



Tourism Tuesday

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

A Message from Director:

Good afternoon,

As we reported in August, AOT, in affiliation with MacGillivray-Freeman Films, Expedia, IMAX® theaters and AMC theaters, worked throughout the month to promote Arizona's unique national parks, monuments, and historic sites through Shawn MacGillivray's film, [National Parks Adventure](#). This was our way of kicking off and celebrating the National Park Service centennial here in Arizona.

Through our partnership, select nationwide IMAX and AMC theaters featured the film that captured the scenic beauty and outdoor adventures of our nation's most iconic national parks, including Arizona's own Grand Canyon National Park, Lake Mead National Recreational Area and Hoover Dam.

In addition to the recognition Arizona has received through Shawn MacGillivray's film, we also developed a [:90 second movie trailer](#) highlighting our state and national parks. This trailer was shown before each viewing of the film to offer attendees even more knowledge about what they can see and do in Arizona. We've also created a [12-minute movie](#) showcasing just about all of Arizona's state and national parks which will be used at our upcoming media, trade and consumer events.

Along with the showings, AOT held activations at the movie locations to expand our presence in these important markets and meet those coming out to see the film. We held events in Minneapolis, MN at the Science Museum of Minnesota where 2,000 people attended; San Jose, CA at The Tech Museum of Innovation where 1,500 people attended; and in Seattle, WA at The Pacific Science Center where more than 3,000 people attended. And here at home we joined the National Park Service and 1,000 attendees in Flagstaff to officially mark the beginning of the NPS centennial celebrations.

This year-long celebration will be part of our marketing efforts as we continue to work with the National Park Service is to encourage everyone to [#FindYourPark](#) in Arizona and enjoy our great state. For more information about our state and national parks, visit our consumer site [VisitArizona.com](#).

Have a great week!

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

AOT in Action

Don't Miss AOT's Last Regional Research Webinar!

AOT is hosting a series of regional research webinars to provide a deeper level of economic impact data, visitor profile information and industry trends for each region of the state. Below is the participation information. For more information, contact Colleen Floyd at 602-364-3716 or cfloyd@tourism.az.gov. Don't forget, the research is available on tourism.az.gov and the [Arizona Travel Impacts App](#).

Tucson & Southern Region (Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, Pima and Santa Cruz)
[Presentation is now available.](#)

Western Region (La Paz, Mohave and Yuma Counties)
[Presentation is now available.](#)

North Central Region (Gila and Yavapai Counties)
[Presentation is now available.](#)

Northern Region (Apache, Coconino and Navajo Counties)
[Presentation is now available.](#)

Phoenix & Central Region (Maricopa and Pinal Counties)

Wednesday, September 7 at 10:00 AM

GoTo Meeting Link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/853587509>

Phone Number: 1 (571) 317-3129

Access Code: 853-587-509

Join AOT for the China Trade and Media Mission

AOT is pleased to invite Arizona DMOs and tourism suppliers to participate in a Travel Trade and Media Mission to China. The five-day mission will take place October 24-28 in Shanghai and Beijing, two of the largest cities for doing travel trade business in China. China is the fastest growing outbound travel market with an estimated 250 million Chinese tourists anticipated to travel overseas by 2020. In addition, Chinese visitors are big spenders, spending more than \$6,000 per person per trip. In 2015, Chinese visitation to Arizona alone increased 18.5% (over 2014 visitation). And, in 2015, Visa card spending from China was up 34.8% year-over-year (source: VisaVue).

AOT plans to meet one-on-one with tour operators and media professionals as well as host meal events and destination workshops for optimal networking and educational opportunities with the Chinese travel trade. This is a great opportunity for you to meet with approximately 125 key travel agents, tour operators, media professionals and other related travel trade professionals in this important market. There are several ways to participate in this mission, so please contact us for more information. Contact Jennifer Sutcliffe (trade) at 602-364-3693 or via email at jsutcliffe@tourism.az.gov or Kimberly Todd (media) at 602-364-3305 or via email at ktodd@tourism.az.gov.

New AOT Research Now Available

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

- Gross Sales & Tourism Taxes June 2016
- State Park Visitation July 2016

For the latest and historical tourism indicator reports, please visit the [Data and Trends](http://tourism.az.gov) page on tourism.az.gov. For more information, contact Colleen Floyd at 602-364-3716 or cfloyd@tourism.az.gov.

