



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:

Good afternoon,

On behalf of the Arizona Office of Tourism, we want to thank all of the firefighters and community representatives for their continued efforts in dealing with the Wallow Fire as well as the Horseshoe II Fire. From the latest information we have received, residents of Springerville and Eager can return to their respective homes and the remaining evacuated communities will be sure to follow soon.

As these communities settle back into their routines, please keep in mind that many of the regional travel destinations are still open and available for visitors. Communities such as Payson, Snowflake/Taylor, Strawberry, and Show Low are travel alternatives for visitors wanted to experience the White Mountain Region. However, we ask that you do call ahead to see if they have room to accommodate you because this is their busy season.

For the latest information on Arizona wildfires, here is a link to an additional resource, the Arizona Emergency Information Network, www.azein.gov.

Also, as a reminder, early registration for the 2011 Governor's Conference on Tourism ends on June 17. More information can be found in the **AOT News** section below.

Have a great week!

Sherry Henry
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News

Do you want fries with that?

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present the next installment of the **Arizona Tourism University** workshop series: *“Do you want fries with that?”*

Lead by Shannon Chambers, President and Founder of Service by Design, *“Do you want fries with that?”* is an informative workshop series that focuses on the value of great customer service. Are your employees creatively customizing their interactions with your guests? Or are they just “order takers”? What’s the universal message that is being sent out by your team? What first (and possibly last) impression(s) are your guests walking away with?

Chambers has more than 17 years’ experience in hotel and resort operations management, as well as staff training and development. She helps businesses identify the hidden potential in their employees as well as reach their goals of service and guest satisfaction.

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

Space is limited, so sign up today by [clicking here!](#)

The workshop will be held:

June 15

9:30-12:00 p.m.

[Tohono Chul Park](#)

7366 North Paseo del Norte

Tucson, AZ 85704

June 16

2:00 p.m.

[Webinar](#) - Please use the link provided to sign up for the Webinar:

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/777290089>

Arizona Office of Tourism

Register by visiting AOT’s online workshop registration webpage at

<http://www.azot.gov/marketing-programs/arizona-tourism-university/workshop-registration>.

Early Bird Registration Ends July 17 for Governor’s Conference on Tourism!

Register now for the 2011 [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.

This year’s theme will celebrate Arizona’s Centennial allowing us to celebrate our state’s development along with our own industry’s growth. To register, visit

www.aztourismconference.com.

Arizona Calling – Share Something Amazing!

AOT, in collaboration with the Governor’s Task Force on Tourism and Economic Vitality, has launched “[Arizona Calling – Share Something Amazing](#),” an ePostcard campaign featuring iconic Arizona images. The ePostcard campaign features vibrant imagery of the Grand Canyon State that gives residents and travelers the opportunity to share Arizona’s beauty with others. With customizable messages, email ePostcards can be sent to friends and family around the globe at no cost. Built to be an on-going campaign, the images of the ePostcard will change periodically to reflect Arizona’s seasons and activities. The ePostcard is available through [Arizonaguide.com](#).

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

The new landing page is up for [Value AZ.com](#), but we still need your travel packages and deals! The ads 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 also asking that deals and packages supplied use the Centennial theme whenever possible.**

If you want your summer travel packages or deals promoted through ValueAZ.com, this is your chance! 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 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.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[ATU Workshop](#)

Dates: June 15

Location: [Tohono Chul Park](#)

[ATU Webinar](#)

Dates: June 16

Location: Arizona Office of Tourism

[GCOT](#)

Dates: July 13-15

Location: Doubletree Paradise Valley Resort

Industry News

Wickenburg's Vulture Mine Chosen as Finalist in National Trust This Place Matters Competition

Wickenburg's Vulture Mine is the only Arizona site chosen to be a finalist in the National Trust This Place Matters competition and will be competing with endangered historic sites in other states for a \$25,000 grant. Winners will be chosen via online voting which began June 1, 2011 and will continue through June 30.

Please help by voting at:

<http://www.preservationnation.org/take-action/this-place-matters/community-challenge/places/vulture-mine.html>.

