



Travel Industry Association of Kansas

# THE VOICE OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY IN KANSAS

June 2019

Volume 14, Issue 6

## TIAK TALK

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Kansas Tourism Conference...2
- Marketing Awards...3-4
- Governor's Rural Prosperity Tour...5
- Job Opportunity...6
- Kansas State Fair Explore Kansas Festival...6
- eLearning University...6
- Taste of TIAK Membership Promotion...7
- STR Monthly Destination Report...7
- Calendar of Events...7
- Flint Hills Getaway...8-10
- KDOT Local Consult Meetings...10
- U.S. Travel Outlook...11

By Stacy Barnes



Family vacations, festivals, fairs, sports...this is what summer is made of. Hopefully you're enjoying yours, despite this crazy, wet Kansas weather!

If you haven't received information yet on Lt. Governor Lynn Rogers' listening tour this summer, visit the [Rural Prosperity](#) website.

Whether rural or urban, big or small, there are many challenges and opportunities facing our state. I hope that you'll attend and share your thoughts on how to make Kansas even better.

Congratulations to Bridgette Jobe as begins her new role as Tourism Director for Kansas. As a former TIAK president, she is very familiar with our organization and industry, and will be a great partner and advocate.

Have you registered yet for the 2019 Kansas Tourism Conference. It's shaping up to be one our best yet. Please consider sponsoring or inviting a potential vendor to exhibit if you can.

Last, I want to leave you with this favorite quote. This mural lives in Greensburg on our old pool bathhouse. Happy July!



#### TIAK EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President  
**Stacy Barnes**  
City of Greensburg

President-Elect  
**Kelly Peetoom**  
Olathe CVB

Vice President  
**Jim Zaleski**  
Labette County CVB

Secretary  
**Susan Rathke**  
Emporia CVB

Treasurer  
**Julie Roller**  
Abilene CVB

Past President  
**Jan Stevens**  
Dodge City CVB

## KANSAS TOURSISM CONFERENCE: OCTOBER 21-23

Thank you to these generous sponsors of the 2019 Kansas Tourism Conference. It is because of the support from members like you that this meeting can bring hundreds of tourism industry professionals together to hear from top-notch speakers on today's most important topics. If you'd like to add your name to this list, sponsorship opportunities are still available to meet any budget.



Leavenworth, Kansas



CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU



MidwestLiving



KINCAID  
coach



### Why Should You Attend?

- ⇒ To network with tourism agencies, communities, & businesses across Kansas.
- ⇒ For the latest and greatest news and information on technological advancements.
- ⇒ To discover up and coming products, offerings, and opportunities in the industry.
- ⇒ To be the first to receive the newest economic impact study, hot off the presses.
- ⇒ To enjoy the company of tourism staff and partners that are crazy about Kansas.

The 2019 Kansas Tourism Conference will be held at the Kansas Star Casino in Mulvane. A block of hotel rooms has been reserved at the Hampton Inn & Suites from October 19-24. Use [this link](#) for booking.



## REGISTER HERE!

### SUPPORT A STUDENT

The 2019 Kansas Tourism Conference will be here before you blink! Now is the time to contribute to the Student Scholarship Fund so we can continue offering a scholarship to a student in a Kansas hospitality/tourism program of study. This is a great opportunity for the next generation of tourism professionals to learn about Kansas, network in the industry and build upon their coursework and learning.

However, we cannot award a scholarship without the help of our members. Did you know it takes \$600 to bring a student to the conference each year? Between meals, lodging and conference registration, that's a lot for a college kid to shell out, so let's help to keep the momentum going for this great program! You can donate as little as \$10. [Donate now.](#)



# 2019 TIAK Marketing Awards

**Travel Industry Association of Kansas**

We want to recognize the outstanding marketing efforts of tourism throughout Kansas. If you've been a stellar promoter, then plan to enter the 2019 TIAK Marketing Award contest!