NCAA Men's Final Four Promotional Opportunity

While many of you are celebrating the start of football season or counting down the days to cooler weather, our thoughts already are on basketball. Specifically, the NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four.

As you likely know, Arizona will host the 2017 NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four next April at the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale. Semi-final games will take place on Saturday, April 1, with the championship game on Monday, April 3. That leaves visitors with an open day on Sunday, April 2 to explore Arizona. And, AOT is working closing with the Final Four Local Organizing Committee to encourage our many out-of-state visitors to "come early and stay late" to enjoy more of our beautiful state.

We have a great opportunity to promote Arizona because this will be our first time hosting this prestigious event. We have been asked by the NCAA to work with our statewide partners to create a campaign highlighting our various communities and destinations to explore the state. A few examples of previous or suggested opportunities are below, but we're looking to each of you to help generate ideas related to basketball. Here are some thought starters to get the ball rolling:

Arizona's most beautiful courts

- Sedona (one example displayed, but we know you have others)

Arizona Dunks!

- Lake Pleasant
- Lake Powell
- Lake Havasu City
- Colorado River Communities
- Desert Lake Communities
- Others

Traveling is not a violation in Arizona

- Day trip suggestions

Arizona's Other Final Four

- Four Corners
- Four Peaks
- Four (and Five)-Star resorts
- Four wheeling

Taking it to the hole

- Grand Canyon

- Canyon de Chelly
- Kartchner Caverns
- Mining towns

No Lane Violations here

- Trails (hiking, biking, horse)
- Desert Botanical Garden
- Ale Trails
- Foodie Trails
- Salsa Trail
- Wine Trails

Arizona's Championship Hoops

- Native American Indian hoop dancers
- What else is hoop related?

These are just a few ideas to get you thinking. Does your community or region fit into any of these areas? Do you have any suggestions for other “themes” that might work (remember, think basketball). Please don’t be shy as we truly need your help and ideas.

Finally, here are images from iconic NYC locations that served as backdrops for photos of the championship trophy when New York hosted the NCAA Men’s Wrestling Championships. We plan to do something similar with the Final Four Trophy.

Trophy tour around the state

- Sample 1
- Sample 2
- Sample 3
- Sample 4
- Sample 5

While April seems a long way off, it will be here before you know it and the Local Organizing Committee is well into its planning. With that in mind, please submit your ideas to Tony Alba at talba@tourism.az.gov by Friday, Sept. 16 on how we can help promote your community. If you have questions, please contact Stephanie Dowling at sdowling@tourism.az.gov or at 602-364-3704.

Upcoming AOT Events & Activities

[Canada Media Influencer Tour - Get Your Kicks on Route 66](#)

Date: October 16-21

Locations: Phoenix, Winslow, Flagstaff and Kingman

AOT’s media rep with ConnectWorldWide in Canada will escort this tour which will provide the opportunity to explore the people and places along Historic Route 66.

Upcoming Industry Events & Activities

Marketing Outlook Forum

Date: October 24-26

Location: Fort Lauderdale, Florida

The Marketing Outlook Forum is the industry's leading strategic travel forecast conference combining industry networking and quality educational programs into a premier event.

Arizona News

Tucson Regains Direct Air Service to Hermosillo

The restoration of flights between Tucson and destinations in Mexico began Wednesday when Mexican airline Aeromar announced it is entering the Tucson market.

The airline will offer four weekly flights between Tucson and Hermosillo, Sonora; Los Mochis and Mazatlán, Sinaloa; and Guadalajara, Jalisco.

“We are committed to these cities,” Andrés Fabre, CEO of Aeromar, said during an announcement at Tucson International Airport.

He said the determination of the airport, tourism officials and city leaders to bring air service to Mexico from Tucson impressed him.

“This is a good example of a win, win, win situation,” Fabre said.

Aside from business travel to Hermosillo, he foresees medical and academic tourism in both directions keeping the airline busy.

“This is a great time to promote a two-nation vacation,” Fabre said of plans to market Arizona-Sonora vacations to visitors from Europe and from eastern parts of the United States.

The flights will operate Fridays, Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays, with one-way fares beginning at \$150 to Hermosillo and \$183 to Guadalajara.

