

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.

- Both the Minot CVB and Greater Grand Forks CVB have launched new websites. Congratulations!
- The Dickinson Regional Airport has been awarded the 2011 Commercial Airport of the Year from the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission and Airport Association of ND. The Barnes County Municipal Airport in Valley City was awarded the 2011 General Aviation Airport of the Year honor.

This issue



Tech Tip: Search Engine Optimization Journal by Nick Stamoulis of Brick Marketing offers five reasons why video marketing is important.

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National Tourism Week: National Tourism Week is May 5-13. Check these facts about tourism's impact. (Page 3)

Community Snapshot

Community Snapshot: Bismarck is highlighted in this month's Community Snapshot. (Page 4)

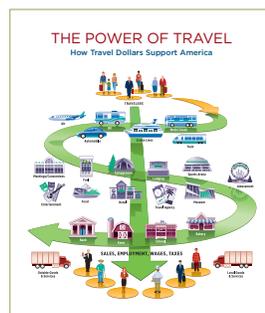
By the Numbers: Tourism Division's first-quarter digital numbers are released. (Page 2)

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



Governor Jack Dalrymple will be speaking at the North Dakota Travel Industry Conference in Bismarck.

The 2012 North Dakota Travel Industry Conference will feature general sessions by Matt Thornhill of the Boomer Project, Dave Serino of Think! Social Media and North Dakota's own inspiring speaker, Bob Uppgren. Plus a number of talented and influential speakers will provide breakout sessions.



Learn more about National Tourism Week on Page 3

BUILDING towards the FUTURE

2012 ND Travel Industry Conference
April 23-25, Radisson Hotel, Bismarck

The North Dakota Travel Industry Conference is just two weeks away and features topics like generational travel marketing, social media and tourism trends, strategic planning, budgeting and motivating yourself and others. A special session on oil impacts on tourism will also be held. You can still register online at <http://www.ndtourism.com/industry/2012-north-dakota-travel-conference/>.



Agritourism workshop

An Agritourism workshop has been scheduled as a prequel to the Travel Industry Conference on Monday, April 23. The workshop will be held at the Bismarck Radisson Hotel from 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. with session topics including how tours can add additional revenue to farm and ranch operations, information about North Dakota's new limited liability legislation, risk management, social media and best practices.

The workshop is sponsored by the North Dakota Department of Agriculture and North Dakota Tourism. Early registration is available through April 16 for \$20. After April 16, registration cost is \$25. All registrations include the agritourism workshop, networking lunch and resource materials. Travel Industry Conference attendees can attend the agritourism workshop at no additional cost. Pre-register at <http://www.ndtourism.com/industry/agritourism/north-dakota-agritourism-workshop/>.

Freelance writers retreat

North Dakota freelance writers are invited to attend at no cost the annual freelance writers retreat, April 23 in Bismarck. The event is a networking opportunity which allows writers to share their experiences and learn from others.

This year's retreat will feature successful freelance writer Amity Moore, who transitioned from a professional travel editor to a freelance writer. Bloggers Jesse Veeder, writer of "Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch;" Linda Kramer, writer of "Travels with Children;" and Beth Schatz Kaylor, writer of "Rhubarb and Venison;" will participate in a panel discussion.

Register for the freelance writers retreat by April 16 by contacting Kim Schmidt, North Dakota Tourism public and media relations manager, at 701-328-2532 or ksschmidt@nd.gov. Learn more at <http://www.ndtourism.com/news/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=484>.

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.

Importance of video marketing

This month's Tech Tip features the Search Engine Optimization Journal by Nick Stamoulis of Brick Marketing who offers five reasons why video marketing is important.

1. People like watching videos

Most people would rather watch a video than read. And what sells travel better than actually seeing the scenery, accommodations and attractions yourself?

2. Decrease website bounce rate

Whether it is one video or 10, your website bounce rate will decrease with a video. Depending on how well the video is made and how long it is, you could really hold a website visitor on your site that much longer.

3. Your videos will rank

If you upload videos into video sharing websites (like YouTube and Vimeo) and really optimize them with nice robust titles, descriptions, and the use of links where you can, chances are that specific video will become a great candidate to increase in rankings.

4. Still an early technology

Like everything digital, online video sharing technology is relatively new compared to older forms of marketing. Sites like YouTube are only growing in power and strength and many businesses are already leveraging the amazing technology for opportunities that exist in helping to grow their business.

5. Increases branding and credibility

When a business creates a new professional video it makes an impact with website visitors – especially when that video is well done. Business branding and credibility follows.

