



Governor's Tourism Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday April 18, 2024, 8:30AM to 1:30PM

South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance

Family Center

1600 W Russel St Sioux Falls SD 57104

Board Members

Ann Lesch
Julie Ranum
Carmen Schramm
Kristie Wagner
Frank Smith
Ivan Sorbel
John Brockelsby
Caleb Arceneaux
Val Rauch
Tom Biegler

Tourism Staff

Jim Hagen
Wanda Goodman
Kirk Hulstein
Katlyn Svendsen
Mike Gussiaas
Bailey Carlsen
Byron Banasiak
Erin Weinzettel
Ann DeVany
Jacey Ellsworth
Calvin Bloemendaal
Alexa Dorn
Stephanie Spronk
Teresa Tople

President Ann Lesch called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for coming to Sioux Falls.

Secretary Hagen welcomed the board to Sioux Falls, welcomed the industry partners who were in attendance, and thanked Teri Schmidt and her Experience Sioux Falls team for hosting the meeting, for the outstanding tour of the city on Wednesday, and for their friendship and support. The secretary relayed that the Tourism team has been working hard these past months to continue to innovate, create and do work that sets us apart from other Destination

Marketing Organizations. He shared that the department has a lot of new updates to share at the meeting today.

President Lesch asked each board member to give a brief report from their area.

Caleb Arceneaux – Black Hills / LIV Hospitality

- The first quarter of the year has been a bit soft
- Strong airport numbers
- Strong numbers for the summer bookings, the planning window seems earlier

Carmen Schramm – Yankton

- The Meridian bridge in Yankton is 100 years old
- Parks are having good booking so far
- Four miles of work on Hwy 81 - is an ongoing 2-year project

Kristi Wagner - Whitewood

- Shout out to Rosie and the NW area in Webster and huge housing development
- Tourism has been cited as the reason for the economic impact

Tom Biegler – Sioux Falls / Regency Hotel

- Soft first quarter for Regency as well
- The second quarter is looking phenomenal

Julie Ranum – Watertown

- 27th year of business at the Redlin Art Center
- Attendance numbers and revenue are up
- Watertown has two sheets of ice at the new ice facility
- The Plaza has free music every Thursday with food vendors in the summer

Ivan Sorbel – Pine Ridge

- It is turkey season
- Pow wows are coming up. The Pow wow with USD, SDSU and BH is the 1st one this year
- The motel in Kyle opened back up
- Ivan is transitioning out of the Chamber of Commerce and contracting with George Washington University to assist the SDNTA

John Brockelsby – Rapid City/Reptile Gardens

- March was a good month at Reptile Gardens
- Competition has gone up with other businesses opening up
- Last year was good. If we have another year like last year, no complaints

Val Rausch – Big Stone City /Abbey of the Hills

- Watertown is doing great
- Milbank is doing remarkable
- Dakota Cheese Factory is adding 120 new jobs
- Housing seems to always be an issue
- Schools need to add on
- Big Stone City has a new ice cream shop named “Melts” and it is doing a great business
- New steak house named “Sly’s”
- A new gas station as well
- Looking to a busy summer
- Winter was good due to the weather cooperating

Frank Smith – Gettysburg

- Three resorts and keeps getting busier
- Many pheasants mean pheasant hunting season looks promising
- GFP is not taking walleye out this year
- The water has been stocked with salmon by GFP
- Reservations look good at Bob’s Resort
- Bobs got a new face lift for the store front

Ann Lesch – Ingalls Homestead, DeSmet

- With the mild winter, ice fishing was only 2 weeks long
- Fishing helps bring money into the area
- New tours are coming to DeSmet
- 50th anniversary of “Little House on the Prairie”
- Walnut Grove MN will be hosting the cast from “Little House on the Prairie” the 3rd weekend in July
- There is a new elementary school being built
- DeSmet won second place in USA Today’s Best Small Town Cultural Sense

Wanda Goodman-2024 Areas of Priority

- Shared 24 areas of priority for 2024
- Projects that tie in with our strategic plan, help us focus on what needs to get done this year before moving on to additional projects

Wanda Goodman-Budget and Revenue updates

- Provided updated fiscal year revenue numbers for the Tourism Promotion Tax and the Gaming Handle, through March

Wanda Goodman-Destination Capitol Hill

- Shared basic information about Destination Capitol Hill, what it is, how our team participates
- Covered the 2024 U.S. Travel Association policy priorities

