



Tourism Tuesday

A Message from Director:

Good afternoon,

This year, for the first time ever, the “Road to the Final Four” culminates in Arizona. And it’s a big deal!

When the 2017 NCAA Men’s Final Four tips off April 1 at University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, it will mark the first time college basketball’s marquee event has been played west of the Mississippi since 1995.

So this week, as you’re completing your brackets and sneaking workday peeks at your mobile devices to check scores, please take some time to consider the economic benefits the Final Four will have on Arizona.

Last year, more than 100,000 fans traveled to Houston for the Final Four and its surrounding festivities, and the city reaped an estimated \$300 million in direct economic impact. We expect a similar number of fans to converge on Arizona for this year’s event, and 80 to 90 percent of them will be from out of state.

To maximize the volume of these visitors and enhance Arizona’s exposure as Final Four host, AOT and its partners have built several marketing initiatives around the event. We created fan sweepstakes, targeted ad campaigns, custom e-newsletters and a slew of social-media posts. We also extended our Cooperative Marketing Program to partner DMOs, increasing Arizona’s Final Four exposure via Facebook, TravelZoo and billboards in our feeder cities.

I’m proud of the work AOT has done (and continues to do) to support the first-ever Final Four in Arizona. As co-chair of the Phoenix Local Organizing Committee, I’ve also witnessed the immense preparation our entire community has put in to ensure the event is a success. The organizing committee’s executive director, Dawn Rogers, and her entire team deserve a standing ovation before the first game of the tournament even tips off.

I’m confident that the 100,000 fans and 90 million television viewers who witness the 2017 Final Four will come to the conclusion so many of us already share: When it comes to hosting mega sporting events, Arizona is no wide-eyed Cinderella or mid-major dance crasher—we’re the undisputed belle of the ball.

Debbie Johnson
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism
#TourismTuesday

AOT in Action

AOT Promotes Arizona to Global Market at ITB Berlin

The International Tourism Exchange - ITB Berlin - is known throughout the world as the leading trade fair for the global tourism industry. This makes ITB Berlin the main forum for communication and marketing for the worldwide tourism sector. It is an ideal opportunity for exhibitors to get their messages out to both trade visitors and the media. ITB is the world's largest travel industry trade show with more than 10,000 exhibitors from more than 180 countries competing for travel business from important European markets. During the three-day conference, AOT and industry partners met with 45 trade representatives and 30 industry-related journalists. Industry partners joining AOT at ITB included Prescott, Scottsdale, Tucson, Sedona and Flagstaff. For more information, contact Becky Blaine at 602-364-3696 or bblaine@tourism.az.gov.

Upcoming AOT Events & Activities

Northern Arizona Media Tour

Date: April 18-24

Locations: Phoenix, Flagstaff, Grand Canyon, Page, Monument Valley, Chinle

This trip will travel to some of the most beautiful and iconic locations of Arizona before returning to the Phoenix metropolitan area.

Upcoming Industry Events & Activities

Final Four Volunteer Opportunities

Date: March 31-April 3

Location: Phoenix and Glendale

Phoenix Local Organizing Committee is recruiting volunteers to assist with the many community and ancillary events before and during the 2017 NCAA Men's Final Four. There are opportunities in hospitality, operations, information centers and transportation. Volunteers can register at www.phoenixfinalfour.com/volunteer. Volunteers receive a Final Four shirt and cap, as well as a ticket to the Final Four Fan Fest at the Phoenix Convention Center.

Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism

Date: July 19-21

Location: JW Marriott Desert Ridge

The annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism provides the state's tourism stakeholders the opportunity to network with peers, learn from expert panelists, draw inspiration from keynote speakers,

and celebrate our accomplishments. Please take note that GCOT 2017 has a new web address: azgcot.com.

Arizona News

New tourism marketing efforts increase visitor numbers

A new website designed to better promote the greater [Sierra Vista](#) area as an ideal tourist destination has been launched. The move comes at a time when tourism appears to be enjoying a boom across the state, including in Cochise County. ([Sierra Vista Herald/Review](#), March 7)

Southwest Airlines making \$40 million investment in Sky Harbor

Southwest Airlines is making some major investments into Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. The Dallas-based airline announced today it will occupy a new concourse at the airport's Terminal 4 and will invest more than \$40 million to expand its maintenance facility. ([Phoenix Business Journal](#), March 8)

Some seasonally-closed roads reopen on Mt. Lemmon

The Coronado National Forest, Santa Catalina Ranger District, has reopened gates to some roads on Mt. Lemmon after the seasonal closure expired March 1. Due to ice and snow remaining in other areas, not all roads have been reopened. Gates reopened: Incinerator Ridge Road and Oracle Control Road. Gates which remain closed due to hazardous road conditions (ice, snow, downed trees): Bear Wallow Road, Bigelow Road, Marshall Gulch Picnic Area, Organization Ridge Road, Mt. Lemmon Recreation Site (above ski area). (Coronado National Forest, March 10)

Industry News

Brand USA has launched a new consumer marketing campaign and website

The campaign, See How Far You Can Go, aims to highlight the diversity of the United States, including music and video from different parts of the country. The effort will focus on social media and emphasize what else is available to see and do within five hours of better-known destinations such as New York or San Francisco. Source: [Travel Trends Today](#)/ New site: [here](#)

The latest measure of the US economy has been released: Jobs

The employment situation continued to improve, with 235,000 jobs being added in February. The unemployment rate was little changed at 4.7%. Construction employment increased by 58,000, with gains in specialty trade contractors (+36,000) and in heavy and civil engineering construction (+15,000). Construction has added 177,000 jobs over the past 6 months. Employment in leisure and hospitality showed little or no change over the month. Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) / 39-page PDF: [here](#) (Travel Smart eNewsletter, March 10)

Did You Know?

Chewing-gum magnate William Wrigley, Jr. constructed the landmark Wrigley Mansion in Phoenix between 1929 and 1931. The Arizona Biltmore Hotel, located nearby, was partially financed and wholly owned by Wrigley, who used Wrigley Mansion as a winter cottage.

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!

Become a fan on Facebook! <http://www.facebook.com/arizonatravel>

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