

A close-up photograph of a woman wearing a blue and white patterned knit hat with a pom-pom, teal sunglasses, and a dark scarf. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right. The background shows a snowy field with another person in a blue jacket and a snowmobile.

North Dakota Tourism Industry Newsletter

February 2, 2021



Opportunity abounds for Tourism Division

Senate Bill 2018 funding the state Commerce Department – including the North Dakota Tourism Division – was heard by the Senate Appropriations Committee on Jan. 25.

Sen. Brad Bekkedahl is chairing the Senate subcommittee that includes Sen. Ray Holmberg and Sen. Joan Heckaman. SB 2018 leaves the tourism budget even with last biennium minus one-time funding for specified projects. A request to include a 3.6% increase in ongoing funding was made. Additionally, the division has requested \$2 million in one-time funding from the general fund for destination marketing and \$200,000 for visitor services and brand extension work. These items were included in Gov. Doug Burgum's budget recommendation.

Tourism Alliance Partnership and Destination Marketing Association of North Dakota members asked the committee for \$18 million per biennium to

support tourism and marketing efforts to assist impacted businesses by creating awareness and attracting visitors.

Tourism and Marketing Director Sara Otte Coleman presented to the committee the division's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes to marketing strategies to entice visitors and promote in-state travel.

"We need to take advantage of the opportunity that we have. There's a huge desire to travel. There's a growing interest in uncrowded places and we are positioned well to take advantage of those opportunities." - Sara Otte Coleman

Otte Coleman reiterated the economic impact reduced travel has had on North Dakota and its small businesses and emphasized the opportunity to rebound with financial backing. The division would use additional dollars to extend the marketing campaign past early summer. Research shows lift in all segments among those exposed to tourism marketing efforts. Visitation to NDtourism.com was up 52% year over year. Of those, 92% were first-time visitors.

"A visit remains the first date of an economic relationship. People who visit North Dakota for any reason whatsoever are far more likely to consider working, living or even starting a business here. Marketing drives a vast majority of first visits." Fargo-Moorhead-West Fargo CVB Director Charley Johnson

Hospitality business owner Jim Poolman provided a private industry perspective. Searle Swedlund of Jamestown presented on behalf of Destination Marketing Association of North Dakota members and Terri Thiel on behalf of Tourism Alliance Partnership. Other businesses and organizations presented written testimony.

The subcommittee will continue its work and recommend a budget to the full appropriations committee. The Senate will pass its version of the bill prior

to Feb. 25 when it will cross over to the House.

[Click here to follow all tourism-related legislation](#)



Round 2 of Hospitality Economic Resiliency Grant opens Feb. 4

The North Dakota Department of Commerce has announced that the application window for a second round of Hospitality Economic Resiliency Grants (HERG) will run from Feb. 4 at 10 a.m. CST to Feb. 25 at 5 p.m. CST.

Due to the continued need for assistance, Commerce created the HERG to focus on reimbursing hospitality businesses that were directly impacted by Executive Order 2020-06. This includes all restaurants, bars, breweries, cafes and similar on-site dining establishments.

Eligible entertainment venues include movie, drama or music theaters and facilities used to host community and private events, including indoor recreation entertainment, e.g., bowling alleys, indoor golf clubs and indoor

trampoline parks where membership/class fees do not exceed 51% of revenue.

Hotels with restaurants, bars, coffee shops and/or banquet/meeting spaces may apply for a grant using the operational expenses from those specific operations. Receipts must clearly show this connection, such as payroll, rent and mortgages that have no affiliation with BND products, marketing expenses, utilities and insurance.

[Click here for more information](#)

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This Local Company Has Put The ERG Grant To Good Use

Troy Rinehardt, Men's Hair Co., Co-Owner

[Fargo business put an Economic Resiliency Grant to good use.](#)



Tourism Ops

Global Marketing

Tourism Global Marketing Manager Fred Walker, as part of the Great American West consortium, completed 31 individual tour operator meetings and two group meetings across five markets over the past 10 weeks. During these virtual meetings, 38 tour companies were represented and more than 50 staff people were trained. Walker and South Dakota representatives also did a BrandUSA session with travel trade that included seven tour companies and more than 20 travel agents.

Outdoors Marketing

North Dakota Tourism-sponsored programming is now running on new episodes of Jason Mitchell Outdoors on Fox Sports North and Midco SN, as well as streaming on Jasonmitchelloutdoors.com and YouTube. "[The Flush - Stories from the Field](#)" podcast is featuring new sponsored content about upland game hunting in North Dakota.

