



## ***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:**

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Good afternoon,

We have some extraordinary data to share today. Arizona's statewide lodging performance is up for the month of March! According to the latest Smith Travel Research performance data:

- Occupancy is at 73.7 percent – a 3.0 percent change over 2010
- ADR is at 113.03 percent – a 3.1 percent change over 2010
- RevPAR is \$83.25 – a 6.2 percent change over 2010
- Demand is at 2,541,783 – a 4.1 percent change over 2010
- Supply is at 3,450,796 – a 1.0 percent change over 2010

Additionally, according to the [Arizona Workforce Informer](#), the Leisure and Hospitality sector had an incredibly strong showing in March, adding 6,700 jobs to Arizona's economy. March is typically a good month for Leisure and Hospitality in Arizona and this 2.6% job gain is better than the ten-year ('01 – '10) average of 1.8%.

This is great news for our industry and our state! The positive statewide lodging performance and the positive job growth directly related to our industry are fantastic indicators that Arizona's economy is heading in the right direction. For more details, be sure to check out the updated research information in the **AOT News** section

Also, registration is now open for the [Governor's Conference on Tourism!](#) And don't forget to send in your nominations for the [Governor's Tourism Awards](#). The deadline is this **Friday**. See below for further details.

Have a great week.

Sherry Henry  
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

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## AOT News

### **DEADLINE is HERE: Send in Your Nominations for Governor's Tourism Awards!**

The Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) and industry partners are busy coordinating plans for the next annual Governor's Conference on Tourism, July 13-15, at the Doubletree Paradise Valley Resort, Scottsdale. The conference is the premier event for members of the travel industry to participate in dynamic work sessions and listen to informative guest speakers.

In addition to the conference, AOT coordinates the [Governor's Tourism Awards](#), honoring individuals and organizations that have contributed noteworthy achievements over the past year to the betterment of the tourism industry. These award recipients are excellent examples of leadership, commitment and teamwork that have helped make the Grand Canyon State a premier travel destination.

AOT invites you to review the 2011 award [categories and guidelines](#) and submit nominations of individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to the tourism industry. The winners will be awarded at the Governor's Tourism Awards Luncheon on Thursday, July 14. All submissions must be received by **Friday, April 29, 2011**. Look for future editions of *AOT in Action* for Governor's Conference on Tourism registration information!

### **Registration for the Governor's Conference on Tourism Now Open**

Registration is now open for the Governor's Conference on Tourism! This event is the premier educational and networking gathering for the travel and tourism industry. It is filled with practical ideas from the industry's top experts that you can take back to your community and immediately apply to your program of work. You'll get the latest hospitality and tourism information, network with more than 500 of your colleagues, learn about products and services from exhibiting sponsors, and get the latest industry research available. To register, visit [www.aztourismconference.com](http://www.aztourismconference.com)

### **Join Us for the Arizona Tourism University Workshop: The Arizona Centennial**

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present the next **Arizona Tourism University** workshop series: The Arizona Centennial. Karen Churchard, executive director of the Arizona Centennial Commission and the Arizona 2012 Centennial Foundation, will give an informative update on what events and projects are happening for the celebration of Arizona's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of statehood. Additionally, information will be provided on how communities can create their own Centennial Legacy Project or be Officially Sanctioned as an Arizona Centennial Event. As part of the workshop, breakout sessions will be arranged so that participants can brainstorm ideas on community centennial events and projects.

Be sure to mark **April 27** or **May 3** off your calendars and join us for the Arizona Centennial workshops!

These Arizona Tourism University workshops are **complimentary!**

Sign up today by sending your RSVP to [ATURSVP@azot.gov](mailto:ATURSVP@azot.gov).

The Arizona Centennial workshop is complimentary and will be held in the following locations.

**April 27**

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Show Low City Hall

180 North 9th Street

Show Low, AZ 85901

**May 3 – Webinar**

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

**Space is limited.**

Reserve your Webinar seat now at:

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/322383120>

**New Updates to AOT's Research Web site!**

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov).

- [National, Regional, Arizona Lodging March 2011](#)
- [County Lodging March 2011](#)
- [Bed Tax Rates January 2011](#)
- [Airport Passenger Volume January 2011](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Melissa Elkins, Research Manager, at 602-364-3716 or via e-mail at [melkins@azot.gov](mailto:melkins@azot.gov).