Audrey Otto-Pepper Great Plains Zoo and Butterfly House & Aquarium

- The zoo opened in 1963
- Becky Dewitt started at the zoo in 2020 at that time she started working with Butterfly House and Aquarium making it a tourism destination in Sioux Falls
- The Bold Vision: Create a great opportunity Land, Sea, and Sky
 - Merge and rebrand
 - ReZOOvenation-high standards for all the animals
 - Education Center
 - Making the Aquarium a unique experience
 - Making the Butterfly House a rainforest experience
- 250k visitors up to over 400K in 2031
- Splash pad at the Zoo opening Memorial Day Weekend
- African Lion habitat opening in July

Tom Biegler and Justin Smith-Update on Tourism Coalition of South Dakota

- The Tourism Coalition of South Dakota has a new website while the VIA never had a website
- Operating capital has been brought to the table for the next 5 years by businesses offering to help fund the TCSD.
- Thank you to Travel South Dakota for the assistance and backing of Tourism Coalition of South Dakota
- Justin Smith has lobbied for the TCSD for 3 years
- It has been an honor to advocate for Tourism

Dan Letellier-Sioux Falls Regional Airport

- In 2000 there were 362,000 passengers flying out of the Sioux Falls Regional Airport
- In 2024 there have been 667,000 passengers flying out of the Sioux Falls Regional Airport
- In 2023 record total passenger in and out with a 9% increase over 2022
- A new parking garage with 975 new parking spots with a skyway costing \$60 million
- Future projects:
 - \$130 million for improvements
 - Construction of a 5-gate concourse
 - A new hold room space to accommodate passengers waiting to board in the next 3 years
- Currently there are 7 gates and there are less seats on planes than there are in the waiting area

Teri Schmidt-Experience Sioux Falls

- Welcome to Sioux Falls and thanks to all that joined the tour

- Prayers to Tom and his employees for the accident at his hotel
- Pheasant Fest was fun and broke the record
- The women's brunch broke the record at Pheasant Fest
- Pheasant Fest went out for bids. 2028 is earliest Sioux Falls could get it again. SPACE is a huge issue. We desperately need more.
- Pheasant Fest is a function of the whole state not just a Sioux Falls thing
- There is a new convention center downtown being proposed but will probably not transpire for years
- Hotels are doing a great job of hosting business meetings
- The numbers on the calendar for the summer looks good
- Soccer tournament will bring in over 170 teams to Sioux Falls
- Jackie is killing in the bus tour business. The bus tours are strong
- The growth in Sioux Falls has been great

Mike Gussiaas, Chief Marketing and Creative Officer, Global Marketing and Brand Strategy

- Since the Tourism Conference in January, four campaigns have concluded (Hunting, Shoulder (National + Regional), Super Bowl 2024 and the first flight of our private/public co-op Sturgis O-G H-D effort).
- The shoulder campaigns, despite their smaller budget, were a resounding success. They generated over 141M+ impressions and a staggering 59% more clicks and completions than our Shoulder 2023 efforts. Notably, they significantly contributed to our visitation, with an impressive \$9.6M+ in expected hotel + flight booking revenue attributed to them.
- The shoulder campaigns, in a surprising turn of events, also attracted significant interest from warm weather markets like San Francisco, Dallas, and Miami. Additionally, they saw more than 1.9k+ total hotel nights booked by Canadian travelers, a market that was not specifically targeted by the campaign.
- Shoulder campaigns ended with the launch of the Super Bowl 2024 effort that extended beyond game day placements and included paid online video, search and social. The efforts ran through the month of Feb and generated more than 27M+ impressions in the markets of Denver, Des Moines, Kansas City, Minneapolis/St Paul, Omaha, Rapid City and Sioux Falls.
- Year two of the Sturgis OG HD campaign launched over the holidays, and the second flight launched on 4/15. The effort will generate 11.5M+ impressions and focus more on the event's entertainment and headline acts.
- Looking at short-term rental activity, advance bookings reported through our data partner, Keydata, show a substantial spike around August 3, the start of this year's Sturgis rally.
- Peak 2024 efforts launched in March, including our Peak National, Peak Regional, Brand USA co-op and Community Co-op campaigns.
- Peak 2024 Community Co-op efforts include custom media calendars for 17 different partners. Since launching mid-March, community co-op efforts have already generated an estimated \$3.7M+ in hotel + flight booking revenue.

Alexa Dorn

Canada Media Campaign

- Object- Attract high value Canadian travelers to South Dakota. Campaign will run June-August for 14 weeks.

- We will be targeting all provinces but extra attention to Ontario and Quebec which is home to 60% of Canada's population. We will be working with our media partners at Sojern and Expedia for the media buy.
- This is a financial partnership with Brand USA, Expedia, and Travel South Dakota. The goal is 9.4 million impressions for the campaign.