The Marketing Awards accommodate varying community sizes. Each entry will be broken out according to the overall organization budget with one winner per overall budget category:

- ⇒ **Large Community overall budget (over \$500,000)**
- ⇒ **Medium Community overall budget (\$100,001—\$499,999)**
- ⇒ **Small Community overall budget (\$100,000 and under)**



This program is limited to TIAK members only. Also, Coalitions may enter but the Coalition must be a member of TIAK. Submit today and good luck!

## SHOULD I ENTER THE TIAK MARKETING AWARDS?

By Susan Rathke, Emporia CVB Director



The Emporia Convention and Visitors Bureau wins three marketing awards at the 2018 Kansas Tourism Conference.

Are you asking, “should I enter the TIAC Marketing Awards this year? It seems like the same people win all the time. I don’t stand a chance. I submitted an entry before and didn’t win anything.”

I know many TIAC members are saying the above if not at least thinking the same.

The Emporia CVB has been the recipient in recent years of several TIAC Marketing Awards. We have submitted entries almost every year since I’ve worked here (26 yrs.) and there were plenty of “award less” years.

So, why do we continue to enter? I have plenty of reasons. #1-We’re proud of our work. #2-Those we answer to like that we are judged, critiqued and sometimes rewarded for our marketing efforts. #3-We get recognition and respect from our tourism peers. #4-We work to be better marketers every day.

Regardless of the size of your tourism organization, everyone puts money into marketing their destination. After all, that’s our job, right? The marketing awards process provides valuable feedback from experienced marketing professionals. In addition, as a TIAC member, this feedback is free of charge.

Some suggestions from me:

- Choose your best marketing effort(s) and enter in the appropriate awards category.
- Be specific as to your reasons for this marketing purpose and what it does for your destination, then convey that information on the entry form.
- Whether you win or not, pay attention to those that do and extract something from the winning entries. All entries receive feedback from the judges, make good use of it.

The annual tourism conference is an opportunity to network with our tourism peers and to learn. Use the time to share ideas, seek new ones, and improve what you do, regardless of budget. Register for this year’s conference, you can bet on having a good time!



## GOVERNOR'S RURAL PROSPERITY TOUR

Governor Laura Kelly and Lieutenant Governor Lynn Rogers announced at a press conference details on the upcoming Office of Rural Prosperity Listening Tour.

The tour is intended to foster new ways to help rural Kansas communities by hearing from the residents themselves.

"Rural Kansas has been overlooked and unheard for far too long," Governor Kelly said. "Our small towns have been neglected. Today we're taking an important step toward changing this serious problem."

This upcoming series of events serves as the first phase of the new Office of Rural Prosperity, which has been approved for a \$2 million allocation in the newly approved FY 2020 budget. Each location will partner with local hosts in order to set up locations and events.

The Office of Rural Prosperity is dedicated to improving life in rural Kansas. The office is guided by the blueprint created by Governor Kelly, Lt. Governor Rogers and Secretary of Commerce David Toland, which includes:

- Developing rural housing
- Revitalizing Main Street corridors
- Investing in rural infrastructure
- Supporting rural hospitals and medical professional recruitment
- Making state government work for rural Kansas
- Incentivizing active tourism
- Supporting agribusiness

The tour is intended to travel to the following towns across the state:

- Nickerson – June 17
- Atchison – June 20
- Colby – June 24
- Phillipsburg – June 25
- Winfield – July 8
- Lindsborg – July 10
- Garnett – July 22



- Independence – July 23
- Ulysses – July 30
- Concordia – August 1
- Sabetha – August 5
- Dodge City – August 7

The tour will cover a wide area of the state in order to learn specific challenges and opportunities for the many different rural communities across Kansas.

"The governor and I recognize the needs of our rural communities are unique, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach," Lt. Governor Rogers said. "We must look at a variety of multifaceted policies and programs that will empower local leaders by helping them access the resources they need. In other words, we must help Kansas communities and local leaders carve out their own route to prosperity."