**Get your Summer Travel Packages and Deals on Value AZ.com**

AOT is gearing up to launch its successful summer, in-state campaign, **Value AZ** and we need your travel packages and deals. AOT, in partnership with statewide industry partners, will be launching the summer campaign in May. The campaign will showcase the amazing summer travel opportunities found throughout Arizona in addition to promoting the economic benefits of the travel and tourism industry. **To celebrate the Arizona Centennial, coming up February 14, 2012, we're asking that deals and packages supplied use that theme whenever possible.** If you want your travel package or deal promoted, this is your chance! Submissions must be received by April 30, 2011 to be considered for the Value AZ Campaign. Upload your travel deals and packages to the Travel Deals section of AOT's consumer Web site, <http://www.arizonaguide.com/arizona-tourism-partners>. You must first sign up to be a Travel Partner on [www.Arizonaguide.com](http://www.Arizonaguide.com) before you can list a travel package or deal. There is no charge to list a package on the Travel Deals section. If you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact Sandy Pederson at 602-364-3698 or via email at [spederson@azot.gov](mailto:spederson@azot.gov).

**Calling all 2012 Events**

AOT is collecting all 2012 event dates for the Arizona Calendar of Events. Please identify the exact dates of your events, details can be sent at a later date if not yet confirmed. Submit your items by **Wednesday, June 1**. If you have not sent your calendar information for the rest of

2011, please send this as well. For more information, contact Marjorie Magnusson at 602-364-3695 or via e-mail at [mmagnusson@azot.gov](mailto:mmagnusson@azot.gov).

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## Upcoming Events & Activities

### Governor's Tourism Awards Deadline

Dates: April 29

Location: Arizona Office of Tourism

### Old, Older, Oldest AAA/CAA FAM Tour

Date: April 27 – May 1

Location: Tempe, Moenkopi, Holbrook, and Winslow, AZ

### Mexico Mini Mission

Dates: May 3 – 4

Location: Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

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## Industry News

### **7th Annual Arizona Tourism Unity Dinner**

Join the Arizona Tourism Alliance to honor Arizona's Golf Industry, including The Thunderbirds, Tucson Conquistadores and the Southwest Section PGA. The event will be **Tuesday, April 26** at the Arizona Biltmore Resort.

The Arizona Tourism Unity Dinner is an opportunity for leaders from the tourism industry, business and government to celebrate tourism and honor the contributions of extraordinary Arizonans for their leadership and support of the tourism industry. The Unity Dinner will also feature an entertaining program and a silent auction. For more information, visit [www.aztourismalliance.com](http://www.aztourismalliance.com).

### **SAVE the DATE: Arizona Highways Travel Show – May 14 & 15**

The Arizona Highways Travel Show provides an opportunity for communities, along with industry-related organizations and companies to promote their tourism destinations directly to potential customers in the Phoenix market.

More than 100 exhibitors participated in last year's event where more than 3,000 attendees were looking for travel locations and things to do in the summer and fall in Arizona.

The Arizona Highways Travel Show is your chance to market directly to this audience!

Show Details:

Arizona Highways Travel Show – Presented by KTVK- 3TV

Phoenix Convention Center – Hall F

May 14 & 15, 2011  
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

To register for a booth at the show:

[www.arizonahighwaystravelshow.com](http://www.arizonahighwaystravelshow.com)

For more information, contact:

Rich Ripley

Arizona Highways Travel Show

Presented by KTVK - 3TV

480-838-9123

[rich@azinco.com](mailto:rich@azinco.com)

### **US Government Sets New Rules Protecting Passengers from Hidden Fees**

The US government is finally dealing with what has become the biggest concern for air travelers, and it's not the TSA's pat downs or safety, seat size or anything else. It's hidden fees. The Department of Transportation (DOT) announced a new set of passenger protections aimed primarily at travelers' growing frustration over airline fees.

The new rules do not set limits on how much carriers can charge for items such as bags and ticket changes but they do require the airlines to more clearly disclose fees in advertisements and on websites. Ads will now be required to cite the full price, including government taxes that are often left to the fine print.

In addition, the new rules -- which were praised by consumer advocate groups -- went further in banning long tarmac delays to include international flights. The rules will also require airlines to reimburse bag fees for lost luggage and pay passengers almost double if they are bumped off flights.

The move came as the Consumer Travel Alliance (CTA) found that the top consumer priority in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) bill, which is making its way through the US Congress, is to have airlines disclose all fees before booking.

The survey was conducted among more than 500 frequent travelers online, and found that 58 percent of respondents said that forcing airlines to reveal these fees should be the number one consumer priority in the bill. Second was requiring airlines to provide services to consumers facing extended take-off delays (27 percent). (*Travel Mole, April 21*)

### **The Wave included in Greatest American Monuments**

Paris has the Eiffel Tower. London has Buckingham Palace. India has the Taj Mahal. But what about the US? Travel and Leisure Magazine lists the "greatest American Monuments," compiled by Sara Spangolo, an editor.

