# AOT in Action

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

## A Message from Director:

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Good afternoon,

As we enter into the prime planning stages for visitors to book their warm-weather winter vacations, AOT proudly launches our annual marketing efforts with the ***Arizona Expedition: Let Yourself Go!*** campaign to inspire them to choose Arizona.

Encouraging visitation to Arizona is an important component to our state's overall economic success. From importing new money and generating taxes to creating jobs and securing earnings, Arizona's tourism industry continues to be a key revenue generator for the state. In 2014, visitor spending generated more than $20 billion, injecting nearly $57 million each day into our economy. This travel activity is critical to Arizona's economic strength and validates the relevance of travel promotion.

The ***Arizona Expedition: Let Yourself Go!*** campaign is a "first-of-its-kind" program that features simultaneous coverage of Arizona in three major industry-related publications—*Golf Digest*, *Bon Appétit Magazine* and *Condé Nast Traveler*. Through this unique partnership, AOT has designed a multi-platform media and content distribution strategy that positions Arizona as a vibrant international travel destination.

Arizona travel-related stories will be showcased throughout these publications along with various other media channels including advertorials, social media efforts, and print ads. We've also developed a unique campaign website, azexpedition.com, designed to feature the ***Arizona Expedition: Let Yourself Go!*** video series.

In addition to these great publications, the campaign also includes key partnerships with nationally and internationally recognized brands including Samsung, Lexus, Callaway, Instagram, and Go-Pro. These brands will be showcasing Arizona content through their own marketing efforts and media channels.

This is an exciting opportunity as Arizona is the first travel destination to execute a program of this scale with Condé Nast publishing. With the wide range of coverage and the variety of media channels being utilized, this campaign provides us the ability to reach our target audience in multiple ways and expands the awareness of Arizona as a destination choice.

Have a good week,

Debbie Johnson
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

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## AOT News

### AOT Releases its New Brochure Promoting Travel to Tribal Lands in Arizona

AOT's new travel brochure, *From Ancient Cultures Come Timeless Treasures*, is now available to travelers wanting to learn more about American Indian culture and experiences found throughout Arizona. The brochure provides in-depth visitor information on what travel opportunities can be experienced on all 22 federally recognized tribes in Arizona. From unique culinary delights and authentic native spa treatments to vibrant casino action and exciting outdoor adventures, the brochure highlights Tribal experiences for every region of the state. For more information contact Dawn Melvin at dmelvin@tourism.az.gov.

### Save the Date – AOT World Tour 2015 – December 8 (Flagstaff), 9 (Scottsdale) & 10 (Tucson)

AOT is pleased to announce the dates for its **AOT World Tour 2015**! The program will be held in December over three days – Dec. 8, 9 & 10 – in Flagstaff, Scottsdale and Tucson, respectively. The **AOT World Tour 2015** program gives industry partners a more in-depth educational experience on Arizona's international markets by bringing AOT's in-market representatives to the state for a series of seminars in northern, central and southern Arizona. This is an opportunity for DMOs, attractions and hotels to identify specific opportunities each area of the state has in attracting tourists from Arizona's six international markets, as well as to interact with our representatives directly. Look to future editions of ***AOT in Action*** for more information.

### New Research Updates Available!

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

- Arizona Lodging August 2015
- National Park Visitation June 2015 (preliminary)
- National Park Visitation July 2015 (preliminary)
- Airport Passenger Volume March 2015 (revised)
- Airport Passenger Volume April 2015 (revised)
- Airport Passenger Volume May 2015 (revised)
- Airport Passenger Volume June 2015

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

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## Upcoming Events & Activities

**Travel Classics West**
Date: October 8 - 11

**Get Your Kicks in Arizona (on Route 66)! Press Trip**
Date: October 18 - 24

**Los Angeles Media Mission**
Date: October 26-28

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## Industry News

### TripAdvisor Names MIM one of the Nation's Top Museums

TripAdvisor, the world's largest travel site, announced its Travelers' Choice™ awards for museums around the globe, top tips from contributors for visiting museums, as well as top-rated value hotel options for travelers near award-winning museums. The Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) in Phoenix has again made the list of the top 25 museums in the nation, ranking at number 16 on the list.

In total, 591 winners were identified, including the top 25 in the world and dedicated lists for Asia, Canada, Europe, India, South America, South Pacific, the U.K. and the U.S. The awards are based on the millions of valuable reviews and opinions from TripAdvisor travelers worldwide. Award winners were determined using an algorithm that took into account the quantity and quality of reviews for museums around the world, gathered over a 12-month period.

