



Tourism Tuesday

Welcome to Tourism Tuesday, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director:

Good afternoon,

From recognizing brilliant marketing campaigns to honoring excellent customer service, it is time for us to celebrate the innovative programs and the valuable people that define our incredible industry!

We are now accepting nominations for the coveted [Governor's Tourism Awards](#). Send us your nominations that showcase the creativity, engagement and preservation you accomplished during this past year. Nomination Forms and Award Categories can be found on our business website, tourism.az.gov. We look forward to recognizing all that was achieved to promote travel to Arizona.

Speaking of celebrations, congratulations to the 2016 Foodist Award Winners! The awards celebrate the amazing tastes, faces and places of Arizona's food and beverage industry. Winners are listed in the *Arizona News* section below.

Have a great week,

Debbie Johnson
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism
#AZTourismTuesday

AOT in Action

Nomination Form Now Available for Governor's Tourism Awards

AOT invites you to submit nominations for the 2016 [Governor's Tourism Awards](#). From innovative marketing programs to valuable tourism champions, astounding work is accomplished each and every day by our industry to promote the Grand Canyon State. The Governor's Tourism Awards is a wonderful way to recognize these efforts. Deadline to submit a nomination is **May 31, 2016**. For more information about the Governor's Tourism Awards, contact Hannah Fullmer at hfullmer@tourism.az.gov. And be sure to register for the 2016

Governor's Conference on Tourism! More information about the conference is available at aztourismconference.com.

International Journalists Enjoy the Trails of Arizona

AOT hosted six international journalists who visited several of Arizona's trails earlier this month. We had the pleasure of showing the journalists some of Arizona's varied trails and finding treasures along each curve. They began with a sunny bike tour of downtown Tucson along part of the Turquoise Trail followed by a taste along Southern Arizona's Wine Trail in Willcox and finishing with dinner on the Salsa Trail in Safford. Then up the Coronado Trail where it snowed what a treat! From Pinetop they hiked and learned all about the flora and fauna of the area, visited Fort Apache and met royalty and even rode the chairlift at Sunrise above the ski trails. Finally, they came down through the Salt River Canyon and made several stops in Mesa along the Fresh Foodie Trail and the Apache Trail. The group, including a journalist from the UK, Germany, Mexico, Canada, China and the US, was amazed at the diversity in weather, attractions and scenery they encountered. For more information, contact Marjorie Magnusson at mmagnusson@tourism.az.gov.

One Week Left! Arizona Travel and Tourism Toolkit Available on Tourism.az.gov

National Travel and Tourism Week is one week away! What is your community doing to recognize the week? To help you and your community celebrate the impact of tourism, we have created a [toolkit full of resources](#) you can use such as press release templates, or samples of social media posts. We've also provided county specific research data so you can customize these resources to reflect how tourism impacts your area. The [toolkit](#) is available on our business site, tourism.az.gov. And be sure to tell us what you're doing! Send your plans to media-info@tourism.az.gov to keep us in the loop.

Upcoming AOT Events & Activities

[Travel Classics International](#)

Dates: May 18 - 22

Locations: Lucerne and Bern, Switzerland

Travel Classics International is a premier travel writer conference that allows freelance travel writers the opportunity to meet with the industry's top editors. This conference attracts top-notch editors from publications such as Sunset Magazine, National Geographic Adventure, Self, Robb Report, AARP Magazine, Men's Journal, Golf for Women, Saveur and more.

Upcoming Industry Events & Activities

[Arizona Restaurant Week](#)

Date: May 20 - 29

Location: Statewide participating restaurants

This statewide affair offers foodies a wealth of dining opportunities and the chance to get outside their own neighborhood and try something new. From sizzling Southwestern and soothing comfort foods to five-star dining and international fare – it's all on the table during Arizona Restaurant Week. So prepare your taste buds and dig in!

Arizona News

Countdown to Phoenix Final Four Begins with Clock at Sky Harbor Airport

For the next 345 days, visitors arriving at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport will be greeted by a clock counting down the time till the 2017 NCAA Final Four in the Valley.

The semi-final college basketball games will happen April 1 with the national championship April 3 at Glendale's University of Phoenix Stadium. Community leaders said the event will bring more than just basketball.

