

EXPANDING TRAVEL AND TOURISM PARTNERSHIPS: INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



TELE-WORKSHOP SPOTLIGHT SPEAKERS



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Julie Heizer has been in destination marketing for more than 20 years, with experience at the local, city, state, regional, national and international levels. Prior to her return to the Department of Commerce in 2003, she spent six years as the Vice President of Tourism for the Washington, D.C., Convention & Tourism Corporation.



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Kim Andersen is Vice President of Marketing Programs for the Travel Industry Association of America. She is responsible for directing the marketing efforts for the See America brand and also directs the graphics and production department at TIA. A seasoned marketing professional, Ms. Andersen earned a dual Bachelor of Science degree in marketing and international business from the University of Colorado at Boulder.



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Chuck Bonelli joined Southeast Tourism Society as Director of Marketing in January 2001. He works with membership, marketing and sales for this broad-based, 11-state regional association. STS promotes travel to the eleven southeastern states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

OTTI HELPS BYWAYS WELCOME VISITORS FROM ABROAD

Exploring the immense breadth and depth of the travel and tourism industry is more productive with an accomplished guide. The Tele-Workshop speakers, all experienced guides in this realm, introduced byway leaders to regional, national and international travel and tourism opportunities and partnership possibilities.

Representing the International Trade Administration – Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, Julie Heizer explained that this 12-person national tourism office concentrates on three areas: data, policy and marketing.

"The OTTI handles collection, analysis and dissemination of travel data," Julie said. "We're the only analysis point for tourism and travel data collected by various organizations." She provided several informational documents, including international travel spending and forecasts for international travel to the U.S.; byway leaders can review the documents via the www.bywaysonline.org website.

"From a totally macro look, tourism is on the rebound and climbing."
Julie Heizer

In addition to data analysis, the office develops policy with other nations and also coordinates marketing programs with international partners.

Last year, an international tourism campaign with the United Kingdom, which was funded by the national tourism office, produced remarkable results, according to Julie. "For the second year of the promotion, we're working with the UK and Japan, again providing opportunities for partnerships." She added that byway leaders should watch for information at summer's end about leveraging that campaign.

"We have a network of almost 200 local or regional offices around the globe whose function is to help U.S. businesses and organizations

"export" their tourism products to the international arena," explained Julie. She noted that these offices are primarily focused on international travel but they also promote some domestic travel.

Byways can contact these local or regional offices to talk about marketing the byway experience to international travelers.

"Some offices are more sophisticated than others, but they'll tell you who to contact or what might work. There's a whole litany of services, too. It's a great network," Julie added. Byway leaders can check www.commerce.gov/statemap2.html for the current list of offices. She also encouraged byway leaders to visit the OTTI website and sign up for its occasional newsletter. "Watch for info on international inbound tourism to specific cities," she said.

Julie also noted that international inbound tourism to the U.S. is on the increase. "By 2006, we'll be at pre-2000 levels; 2004 is the first year since 2000 that we saw our first increase in global market share. From a totally macro look, tourism is on the rebound and climbing"

(continued inside)



The tia.org website features marketing insights and trade news.



The SeeAmerica.org website, which emphasizes travel to and within the entire U.S., has been overhauled and expanded.

**TIA AND SEEAMERICA.ORG
CONNECT TRAVELERS TO BYWAYS**

Also interested in promoting tourism and travel to and within the U.S., the Travel Industry of America (TIA) represents all areas of tourism. Patricia McNally, familiar with TIA through her role at the FHWA National Scenic Byways Program, noted that TIA has a new president, Roger Dow, and that TIA is beefing up its government affairs and business roundtable work in response to a membership survey.

“TIA continues to be a great byways partner and there could be more opportunities because of the recent changes there,” she said.

Kim Andersen, representing TIA, expanded on the organization’s goals and opportunities for byways. She said, “Our mission is to represent the whole of the tourism industry, to promote tourism to and within U.S. The membership includes big guys, like Delta Airlines, and destination businesses, such as bed and breakfasts.”

TIA’s website, www.tia.org, features marketing insights and trade news. The organization also promotes co-op advertising opportunities with publications such as *National Geographic Traveler*, *USA Today*, and others. Kim noted a United Kingdom cooperative effort that brought presentations in that country to tour operators to showcase the U.S. travel opportunities. TIA also hosts a media marketplace that allows journalists to meet with destination/travel providers, particularly at the annual International Pow Wow event. America’s Byways participates with a booth at this event.

The TIA primary portal for travelers is the www.SeeAmerica.org website, which emphasizes travel to and within the entire U.S.

“The SeeAmerica.org website has been overhauled and expanded,” commented Kim. “We can accept travel information, such as events, deals or packages, through our electronic submission form. In the footer, you’ll see ‘suggest content.’ Use it! It’s free exposure for you. If there is a website that you think should be on SeeAmerica.org, you can add it that way, too.”