2024-2025 Brand USA Efforts

- Highlighted the upcoming and campaigns currently running with Brand USA including Global Inspiration Program, Opti Channel, Interactive Travel Guides, American Beats, Travel Week Canada Co-op, Canusa Coop.
- The global inspiration program is similar to a vacation guide but for the United States. 125,000 print copies are distributed along a digital guide, there is marketing behind that guide resulting in 6.7 million views.
- We also choose to be included in the interactive travel guide; this is for the travelers that are higher in the funnel of engagement. This gives us an opportunity to highlight additional locations in South Dakota to consumers and it also has Expedia and programmatic campaigns to back the digital magazine. The interactive travel guides also average 6 million impressions across international markets.
- We partner in Opti Channel campaigns in five markets of Canada, Australia, UK, Germany, and France. These are extensive campaigns that run for a full season backed by native ads, programmatic ads, Expedia, newsletters and more. In spring 2023 our Opti Campaign in Canada resulted in 768 room nights booked through Expedia and 21 airline tickets booked through Expedia tied to the ads. We look forward to seeing how our new creative will perform in the Opti campaigns currently running for Spring 2024.

Canusa Coop Campaign

- We are running a late spring campaign with Canusa, the largest specialized tour operator in Germany. This campaign will have digital promotion, social media, email, print, staff training resulting in around 7 million impressions.

Travel Week Canada

- We are partnering with Canada's number 1 trade media company for a microsite, newsletter, homepage sponsorship, digital sponsorship, travel trade webinar, eblast, and print advertising. The campaign will be running in late spring to encourage Canadians to book through travel trade for late summer and into early fall. The campaign is expected to gain nearly 1 million impressions.

Passports

- We have launched 5 passports for peak 2024! The new Head for the Hills passport was an incredible partnership with Black Hills and Badlands Tourism Association and Travel South Dakota. 40 family friendly attractions are highlighted in the passport, and in the first 18 day of the passport we have seen over 103 downloads and 42 check ins at participating businesses!
- We are continuing our promotion of these passports by paid digital, organic social, consumer and industry emails, welcome center promotion, rack cards, posters, window clings and more. We look forward to further building the passport program with regionally focused passports, brand partnerships, and prize accessibility.

Erin Weinzettel

- Shared an overview of this last year’s efforts for the “Hunt the Greatest” campaign, a campaign ran in partnership with Game, Fish & Parks, generating 29.8M+ in impressions.
 - The campaign ran in key markets with Minnesota (10%+), Wisconsin (11%+), and Kansas (13%+) seeing the biggest non-resident small game license purchases year-over-year.
 - The campaign aligned with Karsh’s new brand and assets included print, digital, audio and video, along with partnerships with Pheasants Forever, OnX, Wide Open Media and Outside, Inc.
 - In addition to pheasant hunting messaging, the campaign incorporated a new fishing campaign that ran within the print, digital and social mediums of the campaign. This provided a late season push while laying the foundation for the following fishing season.
 - Overall, Game, Fish & Parks reported 97,985 non-resident small game license sales, a +7% increase year-over-year. And Epsilon Net Economic Impact reported \$856k+ in Hotel and License Revenue from campaign efforts.
- The “Forever 605” Stewardship campaign has had a lot of momentum behind it since launching in December and continues to be a focal point of the department as we head into the peak season.
 - Year-to-date there have been over 287 toolkits requested, 3,374 collateral pieces and gear distributed and over 3,500 pledges signed for a free sticker.
 - Currently the team is working on an online training module for individuals and employees to further understand the daily practices and efforts of Forever 605.
 - Also in production is the Forever 605 campaign efforts, email blitz and Forever 605 Day.
 - The team shared ways in which the board can help extend the message from requesting a toolkit, ordering gear, engaging on social and ways to simply walk-the-walk of Forever 605.

Wanda Goodman-Global Travel and Trade update

- Gave updates on Canadian efforts
 - Partnership with Global Marketing & Sales (GMS)
 - Webinar series
 - Alberta Motorcoach Association co-op
 - Brand USA Connect program
- Updates on German trade mission results
- Tradeshows recently attended: ABA and GoWest
- Preview of IRU in Casper, April 2024
- Rapid City hosting IRU in May of 2025
- Updates on IPW, coming up first week in May

Katlyn Svendsen Byron Banasiak Global Public Relations and Content Services

- SoDak in Soho media event was a success. The event brought our PR team to NYC to present a pop-up shop with 12+ partners showcasing their businesses to travel journalists in the city. We were able to connect with more than 70 media at the event and have received some coverage from the event already. Our team and LHG will continue to follow-up with media and present opportunities and stories in the months to come.

