



February 2007

### **Tourism Conference a Success**

The 2007 South Dakota Governor's Conference on Tourism "Destination 2010: Follow the Signs" was held Jan. 17-18 at the Ramkota RiverCentre in Pierre. South Dakota Tourism organized the event which was attended by members of the state's visitor industry. Attendees enjoyed two days of expert-lead sessions, social activities and the Awards Night Gala, a Thursday evening awards dinner featuring remarks by Gov. Mike Rounds. Award winners were Sylvia Henkin, Ben Black Elk Award, and Big Thunder Gold Mine, George S. Mickelson Great Service Award. Mark your calendars for the 2008 Governor's Conference on Tourism which will be held in Pierre Jan. 16-17, 2008. Contact Nicole Gall at (605) 773-3301 or [Nicole.Gall@state.sd.us](mailto:Nicole.Gall@state.sd.us) for more information.

### **Interstate Information Centers Update**

The Interstate Information Centers have many marketing opportunities available to industry partners. The programs available include the brochure program, the poster program and the T-shirt program.

Industry members can display their brochures at the 13 Interstate Information Centers free of charge. Brochures must be approved before May 1st by the Office of Tourism. Please review the guidelines at [www.sdvisit.com/programs/coop/infocenter/brochures.asp](http://www.sdvisit.com/programs/coop/infocenter/brochures.asp).

Businesses, communities, and events may display their posters at eight of the Information Centers. The fees for the program are based on the number of locations posters are displayed: \$50 for one location, \$100 for two locations, \$150 for three locations and \$175 for four locations. Registration information will be mailed March 1st. Due to space limitations, posters are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, determined by when the form and payment are received. Posters promoting a special event may be displayed two weeks prior to the event free of charge.

Each Wednesday and Friday travel counselors wear T-shirts promoting visitor industry businesses. Partners may send identical T-shirts to whichever centers they choose or they can send them to every center in the state. T-shirt sizes for each center will be available through the Office of Tourism.

Contact Natasha Bothun at (605) 773-3301 or [natasha.bothun@state.sd.us](mailto:natasha.bothun@state.sd.us) for more information.

### **Media Team Blitzes Milwaukee**

Billie Jo Waara and Wanda Romkema travel to Milwaukee, Wisc., Feb. 26-March 1 to speak with various media outlets at pre-arranged meetings. The team will address topics specific to each writer's preferences and specialties, and create a call to action with each writer, for example, asking them to make South Dakota the topic of their next article, or asking them to visit South Dakota on a familiarization tour. The Office of Tourism has learned that one of the best ways to receive publicity for the state is through third-party endorsement. Featured businesses and attractions often report an increase in visitor inquiries immediately following the release of an article or broadcast of a television program. Contact Wanda Romkema at (605) 773-3301 or [wanda.romkema@state.sd.us](mailto:wanda.romkema@state.sd.us) for more information.

### **Trade Sales & Marketing Update**

RMI Roundup, an international roundup meeting of journalists with regional suppliers from South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana and Idaho, was held in Hot Springs and Deadwood in late January. The Office of Tourism will be following up with tour operators, hosts and South Dakota suppliers (31 of the 71 total suppliers represented South Dakota).

In early February, Vicki Engelhaupt and 39 South Dakota suppliers met with motorcoach tour operators at the American Bus Association's ABA Marketplace in Grapevine, Texas.

Maureen Droz and South Dakota suppliers representing Crazy Horse Memorial, the Rapid City Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Black Hills, Badlands and Lakes Tourism Association, met with bank travel planners Feb. 15-17 in Jacksonville, Fla. to entice bank clubs to bring their tours to South Dakota.

Tyler Sharp mailed literature to more than 1,400 travel agents to encourage them to sign up for the Travel Trade E-newsletter. The e-newsletter is geared to market to travel agents and let them know about the travel opportunities available to their clients in South Dakota.

Contact Maureen Droz at (605) 773-3301 or [maureen.droz@state.sd.us](mailto:maureen.droz@state.sd.us) for more information.

### **Research Focus Groups**

Staff from the Office of Tourism and Lawrence & Schiller combined efforts to conduct Focus Groups in Mankato, Minn. on Feb. 8; Sioux City, Iowa on Feb. 13; and Oshkosh, Wisc. on Feb. 15. Participants were divided into groups and screened by age, sex, travel habits, location and annual income. They were first asked general travel questions and were then tested using different research methods when reviewing print/television advertisements. A combined summary of the focus group research will be available upon completion. Contact Kirk Hulstein at (605) 773-3301 or [kirk.hulstein@state.sd.us](mailto:kirk.hulstein@state.sd.us) for more information.

### **Research Report Update**

Interest in traveling and vacationing in South Dakota continued to grow during January with a 12.2 percent increase in email and Web site inquiries and a 6.8 percent increase in total inquiries over January of 2006.

### **Notable Industry Group Reports:**

#### **TTRA: Journal of Travel Research, February 2007 "Advertising and Publicity: Suggested New Applications for Tourism Marketers"**

(TTRA = Travel and Tourism Research Association)

This study compares the effects of Publicity and Advertising on perceived credibility, message strength, attitude towards destination and purchase intent for tourism marketing. Results of the study show that publicity created significantly higher scores than advertising. Furthermore, the study suggests that a publicity-then-advertising strategy is most effective at persuading potential tourists to visit a specific destination.

#### **CTR: SD Travel Activity 2005-2006 Winter Season Report (Dec 05-Feb 06)**

This report compares the Winter Season of 2005/2006 with the Winter Season of 2004/2005. Notable findings include:

(CTR = Center for Tourism Research, Black Hills State University)

- National Social/Economic – Gas Prices increased 22.3 percent. Intentions to vacation decreased 1.6 percent.
- Weather Conditions – were colder and snowier than the previous season, though warmer and dryer than the 30-year norm.
- Travel Activity – Lodging indicators increased statewide as did all tax indicators (Tourism tax deflated increased 36 percent). However, Traffic Volume, State Park Attendance, and Aggregate Attractions Attendance all declined statewide.

### **Dates to Remember/Upcoming Events:**

Feb. 22-25: **BIT Fair** (travel trade show), Milan, Italy

Feb. 26-Mar. 1: **Media Blitz**, Milwaukee, Wisc.

Feb. 27-Mar. 6: **Scandinavian Mission**, Denmark and Sweden  
Mar. 7-11: **International Tourism Bourse**, Berlin, Germany  
Mar. 12-15: **Media and Trade Blitz**, Denver, Col.  
Mar. 13-15: **French Sales Mission**  
Mar. 17: **5th Annual Indians and Pioneers Tourism and Marketing Conference**, Gordon, Neb.  
Mar. 26-29: **Media and Trade Blitzes**, Minneapolis, Minn.  
Apr. 12-14: **AFCI Locations Tradeshow**, Santa Monica, Calif.  
Apr. 17-18: **African American Tourism Conference**, Indianapolis, Ind.  
Apr. 17-18: **Governor's Office of Economic Development Conference**, Pierre  
Apr. 20-21: **RMI Summit Meeting**, Los Angeles, Calif.  
Apr. 21-25: **TIA Pow Wow**, Los Angeles, Calif.  
Apr. 28-May 3: **Information Center Fam**, northwest South Dakota  
May 2: **West River Lit Swap**, Rapid City  
May 3: **East River Lit Swap**, Mitchell  
May 12: **Information Centers Open**

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[www.FilmSD.com](http://www.FilmSD.com) \*\*\* [www.TourSDakota.com](http://www.TourSDakota.com) \*\*\*

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