



AOT in Action

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

A Message from Director:

Good afternoon,

I want to thank everyone for your dedicated support during my transition into the Arizona Office of Tourism. This is an exciting opportunity for me and I'm honored to be leading the team that markets our great state as a vibrant travel destination. I'm also excited to be promoting the value of tourism to Arizona's economy. This is an important message that we will be touting to community leaders throughout the state so that everyone understands the relevancy of this industry and the important role it plays in Arizona's economic success.

As we move forward with our agency's FY16 program of work, you'll notice that *AOT in Action* will now be released **bi-monthly**. Every other Tuesday you'll find great information about our upcoming plans, new campaigns, outreach programs and participation opportunities.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns. I'm thrilled to be working with all of you in this capacity and look forward to accomplishing great work for Arizona.

Have a good week and a safe Labor Day Holiday!

Debbie Johnson
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News

AOT Wants Visitors to Take a Hike and Do it Right!

In a collaborative effort to educate visitors about the importance of hiking safety, the Arizona Office of Tourism, the Arizona Lodging and Tourism Association and the City of Phoenix Parks & Recreation Department have launched the "Take a Hike. Do it Right." awareness campaign. The

promotional effort brings attention to important hiking tips such as dressing appropriately, bringing water, watching the weather and carrying a cell phone while hiking Arizona's trails. And with the Labor Day Holiday weekend approaching, AOT is encouraging everyone to pass this message along so that all Arizona visitors can be safe while they enjoying their outdoor adventures. For more information, visit

AOT Congratulates Dawn Melvin for Winning Gabe Zimmerman Public Service Award

Dawn Melvin has been named the winner of the 2015 Gabe Zimmerman Public Service Award - Civic Leader. This is a statewide competition created to recognize nonelected public servants. Winners were honored at the League of Arizona Cities and Towns Annual Meeting Aug. 20.

The awards are named in honor of Gabrielle Giffords' director of community outreach who lost his life on Jan. 8, 2011 while serving the citizens of Arizona. "These exemplary public servants represent the spirit of service to the public by which Gabe Zimmerman lived his life," Dr. Lattie Coor, chairman and CEO of the Center for the Future of Arizona, said. "We are pleased to recognize their achievements and commitment to building the Arizona We Want."

Nominees were judged on their qualities and achievements— how they have changed the way government works to serve the public interest; capability to take risks and inspire others; impact on connecting Arizonans to the civic health of their community; new ideas to improve cost, efficiency and delivery of public service; and legacy contribution of lasting significance.

With support from the Zimmerman family, the 2015 Gabe Zimmerman Public Service Awards are sponsored by the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA), the County Supervisors Association of Arizona (CSA), Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc., and the League of Arizona Cities and Towns in conjunction with the Center for the Future of Arizona.

Dawn has been engaged in public service since she was a teenager. Since 2004 she has led Arizona Office of Tourism outreach to enhance, cultivate and grow tourism development and marketing programs for Arizona's American Indian communities. She serves as the agency Tribal liaison to the 22 tribes in Arizona and has collaborated with Tribal leadership to highlight tribal tourism attractions, place visitor information kiosks on tribal lands, open the first Visitor Information Center on tribal lands and work with global media representatives.

Dawn is also involved with Arizona American Indian Tourism Association, Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs, Arizona Women's Partnership, Inc. and is a member of Valley Leadership, Class XXIV. She is a member of the Navajo Nation born for the Coyote Pass Clan and is Hopi/Tewa from the Roadrunner Clan. [Read Full Press Release](#). For more information, contact Dawn Melvin at 602-364-3707 or dmelvin@tourism.az.gov.

New Research Updates Available!

The following reports are now available at tourism.az.gov:

- [Arizona Lodging July 2015](#)
- [State Park Visitation June 2015](#)

For more information, please visit tourism.az.gov or contact Colleen Floyd at cfloyd@tourism.az.gov.

AOT Invites You to Join Tourism Cares for Grand Canyon and Williams!

Tourism Cares is a non-profit organization with a mission to preserve and enhance the travel experience for future generations through volunteerism. The group will kick off its National Park Service Centennial Celebration with the *Tourism Cares for the Grand Canyon & Williams Project* on November 1–3, 2015.