"Not only are we going to put on a great show and activities, but this will also boost the economy significantly in the Valley," said Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton. "This will add hundreds of thousands of dollars into our local economies, just like it did with the Super Bowl. This has been a big three years for sports in Arizona."

The state hosted the College Football Playoff National Championship in January.

The clock unveiling Thursday morning launched the "year of basketball" in Arizona, said Dawn Rogers, executive director of the Phoenix Local Organizing Committee.

Gov. Doug Ducey noted that next year's events will be the first time since 1995 that the Final Four has happened in the West.

"And we know a thing or two about hosting a major sporting event. When we bring a game to Arizona, we not only host it but we also make history," Ducey said.

The NCAA-sponsored event will also bring a push for literacy among Arizona's third graders, creating curriculum focused on the event in an attempt to inspire kids to read and become involved.

The Final Four is expected to attract more than 70,000 fans per game to the Valley. The clock is in Terminal 4, which serves 85 percent of Sky Harbor passengers. The digital clock is on a 55-inch high-definition LED screen at the bottom of the down escalators on the west end of baggage claim.

"We all know in March Madness every second counts as we learned this year," Stanton said. "This clock is a symbol of that and a countdown to, what is in my opinion, the best sporting event on planet Earth."

Those interested in attending a game may go to ncaa.com/mbbtickets for more information on ticket applications. (AZCentral.com, April 21)

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2016/04/21/countdown-phoenix-final-four-begins-clock-sky-harbor-airport/83309522/>

Cactus League Rallies for Another Record Year

On the last day of Cactus League baseball this year, the Colorado Rockies hosted the Seattle Mariners, just as they did to close out the 2015 spring-training schedule.

This time, they attracted some 8,000 fans, about 1,300 more than the same matchup drew in 2015. With that, the Cactus League set another attendance record in 2016, squeaking past the 2015 total, though doing so in two fewer games.

An Arizona Republic analysis of the Cactus League results found that the 227 games drew nearly 1.9 million fans this year. It was 1,600 more than the league attracted in 2015. Overall, the games averaged 8,236 fans, up less than 1 percent from last year's total.

"The first couple weeks were a little slow, though they drew OK. We think it was the local crowd we were missing," said Mark Coronado, the Cactus League's president. "We really spiked over the last three to five years. We were probably due for a flat season. We're pleased with the numbers."

Once again, the Cactus League's 15 teams easily outdrew the Grapefruit League's 15 teams, in part because of weather. Arizona didn't have a single rainout, while Florida lost 15 games to bad weather. In all, the Grapefruit League teams averaged 7,024 per game and drew about 1.5 million total, according to a tally by the website Spring Training Connection.

The final numbers are welcome news in the Valley, which sees an economic infusion from visitors during spring training estimated last year at \$544 million.

Dennis Hoffman, director of the L. William Seidman Research Institute at the W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University, said another record year for attendance should help the state's improving economy.

"This is all part of a big bundle of pretty good news: a steadily improving economy and clearly signs that we have turned a corner," he said.

A second-half attendance boost

Though little different than last year's total, the latest Cactus League record happened because of a second-half attendance surge that offset smaller crowds through the first 15 days of the 33-day schedule. At that point, attendance was down 8 percent compared with 2015. Crowds jumped 8 percent in the remaining games.

It's unclear whether out-of-town visiting patterns changed from year to year.

Hotels in Glendale generally did better in the second half of March than they did in the same period a year ago, according to occupancy data tracked by STR, a data and analytics specialist that tracks the hospitality industry.

But in Scottsdale, which has about 10 times more rooms, the numbers were down for much of the back-half of March, the data shows.

One factor that helped the league set another record was the continued growth of night games in the spring schedule. In 2015, there were 23 night games. This year, there were 28.

That matters because night games — even in the spring — draw more fans than day games. This year, night games averaged more than 9,700 fans while day games averaged little more than 8,000. Those five additional night games delivered about 8,600 extra fans, about the equivalent of adding another day game to the schedule with none of the extra costs.

Coronado said the teams like night games, in part because of the bigger crowds, but also because it allows the players to get used to the night schedule that dominates regular-season baseball.

Night games may not be enough to help the Cactus League set another attendance record next year. The World Baseball Classic tournament, which is held every four years, is scheduled for March and could siphon talent and fans to watch international competition during spring training next season.

