



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,

The **2016 College Football Playoff National Championship** game is a mere two weeks away and volunteers are needed! If you're looking to be part of the excitement surrounding this amazing event, please be sure to check out all the volunteer opportunities available on their website, azchampgame.org. We have more information in the **Industry News** section below.

Also, after 10 years we will be wrapping up the old **AOT in Action** eNewsletter and heading into the new year with **Tourism Tuesdays**. The new eNewsletter will start fresh January 5, 2016 and will be produced weekly to share our great news so you can stay connected to our agency and industry. Every Tuesday you'll find great information about our new destination marketing plans, outreach programs, participation opportunities and important industry updates. Look out for the new edition in your email next Tuesday!

As we say goodbye to 2015 and welcome in 2016, I want to thank you all for your partnership and support over the past year. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the New Year to promote exciting and diverse travel destinations and opportunities throughout Arizona.

Happy New Year,

Debbie Johnson
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News

AOT Leads Media Delegation to New York City

AOT is pleased to invite Arizona CVBs, DMOs and Chambers to participate in its bi-annual Media Marketplace in New York City on Tuesday, February 23, 2016. The marketplace, themed "Arizona: An Oasis Awaits," will be held at Lightbox, a premier NYC event space in midtown that uses innovative technology to customize a creative display for experiences and events. The marketplace will consist of an hors d'oeuvres reception featuring an Arizona-based chef and demonstrations from an Arizona wellness expert. AOT anticipates 20-25 top-tier media and an additional 20-25 second-tier media, for a total attendance of 40-50 qualified media with backgrounds in travel, tourism, luxury/lifestyle, beauty/wellness and food/beverage. For more, contact Tony Alba at talba@tourism.az.gov or at 602-364-3715 no later than **January 8, 2016**. Space is limited.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[UK Media Mission](#)

Date: January 25 - 29

[Travel Exchange-TREX16 \(formerly National Tour Association Annual Convention\)](#)

Date: January 31 - February 4

[New York Media Marketplace](#)

Date: February 23

Industry News

Get in the Game: 2,000 Volunteers Needed for 2016 College Football Playoff National Championship

The Arizona Organizing Committee (AOC) is actively looking for volunteers for the 2016 College Football Playoff National Championship. In fact, the AOC is in need of 2,000 enthusiastic individuals interested in being a part of college football history.

The 2016 national championship will be played on January 11 at University of Phoenix Stadium. There will be opportunities to support championship weekend events in the Championship Campus presented by Ak-Chin Indian Community located in downtown Phoenix from January 8-10. Signature College Football Playoff events within the campus include Playoff Fan Central, a hub of fan activities with plenty of entertainment for the whole family, and AT&T Playoff Playlist Live!, a free, outdoor music concert series.

"The national championship is a celebration for the entire community and a chance to be part of Arizona's famed sports history," said Brad Wright, co-chair of the AOC. "We're looking for people to help us make next year's championship experience one that will be remembered for years to come. We encourage you to welcome out-of-town visitors, volunteer and take part in the excitement with your friends and family."

Volunteer opportunities include:

- Signature College Football Playoff events in downtown Phoenix
- Greeters at hotels, airports, and other locations

In addition to volunteer opportunities in greater Phoenix, there will be a variety of statewide initiatives and festivities in the weeks leading up to the national championship matchup. More specific information regarding the opportunities, locations and shifts will be announced this fall. Connect with the AOC on social or sign up for the monthly newsletter to get the latest updates.

Individuals interested in volunteering must be at least 18 years old and you will need to complete a brief application and background check. To register, visit azchampgame.org/volunteering/opportunities.

Business Travel Poised for Growth in 2016 According to Latest

Results from Travel Leaders Group's authoritative 2016 Business Travel Trends Survey indicate overall growth within the marketplace, along with substantial increases among those business travel clients who now enjoy expedited passage through airport security with TSA Precheck™ approval. A plurality (40.2%) of business-focused travel agents expects their 2016 corporate travel bookings to remain on par with 2015, with nearly as many (36.6%) expecting their bookings to increase year-over-year. By a wide margin, the top concern clients are expressing to agents is the proliferation of "delayed flights" – directly reflecting this year's increased weather disruptions.

Conducted November 17-December 8, 2015, these business travel trends are based on responses from 423 Travel Leaders Group travel agent experts throughout the United States whose portfolio consists of 50% or more business travel clients.

"Almost in spite of headlines forecasting a global recession, the U.S. economy continues to show positive growth, and with that, our outlook for business travel in 2016 remains cautiously optimistic," noted Ninan Chacko, CTC, Travel Leaders Group CEO. "This past year proved to be a challenging one for air travelers as they faced extraordinary flight delays and cancellations. So it is no surprise the top concern agents are hearing from clients focuses on 'delayed flights.'"