More information is available at <http://www.ruralkanprosper.ks.gov>.

You can follow along with the tour with the Lt. Governor on Twitter @LtGovRogers and use the hashtag #LynnListens.

"I'm excited to begin this tour and have meaningful conversations about rural Kansas," Lt. Governor Rogers said. "It's time for elected leaders to be sincere about listening to people in rural communities who've been overlooked and taken for granted far too long. We can and will do better."



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

**Creating Clear Messages**  
July 11

**The Laws of Attraction for the Travel and Tourism Industry**  
July 18

**Turning Conversations Into Customers**  
July 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](#).

## JOB OPPORTUNITY



The Kansas City Kansas Convention & Visitors Bureau is seeking an Executive Director. The Executive Director is responsible for the overall management of the Kansas

City Kansas Convention & Visitors Bureau. This position directs and leads the bureau toward its mission, works directly with a Board of Directors on policy making and strategy for the organization, acts as primary spokesperson for the organization and oversees all administrative, operating, and marketing functions of the Bureau.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the position's duties and responsibilities.

The KCK CVB offers a competitive salary commensurate with qualifications and experience, ranging from \$80,000 – \$100,000. Additional benefits include health, dental and vision insurance, plus a 401K match. Submit your resume and cover letter to [hr@visitKansasCityKS.com](mailto:hr@visitKansasCityKS.com) by Friday, July 26, 2019.

## EXPLORE KANSAS FESTIVAL

The Kansas State Fair will hold its first-ever Explore Kansas Festival on opening weekend, September 7-8, 2019. Many TIAK members will be exhibiting.

The Explore Kansas Festival is a two-day showcase to bring together communities from all across the state, creating a place to discover Kansas treasures and help visitors find unique cafes, fishing holes, hiking trails, next summer's vacation spot, historic sites, natural landmarks, museums, performing centers, arts and culture — or even a new place to call home.

The opening weekend of the Kansas State Fair draws between 80,000 to 100,000 visitors, which will be great exposure for local communities.



# TASTE OF TIAK PROMOTION

taste OF



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!**

## STR MONTHLY DESTINATION REPORT: MAY 2019

**T**IAK has signed an agreement with Smith Travel Research to provide members with the monthly statewide STR report on hotel occupancy. Several TIAK members receive their local community information. We hope that this agreement will increase the information gathered, hotel participants, and improve data the included.

Census (in our database):  
47,018 hotel rooms  
660 hotels

Sample (reporting data):  
36,338 hotel rooms  
424 hotels



*The following data is provided directly from STR:*

**May 2019 year-to-date data for Kansas**  
(with percent changes for May 2018 YTD):

Occupancy: 54.0% (+1.6%)  
ADR: \$88.21 (+0.5%)  
RevPAR: \$47.67 (+2.0%)

**Kansas has about 64% of hotel participation and 77% hotel room participation.**

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Governor's Council on Tourism**

August 2, September 6, Topeka

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

**Kansas State Fair**

September 6-15, Hutchinson

September 7-8, Explore Kansas Festival

**Kansas Tourism Conference**

October 21-23, Kansas Star Casino, Mulvane

### DID YOU KNOW?

We're on Facebook!  
Like and follow us  
**@KansasTIAK**



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

## A FLINT HILLS GETAWAY

By Susie Whitfield



In his November 2018 article for the *Smithsonian* magazine, Jeff MacGregor wrote about a very special part of our country, saying that it "...might be the most beautiful place in America."

It wasn't the Rocky Mountains. Or the Pacific Northwest. Or the Grand Canyon.

MacGregor was describing the **Flint Hills of Chase County, Kansas**.

When you come to Chase County, you'll drive along **Highway US Route 50** where the land rolls wide and green under an endless sky.

