

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 twelve 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.*

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.*

Brand USA

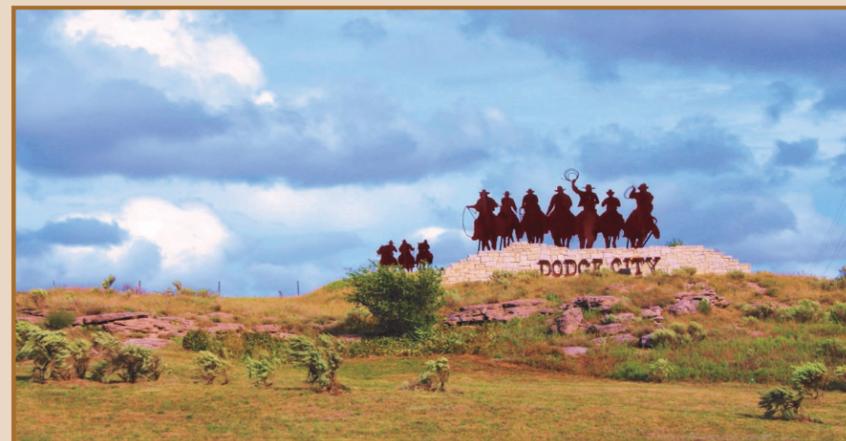
TIAK supports Brand USA, the first national travel promotion program designed to attract more international travelers to the U.S. The program is funded by the private sector, mostly the tourism-related industry, with matching federal funds of up to \$100 million a year from a \$10 fee that international 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, benefit from Brand USA because it lures foreign visitors to major attractions and cities who on subsequent trips to the USA are likely to choose other destinations such as Kansas.*

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.*



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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.

TIAK
Travel Industry
Association of Kansas

**U.S. TRAVEL
ASSOCIATION**

Travel is essential to the American economy, providing an indispensable source of job creation. The travel industry is unique: it is highly dependent on human labor, generally immune to outsourcing and plays a key role in international trade. The U.S. travel industry generates \$2.4 trillion in economic output, supports 15.6 million American jobs and generates a \$77 billion trade surplus for the United States.
When travel thrives, so does America!

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:

Trusted Traveler Programs

Programs such as TSA PreCheck and Global Entry adhere to rigorous pre-screening processes to travelers to alleviate long security lines while enhancing national security and allows resources to focus on unknown travelers. Global Entry and Preclearance programs expedite screening for pre-approved, low-risk international travelers. By removing known, low-risk travelers from the regular screening process, expanding these programs enables the focus of resources to be used on identifying potentially riskier unknown travelers. Increasing resources to TSA PreCheck and Global Entry programs, a larger segment of safe air travelers can be enrolled and shrink the pool of unknown travelers. The more travelers enrolled, the shorter the wait times at airport security allowing for a greater number of safe travelers allowed entry and the greater impact foreign travelers have on the U.S. economy.

Kansas Impact: Air travel is important to tourism and these trusted travel programs will not only make it easier to travel to Kansas, but also make it safer.

Visa Reform



U.S. Visa process plays a critical role in advancing economic opportunity and public diplomacy while ensuring our national security and protecting the traveling public. While much progress has been made in reducing wait times to obtain visas, we

should always look for opportunities to continue to make the process more efficient and accessible. Nearly 38 million overseas travelers visited the U.S. in 2016, spending an average of \$4,363 per trip. While many travelers arrive from countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program, millions of visitors come from expanding markets such as China, Brazil and India. The number of visitors from countries needing visas to come to the U.S. is expected to grow dramatically, including China, Colombia, India and Brazil.

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

Our nation's transportation infrastructure—made up of roads, airports, highways, bridges, rail and more—enables people to travel and conduct commerce around the country and across the globe. This national network is the U.S. travel industry's most important asset. However, over the past several decades our nation's travel infrastructure has fallen into a state of disrepair. Travel to and within the United States cannot grow without increased and sustainable investment in all modes of travel infrastructure.

Kansas Impact: All modes of transportation are critical to the success of Kansas industries, particularly tourism, and adequate funding to maintain and enhance all modes of transportation is critical.

State Tourism Budgets

Destination marketing attracts new visitors to cities and states, whose spending creates significant economic activity. This in turn generates crucial tax revenue supporting essential public services, improving quality of life for residents. Despite these proven benefits, securing and preserving tourism promotion funding from local governments is an increasingly uphill battle. When a state or city loses all or part of that funding, it cedes the economic benefits of tourism to another destination, as visitors simply choose to travel elsewhere.

Aviation Infrastructure



A major concern is if the U.S. fails to modernize its airport infrastructure and air traffic control system, when can travelers expect Thanksgiving-type congestion on a regular basis? America's airports have nearly \$130 billion in infrastructure needs through 2023 to accommodate tremendous growth in passenger volumes, rehabilitate and expand facilities, enhance the passenger experience and spur much-needed airline competition. In particular, technology upgrades and capacity improvement projects at major airports are needed. As such, TIAK supports adjusting the federal cap on the passenger facility charge (PFC) user fee to a level consistent with inflation since it was last raised in 2000. In addition, TIAK supports indexing the federal PFC cap to inflation to assure the fees provide long-term, sustainable sources of revenue for investing in aviation infrastructure.

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.

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, whose goal is to garner federal funding to repair and maintain this vital historical rail line connecting the east to the west. A recent \$50 million appropriation will match a grant that will be used for track improvements assuring the train service will continue running.