

## 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](mailto:ksschmidt@nd.gov)

- Congrats all you North Dakotans! The state had a lot of publicity this month: being one of the best states to live in, one of the happiest states, Fargo as a best city for women, and more!

- Lund's Landing Lodge (Ray) had a featured photo and was recognized as one of Midwest Living's 60 restaurants worth the trip. The list also included Pirogue Grill (Bismarck), Nichole's Fine Pastry (Fargo) and Lewis & Clark Cafe (Washburn).

## This issue

**National Tourism Week:** Here are some quick and easy ideas to help spread the work on what tourism means to North Dakota. (Page 2)



**International:** North Dakota Tourism maintained a strong presence in Sweden and Germany during

the ITB and Swanson travel shows. Interest in North Dakota remains strong. (Page 4)

### Where's Scooter?

Spending the last few days before the weather breaks getting some culture. Where was he? (Page 4)



**In the News:** North Dakota was in the news in March. (Page 3)



## 2011 TRAVEL INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

The annual gathering for tourism professionals is just around the corner, but it is not too late to register for the 2011 State Travel Industry Conference April 18-20 at the Fargo Holiday Inn.

This year's theme - Teaming with Possibilities - helps set the tone for the two-day event packed with valuable information for all segments of the industry. The keynote sessions will highlight new media, team building and personal growth.

There will be breakout session tracks

designed specifically for hotel staff, marketing strategists and all interested in getting better traction with their media relations efforts.

The Governor's award luncheon will showcase some of our industry's best and the Fargo CVB has some fun events packed in to round off the agenda.

Pack your logo shirts or jersey and load your team on the bus for the 2011 conference. Register now at <http://www.ndtourism.com/industry/2011-nd-travel-conference/>



## Commerce Bill on the hill

The third period of the session has started with conference committees being formed. The conference committee meetings will start this week with meetings anticipated to discuss the differences between the senate and house version of the budget for the Department of Commerce including the Tourism Division. In regards to the tourism portion of the bill, HB1018, the House version, added an additional \$1million for infrastructure for tourism projects to the hold-even budget proposed by the Governor. It is unlikely the Senate will concur with that addition resulting in debate in the joint conference committee. For more legislative reports, see Page 5



North Dakota Tourism encourages its partners to participate in National Tourism Week activities May 7-15.

There are a number of ways you can help promote the value of tourism to the state's economy. See Page 2 for several ideas that will help spread the word.

## 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](mailto:hlemoine@nd.gov).

### What's the value of social media

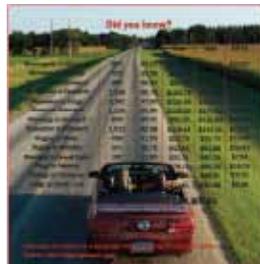
Do you recognize value of social marketing for your tourism business? Here is an article from uPublish.info that may help to answer some questions about getting the most value out of your social media presence:

Perhaps the most crucial approach when developing social marketing and advertising strategy in tourism industry is quality not quantity. The foremost focus should be reaching key influencers as well as establish an open social network, because social media is about generating a dialogue, not feeding the audience. These basics are repeatedly lost when firms perform a social media promotion because they get very excited by what appears like an easy and mindless method to contact a huge audience. This is counter-productive and totally misses the point of designing a credible and viral approach.

<http://www.upublish.info/Article/Do-you-recognize-value-of-social-marketing-for-your-tourism-business-/372072>

### Travel by auto forecast to remain strong

While rising gas prices and the recession are factors impacting most travelers' decisions, auto travelers are slightly more optimistic about future trips than the general leisure market. Mandala Research reports that 82% of auto travelers indicate they will take a leisure trip in the next 12 months.



This summer, NDTourism.com will again feature a fuel facts charts with estimated costs. Did you know that it costs just \$30.42 more to take a round trip from Bismarck to Minneapolis than it did last year at this time?

The full report can be found at <http://www.ndtourism.com/getthere/>

## Be sure to take part in this year's National Tourism Week activities

What can you do to help promote National Tourism Week? Here are some ideas:

- Encourage industry partners to become involved in social media if they haven't already done so. From the North Dakota Tourism Industry page, check out Best Practice (<http://bit.ly/fGzXNc>) or Start Up (<http://bit.ly/gaxtnq>) ideas as resources.

- Encourage industry partners to post deals and packages during Tourism Week. ND Tourism will re-post and re-tweet these posts.

- Kick off smaller, consistent giveaways to encourage ND travelers to tell their stories and submit photos and/or videos on RULegendary. A way to decrease the workload of coordinating custom packages/trips is to ask partners to donate prizes like

- Free hotel rooms
- Prize packages
- Restaurant gift cards
- Event passes
- Attraction passes or annual passes
- Golf course passes, race track passes, national

park season passes, zoo passes, waterpark passes, horseback trail ride passes, state park passes, museum passes, etc.