"Honoring nearly 600 institutions worldwide, the Travelers' Choice awards have recognized the favorite museums that serve as cultural treasure troves for our community of millions," said Barbara Messing, chief marketing officer for TripAdvisor. "These world-class museums provide an enriching experience that can be both inspiring and educational for travelers around the globe."

For the full "Top 25" list visit: http://www.tripadvisor.com/TravelersChoice-Museums-cTop-g191#16. For more information on the awards visit: http://www.tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-i7377-c1-Press_Releases.html.

### Brand USA expanding marketing programs to increase international visitation to the United States from China

President Obama and President Xi of China announced that the United States and China will undertake a year of deeper cooperation in the travel and tourism space under the U.S.-China Tourism Year. Led respectively by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), the Tourism Year is designed to effectively position the United States and China for increased trade in travel services.

The announcement comes on the heels of the 2015 U.S.-China Tourism Leadership Summit held in Los Angeles, California with nearly 200 U.S and Chinese tourism leaders from government and industry present. The Summit was a milestone event as it was the first time since the Summit's beginnings in 2007 that Brand USA – the destination-marketing organization for the United States – took the lead role in planning this year's events with the CNTA. Additionally, the industry welcomed the new Chairman of the CNTA, Chairman Li Jinzao. Li brought extensive experience in local and central government and is well respected in China for his open-mindedness and understanding of tourism.

The official announcement from the Department of Commerce can be viewed at this link. Brand USA's press release can be viewed at this link.

Enhanced travel facilitation from China to the United States dovetails nicely with Brand USA's activities in China and will allow Brand USA to maximize the ROI on its marketing programs.

Brand USA has a number of marketing initiatives and programs available for partners to leverage in the China market. The first-ever Brand USA sales mission is scheduled for February 24 to March 4, 2016 to three cities in China; Guangzhou, Beijing and Shanghai. Brand USA and participants will meet with tour operators, travel agents, meeting & incentive planners and media at a variety of planned events and functions. Other current programs will be expanded and new opportunities developed to continue to promote enhanced travel facilitation from China to the United States throughout the U.S. - China Tourism Year. These programs include:

- New opportunities for partners to promote their destinations and brands via our GoUSA.cn website (ranging from custom landing pages to complete subsites with partner-specific URLs) fully supported with tailored social media marketing.
- Expansion of our In-Language Video program for China.
- The launch of our second Multi-Channel Campaign in China.
- The launch of the USA Discovery travel trade online training program.
- The launch of our Multi-Platform Digital Strategy program that is projected to generate more than 1 billion impressions across all the key channels: Qunar, PPTV, Youku Tudou and Sina, the most popular digital channels in China, in the first eight months. Content syndication includes video, blogs, and key opinion leader programs—all supported by an aggressive social media channel push with online advertising components.
- Expanded content on GoUSA.cn regarding the Great Outdoors to support the Giant Screen Film, with promotional events beginning in fall 2015/early 2016.
- Enhanced culinary content on all digital channels.
- The launch of our digital retail program.
- Continuation of our brand campaign in China, including digital and social media marketing 365 days a year, supplemented by digital TV and out of home components. *(Brand USA, Sept. 28)*

**New State of Wellness Travel Survey Shows Record 86 Percent of Travel Agents Expect Growth in 2015**

Spafinder Wellness 365™ today released part one of its annual State of Wellness Travel Report, revealing that the highest percentage of travel agents in the survey's eight-year history expect growth in wellness travel for the current year (2015). Survey findings show the wellness travel sector, a global market estimated at $494 billion[1], is expanding in directions far beyond luxury spas and in more far-flung global regions.

The full report is available is here. Additionally, a second report looking at how traveler demographics influence wellness travel choices is forthcoming.

This annual survey of North American and European agents also revealed that, for the first time, Asia ranked as the fastest-growing global wellness travel destination, and that Thailand and Costa Rica topped the list of many countries agents identified as getting "hotter."

"The survey confirms what we have recognized for several years," said Spafinder Wellness, Inc.® COO John Bevan. "Growth in wellness travel is outpacing traditional travel as people recognize the importance of healthier options. The hospitality and travel industries need to pay attention to the fact that this is a travel sector that will continue to grow and cannot be ignored."