Tourism Cares for the Grand Canyon & Williams will bring volunteers from all over the country to give back to one of our most iconic tourism destinations and its gateway community. Hundreds will come to Williams on Sunday, November 1 for a welcome networking reception, will overnight and volunteer in the city on Monday, November 2. There, participants will provide a fresh coat of paint to the visitor's center, city hall and even the rodeo grounds building. Their work will help the city of Williams shine for present and future visitors. On Tuesday, November 3, volunteers will the board the Grand Canyon Railway to give back once again – working alongside the National Park Service for a large scale litter clean-up along the South Rim.

This program provides a unique opportunity to channel our passion and commitment to protect and restore valuable destinations we all care about in our home state, while team-building and making connections with others in our industry.

Join us! For more program information, please contact Jennifer Sutcliffe at 602-364-3693 or jsutcliffe@tourism.az.gov. Registration information is available at www.tourismcares.org/nps-volunteer-program.

Trade and Media Relations Marketing Plan is now Available!

AOT's [FY16 Trade and Media Relations Marketing Plan](#) is now available on the business website, tourism.az.gov. The plan outlines the agency's FY16 schedule for tradeshow, media missions, sales missions and familiarization tours. To review the plan, visit tourism.az.gov/marketing-programs/events.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[San Francisco Media Mission](#)

Date: September 21 - September 23

[Arizona Showcase](#)

Date: October 1

[Seattle Media Mission](#)

Date: October 5 - October 6

Industry News

STR: US hotel performance for July 2015

The U.S. hotel industry reported positive results in the three key performance metrics during July 2015, according to data from STR, Inc.

In year-over-year results, the U.S. hotel industry's occupancy was up 2.3% to 75.3%; its average daily rate rose 5.9% to US\$124.32; and its revenue per available room increased 8.3% to US\$93.61.

"The July occupancy of 75.3% was the highest single occupancy of any month ever recorded by STR," said Jan Freitag, STR's senior VP for lodging insights. "Hand in hand with this goes the demand of more than 116.8 million roomnights sold, which is 4 million roomnights higher than last July and another all-time record for any month. This translates to a demand increase of 3.5%, which is a continued healthy clip and actually higher than it was in June (+3.2%)."

RevPAR in the U.S. has increased for 65 consecutive months. ADR has risen year-over-year at 5.0% or higher for three straight months and four of the first seven months of 2015.

In July, every Top 25 Market reported year-over-year growth in RevPAR and ADR.

Ten of those markets posted double-digit RevPAR growth, led by Orlando, Florida (+19.4% to US\$93.24). Nashville, Tennessee (+17.4% to US\$102.16), and Atlanta, Georgia (+15.1% to US\$82.72), were the other two markets to post RevPAR increases of more than 15.0%.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania-New Jersey, recorded the lowest year-over-year increase in RevPAR, up 0.5% to US\$90.03.

Eight markets reported double-digit ADR increases for the month, led by Los Angeles/Long Beach, California (+12.6% to US\$173.87). Boston, Massachusetts, followed with an 11.7% increase to US\$200.00.

Philadelphia reported the lowest increase in ADR, up 0.3% to US\$121.60.

All but five of the Top 25 Markets experienced an increase in occupancy. Orlando saw the largest rise in occupancy, up 8.4% to 84.0%. Houston, Texas, saw the largest occupancy decline, down 3.9% to 70.3%.

"The Top 25 Markets were basically full in July—occupancy was 80.6%," Freitag said.

[View the U.S. hotel review for the month of July.](#) (*HotelNewsNow.com, August 20*)

The Internet of Things: The Impact on the Travel and Hotel Industry

The Internet of Things (IoT) is a relatively large topic that is widely circulating around these days, but I think it is very important to point out its practical implementations. According to HOSPA in 2013 there was one device connected to the internet per person on earth. They forecast that by 2020, this number will increase to 9 devices per person. Currently, 80 'things'

connect to the internet every second but we will see this figure rise to more than 250 'things' connected to the internet every second in just the next few years. This trend will have a huge impact on the travel and hotel industry, which are already major beneficiaries of new and future 'connected' innovations.