To encourage Facebook Travel ND fans to upload photos to RULegendary.com for prizes, we recommend branding one day of the week as the day to post a call-out message for photos, stories, videos. For example, declare Tuesday (from Tourism Week through the summer travel season – or for the duration of prizes) as Travelogue Tuesday. Every Tuesday, your post would be something like, "Today is Travelogue Tuesday. Post a photo from your recent North Dakota adventure to RULegendary.com for a chance to win this week's prize of [insert prize here]."

This would also work well as part of #Travel Tuesday on Twitter.

### Top 100 Events nominations

Do you have an event with wide appeal to motorcoach and tour groups? Does the event have adequate parking and group accommodations? Is the event near other attractions that would allow tour operators to create a package? Current American Bus Association (ABA) members may submit nominations for the 2012 Top 100 Events in North America through ABA's website. ABA members may submit three (3) nominations and state tourism offices may submit seven (7). Non-ABA members may submit one (1) nomination for a nominal fee. Contact Deanne at 701-328-2502 or email [dfelchle@nd.gov](mailto:dfelchle@nd.gov) to nominate an event for ABA's Top 100 Event. Past events selected as Top 100 Events have been Mandan Rodeo Days, Pioneer Days, Dickens Village Festival and Old Time Fiddlers' Contest.



## ND Tourism Digital Analytics

### Digital Unique Audience

1st Quarter Digital Unique Audience

<b>Website Analytics</b> (Unique visitors and mobile site visits)	92,055
<b>Digital Travel Guide</b> (Unique visits)	1,376
<b>Twitter Audience</b> (Twitter followers)	2,535
<b>Facebook Audience</b> (Facebook Fans)	5,623
<b>E-Newsletter Audience</b> (Total subscribers)	24,019
<b>YouTube Audience</b> (Subscribers)	27,935
<b>Flickr</b> (Members)	164

**Total Digital Unique Audience** 153,707

### Digital Impressions

1st Quarter Impressions

<b>Website Analytics</b> (Page views and mobile site visits)	479,068
<b>Digital Travel Guide</b> (Page views)	82,652
<b>Twitter Audience</b> (TweetReach impressions)	165,253
<b>Facebook Audience</b> (Facebook impressions - post views)	1,005,018
<b>E-Newsletter Audience</b> (Total E-mail audience)	143,884
<b>YouTube Audience</b> (Upload views)	71,992
<b>Wordpress blog</b> (Monthly views)	13,965
<b>RULegendary Tracking</b> (Total visits)	7,548

**Total Digital Impressions** 1,969,380

**Tourism Inquiries:** Includes lead fulfillment and pages printed from website 15,572

## In the News

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



### North Dakota Tourism in the news in March

**March 2:** North Dakota's legendary activities in March are geared around getting back outside, or getting ready to get back outside. Spring is just around the corner and winter is fast coming to an end. We challenge you to try these activities and share your experiences with us at RULegendary.com. <http://www.ndtourism.com/news/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=408>

## Analytically speaking

Social media continues to attract new users and North Dakota Tourism is working to communicate its Legendary brand through numerous digital channels.

Facebook

Twitter



The graphic at left is a new report we will post quarterly with digital analytics that show how many times our messages have been posted, tweeted on blogged and gives us timely insight to improve our strategy.

### Hometown Heroes honored at awards celebration

The Greater Grand Forks Convention & Visitors Bureau honored the following individuals and organizations during the Hometown Heroes Celebration:

- Tourism Contributor of the Year – Cheri Reitmeir, Canad Inns Destination Center, Town Square Farmer's Market and Blues on the Red
- Event of the Year – UND Writers Conference
- Event/Convention Organizer of the Year – Kelly Rotar, Special Olympics of North Dakota
- Organization of the Year – River Cities Speedway
- Hospitality Person of the Year – Rick Defea, Road King Inn

"The Hometown Heroes Awards Reception allows us the perfect opportunity to recognize these people and organizations, as well as draw attention to the impact tourism has on Greater Grand Forks", said CVB Executive Director Julie Rygg. "I congratulate the recipients and thank them for their dedication and partnership."

**Consider “voluntourism”**

Voluntourism is the practice of individuals taking non-paid working holidays for the purpose of volunteering for worthy causes. Voluntourists are interested in environmental conservation, community tourism projects, development projects and wildlife.

North Dakota Tourism is looking for partners who have or are interested in establishing a volunteer program to offer visitors. Attractions or events should offer a taste of Legendary history and culture of North Dakota and allow someone to make a difference at the same time.

If you can provide a tourist an opportunity to enjoy North Dakota in this unique way and get their hands dirty or provide friendly information, then you may have a Voluntourism opportunity. Opportunities will vary considerably from hard labor like building projects to less strenuous duties like welcoming, educating and helping visitors. Volunteers want to use their talents and passions for a greater good while enjoying the fresh air, friendly people and unique opportunities found throughout our diverse state.