Find more SEO tips at <http://www.searchengineoptimizationjournal.com/>.

In North Dakota, examples of partners using video marketing include:

- North Dakota Tourism - <http://www.youtube.com/user/LegendaryND>
- Fargo-Moorhead CVB - <http://www.youtube.com/user/fargomoorheadcvb>
- Medora - <http://www.youtube.com/user/MedoraND>
- Visit Grand Forks - <http://www.youtube.com/user/VisitGrandForks>
- State Historical Society of ND - <http://www.youtube.com/user/SHSND>
- ND State Fair - <http://www.youtube.com/user/NDStateFair>

ND Tourism Digital Analytics

Digital Unique Audience

1st Quarter Digital Unique Audience

Website Analytics (Unique visitors and mobile site visits)	113,575
Digital Travel/Hunt and Fish Guides (Unique visits)	7,139
Additional Tourism Sites (NorthDakotaLegendary.com, LegendaryND.com, NDTourism.com/digital)	1,938
Twitter Audience (Reach)	2,541,045
Facebook Audience (Organic Reach/Unique)	134,832
E-Newsletter Audience (Total sends)	41,921
YouTube Audience (Unique Visitors)	196,394
Flickr (Members)	291
Total Digital Unique Audience	3,037,135

Digital Impressions

1st Quarter Impressions

Website Analytics (Page views and mobile site visits)	490,161
Digital Travel/Hunt and Fish Guides (Page views)	137,283
Additional Tourism Sites (NorthDakotaLegendary.com, LegendaryND.com, NDTourism.com/digital)	2,232
Twitter Audience (Impressions)	6,557,371
Facebook Audience (Organic Impressions)	747,664
E-Newsletter Audience (Total e-mail audience)	41,921
YouTube Audience (Total views)	12,125
Wordpress Blog (Monthly views)	16,051
Total Digital Unique Audience	8,004,808

Tourism Inquiries: Includes lead fulfillment and pages printed from website **17,830**

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: Is it really March Madness? Or just a serious case of Spring Fever? Call it what you want, just don't let March get away without trying some of these activities.

<http://www.ndtourism.com/news/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=480>

March 14: Agritourism, the practice of inviting guests to visit and/or participate in working farm or ranch activities, is enticing North Dakota families to open their doors to visitors. New legislation passed last year makes it easier and safer for rural residents to invite visitors onto their farm and ranch operations. <http://www.ndtourism.com/news/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=481>

March 28: Agriculture providers wanting to add a new income stream to their operations are encouraged to attend the North Dakota Agritourism workshop on April 23. Agritourism is inviting guests to visit a working farm or ranch, and could include activities like a you-pick garden, farmstay, educational tour and hands-on farming or ranching activities. <http://www.ndtourism.com/news/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=482>

March 30: North Dakotans have been enjoying the outdoors for most of the so-called winter. In April, take a break from hiking or biking or fishing to check out a few indoor activities sure to leave lasting impressions. <http://www.ndtourism.com/news/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=483>



National Travel and Tourism Week

In preparation for National Travel and Tourism Week, May 5-13, North Dakota Tourism is preparing a new fact sheet. It will be provided to Travel Industry Conference attendees and made available on our website during the event. Some facts about our industry:

- Tourism is a top industry in North Dakota, contributing \$4.6 billion in non-resident spending.
- The industry supports more than 32,000 jobs, 866 accommodations, 640 attractions and 369 annual events.
- Advertising North Dakota has a direct impact in increasing visitor numbers and spending. The \$1.94 million spent in advertising ND in 2010 returned \$178.7 million in increased spending.
- Since 2006, there has been an 18.9% increase in the number of passenger autos crossing into ND through Canada border ports-of-entry.
- Domestic visitors to ND take 15.2 million trips to the state spending more than \$2.2 billion.