Other Key Findings

- **Awareness of Wellness Travel Growing Everywhere**: Agents were asked how awareness of the wellness travel category changed in the last year, and the results show the category is on more people's radar, on every front. Between 71-80 percent of agents report significant annual growth in awareness with consumers, travel agents, the tourism industry and hospitality industry.
- **Many Wellness Elements Matter to Travelers**: Agents rated how important 16 different property wellness "elements" were for their average client, and every single component, from healthy cuisine to outdoor adventure programming to alternative medical services, rated as "important," scoring at least a 5.9 out of 10.
- **Wellness Travel Reaches Beyond Spa**: The majority of agents (52 percent) report that 20 percent or less of the wellness-focused travel they book is primarily spa-focused. Just one in five agents (19 percent) say that over 50 percent of the wellness travel booked is primarily focused on spa experiences.
- **The Wellness Premium**: Eighty-three percent of agents agree consumers are willing to pay a premium for wellness travel or access to healthy products and services while traveling.
- **Healthy Rise in Healthy Meetings**: Seventy-nine percent of respondents report that demand for healthier business meetings (i.e., with healthy food, fitness and spa experiences) is a rising trend.
- **Wellness Travel Destinations Getting "Hotter"**: As noted above, among all global regions, Asia saw the biggest growth in wellness travel bookings in the last year, and within that region, Thailand ranked first, followed by Bali/Indonesia and India. In the Americas, Costa Rica was the overwhelming leader, followed by the Caribbean Islands, Nicaragua and Brazil. In Europe, Hungary, Croatia, Turkey, Italy and Greece were

standouts, and across the Middle East/Africa, the top popularity gainers were Israel, Dubai and Morocco.

- **Top Brands in Wellness Travel**: When asked to name the top brands in wellness travel, agents submitted dozens of hotels, resorts, spa brands and individual properties. The top five brands identified were: Canyon Ranch, Starwood (including Westin, St. Regis and Sheraton), Four Seasons, Hyatt and Six Senses.

"It is clear that health-conscious consumers are becoming more sophisticated about their wellness-related needs while traveling," said Mia Kyricos, chief brand officer of Spafinder Wellness. "Today, wellness travel reaches far beyond traditional spa experiences, and the survey reveals a savvy new traveler: one that demands an extremely wide range of healthier experiences, from check in to check out."

In early 2016, Spafinder Wellness will release its second Global Wellness Travel Guide, a directory of leading international wellness properties designed to help travel professionals meet strong consumer demand for healthier travel options. *(Travel Industry Wire, Sept. 16)*

## Survey - The Top 10 Ways Travel Will Change

A new survey unveiled today by Marriott Rewards Credit Card from Chase asked Americans to imagine the near future and predict what the travel experience could look like. Their top predictions reveal some surprises.

The nationwide phone survey commissioned by Marriott Rewards Credit Card reached 1,000 travelers (18-67 years old) who stay in a hotel at least five nights per year for business, pleasure or both.

From unique travel experiences to putting the real in virtual reality, American travelers are mapping out a different journey by 2030:

- Hologram Personal Trainers: Thirty-seven percent of travelers think a hologram of a personal trainer will help them get their exercise.
- Digital Passports and Face Recognition: Some 58 percent of travelers surveyed believe passports could become available for digital devices and 50 percent believe human face recognition technology could replace passports altogether.
- Underwater Hotels: Among travel experiences of the future, 40 percent think underwater hotels might become more of a reality in the next 15 years.
- Space Travel: Thirty-five percent of those surveyed believe it's a possibility to travel to a destination in space–with men more likely to make this prediction than women (40 percent vs. 29 percent).
- Eco-Travel Destinations: Seventy-one percent of travelers agree that Americans will choose "Eco-Travel" destinations for vacations.
- 24/7 Virtual Hotel Concierge: Sixty-one percent of travelers believe it's possible that hotels in the future will cater to their guests through 24/7 virtual concierge services.
- Digital Payments: Over half (58 percent) of all Americans predict smart watches and other mobile payment options will rise in popularity for travelers.
- Personalized Mobile Travel Guides: Nearly half (47 percent) of all travelers believe personalized mobile travel guides will become available in the future.

- Extreme Hotel Experiences: About half of all travelers (51 percent) believe extreme hotel experiences, such as a private hut over the ocean or taking a zip line to your treehouse will be possible.
- Transatlantic Trains and Flying Cars: Travelers are skeptical that transatlantic trains (26 percent) and flying cars (24 percent) will become travel options by 2030.

"From advancements in technology to new destination and experience opportunities, the way we travel is ever evolving," said Vibhat Nair, general manager, Chase Card Services. "As travel becomes more advanced, we are making it easier for travelers to earn credit card reward points for the trips they are taking today, and to put toward their future travel." To align with the unique needs and preferences of travelers, Chase offers its Marriott Rewards Premier Credit Card, which lets travelers earn Marriott Rewards points on all purchases, accumulate free night stays and accelerate status. Plus, the card offers EMV chip-and-signature technology, charges no foreign transaction fees and comes with a variety of travel benefits.