Spangolo explained the magazine was looking for amazing landmarks throughout the country that were free or very affordable. She added the magazine also considered geographic distribution. They also noted the best time to visit (usually in the winter or off-seasons when crowds are thinner than the rest of the year).

Landmarks that made the list included Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota; The Giant Forest in the Southern Sierra Mountains; the New Orleans Garden District; The Wave (wilderness) in Coyote Buttes, Arizona; Niagara Falls; Port Head Lighthouse in Cape Elizabeth, Maine (illuminated for the first time in 1791 by whale-oil lamps); and the Washington Monument. (*Travel Mole, April 21*)

### **STR: Luxury Segment Leads March U.S. Increases**

The U.S. luxury segment achieved the largest increases in all three key performance measurements during March 2011, according to data from STR. The segment's occupancy rose 7.1% to 74%, its average daily rate was up 6.6% to US\$262.44, and its revenue per available room increased 14.2% to US\$194.28.

Overall, the U.S. hotel industry's occupancy was up 6.1% to 61.4%. ADR ended the month with a 3.8% increase to US\$101.72. RevPAR for the month rose 10.1% to finish at US\$62.47. Among the chain-scale segments, the midscale segment reported the only decrease, ending the month virtually flat with a 0.3% decrease in ADR to US\$71.67.

Other than the luxury segment, the independent segment was the only segment to experience a double-digit RevPAR increase, rising 11% to US\$56.08, followed by the upscale segment (+9.7% to US\$82.24) and the upper-midscale segment (+9.1% to US\$58.09).

Among the top 25 markets, four markets achieved double-digit occupancy increases: Detroit, Michigan (+13.4% to 56.7%); Tampa-St. Petersburg, Florida (+11.2% to 81.1%); Dallas, Texas (+10.7% to 61.5%); and New Orleans, Louisiana (+10.5% to 78.7%). Two markets reported occupancy decreases: New York, New York (-4.1% to 78.2%), and Washington, D.C., (-1.5% to 70.6%).

San Francisco/San Mateo, California, was the only top market to experience a double-digit ADR increase, rising 12% to US\$142.49. Atlanta, Georgia, fell 3.7% in ADR to US\$84.37, reporting the largest decrease in that metric.

New Orleans jumped 20.4% in RevPAR to US\$110.13, reporting the largest increase in that metric. Six other markets experienced RevPAR increases of more than 15%: San Francisco/San Mateo (+17.5% to US\$105.62); Chicago, Illinois (+16.4% to US\$63.60); Dallas, Texas (+16.1% to US\$52.98); Orlando, Florida (+16.1% to US\$83.54); Tampa-St. Petersburg (+15.8% to US\$91.63); and Detroit (+15.5% to US\$42.73). None of the top 25 markets experienced a RevPAR decrease. (*HotelNewsNow.com, April 21*)

### **Study: Online Marketing Practices of Lodging and Destination Organizations**

In an effort to determine benchmarks for online marketing practices and organization structures, a new study surveyed 426 senior marketing executives in lodging and destination organizations. The study, "2011 Travel Industry Benchmarking: Marketing ROI, Opportunities, and Challenges in Online and Social Media Channels for Destination and Marketing Firms," is written by Cornell Professor Rohit Verma, executive director of the Center for Hospitality Research (CHR), and Ken McGill, executive vice president of research for Vantage Strategy. The report is available at no charge from the CHR at

<http://www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/research/chr/pubs/reports/2011.html>.

“Each year well over 700 marketing executives gather for TravelCom, which is a high level marketing conference that was held this year in Las Vegas,” said Verma. “One major theme this year was online marketing, but we realized that there was no overall knowledge of where the industry stands in this area. This study provides those benchmarks.”

Using an internet-based survey, Verma and McGill polled senior marketers regarding budget levels, marketing strategies, and organizational structures. They found both a wide range of expenditure levels on online marketing and considerable diversity in organizational structures.

For social media campaigns, about 80 percent of the marketers said that they produced Twitter campaigns and social media promotions in-house, but such functions as search engine optimization and pay-per-click advertising are largely outsourced. Accommodation firms are more likely to outsource all social media functions, including pay-per-call, Twitter campaigns, and pay-per-click management. Destination marketers, on the other hand, generally handle more functions in-house.

Two-thirds of the entire sample said their 2010 e-commerce budgets had increased with respect to 2009. Sixty percent of accommodation marketers anticipated a further increase in 2011, and 71 percent of the destination marketers said their 2011 budgets would increase. (*Travel Industry Wire, April 21*)

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### **Calendar of Events**

Visit [www.ArizonaGuide.com](http://www.ArizonaGuide.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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