

Brand USA

TIAK supports Brand USA, the first national travel promotion program designed to attract more international travelers to the U.S. The program is funded by the private sector, mostly the tourism-related industry, with matching federal funds of up to \$100 million a year from a \$10 fee that international travelers pay when they visit the U.S. The first full year of operation, Brand USA received \$60 million in private-sector funding and that more than doubled to \$130 million this year. The program promotes all 50 states on their various websites and in promotional material. States can supplement that support by sending in additional funding from state tourism organizations and local chambers of commerce to pay for targeted programs arranged by Brand USA.

Kansas Impact: Less traveled states, such as Kansas, will benefit from Brand USA because it lures foreign visitors to major attractions and cities, but when they make subsequent trips to the USA they are likely to choose other destinations such as Kansas.

Public Lands and Historic Sites

Providing adequate resources for public lands is essential. The U.S. government must make a strong commitment to supply the funding necessary to balance conservation and visitor facilitation in national parks, forests and other public lands. Funds must also be dedicated to restoring and protecting historic sites for future generations.

Kansas Impact: Kansas is rich in natural attributes and historical landmarks. Our communities rely on consistent and reliable funding streams and are essential to maintaining these assets. TIAK specifically supports Congress accepting the Western Trail, along with the Chisholm Trail, as the first cattle trails to be designated. Unfortunately, Wallace Branch of the Western Trail, which ran through Logan, Wallace, Sherman and Cheyenne Counties in Kansas, was inadvertently omitted and needs to be included for consideration.

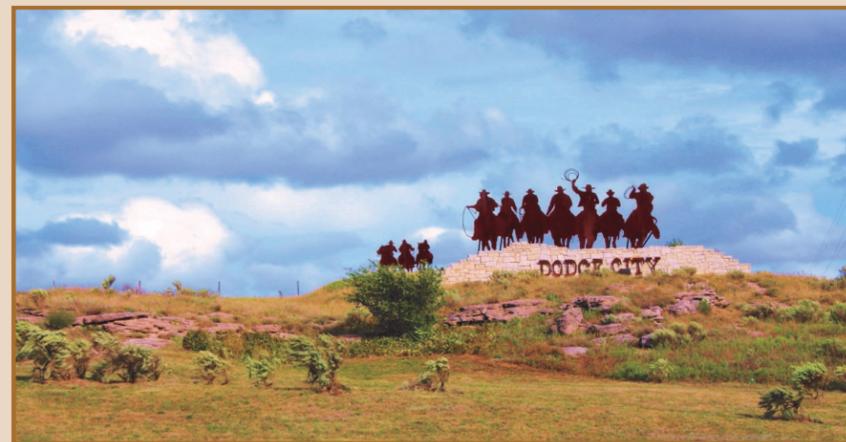
Government Meetings

Face-to-face interaction is the platform where deals are struck, relationships are forged and ideas are generated. Recently there has been a move towards reducing government spending on travel, which is discouraging face-to-face meetings. TIAK supports oversight over federal travel spending, but opposes across-the-board cuts.

Travel Taxes

The travel industry is opposed to discriminatory taxes on the traveling public, and has long held that any tax increases on travel should be modest and the revenue raised be reinvested directly into programs and services that benefit the payer – the traveler. Hotel tax rates in many communities are already in the double digits, and car rental taxes in many locations exceed 20 percent. Travelers are already paying more than their fair share of taxes. While local and state officials believe it is easy to “export” new taxes onto visitors since they are not constituents, most of these same communities depend on business travelers, convention delegates and leisure visitors for their economic livelihood. We encourage state and local officials to craft tax policies that are growth-oriented, and work to promote even higher levels of visitation to states and local destinations.

Kansas Impact: Keeping taxes to a minimum at all levels of government is essential and will keep dollars in the pockets of travelers. In addition, in Kansas it is important Transient Guest Taxes remain dedicated to the promotion of tourism and not diverted to fund other purposes.



TRAVEL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF KANSAS

2017 Federal Platform

825 S. Kansas, Suite 502
Topeka, Kansas 66612
785-233-9465 • www.TIAK.org

Bridgette Jobe, President
Kansas City

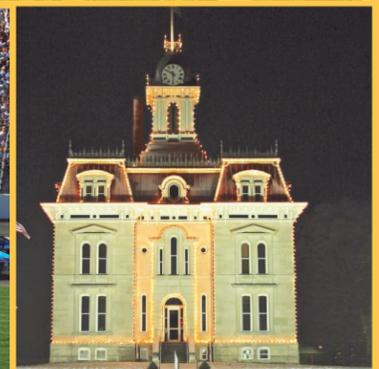
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One of the Travel Industry Association of Kansas' (TIAK) strategic priorities is to advocate on behalf of the collective Kansas tourism industry. Decisions made at the federal level impact Kansas tourism. Therefore, TIAK members ask that our Kansas Federal Delegation advocate for the enclosed legislative positions.



**Travel Industry
Association of Kansas**

**U.S. TRAVEL
ASSOCIATION**

Welcoming International Travelers



The travel sector of the economy is strong but fragile. Uncertainty is not good for a strong business environment, and is even more concerning for business travel, which depends on the public's confidence in safe and secure modes of transportation. Therefore, TIAK supports the following:

Visa Waiver Program (VWP)

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP), created in 1986, is a critical tool for promoting travel to America. It enhances public diplomacy by permitting business and leisure travelers from 35 countries to visit the U.S. for up to 90 days without obtaining a non-immigrant visitor visa. In 2008, the countries in the VWP generated more than 16 million visits to the U.S.—accounting for 65 percent of all overseas arrivals last year. The VWP travelers spent more than \$51 billion in the U.S. in 2008, excluding international airfare. That spending generated 512,000 jobs, \$13 billion in payroll and \$7.8 billion in government taxes for the U.S. economy.

