has also been posted.

Nominate deserving travel and tourism representatives, businesses and events for a 2011 Governor’s Award. Award criteria and nomination form is easily fillable online: <http://www.ndtourism.com/industry/2011-nd-travel-conference/governors-awards-for-travel-and-tourism/>

Categories are:

- Travel & Tourism Industry Leader
- Front Line Tourism Employee
- International Tourism Award
- Behind-the-Scenes Tourism Employee
- Tourist Attraction of the Year
- Event of the Year
- Best Package
- Wade Westin Award for Marketing



Where Am I?

Dorothy Cook is on a roll. She was the only one to correctly place me in the Yurt at Cross Ranch State Park last month. This month, I was indoors and enjoyed the sound of the mighty ... well ... that’s all I’m saying. Where was I? Send your answers to jpursley@nd.gov by February 27. In the event of a tie, a drawing will be held to determine who receives the North Dakota item.

International travel = positive outlook

North Dakota Tourism International Marketing Manager Fred Walker completed his first international show tour in January and was pleased to report that Norway's largest online newspaper, www.Dagbladet.no, had a large feature called "24 good reasons to choose the U.S. this year" in which North Dakota was profiled at #2 – Bismarck and the UTTC Powwow, and #17 – Medora. More from the Reiseliv Travel and Trade Show / Scandinavia Mission:

- First ever Discover America Workshop and Seminar – Day before the Reiseliv show. Total of 52 tour operator/travel agent/media representatives attended.
- 32 solid industry leads from Reiseliv Travel Show – 31,374 consumer, 6,904 trade and 317 media over four days.
- Swanson staff training – Held two one-hour training sessions with 17 Swanson sales and marketing staff members in attendance. Showcased new sites, events and attractions near the itineraries they sell in the region. Note, not "new" but previously non-printed attractions to add to itineraries as day trips or to complete a day or weekend visit to the area.
- Discover America Stockholm – More than 170 travel agents attended the show this year, but the biggest change was the addition of media attending the event. Ten media visited the booth. The presentation this year was given by a FAM participant to our region in 2010. Showcased the states in the region for a majority of the presentation.
- 2010 numbers show Norway and Sweden travel numbers to the U.S. up double digits!
The U.S. is reporting that during the first 11 months of 2010, there was a 10% increase in international tourists to the U.S. Spending by these visitors increased 11%. International travel has been increasing for 14 straight months, and continued outlook is positive.

North Dakota attends American Bus Association

North Dakota Tourism Group Travel Marketing Manager Deanne Felchle was part of a contingent of North Dakota tourism officials attending the American Bus Association Conference January 8-12, in Philadelphia. More than 3,400 ABA delegates and industry professionals were in attendance.

Quality, prescheduled appointments are matched between bus owners and tour operators and tourism entities like destination marketing organizations (city, area, state), attractions, restaurants, hotels, receptive operators and associate service suppliers. This allows buyers and sellers to plan trip itineraries for motorcoach groups in the United States and Canada.

"Leisure travelers are enjoying their options within tours," Felchle said. "Tour operators are offering more of a variety of activities on their tours."

Marketplace included more than 40 professional seminars, a bigger "Product Pavilion," a micro show for equipment and services and a larger networking floor.

North Dakota was also represented by Stephanie Leach, Fargo-Moorhead Convention and Visitors Bureau and Dana Todd, Choice Hotels, Minot.

In the News

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



North Dakota Tourism in the news in December

January 6: North Dakota

Tourism unveiled its freshly designed 2011 marketing materials today. The 2011 Travel Guide and Hunting & Fishing Guide are some of the tools North Dakota Tourism uses to entice travelers to visit North Dakota. Also unveiled today was the 2011-12 State Map, created in cooperation with the North Dakota Department of Transportation. <http://www.ndtourism.com/news/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=402>

January 12: Winter is here, and that means it's time to frolic in the frosty outdoors. Part of being a four-season playground is having activities geared toward each specific season. The arrival of winter provides opportunities for legendary snowshoeing, snowmobiling, ice fishing and cross-country skiing. But that's not all. Discover everything North Dakota has to offer. Whatever the challenge, we dare you to become legendary in North Dakota and share your experiences with us at RULegendary.com. <http://www.ndtourism.com/smartmail/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=403>

January 28: February may be the shortest month of the year, but it's not short on activities. From ice fishing and skiing to various sporting events and the arts, North Dakota is chalk full of activities. RULegendary. <http://www.ndtourism.com/smartmail/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=404>

Pheasant Fest report

North Dakota Tourism Outdoor Promotions Manager Mike Jensen proclaimed that Pheasant Fest, held January 28-30 in Omaha was his best show yet for Tourism.

Mike spoke with approximately 400 potential visitors and has already received e-mails and heard of bookings. To partner with North Dakota Tourism on upcoming shows, contact Mike at mjjensen@nd.gov or call 701-328-2509.

Bulk materials are available

The 2011-2012 state highway maps have arrived. If you need new Travel Guides, Hunting & Fishing Guides and/or maps, be sure to contact Jessica Fretty at jfretty@nd.gov or 701-328-7265 to order cases and quantities.