



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,

We have an exciting announcement to make today. Stephanie Dowling, formerly of Starwood Hotels, has joined the agency as our new Deputy Director.

Many of you will remember Stephanie from her days as Director of Public Relations and Marketing at The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa where she successfully promoted the Starwood Hotel brand. Several promotions later, she continued to successfully accomplish incredible work for the Starwood properties and we're thrilled to have her talent and experience here at AOT. *Read Full Release.*

In her new role, she will focus on the strategic alignment and development of AOT's advertising, public relations and communications program. Stephanie officially begins Monday, September 21.

Please be sure to read through some of our other major announcements in the ***AOT News*** section.

Have a good week,

Debbie Johnson
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News

Cactus League Baseball Association Announces Latest Economic Impact Data

AOT was with Governor Doug Ducey on Thursday as he announced the latest economic impact data from the 2015 Cactus League Attendee Tracking Studies. The two studies, conducted earlier this year, estimate spring training teams and the ballparks they play in now annually generate more than \$809 million in economic impact for the state.

Included in that number is more than \$544 million that results from out-of-state Cactus League fans attending games at 10 Phoenix area ballparks. Year-round athletic and non-athletic events and baseball team spending at the ballpark facilities and in the host communities is credited with generating the remaining \$265 million included in the total.

Two-thirds of the out-of-town fans surveyed said spring training was the primary reason for their visit to Arizona, with more than half of those coming from another state or country. Nearly 1.9 million fans attended Cactus League games this year, the most since the league was created in 1947.

The spring training study conducted by Tucson-based FMR Associates showed the latest number jumped \$122 million from a total of \$422 million reported in the last study conducted in 2012. It represents spending by “out-of-area” fans only. The second FMR study examined the impact of the teams’ use of facilities during the regular and off-season periods, as well as other tournaments and events booked by host communities the remaining months of the year. The new estimate is up \$55 million from the total of \$210 million reported in 2012. For more information, visit cactusleague.com.

Still Time to Register for the 17th Annual Arizona Showcase in Hermosillo

AOT will hold its 17th Annual Arizona Showcase on October 1, 2015 in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico. This event promotes fall and holiday shopping, attractions, and accommodations throughout the State. The highlight of the event will be a charity fashion show with local models specifically targeting high income families and individuals with a strong propensity to travel. The cost to participate varies from \$900-\$2,500 depending on type of supplier and level of participation, plus travel expenses and shipping. For more information please contact Kristin Swanson at kswanson@tourism.az.gov or 602-364-3696.

AOT's Marketing Cooperative Campaign Kicks Off!

The 2015-2016 Marketing Cooperative campaign kicked off on September 1. It runs through August 31, 2016. The campaign showcases spectacular and diverse statewide Arizona destinations. The year-long campaign targets potential travelers in nearby drive markets (e.g. Phoenix, Los Angeles, San Diego, Las Vegas, and Tucson) and Arizona’s top two international destinations (e.g. Mexico and Canada) by utilizing effective digital, print and out-of-home marketing tactics to inspire travel.

AOT has partnered with 31 statewide, tribal and regional destination marketing organizations and regional cooperatives to market Arizona and its many opportunities for adventure and inspiration. AOT is sharing the cost of partner ad placements, and has created Arizona sections in prominent publications and unique digital opportunities including retargeting, content marketing, and destination video development. For more information, contact Glenn Schlottman, at 602-364-3727 or gschlottman@tourism.az.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[Arizona Showcase](#)

Date: October 1

[Seattle Media Mission](#)

Date: October 5 - October 6

[Vancouver Media Luncheon](#)

Date: October 7

Industry News

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

On October 1, Governor Doug Ducey will light the State Capitol dome purple as a symbol of Arizona's dedication to ending domestic violence. Stand with the Governor as we say, "It Can Stop." The lighting event will be Thursday, October 1, 2015, 6 -7 p.m., at the Arizona State Capitol, House Lawn, 1700 W. Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona. Attendance is free, registration is requested. To register visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LightingAZPurple>.

Arizona Restaurant Week is Back! September 18-27!

Arizona Restaurant Week is the most edible time of the year, giving local, regional and national food lovers the opportunity to enjoy a prix-fixe dinner for \$33 or \$44 per person (unless noted: excluding beverages, tax and gratuity) at a number of participating Valley restaurants. Arizona Restaurant Week's goal is to position Arizona as one of the top culinary destinations in the nation by increasing awareness of the many dining opportunities available in the state, as well as stimulating business and revenue for restaurants throughout Arizona.

This statewide affair offers foodies a wealth of dining opportunities and the chance to get outside their own neighborhood and try something new. From sizzling Southwestern and soothing comfort foods to five-star dining and international fare – it's all on the table during Arizona Restaurant Week. So prepare your taste buds and dig in.

Arizona Restaurant Week is making its bi-annual return Friday, September 18-27 sending diners on an 11-day tasting tour throughout the state. For more information, visit arizonarestaurantweek.com.