Just as you turn south into **Strong City**, you'll see the **Flint Hills Rodeo** (300 E 7<sup>th</sup> Street, [www.flinthillsrodeo.org](http://www.flinthillsrodeo.org)). The oldest consecutive rodeo in the state of Kansas is held in



late May/early June. You can enjoy three days of rodeo events, dances, live music, and a parade with Rodeo Queens, antique tractors, and horses and buggies.

Follow the signs for the **Flint Hills Scenic Byway 177** to the **Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve** (2480B Kansas Highway 177, 620-273-8494, [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)).



Park at the visitor center, pick up a trail map, and watch an informational video. 11,000 acres of the last remaining tallgrass prairie in America provide breath-taking views. As you hike, you'll see many species of birds and wildflowers. But if the bison are grazing, admire them from a safe distance! Then tour the 1881 **Z Bar Ranch** limestone mansion, the three-story barn, and the **Lower Fork Creek School**.



If you'd rather see the prairie from a comfortable seat in a 14-passenger bus, contact Casey Cagle of **Prairie Earth Tours** ([director@prairieearthtours.com](mailto:director@prairieearthtours.com)) for an interpretive tour through the heart of the Flint Hills.

Now let's return to Strong City and stop in **Ad Astra Food & Drink** (318 Cottonwood St., 620-273-8440, [www.adastrafoodanddrink.com](http://www.adastrafoodanddrink.com)).



Inspired by the Kansas state motto, the restaurant's name means "To the Stars." You'll be inspired to enjoy locally brewed craft beers, gourmet burgers, seafood, salads, and Kansas grown steaks. Exquisite local art and vintage items decorate

the restaurant's old brick walls. Be sure to save room for homemade pie and ice cream!

Drive a little further south to see the **Strong City Depot and Railroad Park** (204 West Topeka Avenue). Built in 1913 of pressed brick trimmed in native limestone, the depot is the home of the **Strong City Hall** and railroad memorabilia. Next to the depot is an authentic **Santa Fe Caboose**. On opening day of



(Continued on page 9)

## A FLINT HILLS GETAWAY

(Continued from page 8)



**Chase County Country Christmas** in November, the train conductor calls “All Aboard” so children can climb up the caboose steps and get a present from Santa’s helpers. Tour festively decorated private homes, do a fun run,

attend a silent auction, and watch a Christmas parade. Then see the lighting of the Courthouse Christmas tree as Santa is whisked back to the North Pole.

Travel a few more miles south to **Cottonwood Falls** to visit the iconic **Chase County Courthouse** (300 Pearl Street, 620-273-6319), one of the 8 Wonders of Kansas. The 1883 French Renaissance-style stone building is the oldest courthouse still in use in the state. Tour the building Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or call the **Chase County Chamber of Commerce** (318 Broadway Street, 620-273-8469) for a Saturday appointment. If you climb the gorgeous three-story spiral staircase made of walnut trees from the Cottonwood River, you’ll have a perfect photo opportunity.



The **Symphony in the Flint Hills Store** (331 Broadway, 620-273-8955) sells items such as hats, t-shirts, books, and original art. If you haven’t been to the **Symphony** ([www.symphonyintheflinthills.org](http://www.symphonyintheflinthills.org)), put it on your calendar for



next June. When the sun goes down, and everyone sings “Home On the Range” as cowboys drive their herd across the prairie, you’ll have tears in your eyes.

**Prairie PastTimes Arts and Crafts** (220 ½ Broadway St., 620-273-6319, [www.prairiepasttimes.org](http://www.prairiepasttimes.org)) invites you to browse curated artwork and handcrafted clothing & jewelry. Every Friday night, either in the shop or on Broadway St., if weather permits, **Emma Chase Friday Night Music** showcases local musicians and is free to the public.



For fine dining and drinks, stop in the **Grand Central Hotel and Grill** (215 Broadway Street, 620-273-6763,

[www.grandcentralhotel.com](http://www.grandcentralhotel.com)). The elegant, historic 1884 hotel is famous for its western décor and locally raised steaks. Ten rooms, each beautifully appointed and oversized, are “branded” with the historic brands of local ranchers. Meeting rooms are also available for receptions, small executive conferences, and corporate outings.