The VWP strengthens our nation's homeland security efforts by shifting resources towards screening visitors from higher risk countries. TIAK supports the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) because it is a pivotal contributor to national security—protecting the American homeland and public through individualized pre-screening of travelers, greater information sharing, enhanced international partnerships with law enforcement and intelligence services, and secure passports for participating countries.

Kansas Impact: Foreigners travel to Kansas for many reasons—business, education, aviation, tourism experiences and interests for all walks of life—and support for the VWP, and passage of the JOLT Act, will assist in making it easier for these foreign travelers to journey to Kansas.

Improving Transportation Infrastructure

Travel in America is slowing down because our nation's roads, rails and airports are becoming run down and the U.S. must modernize its travel infrastructure to stay competitive in a global economy. Investing in modern infrastructure will enable America to increase domestic and inbound international travel to the United States, including increased economic growth, more jobs, and a more positive balance of trade. Congress should reauthorize the federal surface transportation programs and support long-term investments across all modes, including highways, transit and passenger rail and Congress must pass an FAA reauthorization that provides stable funding for NextGen and accelerates airport modernization through local user fees (e.g. passenger facility charges).

Rail Travel



In order to ensure mobility for travelers and U.S. economic competitiveness, it is important business and leisure travelers have many options available to them that are safe, efficient and affordable. To that end, the expansion of rail travel options, including continued reform and expansion of Amtrak service throughout the country, are essential. Officials should also lead the way in working to spur greater public and private financing of high-speed rail networks in the 11 designated high-speed rail corridors. These actions would help protect the environment, relieve the pressure on regional highway systems and provide travelers with efficient, affordable options for reaching their destinations.

Kansas Impact: Kansas is committed to keeping Amtrak's Southwest Chief rail line running and have formed an alliance with other communities in Colorado and New Mexico to form the Southwest Chief Rural Rail Partnership. The goal of the Partnership is to garner Congressional support for federal funding to repair and maintain this vital historical rail line that connects the east to the west. Unfortunately, President Trump's budget proposes to eliminate the TIGER grant program, which has been used successfully to repair tracks along Amtrak's Southwest Chief passenger train through western Kansas. If the program is eliminated, subsidies for long-distance passenger trains could isolate small rural towns with few transportation options.

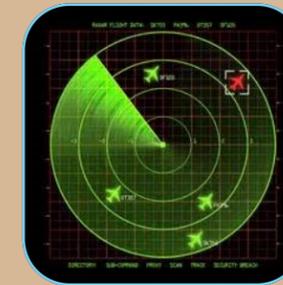
Highway & Byway Funding

Federal lawmakers must take several steps to help facilitate highway travel and invest in our surface transportation system. Such improvements include properly financing the Highway Trust Fund, mitigating highway congestion, increasing funding for the Federal Lands Highways program, properly funding and promoting National Scenic Byways and securing funding for the Transportation Enhancements program.

Kansas Impact: Travelers to Kansas rely heavily on roadways while visiting our state. Kansas also has eleven byways, eight scenic, two of which are National Scenic Byways and three historic byways. Maintaining federal transportation funding and assuring Kansas gets its fair share is essential in preserving both the core infrastructure and scenic roadways important to Kansas tourism.



Air Traffic Control Modernization



The U.S. government must work to reduce air travel delays, eliminate congestion and move people and goods as quickly and efficiently as possible by building new runways, installing new technology, and putting new procedures in place to facilitate capacity and efficiency enhancements. In particular, technology upgrades and capacity improvement projects at major airports are needed. Further, investing in and modernizing the air traffic control system must be a national priority in order to reduce delays and cancellations, while increasing capacity and flow. The United States must move forward with the Next Generation Air Transportation System initiative, utilizing state-of-the-art ground and air satellite-based technologies as soon as possible. If there is a failure to act, the already strained system could reach gridlock.

Kansas Impact: Kansas is centrally located and air travel is important to getting visitors to our state. Upgrading and improving efficiency in the US air travel system will increase both business and leisure travel to Kansas. The Essential Air Service program, which has supported commercial flights to small and rural communities, is in jeopardy of cuts under the President's proposed budget and could significantly reduce air travel to thriving rural communities.

The JOLT Act (Jobs Originated through Launching Travel)

TIAK supports inclusion of the JOLT Act in any comprehensive immigration reform package. Increasing travel to the United States is the most effective form of economic stimulus—supporting communities, injecting billions into the U.S. economy and creating millions of good, new American jobs. In fact, every 33 overseas travelers create one new American job. However, the nation's share of global international long-haul travel actually fell from 17 percent in 2000 to just 12.4 percent in 2010, despite a 40 percent growth in overall global travel. While global international travel boomed over the last decade, America failed to keep pace.

The JOLT Act would help the U.S. regain its lost share by allowing the U.S. to attract more international visitors. The JOLT Act is a bipartisan jobs bill that will increase international travel to the United States through much needed reforms to the U.S. visa application and issuance process. The bill includes provisions that create a premium visa program, reduce in person interview wait times, facilitate the use of videoconferencing to conduct visa interviews, alter the requirements for the Visa Waiver Program to allow more countries to qualify and expand international registered traveler programs to qualified applicants.