



## ***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,

From Arizona to Zimbabwe, travel destinations across the globe will be acknowledging [World Tourism Day](#) on Tuesday, September 27!

World Tourism Day is held annually to promote the importance of the travel and tourism industry and its social, cultural, political and economic value. This year's theme is a celebration of tourism's role in linking together the cultures of the world through travel.

As Arizona's largest economic engine in the state, the tourism industry provides a stabilizing and diversifying affect on local and state economies. In 2010, Arizona hosted nearly 37 million domestic and international overnight visitors, spending more than \$17.7 billion throughout the Grand Canyon State. Direct travel spending generated more than 152,000 jobs, in addition to more than \$2.5 billion in local, state and federal taxes revenue.

Events such as [World Tourism Day](#) help bring awareness to how the tourism industry is such a driving force in contributing to the quality of life for Arizonans. For more information on World Tourism Day, visit <http://unwto.org/en>.

Sherry Henry  
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

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### **AOT News**

#### **AOT Implements FY12 Media Plan**

The Arizona Office of Tourism has implemented its FY12 media and advertising plan. The agency is continuing with the [In One Word – Arizona](#) campaign. Ads will appear in various forms of media including traditional print, digital advertisements, television spots, video-on-demand and outdoor options. The ads will be concentrated in Chicago and Los Angeles, Arizona's top feeder markets.

This campaign will continue to build on the state's brand, *Inspiring Unforgettable Southwest Moments*, and feature some of Arizona's most recognizable attributes and visitor attractions such as the Grand Canyon National Park, Monument Valley, Sedona, and Saguaro National Park. Several more statewide travel destinations will also be featured throughout the duration of the campaign. The [In One Word – Arizona](#) campaign will run through to May 2012.

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## Upcoming Events & Activities

### [Arizona Showcase](#)

Date: October 6

Location: Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico

### [Canada Trade Mission - East](#)

Date: October 11 – 14

Location: Montreal, QB and Winnipeg, MB

### [Celebrate the Centennial: Capital Arizona Press Trip](#)

Date: October 24 – 29

Location: Prescott, Tucson and Phoenix

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## Industry News

### **First Bi-Annual CALA Festival Officially Begins September 2011**

Over the course of the two-month valley-wide celebration, audiences and participants will enjoy the vibrant artistic, musical and culinary offerings of the regional Latino community through various exhibits, concerts, street fairs and more. CALA Alliance is an Arizona community-based organization dedicated to educating and inspiring all Arizonans about the richness of our Latino cultural heritage. Through festivals, performances, exhibits, in-school activities, food, music and events, we will all share in the joy and beauty of the cultural life of the Americas. The life we live throughout Arizona. Anchored by a bi-annual arts and cultural festival, *Celebración Artística de las Américas (CALA)*, will create shared arts experiences that encourage cultural understanding between people of the Americas. The inaugural CALA Festival will take place from September 14 through November 16, 2011, coinciding with Arizona's centennial celebration. For more information, visit [www.calaalliance.org](http://www.calaalliance.org).

### **Sky Harbor Passenger Traffic up in 2011**

Passenger traffic was up 9.2 percent in July compared with a year earlier at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, as the airport posted some of its best numbers since the recession hit at the end of 2007.

Sky Harbor and other major U.S. airports are looking to rebound from the recession and its impact on business travel, tourism and air commerce. The Phoenix Aviation Department reported that 3.63 million passengers flew into and out of Sky Harbor in July. That's the best July passenger traffic since 2007, when 3.73 million passengers used the city-owned and -operated airport.

From January through July, 24.1 million travelers flew through the airport, up 5.8 percent from the same period last year. July freight and air cargo volumes also were up at Sky Harbor compared with the same month last year, according to the Aviation Department.

"We are very encouraged by these increased passenger numbers and are constantly planning to meet the continued demand for services at Sky Harbor." said Phoenix Aviation Director Danny Murphy. (*Phoenix Business Journal, September 16*)

### **STR: Hotel Performance Holds Steady in August**

The U.S. hotel industry reported steady increases during August in all three key performance metrics, according to data from STR. Overall, the U.S. hotel industry's occupancy rose 3.7% to 66.2%, average daily rate was up 3.4% to US\$102.20, and revenue per available room increased 7.2% to US\$67.64.

Among the top 25 markets segments, Miami-Hialeah, Florida, achieved the largest occupancy increase, rising 11.1% to 73.6%, followed by Nashville, Tennessee (+10.8% to 63.5%). Norfolk-Virginia Beach, Virginia, reported the largest occupancy decrease, falling 5.0% to 68.9%.

Four markets experienced double-digit ADR increases: San Francisco/San Mateo, California (+15.3% to US\$159.76); Nashville (+12.8% to US\$91.31); Miami-Hialeah (+10.8% to US\$122.14); and Oahu Island (+10.3% to US\$170.31). Washington, D.C., was the only market to report an ADR decrease, falling 0.7% to US\$123.34.