Group Travel Marketing

The motorcoach industry changed drastically in 2020, with school busing, entertainment coaches and motorcoach tours all canceled. National organizations like the American Bus Association, National Tour Association and United Tour Operator Association joined forces and have worked diligently to keep its members informed of government policies and future possibilities.

The group travel industry made changes to its annual conferences and scheduled virtual/zoom meetings and appointments. Tourism Group Travel Marketing Manager Deanne Cunningham met with 25 tour operators at the virtual National Tour Association annual conferences. Discussions included:

- Safety and cleaning procedures, traveling precautions: Are your North Dakota Tourism partners taking cleaning seriously?
- More outdoor adventure and activities.
- Smaller group tours.
- Shorter tours from 1-4 days (before vaccination).
- Restaurants: Are they open, is it only curbside or will they work with a small group?

Heartland Travel Showcase Feb. 12-14 and Go West Summit March 1-5 also will be by virtual appointments. Heartland Travel Showcase has increased the appointment time to 10 minutes. Go West Summit appointments are now 30 minutes to ensure enough time for follow-up questions and discussions.

American Bus Association moved its annual conference to June 15-19, 2020, and has offered virtual or in-person appointments. Women in Buses

Wednesdays Series continues weekly for learning opportunities and networking with peers.

[Contact Deanne for more information about group travel opportunities.](#)

Visitor Services

Masks are an essential part of everyday life for many people. North Dakota Be Legendary masks are now available in two styles. Purchase a single mask or packs of three or five through CI Apparel in Fargo. Larger quantities for CVBs and other businesses can be purchased by contacting CI Apparel directly and speak to Rylie Dukowitz (701-271-0953, ext. 109).



[Click here to order your Be Legendary masks.](#)



Analytics/Trends

Next Tourism Industry Chat scheduled for Feb. 8

You and your colleagues are invited to join the next North Dakota Tourism Industry update call on Feb. 8. This will be the 20th presentation to North Dakota's travel and tourism industry since the national and state emergencies were declared due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This presentation will feature a legislative update, information on the next round of grants and the latest data and trends on travel and visitor spending in North Dakota.

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. If you are unable to join, [a recording of the presentation will be available here](#).

Sign up for 2021 cooperative advertising programs

During the Jan. 11 industry call, North Dakota Tourism Marketing and Research Manager Heather LeMoine provided an overview of the cooperative advertising options being offered in 2021. [You can watch a recording of that call here.](#)

[The 2021 cooperative advertising plan is posted on the website here.](#) Options have been streamlined this year, and include print programs with AAA Living, U.S. and Canada newspaper placements, North Dakota Living magazine and the North Dakota Newspaper Association covering a statewide circulation. Digital programs are available with Forum Communications, Odney using the Adobe Advertising Cloud and Sojern, and have a \$2,000 match from North Dakota Tourism. Miles Partnership continues to offer options to advertise on [NDtourism.com](#) and in custom emails to the North Dakota Tourism database. And there are programs to reach media influencers and broad social media audiences.

[Sign up for cooperative advertising here.](#)



February proclaimed Winter Recreation Month

February has been proclaimed Winter Recreation Month by Gov. Doug Burgum. It's a great opportunity to inspire others to take advantage of your, or your community's, unique and rejuvenating winter outdoor activities.

Winter recreation isn't just for enjoyment. Studies have shown that spending time outdoors in the winter helps reduce stress and is good for mental and physical health. Exposure to sunlight helps maintain healthy vitamin D levels, which reduces seasonal affective disorder and increases energy.

[Embrace winter activities](#)

[Click for the proclamation](#)



Travel Tidbits

URGENT! Now is the time to add events to [NDtourism.com](https://www.ndtourism.com)

With visitation to [NDtourism.com](https://www.ndtourism.com) soaring, it is imperative to add your community's tourism-related events to the state's official site as soon as possible.

Tourism's website visits are up 52% in the past year as people look for safe destinations and activities. As the coronavirus threat level drops and people start traveling again, they will be looking for nearby activities and events. Don't miss out on the opportunity to enhance the reach of your own sites.

Events should have the potential to inspire a visitor to come to North Dakota or be of a nature that a visitor to the state would be interested in attending the event, which must be open to the public. If you do not have a partner

access account, or can't remember your log-in and/or password, contact [Scooter Pursley](#) to get set up.

In the News

Sara Otte Coleman Describes Winter Tourism Campaign



[Sara Otte Coleman describes winter tourism campaign on Studio 701.](#)