

Kudos

Our congratulations go out to travel partners who've been featured and recognized this past month. If we've missed you, please drop us a line at ksschmidt@nd.gov.

- Group Travel magazine recently mentioned three North Dakota attractions – Valley City, Knife River Indian Villages NHS and Rugby.
- With happiness and relief, Highway 22 reopened this past month!
- Amtrak restored passenger service in Minot!

This issue



Tech Tip: Let WordPress work as a website content management system. (Page 2)

USTA news: Brand USA logo and marketing plan is released by the Corporation for Travel Promotion. (Page 4)

Unwrapped: You won't have to wait long to get a look at the new North Dakota Travel Guide and Hunting and Fishing Guide. They will be unveiled January 9 in Fargo. (Page 2)

Community Snapshot

Community Snapshot: Oakes is a hidden gem in southeastern North Dakota, complete with its own famous Buffalo ... Bill. (Page 3)

In the News: North Dakota was in the news in November. (Page 4)



Welcome to North Dakota

Canadian travel still strong

At the end of this month, Statistics Canada – the centralized statistical agency in Canada – will release results from its 2010 National Travel Survey. One component of that report is the *Travel by Canadians to the United States, top 15 states visited*. North Dakota first appeared on that list in 2006 and since then has seen steady growth in visitation and spending.

In 2010, Canadians made 100,000 more visits to North Dakota than the previous year and 182,100 more overnights. (A 14.5% and 14.7% increase, respectively). Spending totaled \$210,682,600 – a 22.4% increase over 2009. Please note, spending is in Canadian dollars and includes overnight visitors only, not day trips.

In terms of the top 15 states visited, North Dakota was 11th in total overnights. Those 15 states are, as ranked: New York, Florida, Washington, California, Michigan, Nevada, Maine, Pennsylvania, Montana, Vermont, North Dakota, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Arizona and Virginia.

The National Travel Survey of Canadian Residents is a mail-back questionnaire and part of the International Travel Survey Program of Statistics Canada. The survey documents expenditures, activities, places visited and length of stay.

North Dakota Tourism will provide a link to the report when it is published. Please "like" the North Dakota Travel Industry on Facebook to know when that link is available.



Governor Jack Dalrymple and FSN North sportscaster and North Dakota native Marney Gellner touted North Dakota during a Minnesota-North Dakota hockey game.

State's No. 1 fan

Governor Dalrymple continues to tout tourism's benefits for North Dakota. In his recent column in the Grand Forks Herald, the Governor stated his commitment to tourism as a key industry while looking toward to the future. <http://www.grandforksherald.com/event/article/id/222680/group/homepage/>

Tech Talk



Each month, the Tourism Division newsletter will feature technology tips or best practices for utilizing new tools and Web 2.0. Please share your success stories, or your questions and suggestions, via email to hlemoine@nd.gov.

Websites with WordPress

What's at the top of your business New Year's resolution list? If it's updating your website, we applaud you! According to a recent report from D.K. Shifflet & Associates, "Use of online planning tools to build trips and itineraries" was the No. 1 activity of travelers prior to their trip.

Maybe your website isn't as up-to-date as you'd like, but you've been unable to manage its design and content yourself. Maybe you've been hesitant because of cost. If you're looking for an "easy button" on creating a professional, low-cost business website, WordPress is still proclaimed as the best platform.

It's possible to install WordPress on your website and use it for your content management system (without having to change your domain name). The CMS system from WordPress is free. Most plug-ins are also free but there are costs if you want WordPress to host the site and/or have sophisticated options. Information on WordPress for websites (with tutorials) is available at <http://wpsitebuilding.com/>

Another article looks at the best WordPress themes (many of them also free) for businesses. These themes include the layout and design of the site. Read the review at <http://www.bestwpthemes.com/20-best-wordpress-themes-for-small-business/>

WordPress itself has a blog with tips on using the platform for your business: <http://wordpressforbusiness.org/>

There are lots of tools available to help you make your website – and your business – more current, customized and visible, including the North Dakota Tourism Division website.

Make sure your link and content on www.ndtourism.com is current. Keep in mind that the tourism site averages 35,000 unique (first-time) visits each month.

Here's to a happy business new year!



Christmas is fast approaching and North Dakota Tourism has some great deals on "Legendary" North Dakota items. The more you spend, the more you save. Order today and get FREE SHIPPING! Happy Shopping! <https://www.shop.commerce.nd.gov/store/>



New Guides unveiled January 9

North Dakota Tourism will unveil its 2012 advertising campaign and travel publications January 9 at a press conference at the Plains Art Museum in Fargo. The conference will preview the new campaign being used for promoting and advertising North Dakota in 2012, as well as the new travel planning publications: the 2012 North Dakota Travel Guide and Hunting and Fishing Guide.