The aircraft is a 46-passenger ATR-42 turboprop with two-by-two seating. The flights to Hermosillo will be about one hour and begin Oct. 3.

“Re-establishing nonstop and direct air service into Mexico has been one of our highest priorities,” said Bonnie Allin, president and CEO of the Tucson Airport Authority. “It’s an important economic link for our region’s trade and logistics sectors.”

Tucson lost its last international flight in 2008 when Aeromexico discontinued its flights to Hermosillo.

“All I can say is, ‘Yes!’” Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild said with a fist pump. “I’ve been working on this since taking office and since we were just coming out of the recession, I was told to be patient.”

He said connectivity to Hermosillo is significant because it’s the capital of Sonora and a major manufacturing hub with cross-border supply chain connections.

“And no more travel to Phoenix to get to Mexico City,” Rothschild said to applause from a crowd.

Hermosillo is putting together promotional packages so that tourists will stay in Sonora and explore the region, said Antonio Berumen, tourism director for Sonora.

“We don’t want it to be just a connection,” he said.

Extending an invitation to outdoor enthusiasts, Esteban Balderama, director of tourism for Sinaloa, said Mazatlán offers great beaches and water sports, while Los Mochis has hunting opportunities and the iconic Copper Canyon.

“Yes, we have a canyon — and I don’t want to brag — but it’s bigger than yours,” he said.

The addition of the direct flight to Hermosillo will be the 19th direct nonstop flight available from the Tucson airport.

Direct flights to Guaymas/San Carlos, Sonora, will also begin in October when Carlsbad, California-based CalJet will begin flying a 50-seat Bombardier CRJ200 jet four times a week between Tucson and Guaymas, as well as between Phoenix and Guaymas. (*Arizona Daily Star, August 31*)

http://tucson.com/business/tucson/tucson-regains-direct-air-service-to-hermosillo/article_ef743dba-a77c-5a9d-9a7f-ad6546271cee.html

OdySea Aquarium Unveils Mystery Exhibit at Grand Opening

There's a little bit of Jurassic Park inside the new 2 million-gallon OdySea Aquarium near Scottsdale, which opened its doors to the public for the first time Saturday morning.

Along with the aquarium's 50 exhibits and 30,000 marine animals, officials unveiled an attraction kept secret until the grand opening — a 20-minute carousel ride that rotates through several marine-life habitats.

OdySea's Living Sea Carousel, with its five 114-seat moving auditoriums, conjures memories of a similar rotating ride featured in the 1993 blockbuster movie "Jurassic Park," where visitors first learn about dinosaur DNA. Walt Disney World's Carousel of Progress ride also follows a similar format.

Carousel riders at OdySea first encounter three sea turtles, including one that was rescued off the Texas coast and lost two limbs while tangled in a fishing line. Other stops feature sea lions, a seal and several species of sharks.

The aquarium spans about 200,000 square feet inside the OdySea in the Desert entertainment complex near Loop 101 and Via de Ventura on the Salt River Reservation. The complex is also home to Butterfly Wonderland, and a separately-owned swim-with-the-dolphins attraction that is set to open Sept. 17.

About 30 shops and restaurants are eventually expected to open at OdySea in the Desert, including El Encanto, Four Peaks Mining Co., Frozen Penguin Ice Cream and the Kakery.

Hundreds of visitors lined up outside OdySea Aquarium at about 8 a.m. Saturday, waiting to become the first to peruse its concrete halls.

Ramiro Andrade of Gilbert was among the first to enter the aquarium Saturday, earning a special invitation as one of the many construction workers who scrambled to get the attraction ready by Labor Day.

"It's just mind-boggling to see the finished product," said Andrade, who spent thousands of hours at the site working 12-hour days. "It's exciting to have an aquarium here, close by, and something you were a part of, building from scratch."

Mesa resident Amy Assante visited Saturday morning with her husband and two daughters and planned to return to bring out-of-town relatives.

"I think we need places like this. It was time to get an aquarium of this scale here," Assante said. "Definitely there's a few things for them to polish off here and there, but they really impressed me. It looks great."

The exhibits begin with freshwater species like Siamese crocodiles, piranhas and Asian small-clawed otters.

