



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,

Thank you to everyone who participated in our most recent Arizona Tourism University (ATU) workshop, ***Interactive Marketing: Social Media Basics for Tourism Businesses***. We had wonderful statewide participation with nearly 100 industry representatives attending the sessions.

“Thank you...! The presentation was so comprehensive and much appreciated. Topics were addressed that I never even considered. It was an eye-opener to say the least.” – Rosalie Lamentola-Ayala, Noftsgar Hill Inn Bed and Breakfast

In case you missed it, the workshop presentation slides are posted at www.azot.gov/marketing-programs/arizona-tourism-university/atu-presentations. And the webinar is posted at <http://www.azot.gov/marketing-programs/arizona-tourism-university/webinars>.

Our next ATU workshop is the result of cooperation with the Arizona Commission of the Arts, ***Cultural Tourism –Connecting Arts, Parks and Communities***. This fiscal year, we have collaborated with the Arizona Commission of the Arts in a unique partnership to reach out to new audiences and broaden workshop topic opportunities.

Look to future editions of ***AOT in Action*** for the next workshop details. Be sure to review the complete [FY12 ATU](#) schedule.

Have a great week,

Sherry Henry
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News

Golf Shootout Media Tour a Success!

AOT, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), hosted 12 international journalists as they experienced golf in Tucson on the biennial Golf Shootout Media Tour. The participants included three journalists representing Mexico and Germany, two from each France and United Kingdom and one from Canada. The tour featured the gorgeous golf courses of the Westin La Paloma Resort and Spa, The Omni Tucson National Resort, The Ritz Carlton Dove Mountain, Tubac Golf Resort, Loews Ventana Canyon, and the natural beauty of the greater Tucson area. Other highlights included The Desert Museum, The Pima Air and Space Museum, and a stop in historic downtown Tucson at El Charro Café. Contact Kara Woroniec at 602-364-3715 or via e-mail at kworoniec@azot.gov for more information.

AOT Joins Statewide DMOS for Chicago Media Event

On behalf of AOT, Media Relations Manager, Kara Woroniec attended the 2011 Chicago Media Event hosted by the Greater Phoenix Convention and Visitors Bureau (GPCVB) Tuesday, December 6. The event took place at the Paris Club in River North Chicago with more than 25 media members in attendance. Representation included publications such as the *Chicago Tribune*, *The Times Weekly*, *Chicago Magazine* and a variety of freelance writers. In addition to AOT and the GPCVB, attending DMOs included Scottsdale, Mesa, Glendale, and Yuma CVBs. Suppliers included Arizona Biltmore, The Boulders, The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, Hotel Valley Ho, Montelucia, Saguaro Hotel, Sheraton Downtown Phoenix, and Talking Stick Resort. Contact Kara Woroniec at 602-364-3715 or via e-mail at kworoniec@azot.gov for more information.

National Tour Association's Annual Convention held in Las Vegas, Nevada

Jennifer Sutcliffe, AOT's Travel Industry Marketing Manager, attended the NTA Annual Convention and Marketplace held in Las Vegas, NV, December 5-9. The annual event is the largest marketplace for North American packaged travel companies to meet with North American as well as international travel suppliers. More than 2,000 delegates attended this event including 400 operators. Arizona had nearly 50 delegates attend, more than we have had in several years!

The overall sense of the show was excellent and for Arizona, which is always a popular request for operators, we were pleased with the opportunities. We met with operators we had not met with before and a number of operators we normally do business with were eager to add new activities and nights to their existing itineraries as well as add new itineraries!

For many, tours including Arizona are still some of the most popular tours, but they want new ideas and activities to add in their current programs.