The guides are in final production stages with printer Walsworth Publishing. Previews of the guides will be sent to industry stakeholders at the end of December.

Williston gets 2013 and 2016 Babe Ruth World Series

The Babe Ruth Baseball World Series returns to Williston in 2013 and 2016. Games will be played at the Arden Aafedt Stadium. Based on 2003 attendance figures (when the tournament was last held in Williston), close to 50,000 fans are expected. Read more at <http://www.willistonherald.com/articles/2011/01/02/news/doc4d10daf587211749182403.txt>



Fargo to host Olympic Curling Trials

Scheels Arena in Fargo has been selected as the host site for the 2014 US Olympic Team Trials for curling. A field of five men's teams and four women's teams will compete for spots in the 2014 Olympic Winter Games. Read more at <http://www.scheelsarena.com/news/detail.asp?newsID=107>

Tourism infrastructure and expansion grants awarded

North Dakota Tourism recently awarded the first grants for the new Tourism Infrastructure Grant Program, in addition to awarding the 2011 Expansion Grants. Ten North Dakota tourism entities received funds through these two programs.

Tourism Infrastructure Grant Program recipients

The Tourism Infrastructure Grant Program, made possible by an appropriation by 2011 North Dakota legislature, awards up to \$750,000 to new tourism attractions capable of attracting visitors from outside of North Dakota for at least one overnight stay.

Recipients of the Tourism Infrastructure Grant Program are:

- Dakota Zoo, Bismarck, for the Heringer Family Primate Center
- Bottineau Winter Park, Bottineau, for Annie's House adaptive ski facility
- Red River Valley Fair, Fargo, for the Schollander Pavilion Renovation
- Sleepy Hollow, Bismarck, for the stage at Sleepy Hollow Arts Park
- North Dakota State Fair, Minot, for campsite development
- Riverdale High Lodge, Riverdale, for construction of an RV park and cabins

The Tourism Infrastructure Grant Program is a matching grant, requiring the sponsor to provide one dollar for every dollar of grant money requested. The difference between this grant and other North Dakota Tourism grants is that it is reimbursement based. The grant-eligible portion of the project must be completed by June 1, 2013, with funds paid out after work is completed.

Expansion Grant recipients

Created in 2007, the North Dakota Department of Commerce Tourism Expansion Grant Program funds infrastructure and building needs at new or expanding North Dakota tourist facilities. Grants range from \$5,000 to \$24,000. Expansion Grant recipients can use the funds to remodel or preserve existing tourism and recreation attractions and historical sites. Funds may be used to build or purchase new attractions and historical sites, and purchase equipment. The attractions must have the ability to attract a visitor 50 miles one-way and retain a visitor for at least three hours.

Recipients of the Expansion Grants are:

- Rolling Plains Adventures, McKenzie, for the renovation of its historic home to become its main lodge
- Bottineau Winter Park, Bottineau, for Annie's House
- Coteau des Prairie Lodge, Sargent County, for construction of a new guest lodge
- The Enchanted Highway LLC., Regent, for the Enchanted Castle
- Ruby Ranch, Grassy Butte, for the construction of new lodging

The Expansion Grant Program is a matching grant, requiring the sponsor to provide one dollar for every one dollar of grant money being requested.

More details about the grant programs can be found at <http://www.ndtourism.com/industry/nd-tourism-grants/>.



Community Snapshot

Does your community have a "Hidden Gem," a special "Did you know fact" that you would like other North Dakota tourism partners to know about? Have your community showcased through the tourism newsletter. Each month, a community snapshot will be featured. This month's Community Snapshot is **Oakes**.

Oakes was established in 1886 and named after Thomas F. Oakes, president of the Northern Pacific Railroad from 1888-1893. The community played an important role as a stagecoach and railroad station. Rail transportation continues to be a necessity for local grain elevators. The current population is approximately 2,000 and the heritage in the community is mostly German, Irish and Scandinavian. The top industries or employers are Oakes Community Hospital, the clinics, Oakes Public School and the Southeast Region Career and Technology Center, Harris Machine and Kustom Machine Shops, elevators and seed facilities.

Hidden Gems: Sweets 'N Stories offers guests a place to browse and purchase a variety of books from best-selling authors while having a sweet treat, too (from coffees to chocolate ice cream cones). Stick around for story time, where you may be caught up in a mystery. The new gymnasium's performance stage offers a variety of theater productions by students, senior centers and community acts.

Did You Know: Oakes celebrated its 125th anniversary this past June. The community is home to a new state-of-the-art hospital with a dialysis unit, which helps people from all over the southeastern part of the state. Oakes also has its own local newspaper and radio station and proudly televises school events live.