The Vulture Mine nomination was submitted by the Vulture Mine Preservation and Restoration Association whose mission is to preserve and restore Henry Wickenburg's 1863 gold mine and adjacent Vulture City for the purpose of interpreting and sharing the mine's legacy and its importance to the development of Arizona and the West. VMPRA will use the proceeds to begin preservation work on the schoolhouses. More information is available at VMPRA's web site <http://www.savevulturemine.org>.

Giving 'Tanks' to Tourists

Rising gas prices have certainly gotten the attention of tourist-attracting groups as well as hotels, all of whom advertise they want to help motorists keep their tanks full. One of the latest moves was the Wisconsin Hotel and Lodging Association's (WHLA) offer of gas cards worth between US\$25 and \$100, depending on the length of stay.

WH&LA President Trisha Pugal hopes that the promotion will encourage travelers to expand their "staycation" plans just a bit longer. "Last year had a very modest growth, it was 1.8 percent or something like that from the previous year," said Pugal. "We're looking forward to this year moving much stronger."

Hotels are typically offering gas cards often ranging from \$25 to \$50. "As everybody talks about gas prices and everybody talks about value, these hoteliers are very mindful that travelers need to hear about a great deal," said Nicki Grossman, Broward's tourism chief.

While the concept isn't new, the programs are "getting a little more sophisticated," said Joe McInerney, president and CEO of the American Hotel & Lodging Association.

B&B's have also gotten in the act. Hundreds of Bed and Breakfast owners across the country have started a grass-roots effort to give travelers some gas relief, says a press release.

So far, over 310 lodgings across the country have created individual promotions to lessen the drain on your wallet caused by soaring gas prices. Ingenious hotel executives have even come up with variations on the free gas card concept. In California, for example, Old World Inns allows guests who carpool to receive a two-bedroom suite for the price of a single room, says B&B innkeeper Russ Herschelmann.

The Grand Hyatt and Hyatt Regency in Texas hotels plan "Fuel Your Stay" in June. The deal will give guests up to a \$75 credit for hotel incidentals, including food, beverage and parking

expenses, based on their mileage on the way to the hotel. And guests renting condos at the Barefoot Resort in Myrtle Beach, SC, will be eligible for a \$50 gas card and a free night if they book seven-night stays with a Saturday check-in, says Karla Faircloth, operations manager.

Even smaller properties are offering discounts. The Yosemite Sierra View Bed and Breakfast in Oakhurst is offering a \$10 travel incentive for any two night stay, as is the Sierra Mountain Lodge bed and breakfast in Ahwahnee. The Holiday Inn Express in Chowchilla is offering help with both gas and meals. The newer property just off of Highway 99 is offering a package deal that will cover \$10 for gas and a dining credit as part of its Yosemite Package. Other properties are dropping room rates to make up for gas prices. The Hampton Inn in Madera is giving \$10 off of room rate to make up for gas. (*Travel Mole, June 7*)

Latest Tourism Trend: Smelling the Flowers

There's always something new in tourism and the latest may make you want to smell the flowers. It's garden tourism.

"Garden tourism has blossomed as an attractive niche for cities, not only as a way to spruce up their collective curb appeal but to generate green for hotels, restaurants and shops," says the AP.

Around the country, there are as many events to pick from as a field of wildflowers. In Buffalo, it's an annual Garden Festival. In North Carolina, it's an Azalea Festival. There are about 3,000 garden-centered events and festivals in the United States yearly, according to Richard Benfield, author of the upcoming book "Garden Tourism."

Earth-friendly garden tourism to be one of the country's fastest growing areas of leisure and recreation, he said.