Please, if you have itineraries and unique experiences, especially for groups, let us know so we can promote them at these events. Check back soon for a full Arizona report of the NTA Convention. The next convention will be in Orlando, FL in January 2013. For more information, contact Jennifer Sutcliffe at 602-364-3693 or via e-mail at jsutcliffe@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[UK Media Mission](#)

Dates: January 30 – February 3, 2012

Location: United Kingdom

[Go West Summit](#)

Date: February 6 – 9, 2012

Location: Las Vegas, NV

[Authentic Arizona Southwest: Real Deal Ranches and the Rest Press Trip](#)

Date: February 27 – March 3, 2012

Location: Tubac, Sonoita, Elgin, Patagonia, Nogales and Sasabe

Industry News

Access America Survey Shows More Planning Holiday Travel

Nearly six in 10 Americans (57 percent) say they'll take a holiday trip this year, up from 50 percent last year. On top of that, they say they'll spend more; holiday travel spending is expected to reach \$65.2 billion, a 10 percent increase from last year, according to the Access America Vacation Confidence Index.

Travelers intend to spend \$980 on average, down slightly from \$1,040 budgeted on average last year. But with significantly more adults expecting to take a trip, overall spend will increase to \$65.2 billion. While car travel is still the most popular mode of transportation (56 percent), more travelers intend to fly to their destinations this year than they have in the past. A third of travelers (34 percent) plan to fly this year, up from 26 percent last year, and 27 percent in 2009. Holiday and family go hand-in hand, so it is not surprising that two-thirds of parents with children under 18 reported that a holiday vacation is important.

Nearly half (49 percent) of Americans plan on booking their travel at least two months in advance (compared to 42 percent in 2010) and nearly a quarter intend to book their trip between one and two months out. This year, the vacation deficit index, defined as those who believe it is important to take an annual holiday trip but are not confident they will take one, is down to one in five Americans (21 percent) from nearly one in three (32 percent) last year. (*Travel Pulse, December 4*)

Spirit Airlines to Fly to Las Vegas, Dallas from Phoenix-Mesa Gateway

Spirit Airlines is starting new service to the Phoenix market via Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. Fort Lauderdale, Fla.-based Spirit and Mesa officials announced today the airline will start service between the East Valley and Las Vegas, Dallas and Fort Lauderdale.

Two daily non-stop flights between Mesa and Las Vegas begin on Feb. 9, 2012, and daily non-stop service between Mesa and Dallas/Fort Worth with continuing service to Fort Lauderdale begins on March 22, 2012.

Spirit is offering \$9 introductory sales fares on those flights at www.spirit.com today and tomorrow. Spirit becomes the second commercial airline at Gateway. Las Vegas-based Allegiant Air already flies to 32 cities from Mesa.

Spirit flies to 25 U.S. cities, including Chicago, New York, San Diego, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, the San Francisco Bay Area and several in Florida. Spirit (Nasdaq: SAVE) also recently announced new service from Dallas to Atlanta, Orlando, New York LaGuardia and Boston. Spirit also has a number of flights connecting Florida to Latin America.

Allegiant has flights from Mesa Gateway to Oakland, Calif., Las Vegas, Grand Rapids, Mich., South Bend, Ind., and Fargo N.D. as well as other mid-sized and small markets. (*Phoenix Business Journal, December 6*)

Business travel expected to increase in 2012

Business travel in 2012 is expected to increase, according to the findings from Deloitte's new Business Traveler Survey. A total 85% of the survey's 1,000 respondents expect to take the same number or more trips next year. Highlights from the study include: • A total 27% of business travelers in the 18-44 age group expect to take the same number or more trips next year compared to 16% of travelers 45 or older. • In the 18-29 age group, 46% of travelers indicated they prefer to stay at their favorite hotel brand even if it is not conveniently located, while 37% of those 30 and older feel the same way. • Among the 18-44 age group, 36% said they often work in the lobby or common area, compared to 17% of those 45 and older. Source: Deloitte / 23 page PDF ([here](#)) (*Travel Smart, December 7*)

U.S. Travel Cites Economic Benefits of Visa Waiver Program

Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association, told Congress that expanding the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) would bring increased economic opportunity to the U.S. Dow said it would also help the U.S. diplomatically. Dow made these assertions in testimony submitted to the Committee on the Judiciary's Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement.

"Since its creation in 1986, the VWP has been an invaluable instrument of U.S. national security and public diplomacy and is also critical to our nation's economic health," said Dow. "It is difficult to exaggerate the benefits to the United States of reciprocal 90-day, visa-free travel with the 36 countries that currently qualify for visa waiver status."