Personalities or Icon: Former professional football player Phil Hansen was recently inducted into the Buffalo Bills Hall of Fame. The defensive end played 11 seasons with the Bills.

Ethnic Festivals or Special Events: The 41st annual Irrigation Days will be held June 8-10, 2012. Enjoy activities throughout the weekend with parades, golf tournament, hamburger feed, demolition derby, ice cream social, 5-K fun run-walk and evening street dances. The seventh annual St. Patrick's Day Parade, where everyone can be Irish for a day, is March 17.

For more information on the Oakes community, special events and festivals, please contact, Audrey O'Brien, Oakes Area Chamber of Commerce at 701-742-3508.

In the News

(Go to the links below each item for a complete news release)

North Dakota Tourism in the news in November

November 3: Time-honored traditions are part of our culture. They are reminders of who we are and what makes us unique as a state; as a people. Keep it simple this holiday season by shopping close to home and spending quality time with the family. <http://www.ndtourism.com/news/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=461>

November 4: North Dakota's tourism industry bucked declining national trends in 2009 and 2010, leading the nation in the four major reporting categories, according to the United States Travel Association (USTA)'s 2011 research. <http://www.ndtourism.com/news/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=462>

November 9: North Dakota Tourism Director Sara Otte Coleman and Fargo-Moorhead Convention and Visitor's Bureau CEO Cole Carley joined hundreds of travel and industry leaders at the recent U.S. Travel Association's annual Marketing Outlook Forum. <http://www.ndtourism.com/news/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=464>

November 23: North Dakota Tourism recently awarded the first grants for the new Tourism Infrastructure Grant Program, in addition to awarding the 2011 Expansion Grants. <http://www.ndtourism.com/news/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=466>

November 29: Take time to connect with family and friends this holiday season. Musical performances, a Santa fly-in, and good old-fashioned Christmas activities are just some of the ways you can bring everyone together to make this time special in North Dakota. <http://www.ndtourism.com/news/news-releases/detail.asp?newsID=467>



2012 Travel Conference preparation under way

The North Dakota Travel Conference planning committee is currently confirming speakers and agenda for the 2012 conference, to be held April 23-25 at the Radisson in Bismarck. This year's conference will feature a super-session on some of the key issues facing the state's travel industry and North Dakota's overall economy. Look for announcements about speakers through the coming months. The registration flier will be



2012 ND Travel Industry Conference
April 23-25, Radisson Hotel, Bismarck

in mailboxes in February. If you'd like to register now for the conference in 2012, registration is open at <http://www.ndtourism.com/industry/2012-north-dakota-travel-conference/>

The 2012 conference scholarship application is also available at the above website. Six industry scholarships and four student scholarships will be awarded to cover registration fees. Applications are due by April 13.

Make your nominations now to recognize hard-working industry individuals with a Governor's Award for Travel and Tourism. The award nomination criteria and application is online. Nominations must be submitted no later than March 25. <http://www.ndtourism.com/industry/2012-north-dakota-travel-conference/2012-award-nomination/>

International marketing news

North Dakota hosted a journalist from Australia in September. Check out what he thought of his visit at <http://www.mentalfloss.com/blogs/archives/106193>

The US is seeing record numbers of Nordic travelers. Arrivals from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland increased 14.45% during the first half of 2011. The Nordic region ranks fourth among all European markets and sixth worldwide. Visitors from the Nordic region spend on average \$3,222 per stay/visitor, whereas the average among all overseas visitors is \$2,435.

New Brand USA logo unveiled

The Corporation for Travel Promotion, the public-private organization responsible for promoting international travel to the United States, has unveiled its logo and global branding strategy. The corporation, now operating as Brand USA, also is taking over operation of the multilingual Discover America websites and publications, which have been maintained by the U.S. Travel Association. In 2011, Brand USA planned to spend around \$125 million on marketing efforts and beyond that the goal is \$200 million annually.

Funding for Brand USA comes from industry contributions, which the federal government is matching on a 2-to-1 basis during its first fiscal year (which began Oct. 1) and a 1-to-1 basis thereafter. Up to 80% of the industry contribution can be "in-kind" donations of goods and services. Funding from the ESTA program supports Brand USA with some funding for the Nordic Region.



Worldwide Visitors to U.S. January-July 2011

United Kingdom	2,126,721
Japan	1,762,457
Germany	985,609
France	869,875
Brazil	833,207
Nordic	676,975
South Korea	667,650
China	588,057
Australia	576,267
India	429,485

European Visitors to U.S. January-July 2011

United Kingdom	2,126,721
Germany	985,609
France	869,875
Nordic	676,975