

A person wearing a dark jacket and light-colored pants is walking away from the camera on a snow-covered path. The path is marked with tracks and leads through a dense forest of trees heavily laden with snow. The scene is bright and wintry.

North Dakota Tourism Industry Newsletter

January 5, 2021

Message from Sara



2021: North Dakota poised to lead tourism rebound

To quote many, “hindsight is 2020” and I know we are all happy to turn the page as we look forward to a better 2021. While it is impossible to recoup the \$1.1 billion of visitor spending lost during the pandemic, North Dakota is well positioned to see a quicker recovery than many urban areas. This winter, North Dakota Tourism will launch its first winter marketing campaign to help residents and those near our borders plan safe trips and activities to support our local businesses while improving their physical and mental health. From outdoor recreation like cross-country skiing and ice fishing to indoor experiences with close friends and family, there are many ways to enjoy winter in North Dakota. We plan to highlight those. The team at North

Dakota Tourism stands ready to support our state's recovery, and we look forward to working together in the new year.

Be well, Sara



Gov. Burgum lowers COVID-19 risk levels; hospitality industry to benefit

Encouraged by the expansion of rapid testing and declining numbers of infections and hospitalizations, Gov. Doug Burgum has moved the entire state from high to moderate risk, thus relaxing capacity limits for restaurants, other food establishments, bars and large gatherings

Under the amended executive order, these establishments can start operating at 65% of licensed facility capacity, not to exceed 200 patrons, beginning Jan. 8 at 8 a.m. Bars, restaurants and other food service

establishments have been operating at up to 50% of licensed seated capacity, not to exceed 150 patrons, since Nov. 16.

In addition, banquet, ballroom and event venues, which have been limited to 25% capacity since Nov. 16, will be able to start operating at 50% capacity, not to exceed the [ND Smart Restart capacity limits](#).

[Click here for full details](#)

Legislative update: Session begins under new coronavirus mitigation protocols

The 67th legislative session began Jan. 5 with Gov. Doug Burgum's State of the State address and updates by tribal and judicial leaders. The session will be different this year, with new COVID-19 protocols in place. Visitation is discouraged except for state employees. In order to enter the Capitol, you will be screened for a fever and asked a series COVID-related questions.

Testimony will be provided digitally through a system available on the 67th Assembly (2021) Legislative Assembly Regular Session page of the legislative branch website, under "[Committee Hearing Schedules](#)."

The system is still under development but should allow all interested citizens to provide testimony, written, or live via Zoom.



Commerce ERG, HERG and HERG PLUS grants to total \$58-60 million

The North Dakota Commerce Department has awarded nearly \$60 million in grants to date to help businesses withstand the negative financial impact of the COVID-19 virus.


The department awarded more than \$27 million in Economic Resiliency Grants to 2,064 grantees to make improvements to public-facing areas to mitigate the spread of the virus.



Hospitality Economic Resiliency Grant funding of \$23.6 million was awarded to 963 applicants to recover income lost by the hospitality industry.

And more than \$7 million in Hospitality Economic Resiliency Grant PLUS funding for hotels and motels was awarded to cover expenses incurred by 197 recipients.

"The Empire Arts Center is beyond thrilled to be a recipient of both the North Dakota Economic Resiliency and Hospitality Economic Resiliency grants, presented by the North Dakota Department of Commerce! We have implemented touchless restrooms, new air purifying systems throughout the building,



hand-sanitizing stations, ticket scanners, plexiglass barriers, official signage and patio heaters to better accommodate outdoor events. We are committed to safety and these upgrades will help keep our building safe for years to come."





Commerce Communications Manager Kim Schmidt accepts the award from Midwest Travel Network.

North Dakota selected Travel Destination of the Year

The Midwest Travel Network has selected North Dakota as its Travel Destination of the Year for 2020.

A continuous stream of content by bloggers in North Dakota, despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, prompted the travel influencer network to reward the state's hard work in attracting media coverage to its exciting, wide-open and welcoming locations.

"In the past year, we kept seeing a blogger in North Dakota or we'd see conversations on social media talking about 'I want to go to North Dakota' and two weeks later we see they're in North Dakota. Congratulations North Dakota. We are so excited you

have won this award." - Midwest Travel Network co-owner Sara Broers

Midwest Travel Network connects travel writers, bloggers, influencers and partners to interesting destinations so they can share stories of destinations in the Midwest. **Kudos to tourism partners for working together to promote the state as a welcoming, exciting place to visit.**

"This past year was a unique opportunity for North Dakota to show off its uncrowded spaces and wide-open places. That is one of the bright spots we saw in 2020." - Commerce Communications Manager Kim Schmidt

MTN's Blogger of the Year Lindsey Ranzau (left) wrote of her experiences in [Medora](#) and [Fargo](#).

[Click here to watch the award presentation](#)



Travel Tidbits

First Tourism Industry Chat of 2021 scheduled for Jan. 11

The next Tourism Industry Chat is scheduled for Jan. 11. Join the call and presentation directly by [clicking here](#) to join at 2 p.m. CT or contact [Heather LeMoine](#) for a calendar invitation to the chat.

These presentations are open to anyone in North Dakota's travel and tourism industry. You are welcome to forward the log-in information to

colleagues. We also share updates for future calls in our Tourism Industry Newsletter and on our website: NDtourism.com.

In the News



[Drekker Breweing unveils Brewhalla plans.](#)



[West Fargo launches own stimulus plan.](#)



The Midwest isn't flat.

Something here is the lede