These business trends are part of a comprehensive travel trends survey of 1,316 U.S.-based travel agents from Travel Leaders Group's flagship Travel Leaders brand and All Aboard Travel, Cruise Specialists, Nexion, Protravel International, Results! Travel, Travel Leaders Corporate, Tzell Travel Group and Vacation.com units. Results from Travel Leaders Group's 2016 Travel Trends Survey are [here](#).

Travel Leaders Group is one of North America's largest travel companies – encompassing nearly one-third of all travel agents – and generated gross travel sales of approximately \$20 billion annually. Travel Leaders Group is a leader in both leisure and corporate, consistently ranking as one of the top travel companies nationwide. (*Travel Industry Wire, Dec. 22*)

Two-Thirds of US Adults Resolve to Travel More in the New Year

Switchfly, Inc., the technology company powering travel search/booking, loyalty program engagement and ancillary merchandising solutions for the world's most celebrated airlines, hotels, online travel agencies and financial services companies, today released a survey gauging whether or not travel will be part of Americans' New Year's resolution. The online survey conducted on behalf of Switchfly by Harris Poll in September among over 2,000 U.S. adults found that two-thirds of Americans (66 percent) resolve to do more traveling in the New Year. Of these, over a quarter want to travel more domestically, some want to travel with friends and loved ones -- few want to travel abroad.

Among those Americans who are making travel part of their resolution in the New Year, three in ten resolve to travel more with their significant other (30 percent), with their family (30 percent), and to spend time exploring the vast and many wonders of the United States (28 percent). 25 percent hope to take better advantage of their weekends for travelling in the coming year, while a minority plan to do more "voluntouring" (6 percent) or traveling to learn foreign languages (5 percent).

Americans Top Travel Resolutions for the New Year:

Travel more with significant other	30 percent
Travel more with family	30 percent
Travel more inside of the U.S.	28 percent
Take more weekend trips	25 percent
Travel more with friends	18 percent
Do more adventure travel	15 percent
Travel more internationally	14 percent
Do more exotic travel	12 percent
Try "voluntourism" (volunteering abroad)	6 percent
More "hookups" when traveling	6 percent
Travel to learn a new language	5 percent
Travel alone	5 percent

50 percent of parents of kids under 18 in their household resolve to do more family vacationing, while 32 percent said they hope to travel more with their significant other.

"Holidays are always a big travel season, but travel companies should expect the year that follows to be especially busy," said Daniel Farrar, CEO of Switchfly. "These findings indicate cross-selling and vacation packaging for couples, families and weekend trips could drive big revenues in 2016 for travel brands."

"With travel figuring so prominently into Americans' New Year's resolutions, people could be hitting the road - or the runway, as the case may be - at the first sign of Spring. Travelers should book early, especially if their resolutions figure around peak travel times, like Spring Break, July 4th, or any Summer weekend."

Millennial women feel the need to wander

Those most affected by wanderlust seem to be Millennial women (18-34 years old), who expressed the most interest in almost all forms of travel: 42 percent resolve to travel more with their significant other; 49 percent want to travel more with their families; 39 percent want take more weekend trips; 30 percent want to do more traveling with friends; and 27 percent resolve

to do some adventure traveling. With 1 in 4 saying they resolve to travel internationally, they are also the age group to express the most interest in potentially crossing the pond.

And more mature women want to hit the (local) highway

Like Millennial women, the findings show that women of other age categories are most interested in family travel (42 percent of 35-44 year olds), domestic travel (38 percent of 55-65 year olds; 28 percent of 65+ year olds), and weekend trips (32 percent of 55-65 year olds).

Millennial men hope for travel hookups

The only travel category in which Millennial men expressed noticeably more interest than any of their polled peers was traveling with intent to hookup: 20 percent of Millennial men said this would be their New Year's travel resolution, compared to only 5 percent of Millennial women. The only other age group to express somewhat of an interest in this form of travel? 45-54 year old men, at 10 percent.

And older men are going...somewhere

While trends among women and the younger generations were easy to spot, older men were more divided. Even though well over half of men in (almost) all age categories resolve to travel more in the New Year (77 percent of 18-34 year olds; 69 percent of 35-44 year olds; 53 percent of 45-54 year olds; 48 percent of 55-65 year olds; 57 percent of 65+ year olds), Millennials are the only ones with a clear consensus about where and with whom they hope to travel (33 percent hope to travel more with their families; 30 percent want to do more domestic traveling; 31 percent hope to travel more with friends). The rest of the age groups seems unsure about where and with whom they will be traveling. 11 percent of 45-54 year olds hope to do more adventure traveling; 19 percent of 65+ year olds hope to travel abroad and 21 percent of 35-44 year olds want to do more traveling with their significant others. And, as mentioned, 10 percent of 45-54 year olds will travel in hopes of getting "lucky."

Read the full report here: www.switchfly.com/2016travelresolutions (*Travel Industry Wire, Dec. 22*)

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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