In 2010, VWP countries were the largest source of inbound overseas travels to the United States, sending more than 17 million visitors, or 65 percent of all visitors from overseas. While here, these visitors spent nearly \$61 billion, supporting 433,000 American jobs, along with \$12 billion in payroll and generating \$9 billion in tax revenues. (*Travel Pulse, December 7*)

DOT Reports U.S. Air Traffic at Highest Level Since 2008

The number of people flying U.S. airlines so far this year, both domestically and internationally, is at its highest levels since 2008. Systemwide, domestic and international totals were all the highest for January through September since 2008, according to just-released statistics from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS).

U.S. airlines carried 551.8 million total system passengers during the first nine months of 2011, up 1.9 percent from the same period in 2010. Domestically, they carried 480.5 million passengers, up 1.8 percent from 2010. Internationally, they carried 71.3 million passengers, up 2.7 percent from 2010. Systemwide, domestic and international totals were all the highest for January through September since 2008.

Air passenger traffic in September was up 1.2 percent over last September and up 6 percent over September 2009, U.S. airlines carried 58.0 million scheduled domestic and international passengers in September 2011. (*Travel Pulse, December 8*)

Airlines to Benefit from Business Travel Strength

Business travel growth has cooled in recent months, but it's likely to expand slowly through 2012 even as the European economy teeters on the edge of recession, industry analysts said Thursday.

That's good news for U.S. airlines that have been rapidly raising their fares to outpace a sharp climb in fuel prices and maintain profitability. But Europe is a specter, raising fears that its sovereign-debt crisis could bring down the global economy.

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In the past 52 weeks, the benchmark NYSE Arca Airline Index XX:XAL +2.87% has declined nearly 30% as air freight volumes, an important leading indicator for passenger volumes, started to decline and future economic growth looked less certain. Corporations, investors reasoned, would soon tighten discretionary spending such as travel. So far that hasn't happened.

"I haven't had any conversation with airlines or hotel operators that they are seeing a decline," said Adam Weissenberg, a Deloitte vice chairman and consultant for the travel sector. "Companies are still sending people on the road and they are making lots of trips."

That trend is expected to continue through next year, according to a Deloitte travel survey released earlier this week, with 85% of respondents saying they'll likely make as many, or more trips in 2012 as they did this year. Domestic travel looks strong, Weissenberg said. Internationally, business people might be traveling less to Europe, but they are still traveling to China, Russia and Brazil.

"There's a lot of caution about the economy, but we haven't seen it in spending yet; hotels, airlines and even cruise line trends still look pretty positive," said Matt Jacob, an equity analyst with ITG Investment Research.

Deep-pocketed business travelers pay the highest prices for their tickets, and their patronage can mean the difference between profit and loss for many carriers. Analysts predict all the major U.S. airlines, save bankrupt American Airlines parent AMR Corp. AMR -14.48% , will post

bigger profits in 2012. Delta Air Lines DAL +3.91% is expected to earn \$2.26 a share, according to an analyst survey compiled by FactSet Research, up from an estimated \$1.23 a share this year.

United Continental UAL +4.62% is expected to earn \$5.39 a share next year, up from an estimated \$3.67 in 2011; US Airways LCC +5.24% earnings could hit \$1.55 a share, up from 31 cents a share this year, and Southwest Airlines LUV +2.06% could reach 79 cents a share, versus an estimated 40 cents a share in 2011. Business-travel growth has slowed after two years of rapid recovery from the 2008-2009 financial crisis when companies froze travel plans, but there's room for it to expand further, Jacob said.

Average domestic fares are already up sharply from a year ago as carriers improved their seat-capacity management. After Labor Day, the industry reduced capacity, keeping fares high even as demand slumped in some markets. Next year the industry is expected to reduce capacity further as AMR downsizes its fleet and terminates its less-profitable routes.

"AMR's decision to finally bite the bullet and file for Chapter 11 ... was a transformational event," said CRT Capital Group analyst Michael Derchin. "Virtually every airline is expected to benefit somewhat from AMR's capacity retrenchment." (*MarketShare, Washington Street Journal, December 8*)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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