*About the Survey*
This report presents the findings of a telephone survey conducted among a nationally representative sample of 1,002 Americans, ages 18-67, who stay in a hotel at least five nights per year for business, pleasure or both. The survey was conducted from April 2, 2015 through April 10, 2015, and the margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent with a 95 percent confidence level. *(Travel Industry Wire, Sept. 22)*

## New GBTA Study Finds Surprising Insights Into Booking Behaviors of Business Travelers

Business travelers have diverse priorities when booking hotels and two of the top three rated factors focus on the outcome of the booking rather than the process, according to new research from the GBTA Foundation, the education and research arm of the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA). Surprisingly, 56 percent of business travelers rank "finding the right price" among their top three booking priorities showing they may be receptive to travel buyers' efforts to convince them to book using methods that yield the greatest savings.

The study, Booking Behaviors: Helping Business Travelers Book Smarter, conducted in partnership with Carlson Wagonlit Travel, surveyed more than 500 North American business travelers. The study examined how travelers make bookings for business trips with a focus on hotel bookings revealing differences between types of travelers based on their age and the size of their organization.

Employees from large organizations were more likely to use a corporate online booking tool (OBT) than those at smaller organizations who are more likely not to have OBTs. When it comes to booking through alternative channels for hotel accommodations, 54 percent used a direct channel, 41 percent used a third-party website and 5 percent used an event registration site. Interestingly, 42 percent who used an alternative channel said they are not required to share their travel information with their company. This hampers a travel buyers' ability to monitor and enforce policy compliance and also means they may not be able to locate their traveler in an emergency.

“In identifying the booking habits of business travelers, the study revealed several ways companies can improve their travel policies,” said Joseph Bates, GBTA Foundation vice president of research. “By meeting traveler expectations with corporate booking tools, travel buyers can encourage travelers to stay within the system and not seek out alternative methods. Travel buyers also have an opportunity to influence what travel apps are downloaded and used bringing consistency to the use of travel apps within their travel programs.”

“CWT is pleased to sponsor the excellent research conducted by GBTA and this year’s ‘Buyer Behavior’s Study’ is a great example of the insightful, deeply researched content we have come to expect,” said Ben Scott, Vice President of Americas Marketing for CWT. “There are many surprises in the data. One of the major surprises in the research is adaption of technology. Another is the rate of direct booking.”

Additional Key Findings

- Four in ten (39 percent) business travelers have used a smart phone to book a hotel for a business trip in the past six months compared to 58 percent using laptops and 43 percent using desktop computers. Only 25 percent have used a tablet while almost half (47 percent) have booked hotel accommodations for a business trip using at least two of the devices listed.
- Millennials book their own trip less often than older travelers. When they did book their own trip, Millennials also communicated more often with others, such as a hotel representative or travel counselor, prior to booking. This is surprising given Millennials reputation as a tech-savvy generation accustomed to having choices, but may also reflect their inexperience traveling for business.
- While smart phones are practically universal among business travelers, adoption of travel apps is not. Less than half of the business travelers surveyed have downloaded airline, hotel, travel reservation or general travel apps. Both Millennials and Gen-X travelers are more likely than Baby Boomers to have downloaded each of four types of travel apps (hotel, travel reservation, general travel and review) on their smart phones. Millennials and Gen-X travelers have similar adoption rates with the exception of ground transportation apps, downloaded by Millennials at a higher rate.

- When it comes to how the apps are used, Millennials are more likely than Baby Boomers to use apps for booking hotels, hotel check-in, booking car rentals, checking reviews and online translation. Gen-X travelers are more likely than Baby Boomers to use travel apps for navigation, hotel check-in, tracking expenses, booking car rentals and online translation.

*Methodology*

This study is based on an online survey conducted of business travelers (including those from companies that both have and do not have managed travel programs) in the United States and Canada. The survey was conducted by the GBTA Foundation using a business travel panel from the company Lightspeed GMI. Fielding took place in April 2015. Respondents qualified if they were employed (full-time or part-time) and had traveled at least once for business in the past year. 521 respondents completed at least one question in the survey.

GBTA will be hosting a webinar on October 20 at 2pm (ET) to further discuss this study and its findings. Learn more and register now.

The study, Booking Behaviors: Helping Business Travelers Book Smarter, is available exclusively to GBTA members by clicking here and non-members may purchase the report through the GBTA Foundation by emailing pyachnes@gbtafoundation.org. *(Travel Industry Wire, Sept. 24)*

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## 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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