The Press Run: Featuring North Dakota

North Dakota in the news: First quarter 2012

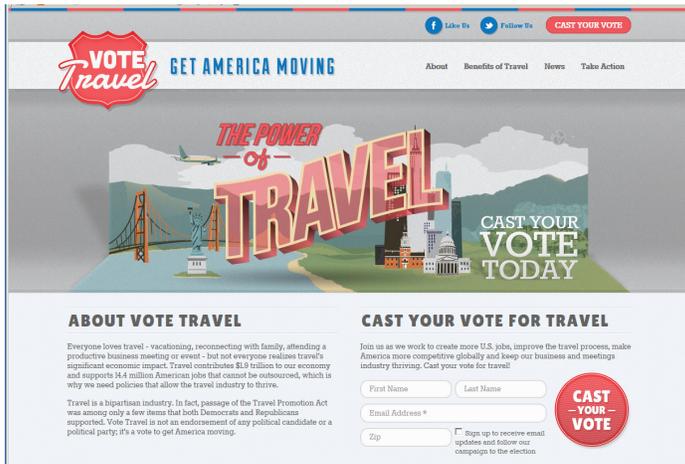
- Midwest Living, Quiet Inspiration, Celebrations, Unique Eats, Country Escapes
- North Dakota Water: Prairie Pondering, Looking for Balance
- Bondebladet: Norwegian Farm Family in North Dakota
- AAA Living: Get Up and Go! Winging It
- True West: Top 10 True Western Towns
- Minnesota Monthly: Great Escapes, Vacation Guide
- Sydney Morning Call: The Weird, Wild West
- TrailBlazer Magazine: TRNP, CCC Camp
- Courier: Where to go - On the Trail of Explorers
- Forbes: Gas Houses
- Ducks Unlimited: Whiting Petroleum Gives Back to North Dakota Prairies
- Bismarck Tribune: Bismarck Pilot sees Every North Dakota Airport
- Dakota Farmer: New Law Reduces Agritourism Liability
- Red River Valley Agriculture: North Dakota Tourism to Help Promote Ag Operations Interested in Agritourism





Vote Travel Bus Tour

The U.S. Travel Association has launched a 2012 Vote Travel Bus Tour – a coast-to-coast tour of destinations across America to highlight the strength and breadth of the industry with candidates running for all levels of public office. To learn more about the vote travel campaign go to <http://www.ustravel.org/news/press-releases/us-travel-association-launches-2012-campaign-vote-travel>



Wimbledon celebrates museum grand opening

Wimbledon will celebrate the grand opening of the Midland Continental Depot Transportation Museum on May 26. The newly restored building is a step back in time into a working railroad depot. Upstairs, find the depot agent's living quarters and for several years the home of the famous jazz singer, Peggy Lee. The open house takes place from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Community Snapshot

Does your community have a “hidden gem,” a special “did you know” fact that you would like other North Dakota tourism partners to know about? Have your community showcased through the tourism newsletter. Each month, a community snapshot will be featured. This month's Community Snapshot is **Bismarck**.

Bismarck is the capital of North Dakota. It was founded in 1872 and called Edwinton, for Edwin Ferry Johnson. In 1873, Edwinton was changed to Bismarck, after a German chancellor, Otto von Bismarck.

Bismarck became the capital of the Dakota Territory in 1883 and the state of North Dakota in 1889. It is the second-most populated city in the state at 61,272. The top five industries or employers include the state and city government, Bismarck Public Schools, medical industry and energy.

Hidden Gems: The Former Governors' Mansion served as a residence for 20 governors. ... Gateway to Science Center entertains families and children of all ages with interactive exhibits and programs.

Did You Know: The beverage “Smith & Curran” was invented in Bismarck during the 1950s oil boom by Wendell Smith and James Curran. ... Double Ditch Indian Village covers 24 acres and is considered an archaeologist's dream. At its peak, it was home to approximately 2,000 Native Americans. ... The Cathedral of the Holy Spirit church was constructed in 1942 by seven elders of the church and a few teenagers.

Personalities: ND businessman and entrepreneur Harold Shafer founded the Gold Seal Company and was the original maker of Mr. Bubble bubble bath. ... Bismarck's Weston Dressler is a professional Canadian football player for the Saskatchewan Roughriders. ... Model and actress Leslie Louise Bibb of Bismarck has appeared on television and in movies like Talladega Nights, Iron Man and Iron Man II and is now on the ABC series GBC. ... Bismarck native Gary Cederstrom is currently an MLB umpire.

Special Events: Dakota Zoo's first full day of the season, April 28. Band Night Parade, May 11. Downtowner's Rip Roarin' Ribfest, where National “Ribbers” come to cook off., June 14-16. Capital A'Fair, Aug. 4-5; United Tribes International Powwow, Sept. 6-9.

For more information on Bismarck and special events, please contact the Bismarck-Mandan CVB: 800-757-3555, 701-222-4308 or visit www.discoverbismarckmandan.com.

To have your community highlighted in the tourism newsletter, please contact Deanne at 701-328-2502 or e-mail: dfelchle@nd.gov to receive your form.