



**Travel Industry
Association of Kansas**

**THE VOICE OF THE TRAVEL
INDUSTRY IN KANSAS**

March 2019

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TIAK TALK

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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By Stacy Barnes



Destination Capitol Hill is right around the corner, April 10-11.

Kansas Tourism will be well represented in Washington D.C. to carry our message on the importance of tourism to our elected officials. The following individuals will be attending: Gloria Moore, Jan Stevens, Kevin Fern, Jim Zaleski, Bridgette Jobe, KDWPT Secretary Brad Loveless, Natalie Bright, and myself.

April 18 in Salina will be the spring educational seminar on human trafficking. Even though this will be a very heavy topic, I know it will provide vital information for our industry. Please make sure and register for this opportunity.

I don't know about you, but I am hoping that spring is here to stay once and for all. I am sure that you have seen spring break travelers, people making summer vacation plans, and your communities are gearing up for spring and summer events.

On that note, I will leave you with this picture that my kids drew on our driveway over the beautiful weekend. (Please ignore the spelling!)



TIAK EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Last week was a short and somewhat uneventful week in the Kansas Legislature. Last Friday was the last day for all non-exempt or “blessed” bills to be considered in either chamber, so the House and Senate spent Monday through Wednesday on the floor debating and passing dozens of bills. Essentially no committees met last week, and the Legislature was not in session on Thursday or Friday.

Conference Committees are scheduled to begin meeting on Monday, April 1, while the House and Senate continue on general orders throughout the week. First adjournment is scheduled for April 5, with Veto Session starting on May 1.

Here are three of the hot-button issues under the dome right now:

Governor Vetoes Tax Bill

As expected by most, Governor Kelly officially vetoed Senate Bill 22 last Monday. The Senate is scheduled to vote on an override next Tuesday, and the House shortly after. It will not be an easy feat getting a two-thirds majority in both chambers – 27 votes in the Senate and 84 in the House – to overturn her veto.

SB 22 prevents Kansas corporations and individuals from an unexpected tax increase as a result of federal tax policy adopted in 2017. The bill ensures Kansas’ multi-national corporations are not newly taxed on their foreign earnings, which is valued at around \$136 million. It also allows Kansans the option to itemize on their state tax returns at the lower threshold before it was increased on the federal level, a provision valued at around \$50 million.

In an attempt to make the measure more appealing to the Governor, the bill was amended during the committee process to include a one-cent reduction in the food sales tax, something that Kelly prioritized during her campaign. A provision to level the tax playing field for all online retailers was also added.

However, while Kansas’ budget is beginning to recover from years of income tax reductions and increased state spending, some lawmakers have been eyeing this new tax revenue as a way to continue to pad the state coffers for other government programs and services.

House Passes Partial School Finance Plan

The House debated and narrowly approved Senate Bill 16 last Tuesday by a vote of 63-61. The bill addresses K-12 policy but does not include the inflationary increases in appropriation required by the Kansas Supreme Court. Those budget provisions are in another bill, House Bill 2395, which was not considered by the House last week. SB 16 includes several controversial provisions that place accountability and reporting requirements on local school districts, as well as spending directives specifically toward the 25 percent of underachieving students in the state.

The Senate has already passed their \$92 million school funding bill, which the Governor proposed in her budget and supports. A House-Senate conference committee will most likely address K-12 spending next week.

Legislators Seek Funding for Transportation Plan

Both the House and Senate advanced their own sets of three bills that 1) increase oversize and overweight vehicle permits; 2) increase registration fees on electric and hybrid vehicles; and 3) allow for new toll projects.

These are to implement the recommendations of the Legislative Transportation Task Force that met last summer and fall to plan for the next 10-year state transportation plan. The current TWORKS expires in 2020.

Hearings were also held this year on:

- Increasing motor fuel taxes by three cents.
- Increasing motor fuel taxes by six cents.
- Using LAVTR funds for local transportation projects.
- Exempting local transportation projects from the tax lid.

The Senate Transportation Committee also held a confirmation hearing on Julie Lorenz’ appointment as Secretary of Transportation. The Committee voted unanimously to advance to the Senate their recommendation to approve the appointment, which the Senate did last week. Before working for Burns & McDonnell, Lorenz led the department’s development of the TWORKS program nearly ten years ago.

EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR: HUMAN TRAFFICKING



TIAK EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**1:30 PM to 4:00 PM * Thursday, April 18th * \$10 Registration Fee
Visit Salina Annex * 120 W. Ash Street * Salina, KS 67401**

Human trafficking, a modern form of slavery, is the second-largest and fastest-growing criminal industry in the world. The U.S. Justice Department has identified Kansas as an originating state for human trafficking.

Could you recognize a victim of human trafficking?