Gains for the Cubs and Reds

As usual, the Chicago Cubs led the league in attendance, though they drew about 8,000 fewer than in 2015, only because they played one less game in Mesa. The team averaged 15,302 per game, nearly identical to what the Tampa Bay Rays averaged during last year's regular season.

The Arizona Diamondbacks were the next hottest ticket this year. The team averaged 11,445 per game, which was up slightly over last year's spring games.

Perhaps more important, the most improved team at the gate was the Cincinnati Reds. Attendance in Goodyear for Reds games was up 12 percent over last year. The Cleveland Indians, who share the Goodyear facility with the Reds, also had a modest improvement, though Goodyear remained at the bottom of the Cactus League for attendance.

The Kansas City Royals, the defending champions, saw their attendance in Surprise climb 11 percent. The San Diego Padres, who play in Peoria, had the biggest drop, nearly 10 percent. The Oakland Athletics lost nearly as many fans in their second season in Mesa.

Overall, the six teams playing in the East Valley outdrew the nine teams playing on the west side, though they hosted 43 fewer games. Even so, the west-side teams saw average attendance go up 2.7 percent. Teams on the east side averaged slightly fewer fans.

The Republic's analysis only counts games involving major-league teams in Cactus League parks. It doesn't count, for example, games played at Chase Field in Phoenix or a game played in San Antonio. (*AZCentral.com, April 19*)

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/money/business/economy/2016/04/19/cactus-league-rallies-another-record-year/83009054/>

Congratulations to the 2016 Foodist Award Winners!

The Arizona Restaurant Association paid tribute to outstanding members of the food and beverage industry last week.

Below are the winners of the 2016 Foodist Awards.

- Uniquely Arizona: Lon's at the Hermosa
- Top Chef: Kevin Binkley
- Innovative Restaurant Concept: Kai
- Outstanding Multiple Location Restaurant: Nook Kitchen
- Emerging Restaurant of the Year: Ocotillo
- Restaurant Employee: Laura Baldassarre, Assistant Manager, Wildflower Bread Company
- Premier Cocktail Program: Counter Intuitive
- Premier Beer Program: Culinary Dropout
- Premier Wine Program: Southern Rail Restaurant
- Good Neighbor: Local First Arizona
- Outstanding Food Truck: Chef Wade's Bistro on Wheels
- Best Dessert: Sumomaya Mexican Asian Kitchen
- Food Pioneer: Joe Johnston (Liberty Market, Joe's Real BBQ, Joe's Farm Grill)

For more information, visit foodistawards.com.

Industry News

Study Finds Travel Makes People More Trusting

Travel search site momondo today released a global "Value of Traveling" study showing that traveling increases trust, opens up new perspectives and provides a more positive attitude to new cultures and people.

The study, which surveyed more than 7,200 people in 18 countries, showed a significant link between travel and openness. For example, according to the study, people who have visited 46-50 countries are more likely to trust someone they've just met for the first time than those who have visited 0-5 countries.

Several academic studies have previously shown a positive correlation between travel and acceptance, but this is the first time that such a large study has addressed the issue.

"Almost half of the respondents think that people are less tolerant of other cultures than five years ago, and we are looking for ways to help change that trend," said momondo executive Lasse Skole Hansen. "At the same time, this study shows the positive effects that travelling can have, namely in its potential to break down barriers between people across cultures. It is encouraging that the more people see of the world, the more tolerant they become."

The study also showed:

- 48 percent believe that people today are less tolerant of other cultures than five years ago. Only 16 percent disagree with the statement.
- 76 percent believe that travelling has given them a more positive outlook on differences and diversity.
- 76 percent believe that travelling has given them a more positive outlook on other cultures in general.
- 75 percent believe that traveling has given them a more positive view of people from cultures they visited.

“The Value of Traveling” study consists of answers from 7,292 respondents in total with 400 respondents from each of the following 18 countries: Australia, Brazil, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The respondents are demographically representative based on gender, age and regions.

Read more about the [survey here](http://www.travelindustrywire.com/article88876.html). (*TravelIndustryWire, April 19*)
<http://www.travelindustrywire.com/article88876.html>

National Park Visitor Spending Contributes \$32 Billion to Economy: Every public dollar invested in National Park Service returns \$10

Spending by a record number of national park visitors in 2015 provided a \$32 billion benefit to the nation’s economy and supported 295,000 jobs, according to a report released today by National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis.

“The big picture of national parks and their importance to the economy is clear,” Jarvis said of the \$16.9 billion visitors spent in communities within 60 miles of a national park. “Each tax dollar invested in the National Park Service effectively returns \$10 to the U.S. economy because of visitor spending that works through local, state and the U.S. economy.

“This is especially significant news to the gateway communities where national parks can be the community’s primary economic engine,” Jarvis said. “While we care for the parks and interpret the stories of these iconic natural, cultural and historic landscapes, our neighbors in nearby communities provide our visitors with important services like food and lodging and that means hundreds of thousands of local jobs.”

The report comes on the heels of a major policy speech delivered by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell earlier this week. The Secretary called for greater investments in national parks and public lands to prepare for the next century of conservation. The address, delivered during National Park Week, also called for a course correction in conserving America’s public lands; made an argument to make our national parks more relevant to an increasingly diverse and urbanized country; and called for implementing smarter, landscape-level planning to support healthy ecosystems and sustainable development on public lands.

Visitor spending in 2015 supported 295,000 jobs, provided \$11.1 billion in labor income, \$18.4 billion in value added, and \$32.0 billion in economic output to the U.S. economy. The lodging sector provided the highest direct contributions with \$5.2 billion in economic output to local gateway economies and 52,000 jobs. The restaurants and bars sector provided the next greatest

direct contributions with \$3.4 billion in economic output to local gateway economies and 65,000 jobs.

According to the 2015 report, most park visitor spending was for lodging (31.1 percent) followed by food and beverages (20.2 percent), gas and oil (11.8 percent), admissions and fees (10.2 percent) and souvenirs and other expenses (9.8 percent).

The annual peer-reviewed economics report, 2015 National Park Visitor Spending Effects, was prepared by economists Catherine Cullinane Thomas of the U.S. Geological Survey and Lynne Koontz of the National Park Service. It includes information by park and by state on visitor spending, the number of jobs supported by visitor spending and other statistics.

Report authors this year also produced an interactive tool to present data in full color circle and bar graphs. Users can explore visitor spending, jobs, labor income, value added, and output effects by sector for national, state, and local economies. Users can also view year-by-year trend data. The interactive tool and report are available at the NPS Social Science Program webpage: go.nps.gov/vse.

National Park visitation is expected to grow again in 2016, the centennial year for the NPS. There are now 411 parks in the national park system, the latest is the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument in Washington D.C., established by President Obama on April 12.

President Obama established a Centennial Initiative for the NPS anniversary and Congress is considering a centennial act to support a multi-year effort to invest wisely in the park system's most important assets, use parks to enhance informal learning, engage volunteers, provide training opportunities for youth, and enhance the NPS's ability to leverage partnerships to accomplish its mission.

For more state-by-state information about national parks and how the National Park Service is working with communities, go to [http://www.nps.gov/\[statename\]](http://www.nps.gov/[statename]), for example: <https://www.nps.gov/state/az/index.htm>. (*National Park Service, April 21*)
<https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/news/release.htm?id=1821>

China Business Travel Market Overtakes United States As Global Leader in Business Travel Spend

China's business travel market has overtaken the United States as the number one business travel market in the world. This is one of the key findings from the GBTA BTI™ Outlook – China 2016 H1, a report by the GBTA Foundation, the education and research arm of the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), sponsored by Visa, Inc.

Revised figures in this new report from the GBTA Foundation show China edged past the United States in total business travel spending at the end of 2015 by a billion U.S. dollars, finishing the year with \$291.2 billion in spend compared to \$290.2 billion respectively.* China will soar ahead in 2016 with business travel spend forecast to grow 10.1 percent to \$320.7 billion USD, compared to 1.9 percent growth in the United States and \$295.7 billion USD in total business travel spend.

“Despite a relative slowdown, China’s business travel market remains one of the fastest growing in the world,” said Michael W. McCormick, GBTA executive director and COO. “China surpassing the United States in business travel spending marks a major inflection point and truly demonstrates the global nature of today’s economy.”