U.S. Travel Market Hits Record Highs

2014 was a phenomenal year for travel in the U.S., as two-thirds of the adult population finally threw off the shackles of recovery and took a leisure trip, marking a six-year, post-recession high. More people are taking trips now than they did even before The Great Recession. While some demographics haven't shown the same growth as millennials and 35 year-olds because of

responsibilities towards dependents, mortgages and retirement, spending is on the rise for those that are traveling more. And in the coming years, they plan on traveling further and taking longer trips.

Phocuswright's U.S. Consumer Travel Report Seventh Edition provides a longitudinal and demographic analysis into consumer leisure travel behavior, including key metrics such as travel incidence, trip frequency and duration; travel products including air, lodging, car rental and cruise; and more. Additionally, from researching destinations to shopping and booking, this report navigates the trip planning process, exposing key shifts in the types of devices, websites and online functionality travelers use each step of the way.

"U.S. leisure travelers are spending with pre-recession confidence again," says Phocuswright's director, consumer research, Marcello Gasdia. "More adults are getting out of the house and booking hotels and flights. Big family trips are back in numbers and more continue to put passports to good use. The whole picture looks very promising for U.S. travel industry in 2016."

Key topics include:

- A complete analysis of the consumer travel search-shop-buy process, including sources of information and types of websites used
- Booking trends for major travel products, including air and hotel
- Trip motivation and information sources used in destination research
- Mobile shopping and booking trends and use of online features during the trip planning process

For more information, visit Phocuswright.com. (*Phocuswright, August 2015*)

Allegiant adds Flights from Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport

Allegiant Air today said it plans to add service to three cities from Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport in December, its first new flights in more than a year.

The Las Vegas-based discount carrier, which has one of its largest operations at the east Mesa airport, will add non-stop flights to Memphis, Des Moines and Fresno, Calif. The last new city added from Mesa was Cincinnati, in November 2014. The latest additions will bring the number of non-stop destinations served out of Mesa to 38.

The new flights begin on Dec. 17 and will be offered twice a week year round. The Memphis and Fresno flights will be offered on Sundays and Thursdays, Des Moines flights on Mondays and Fridays.

Introductory fares start at \$49 each way to Fresno and \$71 each way to Memphis and Des Moines. Those fares are not available for Christmas or New Year's travel.

Allegiant will offer the only non-stop service from greater Phoenix to Memphis. US Airways/American Airlines offers non-stop flights to Fresno and Des Moines from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

Allegiant offers bargain fares but charges extra for just about everything, including checked and carry-on bags, advance seat assignments, online and telephone bookings and soft drink and water on the plane. (*azcentral.com, September 9*)

International Tourist Arrivals Grew by 4% in the First Half Of 2015

The number of international tourist arrivals grew by 4% in the first half of 2015 according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer. Destinations worldwide received some 538 million international tourists between January and June 2015, an increase of 21 million compared to the same period of 2014.

Europe, Asia and the Pacific and the Middle East all recorded 5% growth in international arrivals and the Americas 4%. Limited data available for Africa points to an estimated 6% decrease in the number of international tourists in the region. At the subregional level, the Caribbean and Oceania (both +7%) were the best performers, together with Central and Eastern Europe and Central America (both +6%).

In spite of this overall growth, results by destination are rather mixed. Safety and security remain a global concern while the economic scenario is comparatively more volatile with the recovery of advanced economies contrasting with the slowdown of emerging economies. Tourism demand has also been impacted by lower oil prices and currency fluctuations.

“These results show that, despite increased volatility, tourism continues to consolidate the positive performance it has had over the last five years and to provide development and economic opportunities worldwide”, said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. “As UNWTO prepares to meet in Medellin, Colombia, for its 21st General Assembly, this is the appropriate moment to call for a stronger support to tourism as the sector has the potential to deliver on some of the most pressing challenges of our time, namely job creation, economic growth and social inclusion”, he added.

According to the UNWTO forecast issued at the beginning of 2015, international tourist arrivals are expected to increase by 3% to 4% worldwide for the whole year, in line with the long-term forecast of an average growth of 3.8% a year set for the period 2010 to 2020.

Regional Results

Europe, the most visited region in the world, led growth and increased international arrivals by 5%, benefiting from a weaker currency in the euro area. Growth was driven by the recovery in Central and Eastern Europe (+6%), while Western Europe, Northern Europe and Southern Mediterranean Europe (each +5%) all outgrew the worldwide average.

Asia and the Pacific recorded a 5% increase in international arrivals in the first half of 2015, with Oceania (+7%) in the lead. Destinations in North-East Asia and South-East Asia (both +5%) reported rather mixed results, led by Japan (+47% through July) and Thailand (+30% through July). South Asia recorded a comparatively modest 4% increase in arrivals after two years of double-digit growth.