Join a member of the Kansas Attorney General's Office and Deb Kluttz, Director of Homestead Ministries, to hear about ways you can help to end human trafficking, and meet a survivor who has escaped it.

Visit Salina has blocked rooms for this event at the Holiday Inn, 3145 S. 9th St., for April 17.

Please contact the hotel directly to make your reservation: 785-404-6767.

The guaranteed block rate of \$99 is valid through April 12. Please mention "TIAK" when making your reservation.

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: TIFFANY BENIEN

This June, Tiffany Benien will celebrate her 24th year as Sports & Special Events Manager for the Visit Salina division of the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce.

She loves working with her clients that bring visitors to Salina for sports and special events. The KKOA Leadsled Spectacular Car Show; KSHSAA State Championship events for basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball, football and wrestling; KS ASA/USA Softball tournaments; the Grand Slam Baseball Tournament; the USSSA Midwest Regional Crossroads Basketball Championship and the Salina Comic Con are just a few of her favorite events to be a part of.

Tiffany cherishes the Salina community and its people. She went to K-12 at Bennington High School (just 20 minutes north of Salina), has a B.A. in Business (1995) from Kansas Wesleyan University where she played volleyball and softball and in the summers worked the SPRD softball/baseball fields.

She is excited that Salina is going through some major changes including a \$165 million downtown development that includes renovations of the streetscape, a new Homewood Suites hotel, car museum, several new restaurants, The Alley indoor entertainment center and - within 3 blocks of her office - the completion in 2017 of the Salina Fieldhouse, a 65,000+ sq. ft. multi-sport venue.

Tiffany loves beyond measure her family which includes her husband Jeromy, and daughter, Rylee (10). She enjoys travel in general--especially to places with palm trees, spending time with her family and coaching Rylee in volleyball and softball. She still occasionally gets to have fun playing old ladies and co-ed league volleyball. Ideals held close to her heart are family, freedom and faith.

Tiffany is serving her 2nd year on the TIAK board, and has been a member of TIAK since 1996. She is a TIAK Kansas Destination Specialist (KDS) and National Association of Sports Commissions Certified Sports Events Executive (CSEE). She currently serves as the President of SportsKS, a coalition including many TIAK members with the goal to increase the level of sports visitors to Kansas.

Tiffany encourages those wanting to see Kansas grow to do so by promoting Kansas Tourism and sharing with pride about our friendly people, open spaces, beautiful landscapes, all four seasons and extraordinary sunrises and sunsets.



"The Travel Industry Association of Kansas, TIAK, is a great membership organization with the main goal to increase the number of visitors to Kansas. TIAK provides Kansas Tourism a voice through collaboration, education, advocacy and promotion!"

*Tiffany Benien, TIAK Member
Visit Salina/Salina Area Chamber of Commerce*

NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK

National Travel and Tourism Week is scheduled for May 5-11 this year, and is an annual tradition for the U.S. travel community. It's a time when travel and tourism professionals across the country unite to celebrate the value travel holds for our economy, businesses and personal well-being.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism has put together a toolkit for local communities to use when preparing their celebrations. The [toolkit](#) includes: a sample proclamation, press release, talking points, blog post, elected official letter, social media ideas, and much more. Don't forget to send TIAK your celebration plans and photos for the rest of the membership to see!



KANSAS TOURISM CONFERENCE



The Kansas Tourism Conference will be held on October 21-23 and is a highlight each year with inspiring speakers and networking opportunities. Both sponsors and attendees, alike, enjoy interacting with hotels, attractions, CVBs, and dining and retail establishments from across Kansas!

The 2019 Kansas Tourism Conference will be held at the Kansas Star Casino in Mulvane. Registration is coming soon, but it's not too early to make your hotel reservations. A block has been reserved at the Hampton Inn & Suites from October 19-24. Use [this link](#) for booking. **If your community/facility would like to submit an RFP for the 2021 or 2022 Kansas Tourism Conference, [click here](#). RFPs are due by May 6.*

2019 WHITE HOUSE ORNAMENT

The Official 2019 White House Christmas Ornament is honoring Kansas' own President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and symbolizes his commitment to innovation.

On July 12, 1957, Dwight D. Eisenhower became the first president in office to employ a helicopter in his transportation service. This event marked a significant development for both the White House and the helicopter industry. In the short term, the helicopter became a key feature of presidential safety in the event of nuclear war. At the same time, Eisenhower's occasionally contentious decision to utilize helicopters for personal transport signaled an evolving conception of the role of travel in the presidency.

His administration embraced a new model for jet-setting diplomacy that relied upon fast and flexible transport in the face of Cold War realities. For the nascent helicopter industry, this development showed to the world that rotary wing technology had become safe and reliable. Order yours [here](#).



BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: DONNA PRICE

Donna Price is the Executive Director of the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau. She is the Northwest Kansas Travel Council representative on the TIAK Board, serves, as president of the Kansas I-70 Association, Northwest Kansas Travel Council Board, is one of three county representatives for the Big Kansas Road Trip, and other local and regional groups and committees.



She's been involved in tourism for about 20 years and thinks it's one of the best industries to work in. She's been involved with TIAK since 2000 and served on the board in one capacity or another since 2002.

Donna received her Kansas Destination Specialist pin and designation twice. Her recommendation to everyone is keep track of the dates to renew and do it on time. Those book reports aren't fun the second time around.

More information on the Northwest Kansas Travel Council:

The Northwest Kansas Travel Council originally began as a sub-committee of Pioneer County Development Inc. (PCDI) in 1968. In 1980 NWKTC was formed as a formal council still under the umbrella of PCDI. In 1992 it became incorporated and became a 501(C)6 allowing the council to qualify for grants. The council still continues to give regular reports to PCDI.

The council includes DMO's of 18 counties in Northwest Kansas, and others interested in promoting tourism in the region. Each county receives one vote on the board. Board meetings take place on a monthly basis and travel among each of our Northwest counties. They try to have a two-day retreat every other year. At the retreats the group works on planning for the future, professional development and leadership skills.

In 1999/2000 it was decided to produce a Northwest piece. The council needed a consistent funding stream and a marketing piece that would promote the entire area. The marketing piece became the Ultimate Guide to Northwest Kansas. This year its 20th edition will be printed. Each community sells advertising and has feedback on all the content and design work. That project pays for the publication and numerous events and trade shows during year.

There is a [website](#) with members' information, numerous tours, road trips, and updated listing of events in the 18 counties. The [Facebook page](#) continues to grow, and see an increase of engagement.

KANSAS LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE

The Kansas Legislative Hotline is **800-432-3924** and available all year, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. On weekends, questions can be emailed or left on the answering machine. Reference librarians with Kansas legislative research experience will follow up on Monday. Instant Message chat is also available at the same times. "Ask a Librarian" can be accessed through the State Library, [HERE](#).

Typical questions received by the librarians correspond to the activities of the legislative session: who is my legislator, how do I contact them, what is the bill number, how do I testify, what is the status of a bill? Later in the session, the questions are more about amendments, rules and deadlines. After the legislative session ends, the hotline continues to receive calls from Kansans wanting to know if a bill passed or died, how they can see the final version, the effective date, and where will the bill be codified in the statutes.

U.S. TRAVEL'S ECONOMIC OVERVIEW: MARCH 2019

OUTLOOK

U.S. Travel's Research Trends from David Huether

Has the economic recovery peaked? As expected, the economy slowed down in the fourth quarter of 2018 to a moderate 2.4 percent growth. Unexpected, however, was the dramatic drop in consumer spending, business investment and the December trade balance.

- Despite the fall of consumer spending in December, consumer confidence rebounded in February, bringing hope that the consumer will remain the engine of economic growth across 2019.
- The labor market decelerated hiring to a near-halt in February, but the unemployment rate shrank to 3.8 percent and increases in the average hourly wages provided robust silver linings.
- The trade deficit (in goods) reached an all-time high, with exports plunging in December. However, the travel trade surplus remained robust and a possible respite from recent U.S. trade disputes could provide greater clarity to exporters and foreign consumers.

In light of this new information, first-quarter GDP forecasts for 2019 have been revised down to a flat 0.4 percent growth. While somewhat disappointing, economic forecasts point to the U.S. finishing the first act of a well-worn "slow first quarter, fast second quarter" economic pattern seen throughout the recovery.

Economic Summary:

The U.S. economy finished the year on a temperate note, with fourth-quarter GDP growing at a 2.6 percent seasonally-adjusted annualized rate. Growth was led by strong but slowing contributions from consumer spending and business investment. If the preliminary estimate were to hold, then GDP would have increased by 2.9 percent in 2018, one of the fastest years of economic growth since the recovery. "Last year was likely the best year of this business cycle," said Ellen Zentner, chief economist at Morgan Stanley. "We stimulated the heck out of the economy last year, and that stimulus will fade this year."

Many economic indicators, however, ended the year on a slide. December consumer spending contracted 0.5 percent month-over-month (m/m) from November. "Unless there is a big upward revision to the disastrous December retail sales figure [which decreased 1.2 percent m/m], the weak end-of-quarter consumption profile provides for very challenging arithmetic for first-quarter consumption growth," said Michael Feroli, an economist at JPMorgan. That said, personal income surged by 1 percent m/m in December, meaning that consumers ostensibly saved more for future spending in 2019. "The consumer is trending lower, though consumption is still strong," said Constance Hunter, chief economist at KPMG. However, she also noted another concern in "housing investment, which fell for the fourth-consecutive quarter. If this continues into 2019, it will be a worrying signal for future growth." Following the trend of a December disaster, housing starts plummeted by 11 percent in December.