It appeals not only to an older crowd but also to younger homeowners in search of landscaping inspiration and to anyone in search of a simple breath of fresh air. (*Travel Mole, June 7*)

Tucson selected as Top Ten Finalist in Outside Magazine's Search for the "Best Town in America"

Tucson has been selected by *Outside* magazine, America's leading active-lifestyle publication, as a finalist in its search to determine the best *Outside* town in America. The three week competition, held exclusively on Facebook, kicked-off June 8, 2011 at facebook.com/outsidemagazine

Outside scoured the nation to find dream cities that offered a balance of great culture, perfect scenery, stress-free and reasonable cost of living, and, of course, easy access to the outdoors; and Tucson is a top contender. Now *Outside* is calling on the public to help choose the best one ever from a pool of ten finalists that include: Charleston, SC; Chattanooga, TN; Madison, WI; Portland, OR; Portland, ME; Santa Fe, NM; Ashland, OR; Boulder, CO; Burlington, VT; Tucson, AZ.

The winning town will receive the official honor of *Outside's* "Best Town in America" and will be featured on the October 2011 magazine cover, *Outside* Online, and an exclusive segment on *Outside* Television.

As part of the contest, the public can vote, submit photos, video and comments backing up their selection; content that will have a chance to appear in the *Outside* magazine and on *Outside* Television. All voters will have a chance to win a five-day adventure to one of the top ten towns. The winning town will be determined through a combination of total votes; overall support as a result of content submitted; and creativity. For more information on *Outside* magazine, visit www.outsideonline.com. For more information on Tucson, visit www.visitTucson.org.

U.S. Travel Analysis on May 2011 Jobless Rate

"Employment in the travel industry edged down 3,000 in May 2011, the first monthly decline in six months. Still, over the past year, travel jobs increased by 107,200, which accounted for 12.3 percent of the 870,000 U.S. jobs added overall during this period.

"With the domestic economy appearing to decelerate in the second quarter, reliance on exports will play an even more critical role in keeping the recovery ongoing and create job opportunities for Americans. Last year, foreign travel in the U.S. supported 931,000 jobs directly in the U.S. travel industry and another 856,000 jobs in other industries. And through the first quarter of this year, travel exports were up 8.7 percent from 2010, a good sign that this key job creator is continuing to grow.

"Attracting more foreign visitors to the United States will play an important role in creating job opportunities for U.S. workers across America. However, the U.S. is in strong competition with other global markets, which is why the U.S. Travel Association recently put forth a plan to create 1.3 million domestic jobs by making the U.S. a more-competitive export market in global travel." (*Travel Industry Wire, June 6*)

World's Largest Gathering of Travel Bloggers Arrives in Vancouver

The preeminent annual gathering of travel bloggers from around the world, the Travel Blog Exchange Conference, is set to kick off a record year in Vancouver, BC this weekend. Commonly referred to as TBEX, several hundred travel enthusiasts will arrive in British Columbia to share ideas and study best practices in writing, photography, video, podcasting, and a wide variety of other content platforms for the organization's third annual convention.

Founded in 2008 as an online community for travel bloggers, the organization quickly grew into a worldwide phenomenon with more than 5,000 global content-creating members trading best practices, links, and above all travel stories.

"Together with our partners at Tourism British Columbia and the Canadian Tourism Commission, we are delighted to be hosting TBEX '11 in Vancouver," said Walt Judas, Tourism Vancouver's vice president of Marketing Communications and Member Services. "Travel bloggers play a key role in generating the current, detailed and inspiring travel information that can lead to bookings. We're excited to have the spotlight on Vancouver this weekend when many of North America's top travel bloggers are in our destination."

Another sign that TBEX is touching a mainstream nerve: traditional print publications have editors and reporters attending the show. Travel staffers from Travel + Leisure, the Los Angeles Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, Frommers, Lonely Planet, and dozens of other outlets will be

participating in the conference. For those who didn't secure a ticket for the sold-out event, online content will be plentiful, including real-time updates on Twitter using the hashtag #TBEX.

This year's conference includes an emphasis on narrative writing, revenue-generating models for online media, and ethics for bloggers. Major sponsors include American Express, TripAdvisor, and a variety of resorts, hotels, and tourism destinations. (*Travel Industry Wire, June 9*)

Calendar of Events

Visit 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!

Become a fan on Facebook! <http://www.facebook.com/arizonatravel>

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