Sec. Hagen also appeared on WPIX Morning Show while we were in NYC. The show has 800,000 viewers and a digital audience of more than 1.3 million.

- Agritourism press trip will be in the southeast and northeast regions in June. We will be bringing in a handful of press to explore and garner content for story pitching.
- The team will be conducting a regional broadcast tour hitting morning shows in several of our main markets including Bismarck, Denver, Minneapolis, Kansas City, Des Moines, and Milwaukee. All will be done between April and June.

Stephanie Spronk

- We've reached 20 million users through organic social media efforts in FY24. Social media influencers have been very effective this year, garnering 1.8M impressions
- Current FY24 international media reach is at 973,516,626

Ann DeVany

- Findings from Website Usability Study of TravelSouthDakota.com by Future Partners (w/ Miles Partnership)
- Content efforts on TravelSouthDakota.com – new & upcoming pages, new & updated event and business listings
- Apple Map Guides – first 5 launched in mid-April

Kirk Hulstein-Industry Outreach and Development Team

- We have a lot of studies currently underway. More than I've seen in my last 17 years in the department.
- The ROI study by longwoods was just completed the week of May 15. We have an internal call scheduled to go over the results with staff
- The Top Persona's study is currently in the field collecting responses from those within our top five personas to learn about their travel behaviors, planning preferences and perceptions about SD.
- You'll be hearing from the love team as they give us an overview of findings from the Market Evaluation Study they conducted.
- Tourism Economics recently completed the County and Region level eco impact study. The Missouri River Region has increased the most since 2019, probably due to the increased interest in outdoor experiences we saw during the pandemic. The BH region increased the most when looking at prior year growth.
- Mandy will be taking her Travel Supervisors and Counselors to the NW part of the state where they will visit Faith, Lemmon, Buffalo, and Belle Fourche among other stops.
- We are making progress on the bison exhibit at the Valley Springs welcome center. Some of the panels will display content about the Wind Cave Creation Story, Renaissance of the Bison and how the Lakota use the bison both in the past and present.

Bailey Tysdal

- Customer Service Seminar
 - May 6-9
 - Hill City, Belle Fourche, Rapid City, Lemmon, Sioux Falls, Platte, Milbank
 - Partnering with the South Dakota Retailers Association again this year
 - Bringing back Betsy Allen-Manning again this year since we received such amazing feedback on her last year

- She will speak for 90 mins instead of 60 mins this year
- Doing a bigger promotional push this year as well.
 - Sent large posters to all the communities, in addition to the flyers
 - Reached out directly to several associations and businesses asking them to share the info with their members/staff
 - Created a PSA campaign including a video that's being used on social and running on broadcast TV during news segments, and radio statewide on SD Public Radio throughout the day.
- National Travel and Tourism week is May 19-25 this year
- 2024 Governor's Conference on Tourism
 - 550 registered attendees, sold out exhibitor booths
 - Amazing feedback on breakout sessions and already have ideas for next year
 - Food was a major shortcoming for us this year and we have been in contact with the vendor to discuss what went wrong and how we can ensure it goes better next year
 - This is the third year in a row that we've heard complaints about lodging in Pierre/Ft. Pierre. Cleanliness issues, poor customer service, and dropped reservations.
 - We have reached out to the Pierre and Ft. Pierre Chambers to discuss ways in which we may be able to work with the hotels to guarantee reservations are there upon arrival going forward.

Calvin Bloemendaal

- SDNTA is now a formal non-profit organization
- They are made up of a 20-person board and project manager
- They are currently reviewing content and providing recommendations on a new bison exhibit.

Jacey Ellsworth

- Planning an Agritourism & Adventure Travel Workshop with Nebraska November 5-7, 2024
- TAP Grant open April 2-30, Event Promotion Grants available from \$1,000-\$10,000
- Continuing AgritourismSD classes with SDSU Extension

Wanda Goodman, Strategic Plan update

- Shared updates on timeline, how much of the plan is complete, some major accomplishments, what's coming up next

Love Communications-Market Evaluations Study

- Adam Whalen from Love Communications presented a recent market evaluation study their firm conducted to see what South Dakota's awareness funnel metrics are (i.e., awareness, familiarity, consideration, and intent) across the nation at a statewide and DMA level, what advertising channels are having the largest impact on travel

decision making to the state of South Dakota, and in which channels does South Dakota already have awareness for its advertising with a frequency measurement component considered.

President Lesch asked if there were any other questions or comments and mentioned the upcoming open board position open in June.

Secretary Hagen thanked the board for their steadfast support and for the industry partners who attended the meeting. He encouraged all to reach out to the Tourism team with any questions.

Meeting adjourned around 1:30 PM.