Encouragingly, economic data across the rest of the economy through the beginning of 2019 was mixed: business investment, which also endured a large December decrease, shot back up in January; Consumer confidence, after enduring three consecutive months of unchanged growth, spiked nearly 10 points in February; The strong labor market showed decreasing unemployment and a 3.4 percent year-over-year (y/y) increase in average hourly wages, despite only producing 20,000 new jobs in February against an expected 180,000. For Gregory Daco, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics, the halting data shows signs of economic slowdown toward a "new normal" of 2.3 percent annual GDP growth for 2019. Daco states that he sees "three reasons for caution" moving forward in 2019: "fading fiscal stimulus, tighter financial conditions and slowing global activity... financial markets will become increasingly sensitive to negative downside surprises in U.S. economic data." Read more [here](#).



Educate yourself in 2019 compliments of the Kansas Tourism Division. Kansas Tourism partners, sign up with a username and password [HERE](#). Access recorded programs at anytime or view live webinars each Thursday.

UPCOMING ONLINE COURSES

Using Brain Science to Motivate Yourself & Visitors
April 4

Create Engaging Video Content for Social Media Marketing
April 11

How To Become a Data Driven Content Marketer
April 25

Get more information on these upcoming webinars [HERE](#).



RECORDED COURSES

Kansas Tourism partners, sign up with username and password [HERE](#). Then view the recorded webinars [HERE](#).



Mark your calendars for the **Big Kansas Road Trip, May 2-5, 2019 in Cheyenne Sherman and Wallace counties.**

Cheyenne shares the border with Colorado and Nebraska and Sherman and Wallace with Colorado. They are part of an active tourism group, the Northwest Kansas Travel Council. As you travel to this area in 2019 you'll find their promotional materials handy for sightseeing along the way. Note! Sherman and Wallace counties observe Mountain Time.

You'll have the opportunity to eat in the cafes, shop in the stores, tour the attractions, and drive the scenic roads. You'll get to see these communities as they are--with the red carpet rolled out.

There will be Information Centers in the three counties where you can pick up itineraries and menus of things to see and do. Though not required, these towns will come up with some extras. It'll be a great time to explore with hundreds of other people who want to get to know Kansas. Read more about it [HERE](#).

Please use #bkrt19 on your social media posts!



April 10-11, 2019 | Washington D.C.

Destination Capitol Hill (DCH) is the U.S. Travel industry's premier legislative fly-in. The event brings travel leaders from across the country to Washington, D.C. to educate policymakers about the power of travel. The program combines a legislative day on Capitol Hill with advocacy training, guest speakers and peer-to-peer networking. DCH provides delegates with an opportunity to learn about upcoming legislation that impacts travel, network with peers and meet with members of Congress to stress the importance of travel as an economic driver. It's not too late to register [HERE](#).

TASTE OF TIAK PROMOTION



Don't want to bite off more than you can chew? Then how about a "taste"? Learn more [HERE](#).
Any NEW member can join TIAK in 2019 for just \$50!

HOSPITALITY HUB

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WEBSITES

The City of Dodge City is excited to share their two, yes TWO, public engagement websites for the Dodge City Comprehensive Plan and the Wright Park Zoo Masterplan. They're using these websites to enhance community outreach in addition to in-person meetings. Follow to get updates, ask questions, offer feedback, and shape your community.

Follow the projects on coUrbanize: [Dodge City Comprehensive Plan](#) and [Wright Park Zoo Master Plan](#). If you're on Facebook, [click here](#) to watch a quick tutorial on how to use the sites.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Destination Capitol Hill

April 10-11, Washington D.C.

April Board Meeting and Education Seminar

April 18, Visit Salina Annex

Big Kansas Road Trip

May 2-5, Cheyenne Sherman and Wallace County

National Tourism Week

May 5-11

Governor's Council on Tourism

June 7, Topeka

Open to the public, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Curtis State Office Building

Kansas Tourism Conference

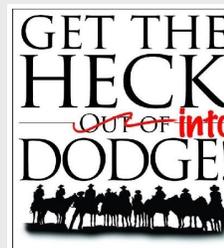
October 21-23, Kansas Star Casino, Mulvane

JOB OPPORTUNITY

DC Chamber Summer Intern

Looking for a college, highly qualified high school student, or young community member starting mid-May to mid-August. This person will mostly focus on coordinating the 2019 Dodge City Days festival.

Interested applicants should send a cover letter and resume to jwittman@dodgechamber.com. Interviews will be held in mid-April.



Travel Industry Association of KS
 825 S. Kansas Ave., Ste. 502
 Topeka, KS 66612
 (785) 233-9465
www.tiak.org