



AOT in Action

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director Sherry Henry:

Good afternoon,

We hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday! And now that the holiday season is officially upon us, be sure to take some time to check out all the wonderful and festive events happening throughout the state!

Encourage all your visitors, friends and loved ones to experience some of Arizona's amazing holiday events. For more information on statewide happenings, visit the Calendar of Events section on www.visitarizona.com.

Have a great week,

Sherry Henry
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News

You Can Still Join Us for the AOT World Tour 2014!

There are still two opportunities left to see AOT's international representatives! To give statewide communities a more in-depth educational experience on the state's top international visitor markets, AOT will be bringing our international representatives to you for a series of seminars in Arizona.

The next two AOT World Tour workshops will be held Dec. 3 and 4 – in Scottsdale and Tucson, respectively. This is an opportunity for DMOs, attractions and hotels to learn from AOT's seven in-market international representatives about the latest visitor trends and statistics to ensure that your promotional efforts are effectively reaching your target market. For more information, contact Kristin Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via email at kswanson@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[Chicago Media Mission](#)

Date: January 1

Locations: Chicago, IL

[China Sales and Media Mission](#)

Date: January 12 - 16

Locations: Beijing, Shanghai, PRC

[Los Angeles Media Marketplace](#)

Date: January 13

Locations: Los Angeles, CA

Industry News

DOT Revises U.S.-Mexico Aviation Agreement

Starting on Jan. 1, 2016, there will no longer be restrictions on the number of airlines servicing city pairs between the United States and Mexico.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has announced a revision of the 2005 agreement between the two countries that limited the number of carriers between two cities to two – three if they served some of the major tourist sites, such as Cancun and Cozumel, for instance.

The new agreement with Mexico includes unlimited market access for U.S. and Mexican air carriers, improved intermodal rights, pricing flexibility, and other important commercial rights, according to the DOT.

“Travelers, shippers, airlines, and the economies of both countries will benefit from competitive pricing and more convenient air service,” U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said in a statement. “This agreement is the result of the commitment on both sides of the border to strengthen the strong bonds of trade and tourism between our two countries, and demonstrate our shared commitment to a competitive, market-based international economic system.”

The new agreement will remove the numerical limitations on the number of airlines that may provide passengers service in all U.S.-Mexico city pairs. As a result, some city-pair markets might see the entrance of new carriers for the first time in years.

None of the major U.S. carriers have announced any plans yet in response to the new agreement.

Cargo airlines will have expanded opportunities to provide service to new destinations that were not available under the current agreement, and to offer services from the United States to Mexico and beyond Mexico to other countries.

The agreement will not enter into force until January 1, 2016, after both parties have completed their necessary internal processes, the DOT said. (*Travel Pulse*, Nov. 24)

U.S. Travel and Tourism Office: International Arrivals on the Rise in 2014

The United States Department of Commerce's Office of Travel and Tourism Industries recently revealed data from this past August that points to a significant increase in international travel to the U.S.

According to the OTTI's official website, there were nearly 8.4 million total arrivals to the U.S. this past August, compared to just over 7.8 million in August 2013.

What's more, a total of 50.3 million travelers entered the U.S. from the start of the year through August. Data for the remaining months is still being compiled and the complete breakdown of 2014 will be available next year.

While the 8.4 million figure represents a seven percent increase over August 2013, it should be noted that the organization adjusted its method for counting overseas visitors from 2013 to 2014, making comparisons between the two years somewhat inaccurate.

The OTTI notes the following:

"With the inclusion of one-night stay travelers in 2014, year over year percent changes, 2014 vs. 2013, overstate the percent change volume for all overseas countries. 2014 and 2013 U.S. arrivals data from overseas countries are basically not comparable."

Meanwhile, the 1.1 million increase in U.S. visitors from July 2014 to August 2014 can be attributed to a significant rise in travelers from Canada.

According to the data, 36 percent of international travel to the U.S. came from Canada in August, compared to less than 32 percent the previous month. The jump from 2.3 million Canadian-based visitors in July to 3 million in August represents a 30 percent increase.

While the number of travelers from Mexico and overseas increased from July to August, their rate of increase paled in comparison.

Although the change in methodology for counting overseas visitors from 2013 to 2014 makes it difficult to draw accurate year-over-year conclusions from this data, there's still enough information to shed light on some interesting travel trends.

And with data for the rest of the year still to come, it's only a matter of time before we know even more.

[Click here to view](#) the OTTI's complete monthly tourism breakdown for the past two decades. (*Travel Pulse*, Nov. 25)

The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index® Declines

The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index®, which had rebounded in October, declined in November. The Index now stands at 88.7 (1985=100), down from 94.1 in October. The Present Situation Index declined from 94.4 to 91.3, while the Expectations Index decreased sharply to 87.0 from 93.8 in October.

The monthly Consumer Confidence Survey®, based on a probability-design random sample, is conducted for The Conference Board by Nielsen, a leading global provider of information and analytics around what consumers buy and watch. The cutoff date for the preliminary results was November 13.

Says Lynn Franco, Director of Economic Indicators at The Conference Board: “Consumer confidence retreated in November, primarily due to reduced optimism in the short-term outlook. Consumers were somewhat less positive about current business conditions and the present state of the job market; moreover, their optimism in the short-term outlook in both areas has waned. However, income expectations were virtually unchanged and gas prices remain low, which should help boost holiday sales.”

Consumers’ assessment of present-day conditions was moderately less favorable in November than in October. The proportion saying business conditions are “good” decreased from 24.7 percent to 24.0 percent, while those claiming business conditions are “bad” increased from 21.3 percent to 22.4 percent. Consumers’ assessment of the job market was slightly less favorable, with the proportion stating jobs are “plentiful” falling from 16.5 percent to 16.0 percent, and those claiming jobs are “hard to get” increasing marginally from 29.0 percent to 29.2 percent.

Consumers’ optimism, which had improved in October, retreated in November. The percentage of consumers expecting business conditions to improve over the next six months decreased from 19.4 percent to 17.6 percent, while those expecting business conditions to worsen rose from 8.9 percent to 10.7 percent. Consumers’ outlook for the labor market was also less optimistic. Those anticipating more jobs in the months ahead decreased from 16.0 percent to 15.0 percent, while those anticipating fewer jobs rose from 14.1 percent to 16.4 percent. The proportion of consumers expecting growth in their incomes edged down from 16.7 percent to 16.3 percent, while the proportion expecting a drop in income was virtually unchanged at 11.4 percent compared to 11.3 percent in October. (*Conference Board, Nov. 25*)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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