As you leave the hotel, wander down the brick street to the old **Cottonwood River Bridge**. Every year on the Friday night before

Symphony, the **Chase County Chamber of Commerce** (318 Broadway Street, 620-273-8469, [www.chasecountychamber.org](http://www.chasecountychamber.org)), holds its signature event, **River Suite**. Under white peaked tents, guests watch the sun set as they enjoy a cocktail hour followed by a mouth-watering KC strip steak dinner and a refreshing summer dessert. Live music and dancing end a perfect evening.

(Continued on page 10)

# A FLINT HILLS GETAWAY

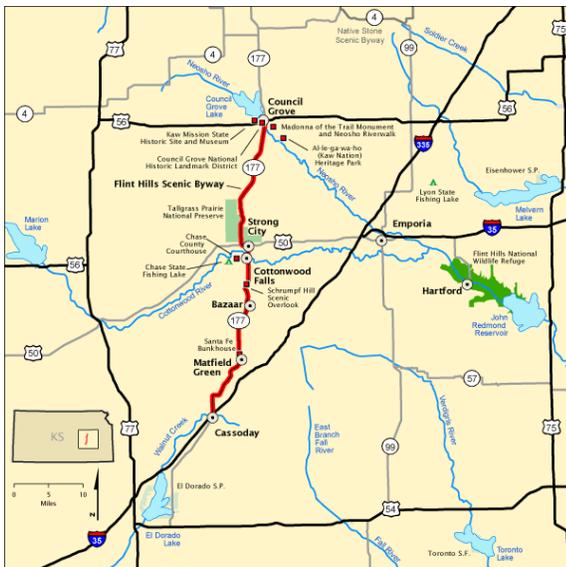
(Continued from page 9)

## Where to Stay:

**The Millstream Motel** (401 Mill Street, 620-273-8114): Owners Richard and Sharon Klute's 4-room historic building and a private cabin back up to the Cottonwood River. Rustic décor, hardwood floors, and photographs by local artists welcome weary guests. Go roast a marshmallow at the fire pit and listen to the river race over the falls.

**The Larkinn Guest Houses** (620-273-1135, [www.larkinnpropertymanagement.com](http://www.larkinnpropertymanagement.com)): Take your choice of 9 bed and breakfast private homes, including the **Church**, the **Prairie House**, and the **1879 Stone House**. These historic and artfully renovated homes are exquisitely decorated and supremely comfortable. You can book several homes within walking distance for large gatherings. Owners Kris and Pat Larkin are the perfect hosts; Kris stocks the kitchens with Peet's coffee, farm fresh eggs, and homemade muffins and granola for her guests.

**Clover Cliff Ranch** (826A US Highway 50, Elmdale, Kansas 66850, 620-343-0621, [www.clovercliff ranch.com](http://www.clovercliff ranch.com)). This elegant 1880s Empire-style stone home offers guests hiking trails, spectacular views, and sumptuous breakfasts served on the enclosed veranda. Owners Warren and Susie Harshman invite you to play disc golf on their world-renowned 18-hole course or book their gorgeous native stone **Pavilion** for weddings and large gatherings.