Kim also asked byway leaders to play and participate in the www.SeeAmerica.org online interactive game, America’s Treasure Hunt. “It’s a combination of *Jeopardy* and *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*,” she explained. “There are eleven travel categories, including ‘Byways.’” Currently, the game has a qualified sweepstakes through July 31. The game will reside on the website through the end of the year; it continues to be popular.

“I can still add questions to the game,” Kim said. She invited byway leaders to suggest an actionable question (a place to see or visit) with four possible answers, one of which is correct (remember to identify the correct answer). A byway website should be provided; after the player submits an answer, the correct answer appears with an active link to the byway website.

A separate byways micro-site, www.SeeAmerica.org/Byways/index.html, exists on the website, too. “Look to see if anything is outdated or incorrect,” said Kim. “Itineraries are very popular. Make sure yours is correct. We’d love the input!”

**STS SHOWCASES ELEVEN STATES
AND THEIR BYWAYS**

Chuck Bonelli, representing the Southeast Tourism Society, said that this regional organization covers 11 states, including 19 byways. “We promote tourism to and within the region. We work with all aspects of the tourism industry—attractions, allied media, marketing.”

Founded by Bill Hardman, Sr., some 23 years ago, STS is based on private and public sectors working together for sustainable economic development through tourism and travel.

“STS started with a little conversation and a gentleman with good vision, willing to knock on doors. It’s all about personal communication and similar interests; don’t worry about differences,” he said.

According to Chuck, the organization started with about twenty people. “We’ve grown through partnerships. Partnerships are key.”

The organization found partnership opportunities with local and regional businesses that have interests in travel and tourism, or regional economic interests, such as power companies. STS hosts quarterly meetings around the country as well as a main meeting in Washington, D.C.

“We have an advocacy arm,” said Chuck. “We’ve signed an agreement with the Southeast Tourism Policy Council with several departments and agencies of the federal government.” The Memorandum of Understanding, signed February 2004, includes the Department of the Interior (Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service);

Department of Agriculture (Forest Service, National Resource Conservation Service); Department of Commerce (Office of Travel and Tourism Industries); Department of the Army (Corps of Engineers); Department of Transportation (Federal Highway Administration); Environmental Protection Agency; and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Chuck provided an example of working with the Corps of Engineers, focusing on creating a map of the Corps' recreation sites within the southeastern region. He noted that the Corps' Buford Dam at the popular Lake Lanier brought several convention and visitor bureaus together with the Corps and STS to drive tourism.

"Get involved with the local or regional Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)," he suggested. "These can include local or regional CVBs, chambers of commerce, multi-state regional area marketing groups, etc. Some aren't free opportunities, but they're still worthwhile to contact."

Chuck noted that STS offers cooperative marketing outreach, regional advertising opportunities, and information through its member website: www.SoutheastTourism.org. STS also operates a consumer website, www.EscapeToTheSoutheast.com.

In addition, STS offers a marketing college that's open to any travel or tourism group, including all byways. For byways in the southeastern U.S., STS offers a free program to submit festivals and events for judged recognition. The Top 20 Events in the Southeast is endorsed and highly respected.

Through the expertise of the three speakers, byway leaders discovered multiple opportunities beyond the local level for expanding their networks, building awareness and leveraging regional, national and international marketing efforts.

Patricia McNally said, "The guest speakers have been very helpful to us to keep Byways in the loop. I'd like to thank them all!" She added that

often times the America's Byways Bulletin / Byways Blasts highlight partnership opportunities that are available to byways. Byways can sign up for bulletins and e-mails at www.bywaysonline.org. ★



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Q&A

Q. Is it better to work with a local DMO (Destination Marketing Organization) or large organizations?

A. Smaller volunteer-based byways should contact any of us for suggestions and connections. Just because your byway group isn't huge, well-organized, well-funded, or well-staffed, it's OK! The DMO network runs throughout the country. If you start working with your local DMO, then all of the DMOs in the region, state and nation are connected. At the grassroots level, you have the best opportunity for involvement. But even if you can't afford bigger things, you're still connected to the entire network. And through the network, you learn how to reach out for grants, Rails-to-Trails opportunities, etc.

Q. STS covers the eastern region. Where are other regional travel and advocacy organizations?

A. Like STS, the Western States Tourism Policy Council advocates for sustainable growth. There are networks of regional groups around the country. Contact America's Byways Resource Center for suggestions for your byway.

Q. Minnesota has a campaign that's themed "Trip on a Tankful." These shorter driving trips are a significant trend, correct? Should byways position themselves for shorter trips?

A. Byways should leverage the shorter-trip trend, yes, but not at the cost of other forms of travel. Day trips, weekend trips and week-long trips are all popular. Baby boomers are retiring, shifting tourism demographics. Retirement allows them to

get off freeways and onto byways—to stop and smell the roses. You're going to see more people with time and money to spend out there traveling. Plus, the mobile young society may not have enough money to go to London, but they may hit the road for a long weekend. