



Tourism Tuesday

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

A Message from Director:

Good afternoon,

As Governor Doug Ducey announced yesterday, the Arizona Office of Tourism, the Arizona Commerce Authority and the Arizona Mexico Commission will now co-exist under the new [Governor's Economic Opportunity Office](#) (GEOO).

GEOO is an opportunity for us to be part of an innovative economic development infrastructure that will elevate tourism's role in building Arizona's economy. We have long touted that tourism is one of Arizona's strongest economic drivers and is the window to our state's business attractions and quality of life. Tourism's role in GEOO is, in fact, a testament to what this industry truly does for our state and how it can bring further awareness of Arizona as the ideal place to live, work and visit.

We are appreciative of Governor Ducey's support and excited to be an active partner in our state's most important economic development efforts, as these will certainly continue to enhance Arizona's sustainability and its future.

It is critical to note that this is ***not*** a merger. AOT will carry on as our own agency that focuses on promoting Arizona as a vibrant and welcoming travel destination.

We will certainly keep you informed as to how AOT operates within this new infrastructure. As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Have a great week,

Debbie Johnson
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT in Action

Join us for AOT's Mexico Trade and Media Mission April 4-8

Connect WorldWide Mexico will oversee AOT's upcoming Mexico Trade and Media Mission to Mexico City and Guadalajara. The mission, originally slated for March, has been rescheduled for **April 4 - 8**. As part of the mission, AOT and partners will host a trade and media function in both Mexico City and Guadalajara to educate tour operators, travel agents and journalists about Arizona's many travel offerings. Additionally, media and trade appointments will be scheduled in both cities. This is an ideal opportunity to join statewide partners in educating this important market about Arizona's tourism amenities. For more information or to participate, please contact Jennifer Sutcliffe (trade) at jsutcliffe@tourism.az.gov or 602-364-3693 or Kimberly Todd (media) at ktodd@tourism.az.gov or 602-364-3305.

AOT Attends Travel Exchange Annual Convention (Trex16)

AOT attended Travel Exchange (Trex16), the National Tour Association (NTA) Annual Convention, in Atlanta, GA on January 31-February 4. The annual event is the largest marketplace for North American packaged travel companies to meet with both domestic and international travel suppliers. Approximately 2,000 delegates attended the event. Arizona had more than 30 delegates in attendance. Arizona spent time with companies interested in adding more unique or exclusive Arizona travel experiences to their itineraries. A full Arizona report of the NTA Convention will be available soon. For more information, contact Kristin Swanson at kswanson@tourism.az.gov or at 602-364-3696.

Upcoming AOT Events & Activities

[Arizona: Hike-Bike-Peddle-Paddle-Ride Press Trip](#)

Date: April 3 - April 9

Locations: Willcox, Sierra Vista, Tucson, Valley

This trip will feature some of the very best nature and history have to offer in southern Arizona. Mountains, canyons, caverns, vineyards, hummingbirds and even the sites of two historic shootouts (OK Corral and the western-most Civil War battle) will be part of tour.

Upcoming Industry Events & Activities

[Unity Dinner](#)

Date: February 25

Location: The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa

The Tourism Unity Dinner brings together leaders from business and government communities in celebrating the \$20.9 billion tourism industry and its contribution to our state's economy. In addition, this event recognized entities and individuals that have greatly enhanced and positively impacted Arizona tourism. We are pleased to announce the 2016 honoree will be: The Honorable Doug Ducey, Governor of the State of Arizona.

Arizona in the News

Governor Doug Ducey Announces Geocaching Now Allowed On State Trust Land

Geocaching is now allowed on state trust land, Governor Doug Ducey announced last week. Governor Ducey has instructed the Arizona State Land Department to allow geocaching on some of Arizona's 9.2 million acres of state trust land.

Geocaching is a GPS-based scavenger hunt where geocachers use GPS-enabled devices to find a specific coordinate and locate a hidden object (the geocache) at that location.

"We've made eliminating pointless, bureaucratic regulations that hinder Arizonans a top priority," said Governor Ducey. "I'm glad this issue was brought to our attention and we were able to work with Senator Steve Smith to resolve it. Arizona is known for its outdoor recreation, so it makes complete sense to allow geocaching on state land. To all the geocachers out there – have fun exploring Arizona's beautiful land."

"Our department looks forward to working with the geocaching community to advance recreational opportunities while allow preserving our state trust land," said State Land Commissioner Lisa Atkins. "I'm thrilled we were able to work in partnership with the geocaching community, Senator Smith and the governor's office to ensure state land would still be protected and the Trust beneficiaries would be compensated, while geocaching enthusiasts could still take part in this GPS-based scavenger hunt. It's a win-win for everyone."

Mel Hockwitt, a leader in the Arizona geocache community, brought this regulation to Senator Smith's attention who then contacted the governor's office and Arizona State Land Department about the issue.

"I would like to thank Governor Ducey and Land Commissioner Atkins for their leadership in addressing this issue brought to my attention by my constituent and geocacher, Mel Hockwitt," said Senator Smith.

"I am excited that we were able to resolve this administratively and legislation was not needed to correct a policy from the previous Land Commissioner that ultimately hurt geocaching in Arizona. This further demonstrates the power of the people's voice. Geocachers provide a great service to Arizona by cleaning up trust land while exploring the beauty of Arizona."

"The geocaching community would like to thank Governor Doug Ducey, Senator Steve Smith and Commissioner Lisa Atkins for allowing us to enjoy our sport on State Trust land," said Hockwitt. "We look forward to enjoying the many places on State Trust land with family and friends."

Each individual geocacher must obtain a recreation permit in order to participate in the activity on state trust land. The new policy and recreation permit applications are available on the land department's website.

Phoenix Open Attendance Surpasses 200,000 Fans in One Day for First Time

The previous record was 189,722 in the third round in 2014.

Friday's attendance was also a record for that day, with 160,415 fans at the TPC Scottsdale.

Attendance for the week so far is 553,035. The previous high was 564,368 in 2015, meaning only 11,334 have to be on hand Sunday for the weekly attendance record to be broken. If the Sunday attendance is 46,966 or more, the week-long attendance will surpass 600,000 for the first time.

"It's insane to see this many people here," said Tyler Sweet, of Dallas, while standing at the 18th hole. Saturday's tournament was Sweet's fourth time attending.

The 26-year-old decided to play it safe and stay at the 18th hole due to the large crowds, a plan followed by others like Uriel Nunez, 42, who lives down the street from the greens.

Nunez said getting around anywhere near the TPC Scottsdale has been "hectic" since the start of the Phoenix Open, although he conceded the event "made for great people watching."

Ashley Szafronski, 29, of Scottsdale, waited on a bus for "over an hour" to get from her parking spot to the tournament entrance. It was worth the wait, she said, for the beautiful weather and atmosphere.

"This is what Phoenix is all about," Szafronski said.

Golf fans and revelers weren't the only ones queued up, sometimes for hours, to be part of the festivities. So, too, were peddlers of Girl Scout cookies.

"The competition is thick," said Jennifer Marshal, 39, of Scottsdale, who was helping her daughter, 7-year-old Maria, sell Girl Scout cookies outside the gates.

The pair live 2 miles from the event, and it took them 45 minutes to get home Friday night, Marshal said. They expected to contend with much of the same when it came time to head home Saturday evening. The pair planned to be there again Sunday.

The reported single-day attendance record in the United States is the Indianapolis 500, with 385,000 fans.

The Phoenix Open is now No. 2 on that list of American sporting events. (*Arizona Republic*, Feb. 7)

Industry News

ACA 2.0 To Amplify Arizona's Job Creation Efforts

A stronger focus on data and analytics when it comes to job creation, marketing and regulatory reform is at the heart of legislation introduced today in the Arizona House of Representatives to boost economic development.

Legislation sponsored by Representative Karen Fann, consolidates government offices by establishing the Governor’s Economic Opportunity Office (GEOO) – a one-stop economic development shop that will focus on getting government out of the way of job creators, provide a direct link between the business community and the workers and capital they need to be successful, cut down on government overlap to make taxpayer dollars go farther, and create a more unified and effective approach to job attraction and marketing of Arizona.

GEOO will serve as an analytics and strategy team under the Arizona Commerce Authority that will continually analyze how Arizona stacks up against other states, identify ways to drive down regulatory and tax burdens, and provide real-time data so policy makers and government can move at the speed of business to bring new business to Arizona. This will help ensure Arizona stays a step ahead of the competition in job attraction and creation, while helping hardworking and innovative Arizonans get to market easier and faster.

Additionally, this new approach is focused on:

- Boosting job creators both large and small, expanding innovation in the sharing economy, and giving tools to rural communities.
- Ensuring government is open and accountable, and that taxpayer resources are properly spent.
- Streamlining government so it isn’t standing in the way of new jobs.
- Stronger sales force and marketing strategy by working as a team.
- Leveraging existing resources to focus on workforce development.

“When it comes to our economic future, we’re planning for tomorrow, and we’re innovating,” said Governor Ducey. “We know what businesses look for when deciding where to locate: quality of life, low taxes, light regulations, good financing and qualified workers. This new approach is focused on growing our economy by attracting new business to Arizona and ensuring job creators who are already here, stay and thrive. I thank Rep. Fann for her leadership in these crucial efforts.”

“Arizona is quickly becoming the preferred place to be for companies – especially small businesses and startups – looking to grow their business in an environment with limited regulations and competitive taxes,” said Rep. Karen Fann. “But there's more we should be doing – and in order to know exactly what that is, we need to have a better understanding of other states’ strengths and weaknesses, and use that information to either improve, or to be able to tell companies, in dollars, how much they will save by doing business with Arizona. GEOO will give us the analytics that we’re currently missing, while enhancing our success on the marketing side. I’m proud of this legislation and I thank Gov. Ducey for his commitment to economic competitiveness.”

Find more details on the Governor’s Economic Opportunity Office [here](#).

Demand for Air Travel Is the Highest in 5 Years, IATA Reports

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has announced the highest demand for air travel in the past five years.

Global air travel demand, measured in revenue passenger kilometers (RPKs), rose 6.5% for the year compared to 2014.

“This the strongest result since the post-Global Financial Crisis rebound in 2010, and well above the 10-year average annual growth rate of 5.5%,” the airline organization states.

Tony Tyler, Director General and CEO of IATA said of the results, “Last year’s very strong performance, against a weaker economic backdrop, confirms the strong demand for aviation connectivity. But even as the appetite for air travel increased, consumers benefitted from lower fares compared to 2014.”

Annual airline capacity rose by 5.6% and passenger load factor climbed 0.6 percentage points to a record annual high of 80.3%.

While all regions experienced growth in 2015, Asia-Pacific airlines accounted for one-third of global annual increase in traffic in 2015, with a demand increase of 8.2% compared to 2014.

North American airlines’ demand rose by 3.2% in 2015, “Broadly unchanged from the growth achieved in 2014,” IATA reports.

U.S. airline domestic traffic growth outperformed international growth. Domestic RPKs account for 66% of North American airlines’ operations.

- US domestic traffic rose by 4.9%, which IATA attributes to solid economic growth.
- US airlines’ load factor rose by 0.1 percentage points to 81.8%.
- US airlines’ domestic load factor reached a domestic record high of 85.4%.

“This was the fastest rate of increase since 2004 and the first time since 2003 that [U.S. airline] domestic traffic growth surpassed international growth,” IATA states.

- In Latin America domestic travel accounted for 46% of airline operations for 2015.
- In Asia-Pacific domestic travel accounted for 45% of airline operations.
- In Europe, domestic travel represented 11% of operations.
- For Middle Eastern airlines domestic travel represented only 4% of operations.

Middle Eastern airlines had the strongest annual traffic growth at 10.5%. Their share of international traffic surpassed that of North American airlines (14.2% v 13.4%).

Middle East airlines grew capacity by 13.2% which exceeded demand. As a result load factor decreased 1.7 points to 76.4%. (*Skift.com, Feb. 8*)

Did you know?

It's Canada Week!

Governor Ducey declared this week, Feb. 7-13, as [Canada Week](#). In December, Ducey issued a

proclamation recognizing Canadians' significant impact on the tourism and trade industries in Arizona. The proclamation notes that Canada and Arizona bilateral trade exceeds \$3.7 billion each year, and more than 146,000 Arizona jobs depend on trade and investment with Canada. Additionally, more than 895,000 Canadian visitors annually contribute \$920 million to the Arizona economy.

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!

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