If Voluntourism sounds like a good fit for your entity, please call Tammy Backhaus 701-328-2526 or E-mail [tbackhaus@nd.gov](mailto:tbackhaus@nd.gov).

**On the international front**

For North Dakota, ITB in Berlin, Germany, just keeps getting better. Trade days were packed and Tourism had more than 22 scheduled meetings that were, with few exceptions, very productive. Things continue to go very well for North Dakota in this market.

While at ITB, Canada announced that it would be increasing its marketing budget for Germany by 300% in 2011. This caused a bit of excitement with the tour operators and airlines. Many northern states will be able to benefit from this aggressive new program, as US/Canada holidays have the potential to be quite popular with the German traveler. Once we know more about the Canadian promotional program, we will need to revise our present strategy and focus more effort on cross-border opportunities.



*Fred Walker of North Dakota Tourism and Barbara Stafford of Rocky Mountain International make a presentation during an international travel show in Osby, Sweden.*

Meanwhile, the Swanson Travel Show in Osby, Sweden, broke all records this year, with more than 1,200 USA product clients attending. More than 20% of the participants booked trips to the US on the day of the event (Swanson’s offers a special show rate on many of their tours) with another 10% on a waiting list to be contacted. North Dakota was invited to present two of the 13 one-hour destination presentations scheduled throughout the day.

**Tourism Cares scholarship program**

Tourism Cares awards more than \$100,000 in scholarships each year to travel and tourism or hospitality students attending programs primarily in the United States and Canada.

The merit-based scholarships include academic, professional development and service-learning. The deadline for Professional Development scholarship applications is June 1.

Go to [www.tourismcares.org/scholarships](http://www.tourismcares.org/scholarships) for more information.



*Where Am I?*

Bobby Koeplin of Valley City correctly placed me at the Bear’s Den Mountain Ski Area last month. This month, I checked out a bird and more. Where was I? Send your answers to [jpursley@nd.gov](mailto:jpursley@nd.gov) by April 27. In the event of a tie, a drawing will be held to determine who receives the North Dakota item.

# Legislative update

## Agritourism Bill

HB1142, the ND Agritourism Insurance Affordability Act, as amended, was passed by the Senate 37-10 on March 23. This Senate version of the bill limits the liability of an agritourism professional for injuries that result from inherent risk or conditions that are considered beyond the control of the agritourism professional. This type of legislation has been passed in other states and has helped the agritourism industry expand. It is the hope of those involved in the industry that this legislation will help expand agritourism businesses across North Dakota. The bill will now go to a conference committee to reconcile the Senate and House versions. The industry is supporting the Senate version of this bill.



*The Senate passed HB1407 changing non-resident regulations for Canada goose hunting in Benson, Ramsey and Towner counties.*

## 30-Day Lodging Tax Exemption Bills

HB1245 was heard before the Senate Appropriations Committee on March 28. In its original form, this bill would have eliminated the city lodging tax exemption for hotel, motel and tourist court stays of 30 days or more. The current bill has been amended to provide for collection of all taxes for the first 90 days. On the 91st day, the state portion of the tax will be credited back. No collections are made on the 91st day and all days thereafter. Should this bill pass the Senate, TAP will work with the conference committee to get the entire exemption removed.

SB 2180 failed the House 13-78 on April 1. The bill, in its original form, would have eliminated the city lodging tax exemption for hotel, motel and tourist court stays of 30 days or more and included cleanup language relating to the composition of cities' visitor committees.

## HB1407 Canada Goose Hunting

HB1407 passed the Senate 28-18 on March 25. This bill allows non-residents to hunt Canada geese in Benson, Ramsey, or Towner counties during the early September season outside of the one 14-day or two 7-day restrictions of the nonresident waterfowl hunting license. The bill intends to fight crop depredation due to a large number of nesting geese and includes a sunset of July 31, 2013.

## HCR3037 Legislative Management Study

HCR3037 passed the Senate on March 28. This bill is a concurrent resolution directing Legislative Management to study the statutes throughout the Century Code that grant immunity from civil or criminal liability for performing certain functions. TAP was tracking HCR 3037.

## SB2018 State Historical Society Budget

SB2018 received an 18-1 do-pass recommendation from the House Appropriations Committee on March 30. SB 2018 is the State Historical Society's appropriation bill. The Governor's executive budget recommendation included \$13.1 million in general funds and \$926,110 in one-time funding. The bill has been amended to include \$35,000 less in general funds and \$135,000 less in one-time funding.

## SB2295 Recreational Immunity

SB2295 passed the House 92-2 on March 29. This bill was introduced because recent court cases have created exceptions to use of the recreational immunity statute by public entities.