## KDOT PLANS LOCAL CONSULT MEETINGS

The Kansas Department of Transportation has scheduled a series of regional 'local consult' meetings to give Kansans the opportunity to discuss their transportation priorities with KDOT staff and the Kansas Turnpike Authority:

- **Northcentral Region-Salina**, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Aug. 19, Kansas Highway Patrol Academy, 2025 East Iron, Salina.
- **Southcentral Region-Hutchinson**, 9 a.m.-noon Aug. 20, Atrium Hotel & Conference Center, 1400 North Lorraine, Hutchinson.
- **Southeast Region-Independence**, 9 a.m.-noon Aug. 21, Independence Civic Center, 410 N. Penn Ave., Independence.
- **Kansas City Metro Region-Overland Park**, 9 a.m.-noon Aug. 22, Matt Ross Community Center, 8101 Marty Street, Overland Park.
- **Northeast Region-Topeka**, 1:30-4:30 p.m. Aug. 26, Capitol Plaza Hotel, 1717 SW Topeka Blvd., Topeka.
- **Wichita Region-Wichita**, 9 a.m.-noon Aug. 27, Eugene Metroplex, 5015 East 29th Street N, Wichita.
- **Southwest Region-Dodge City**, 9 a.m.-noon Aug. 28, Dodge House Convention Center, 2409 West Wyatt Earp Blvd., Dodge City.
- **Northwest Region-Hays**, 9 a.m.-noon Aug. 29, Fort Hays State Union, 700 College Drive, Hays

## U.S. TRAVEL'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK: JUNE 2019

# OUTLOOK

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

The U.S. economic engine has not been firing on all cylinders as of late. Current high-frequency indicators have shown that the economy is growing, but it is also slowing. On the positive side, solid [wage growth](#) and [consumer confidence](#) continue to improve [consumer spending](#). However, [business spending](#) on capital goods continues to decelerate, possibly signaling an expectation of slower economic growth later in the year. In addition, [export growth](#) remains anemic as Americans remain concerned about ongoing trade disputes. Taken together, it is quite clear that the economy is decelerating from the first quarter of the year's 3.1% pace.

### ECONOMIC SUMMARY:

Revised real GDP remained steady at [3.1% annualized growth for the first quarter](#), according to the Commerce Department. The story remained the same: exports and inventories led growth, while consumer spending and business investment slowed substantially.

"The latest economic data solidified our view that the economy will underperform" in the second quarter, wrote Lydia Boussour and Gregory Daco, economists at Oxford Economics. Boussour and Daco identify three pockets of weakness: investment, inventories and trade. Indeed, April data for all three indicators remained very soft: [core capital goods declined precipitously](#) (-0.9% m/m), [inventories held steady](#) (but [retail sales dropped](#)) and [international trade volume plummeted](#) (-2.1% m/m) in the wake of trade tensions with two of the U.S.' largest trading partners (China and Mexico). Even though consumer spending indicators returned to more normal numbers in April after an inconsistent first quarter, Oxford Economics revised their outlook for the second quarter downward from 2% to 1% annualized real GDP growth due to the oncoming economic turbulence.

Even the [healthy labor market recently tapped the brakes](#): hiring slowed down to 75,000 jobs in May, one of the lowest readings of the post-Great Recession period. The modest gains were enough to hold the unemployment rate steady at a very low 3.6%. However, despite labor market tightening, average hourly earnings continued to decelerate, rising 3.1% over the prior year, down from a recent high of 3.4% in February. Recent economic uncertainty "may not lead to firing but it [may cause businesses to postpone hiring](#)," said Michelle Meyer, chief United States economist at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

The slowdown in wage growth, coupled with long-term softness in consumer prices, could prompt the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates in upcoming months. According to Diane Swonk, chief economist at Grant Thornton, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell "is walking a tightrope -- he [wants to stay optimistic with still solid growth](#), but [also] willing to cut if need be." But, with tariff tensions adding to soft labor numbers, Swonk notes that "the threshold on a rate cut is falling."

Given recent economic data, the economy will likely slow down in the second quarter of 2019. The Atlanta Federal Reserve's GDPNow forecasting model agrees with Oxford Economics' assertions, currently forecasting [1.4% annualized real GDP growth](#) in light of the recent jobs report and inventories numbers. The New York Fed's Nowcast is even more pessimistic, predicting only [1% annualized real GDP growth](#) in the second quarter, with the recent drop in trade volume sparking a 0.2 percentage point drop in the forecast.