Nashville jumped 24.9% in RevPAR to US\$58.02, experiencing the largest increase in that metric, followed by Miami-Hialeah with a 23.2% increase to US\$89.86. Norfolk-Virginia Beach (-4.9% to US\$71.10) and Washington, D.C. (-3.5% to US\$83.99), were the only markets to report RevPAR decreases during August.

Among the chain scale segments, the upper-midscale segment reported the largest occupancy increase, rising 5.1% to 68.4%, followed by the upscale segment (+4.3% to 73.7%) and the luxury segment (+4.2% to 71.4%).

The luxury segment achieved the largest ADR growth (+5.8% to US\$241.22) and RevPAR increase (+10.3% to US\$172.27) for the month. The midscale segment was the only segment to experience a decrease in any of the key performance metrics, falling 1.4% in ADR to US\$77.18. (*HotelNewsNow.com, September 21*)

## **Senate Takes Early Step to Creating American Jobs**

Studies show the U.S. visa system has been a hurdle for international business and leisure travel to the United States, but thanks to last week's committee vote of the FY 2012 State Department Foreign Operation Bill, the country is one step closer to welcoming more international visitors, creating more U.S. jobs and seeing billions in economic benefits. The Senate Appropriations Committee voted to send the FY 2012 State Department Foreign Operations Bill, which contains key directives endorsed by the U.S. Travel Association regarding the U.S. visa system, for consideration by the full Senate.

"Increasing travel to the United States is the most effective form of economic stimulus, but for far too long the U.S. visa system has stood as a barrier for travel to the U.S.," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association. "We applaud the Senate Appropriations Committee for initiating these important reforms to the U.S. visa system, and we urge the full Senate to quickly pass this bill so we can welcome more travelers to the U.S., which will create much needed U.S. jobs."

The proposed changes will improve efficiency of the U.S. visa process for legitimate international visitors while at the same time maintaining – and in some cases increasing – security.

By failing to keep pace with growth in global long-haul international travel between 2000 and 2010, the United States lost the opportunity to welcome 78 million more visitors and generate \$606 billion in direct and downstream spending – enough to support more than 467,000 additional U.S. jobs annually over these years. Recapturing America's historic share of worldwide overseas travel would create up to an additional 1.3 million U.S. jobs by 2020 compared with 2010 and produce \$859 billion in cumulative additional economic output.

The travel industry creates more than twice as many jobs compared to the rest of the private sector for any given increase in sales. Today, the travel industry is one of the top ten employers in 49 states, plus the District of Columbia, benefiting every state and locality.

The U.S. Travel Association has led the charge to reform the U.S. visa system and gathered a diverse coalition of voices around the issue. Separate job creation plans by leaders of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and U.S. Chamber of Commerce build on recommendations by President Obama's Jobs and Competitiveness Council and the Discover America Partnership to improve America's visa system for international travelers visiting the United States. For more information, visit: [www.smartervisapolicy.org](http://www.smartervisapolicy.org). (*Travel Industry Wire, September 22*)

## **PKF Boosts U.S. Hotel Forecast for 2011**

PKF Hospitality Research boosted its forecast for U.S. hotel revenue per available room (RevPAR) this year as the impact of increased demand from wealthier travelers is more than offsetting the effect of a stubbornly high unemployment rate and stock market declines.

U.S. RevPAR growth will be 7.2%, PKF said in a statement Wednesday. The research firm forecast a RevPAR growth rate of 6.9% in June.

"After reading and hearing recent news reports, many clients have been questioning why we are raising our estimates of revenue growth for the year," said PKF Hospitality Research President

Mark Woodworth in the statement. "However, after a thorough analysis of the latest lodging performance and economic data, it is tough not to be optimistic regarding the future of U.S. hotels."

U.S. hotel occupancy will increase 2.2 percentage points to 59.8% this year, while room rates will advance 3.2%, according to PKF. The 2012 RevPAR forecast was trimmed slightly to 4.8%, largely because many corporations are locking in lower group-room rates in advance, PKF said. *(Travel Weekly, September 22)*

### **Marketing Outlook Forum 2011 -- Navigating New Terrain**

In these tough times, every dollar spent must be justified, which is why you can't afford to miss U.S. Travel's Marketing Outlook Forum, October 26-27 at the Omni Fort Worth Hotel. Only Marketing Outlook Forum gives you the market intelligence and strategies needed to Navigate New Terrain and drive results. Don't miss your opportunity to get a jump on the coming year. Your bottom line depends on it! To register, visit [www.ustravel.org/marketingoutlookforum](http://www.ustravel.org/marketingoutlookforum). Marketing Outlook Forum Pre-conference Brochure: [http://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/10/MOF0211\\_webPreCon.pdf](http://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2009/10/MOF0211_webPreCon.pdf)

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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!

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