Additional key findings from GBTA BTI™ Outlook – China 2016 H1 include:

- Early 2016 volatility in China’s financial markets once again led to heightened concerns about a potential hard landing for China resulting in collateral damage to the global economy, but a steady stream of indicators continue to point towards controlled growth moderation as planned.
- GBTA’s expectations for the Chinese economy are for a continuation of GDP growth moderation bringing rates of 6.4 percent and 6.1 percent for 2016 and 2017, respectively. Growth will continue to come primarily from consumption and purposeful government infrastructure investment as China works to shift its economy to one driven by consumers, not just investment and exports.
- Despite the slowing Chinese economy, investment in travel infrastructure continues in anticipation of better days ahead for both business and leisure travel. A plan to open 82 new airports has been underway since 2011 and hoteliers are also continuing to increase their presence in China. Over 70 percent of the hotel construction pipeline in Asia Pacific can be attributed to China.
- Business travel spend in China continues to be dominated by domestic business travel, which comprises 95 percent of total business travel spend. Pressure from slower economic expansion will keep a lid on the tremendous levels of domestic business travel growth seen in previous years, but growth of roughly 10 percent is still expected on an annual basis over 2016 and 2017.
- GBTA’s forecast of 9.8 percent total business travel spend growth in 2017 would mark the first year of this millennium that China’s business travel spend growth rates dropped below double digits.

“This is an exciting milestone for the travel industry,” said David Henstock, VP of Global Commercial Solutions at Visa, Inc. “This highlights the need for consistent, integrated and truly global payment solutions for business travelers around the globe.”

The GBTA BTI™ Outlook – China 2016 H1 report is available exclusively to GBTA members by [clicking here](#) and non-members may purchase the report through the GBTA Foundation by emailing pyachnes@gbtafoundation.org. (*TravelIndustryWire, April 21*)
<http://www.travelindustrywire.com/article88904.html>

Could Millennial Travelers Lead A Virtual Travel Boom? Expedia Thinks So.

Expedia made headlines last month when it partnered with St. Jude Children's Hospital to offer child patients "Dream Adventures" without having to travel through Virtual Reality (VR). But now the popular travel service is investing in VR for a different reason.

Business Insider reported Expedia is investing in the technology in wake of a recent study that found millennial travelers are slightly less adventurous than other generations.

Through the development of VR apps, Expedia hopes to allow travelers to experience a destination before they go.

The Study

Expedia's study concluded that millennials tend to be less adventurous than older generations of travelers, with more than four in 10 (43 percent) indicating that they are "intimidated" by the idea of solo travel.

By comparison, roughly only one-third of baby boomers (32 percent) and Gen Xers (33 percent) find solo travel intimidating.

What's more, the study found that more than three-quarters of millennial travelers (77 percent) are willing to provide more personal information to an online travel agency like Expedia in exchange for more relevant travel advice, compared to just 69 percent of Gen Xers and 57 percent of baby boomers.

"I think it's not that we're getting less adventurous but a sense of risk aversion is growing. The sense that 'I need to know that it's going to be authentic, I need to know that people are going to look favorably on it,'" Expedia's senior vice president and head of retail Gary Morrison told Business Insider last week.

Morrison added that while many are drawn to travel because of the potential for discovery, younger travelers are more likely to prefer that there be no surprises.

What Impact Will it Have?

While Expedia's study reveals some key trends as it pertains to younger generations of travelers, it remains to be seen whether VR will catch on.

Mobile apps are popular, but VR apps aren't on their level at this point. In addition to development, Expedia will need the millennial market to latch onto VR apps. From that point it still remains to be seen whether a VR experience would be the deciding factor for a young traveler eyeing a trip to an undiscovered destination.

Regardless of how VR development pans out, Morrison believes there's no chance it will supplant travel.

"People will always want to have the experience," he told Business Insider. "The sensation of warm sun on my flesh cannot be replicated by virtual reality."

In the meantime, VR is being implemented in other areas of the travel industry, perhaps most notably in hotel rooms. VR Bangers recently announced a partnership with headset manufacturer AuraVisor to trial VR adult entertainment inside select Las Vegas hotels. (*Travel Pulse, April 25*) <http://www.travelpulse.com/news/travel-technology/could-millennial-travelers-lead-a-virtual-travel-boom-expedia-thinks-so.html>

Did you know?

The Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona holds more archives and individual works by 20th-century North American photographers than any other museum in the nation. There are currently more than 90,000 works by over 2,200 photographers.

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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