About two dozen African penguins greet visitors before they descend into a shark tank via an escalator encased in an acrylic tube. Jellyfish, eels, crabs, sea horses and the giant Pacific octopus await at the bottom.

After a 3-D movie called "Underwater Giants" about humpback whales and whale sharks, the aquarium experience predictably ends at an expansive gift shop.

Single-day admission is \$34.95 for an adult and \$24.95 for a child, according to the company. It is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. (*Arizona Republic*, Sept. 3)

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/scottsdale/2016/09/03/scottsdale-odysea-aquarium-unveils-mystery-exhibit-grand-opening/89721458/>

U.S. Travel Research Round-Up: Travel Searches Post-Brexit, Plus Job Growth in Peak Summer Season

Each month, the U.S. Travel Association sends its members the U.S. Travel Outlook, which provides insight into the current state of the travel economy and related industry trends, plus other relevant data and information on the travel and tourism sector.

U.S. Employment Better Than Expected; Travel Jobs Surge

U.S. employment overall grew more than expected in July—and travel job growth surged right along with it for the second month in a row.

According to U.S. Travel estimates, all major travel-related industries experienced job growth, totaling 17,100 travel jobs added in July. So far this year, the travel industry has added an average of 7,300 jobs per month, a rate on par with 2015. Overall, the travel industry remains a consistent job creator for the current U.S. economy, adding new jobs 15 out of the past 20 months. Since the post-recession employment recovery began in early 2010, job creation in the travel industry has outpaced that of the rest of the economy by 17 percent.

Where in the U.S. Do Americans Want to Travel?

This month's National Park Centennial has likely inspired more Americans to see what their country has to offer. In fact, nearly four in ten respondents to a recent AAA survey said they were more likely to visit a U.S. national park in the next year compared to recent years. How do domestic travel intentions for the coming months based on lodging searches stack up against this trend?

According to July's U.S. Travel Barometer, it appears that greater numbers of U.S. residents would prefer to stay closer to home. Nearly eight in 10 (79 percent) of U.S. residents with near-term travel intent searched for lodging within the U.S. in the September through October timeframe. Cheaper gas prices and instability overseas are likely motivating Americans to use their vacation time to explore destinations in their own backyard.

As it has done consistently the last few months, the Southeast region of the U.S. (which includes Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and the Carolinas) captured one-third (33 percent) of domestic searches, followed by the Far West (which includes California, Alaska and Hawaii) with 19 percent, and the Mideast (which includes New York and Washington, D.C.) with 13 percent. The Far West and Mideast's share of domestic travel searches declined somewhat compared to July of last year.

New Yorkers were the top source of travel searches to the Southeast region, followed by Florida. New York was also a top source state with travel intent to the Mideast.

International Interest in U.S. Destinations Post-Brexit

According to the latest U.S. Travel Barometer, America's share of international travel searches increased to 14.6 percent in July—the highest since January this year—while searches to European countries have experienced a decline in recent months. This is likely a result of a combination of factors, including the summer travel season winding down, Europeans staying closer to home post-Brexit, growing numbers of visitors from areas like China and India, and some avoidance of European destinations due to terrorism fears.

However, the softening European travel market—a top inbound market to the U.S. Mideast—pushed that region into second place, with 26 percent of international searches, behind the Southeast, which

claimed 31 percent. Canada and Germany were the top sources of travel searches to all regions in the U.S., while India notably moved into the top five sources of travel intentions to the Great Lakes, Plains and Southwest regions in July.

However, it remains to be seen whether an unprecedented Zika-related travel warning for the Miami area will affect tourism to the Southeast region.

A deeper dive into the data available in the August 2016 U.S. Travel Outlook—which includes the latest data releases on travel employment, transportation, lodging metrics and more - is online here.

U.S. Travel Association members receive the full U.S. Travel Outlook, plus a myriad of other cutting-edge research reports with information relevant to the travel industry. Learn more about the benefits of becoming a member here - or simply continue to enjoy a small taste of U.S. Travel's research insight each month here, with the Research Round-Up. *(Sept. 1 U.S. Travel Association, Travel Industry Wire)*

<http://www.travelindustrywire.com/article90932.html>

Did You Know

Rising to a height of 12,643 feet, Mount Humphreys north of Flagstaff is the state's highest mountain.

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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Follow us on Twitter! <http://twitter.com/ArizonaTourism>