International arrivals in the Americas grew by 4% in the first half of 2015, consolidating last year's strong results. All four subregions recorded positive growth, although with variations across destinations. The strong US dollar fuelled robust outbound demand from the United

States. The Caribbean (+7%) and Central America (+6%) led growth. In North America (+3%), arrival numbers were strong in Canada and Mexico (both +8%), while for the United States indications point to more modest growth. Most destinations in South America (+4%) reported sound results, in spite of Brazil's outbound travel stalling.

The limited data available for Africa indicates that international tourist numbers were down by 6% with a decline of 10% in arrivals to North Africa and 4% in Sub-Saharan Africa. Alongside the impacts of the terrorist attacks, African destinations have been impacted by the aftermath of the Ebola outbreak in a few West African countries and the slower growth of regional economies depending on the export of oil and other commodities.

International tourist arrivals in the Middle East grew by 5% consolidating the recovery initiated in 2014. (Data for Africa and Middle East should be taken with caution as it is based on limited available data.)

Source markets show mixed results

In terms of outbound tourism, data for the first quarters of 2015 shows a diverse picture in spending abroad.

Among the emerging markets, China and India both started the year with double-digit growth in the first quarter, while expenditure from the Russian Federation and Brazil reflected the slower economic growth in both markets and the depreciation of the rouble and the real against the US dollar and the euro.

As for the traditional advanced economy source markets, demand from the United States, France, Sweden and Spain remains strong, while it is weaker in Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy and Canada.

Useful links: [UNWTO World Tourism Barometer](#); [UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2015 Edition](#).
(*Travel Industry Wire, September 10*)

Draft Environmental Impact Statement for ADOT's Passenger Rail Corridor Study now Available for Public Review and Comment

The Arizona Department of Transportation, in partnership with the Federal Railroad Administration, has released the Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement for ADOT's Passenger Rail Corridor Study: Tucson to Phoenix. While the proposed passenger rail project has no identified funding, this environmental impact statement is a step closer to identifying the cost, impacts and benefits from a rail system serving passengers in Arizona.

The Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement is part of federally required review process, governed by the National Environmental Policy Act, which provides the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the document, along with the recommended alternative. ADOT's Passenger Rail Corridor Study is part of the department's long-range plan to determine which transportation options will best meet the demands for future growth and travel to complement Interstate 10, one of the busiest highways in Arizona.

The Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement is available for download at azdot.gov/passengerrail. Printed copies are also available for review at these locations through Oct. 30:

- ADOT, Research Center Library; 206 S. 17th Ave., Phoenix, 85007
- Phoenix Public Library, Burton Barr; 1221 N. Central Ave., Phoenix, 85004
- Chandler Public Library, Downtown Branch; 22 S. Delaware St., Chandler, 85225
- Gilbert Maricopa County Library District, Southeast Regional Library; 775 N. Greenfield Road, Gilbert, 85234
- Pima Community College, Northwest Campus Library; 7600 N. Shannon Road, Tucson, 85709
- Central Arizona College, Signal Peak Campus Library; 8470 N. Overfield Road, Coolidge, 85128

ADOT has scheduled three public hearings for community members to attend and provide comments. A video summarizing the studies will be shown at all three public hearings and members of the rail study team will be available to answer questions. Public hearings will be held:

- Sept. 15: 5:30 to 7 p.m. — Phoenix Public Library, Burton Barr (1st Floor Pulliam Auditorium); 1221 N. Central Ave., Phoenix, 85004
- Sept. 16: 5:30 to 7 p.m. — Tucson Convention Center (Leo Rich Theater); 260 S. Church Ave., Tucson, 85701
- Sept. 17: 5:30 to 7 p.m. — Central Arizona College, Signal Peak Campus (Room M101); 8470 N. Overfield Road, Coolidge, 85128

The deadline for all public comments is Oct. 30, 2015. Comments may be provided at one of the hearings, submitted via the ADOT website at www.azdot.gov/passengerrail, emailed to projects@azdot.gov, or mailed or faxed to:

ADOT Passenger Rail Study Team
24 W. Camelback Rd., Suite 479
Phoenix, AZ 85013
Fax: (602) 368-9645

For more information about ADOT's Passenger Rail Corridor Study, visit azdot.gov/passengerrail.

Special Message from Arizona Department of Revenue

Evading state taxes is not only a serious crime; it hurts everyone in Arizona. Taxes are used to fund government programs such as education and public safety. When people evade taxes, these programs do not get the support they need.

The Department of Revenue is offering a tax recovery program that provides a limited-time opportunity for taxpayers to come into compliance.

The goal of the tax recovery program is to offer relief to those taxpayers who, for whatever reason, underreported or failed to file returns and pay their taxes. Tax recovery applications

must be received by the Department between September 1 and November 2, with all tax liability paid with the application. Taxpayers who meet all the requirements will pay no interest and have no civil penalties imposed.

Now is your chance to avoid harsh penalties, criminal sanctions and higher interest.

Visit www.azdor.gov/TaxRecovery.aspx to download forms and read the latest on the program. You may also call the Arizona Department of Revenue at 1-844-698-9176 to get further details.

Calendar of Events

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

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