Perhaps the most visible IoT innovations to affect the travel and hotel industry are the smart devices that have hit the market in the last several years. According to research by the SMA, two out of three people plan to purchase a smart home device in the next year. These innovations are giving rise to similar IoT technologies for use in travel and hotels-- for example, connected mini bars that feature removal sensors for auto-charging guests, and smart suitcases that can be tracked and monitored

Mobility and convenience are two shared critical components of travel and IoT, making them a natural fit. By taking advantage of IoT solutions currently on the market, hotel and travel companies can realize increased operational efficiency and more personalized guest experience.

Facilities and Operations

Smart sensors in connected devices such as 'smart' thermostats, drop-cams, coffee makers, connected mirrors, robot butlers and smart lightbulbs can work together to automatically personalize environmental conditions for guests based on their proximity and movement patterns. Lighting and temperature can be automatically adjusted based on sensor data from IoT devices, increasing efficiency and eliminating waste. In the airline industry, gate agents can locate late passengers through NFC beacons, expediting departures.

Personalized Service Delivery

Travelers and guests can experience dramatic improvements in service with the latest 'smart' innovations. Hotels can automatically send electronic key cards to their guests' mobile devices, providing a comprehensive self-check-in and room key service. Smart locks with NFC readers can allow guests to restricted access to facilities on demand for improved security. Moreover, for returning guests, hotels can save room preferences and automatically load them at each visit, ensuring all guests enjoy a consistent, customized experience.

Logistics and Security

Last but not least, the day-to-day business functions of travel and hotel businesses can be dramatically improved through the automation provided by IoT innovations. Hotels can track supply chains more efficiently through sensor-enabled shipments, allowing them to plan for any contingency and prevent service disruptions to guests. Hotels and airlines can also easily and more cost-effectively deploy security mechanisms in facilities and structures, with centralized management of these IoT-enabled cameras and proximity sensors possible from any desktop or mobile device.

These IoT solutions are all available on the market now. Future IoT products and innovations will no doubt bring even more dramatic transformations in the travel and hotel industry. Companies should prepare by incorporating IoT into their current initiatives to take advantage of future innovations when they arrive.

The Internet of Things is here to stay, and this landscape will become even more interesting...and complex. How the travel industry and the hospitality industry embraces this

“technology” will ultimately center on revenue generation and retention. If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Alan at 705.241.5244 or email at alan@puzzlepartner.ca. (*Travel Industry Wire, August 26*)

Where Did Americans Travel Most in the First Half of 2015?

While the Top 10 U.S. destinations for American travelers remained largely the same as the first half of 2014, several Southwest and Midwest destinations rose in popularity. After seeing record-breaking crowds this year, the Grand Canyon region made the biggest jump in the rankings from outside the Top 50 to #45.

With summer winding down and holiday travel plans beginning to take shape, Hotels.com® has released the most popular cities from the first half of 2015, highlighting the most popular domestic and international destinations based on data from the Hotel Price Index™ (HPI®).

While the Top 10 U.S. destinations for American travelers remained largely the same as the first half of 2014, several Southwest and Midwest destinations rose in popularity. After seeing record-breaking crowds this year, the Grand Canyon region made the biggest jump in the rankings from outside the Top 50 to #45. Phoenix also experienced an increase in popularity in the first half of 2015 after being on the national stage and hosting the country's biggest sporting event in February. The city jumped two spots to become the 27th most popular domestic destination, replacing Atlantic City, which fell 12 spots to #39.

Kansas City (#29) and St. Louis (#30) also made big leaps as each moved ahead four spots to join Chicago (#6) and Detroit (#28) as top Midwest destinations. California hotspots San Diego (+1 spot to #4) and Anaheim (+2 to #17) also rose in domestic popularity, but with a revitalized downtown and a flurry of new restaurant openings, it was the state capital of Sacramento (+4 spots to #31) that saw the biggest increase on the west coast.

Top U.S. Destinations for International Travelers

New York (#1), Las Vegas (#2) and Orlando (#3) remained the three most popular U.S. destinations for international visitors in the first half of 2015, while San Francisco surpassed Los Angeles and Miami to reach the #4 spot. The Grand Canyon rose in popularity amongst international visitors as well, moving from #24 to #20. The national park was recently named the sixth most popular international landmark on Chinese travelers' wish lists according to the Hotels.com Chinese international Travel Monitor. (*Travel Industry Wire, Aug. 27*)

Calendar of Events

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

Connect with the Arizona Office of Tourism!

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