



Tourism Tuesday

A Message from Director:

Good afternoon,

In the era of digital marketing and social media, it's sometimes easy to forget that the first stop for many travelers to Arizona is a visitor information center—an actual building staffed by helpful humans.

There are several visitors' centers in cities and towns across the state. AOT does not operate or manage these centers—that is typically the job of local convention and visitor bureaus or chambers of commerce—but we do provide helpful guidelines, educational resources and printed collateral (such as our Official State Travel Guide and Map).

I'm excited to announce that AOT has overhauled and improved the program for designating official Arizona Visitor Information Centers (AVICs). The new guidelines and application form are available for download on the [Visitors Services](#) page of our industry-facing website, tourism.az.gov.

Visitors' centers that complete the application process and achieve official AVIC accreditation will be listed in the following AOT consumer-marketing resources:

- VisitArizona.com (2.8 million visits annually)
- Visit Arizona App (installed on nearly 13,000 mobile devices)
- Arizona Official State Travel Guide (distribution exceeding 400,000)

The AVIC program is designed to help Arizona communities and CVBs better promote the attractions, recreational opportunities, hospitality amenities and tourism-related businesses in their region. The goal is to ensure that travelers who set foot into a visitors' center walk away with a positive first impression of our state.

On the subject of positive first impressions, I'm happy to relay the news that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) began installing our new Grand Canyon National Park Centennial road signs last week at 40 locations across the state. Thanks again to Governor Ducey, ADOT and APS for helping us make these beautiful new signs a reality.

Debbie Johnson
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism
[@AZTourismNews](#)

AOT in Action

AOT Advances International Marketing Efforts with ITB Participation

AOT recently attended ITB in Berlin, Germany, the "World's Leading Travel Trade Show". Each year more than 10,000 exhibitors from 180 countries gather in Berlin to promote their destinations to top travel-trade buyers in Germany and Western Europe. Experience Scottsdale, Visit Tucson and Antelope Canyon Tours also joined AOT. In total, the delegation met with 30 top tour operators and product managers from Germany and other European countries.

Updated Industry Research Now Available

The following reports are now available at tourism.az.gov:

- [Airport Passenger Volume January 2019](#)

For the latest and historical tourism indicator reports, please visit the [Data and Trends](#) page on tourism.az.gov.

Strong Growth in Tourism Taxes in 2018

Estimated tourism taxes for 2018 ended the year strong with a 7.2% increase over 2017. The growth was led by lodging sales. Estimated tourism taxes for lodging were up 10.1% year-over-year, followed by retail (6.9%), restaurant/bar (5.4%), and amusement (4.0%) taxes. Three months in 2018 saw estimated tourism taxes increase over 10% compared to 2017: March (11.8%), July (11.2%) and November (10.3%). Please visit the December Gross Sales and Tourism Taxes Report on tourism.az.gov for more information.

2018 Attractions Attendance Needed

AOT is collecting 2018 attendance numbers from attractions across the state. This information will be posted on the research section of our industry website, tourism.az.gov. To be included, please email your total 2018 attendance to kroberg@tourism.az.gov. You can view the 2017 Natural Attraction Attendance and 2017 Private Attraction Attendance lists at tourism.az.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

April 8-12

TravelBrands Roadshow

TravelBrands is the largest independent travel company in Canada. It comprises specialized tour operator wholesale brands and unique retail brands. AOT will join CWW Canada and TravelBrands on a roadshow to Vancouver and Edmonton to promote Arizona to the Canadian travel trade.

May 5-11

National Travel and Tourism Week

National Travel and Tourism Week 2019 is May 5-11, with Travel Rally Day on Tuesday, May 7. This year's theme is Travel Matters. Resources are available for you to reach out to media and elected officials, plan local events and stage effective activities at ustravel.org.

Industry News

[Scottsdale Named Among Top 10 Happiest Cities in the Nation](#)

They say money can't buy happiness, but where you live might be a factor. Scottsdale was rated the happiest city in Arizona, and it was in the top ten happiest cities nationally, according to WalletHub.

[Millennials Are Tired of Researching Their Vacations](#)

Called "net lag" or "scroll fatigue," millennial travelers are exhausted when it comes to researching their vacation. On average, millennial travelers are spending eight hours of research on their vacation and becoming bored after just 40 minutes of research, according to Hotels.com's latest study.

[Online Travel Agency Giants Spent \\$10.6B on Marketing in 2018](#)

The power of the platforms is huge: Expedia Group and Booking Holdings splashed out a record amount on customer acquisition during 2018. The pair spent \$10.6 billion on what they loosely term "performance advertising and brand advertising" in the case of Booking Holdings and "selling and marketing" at Expedia Group.

Did You Know?

On this date in 1901, the Arizona Territorial Legislature adopted the saguaro cactus blossom as the official state flower. The white and yellow flowers can bloom from late spring through early summer.

Statewide 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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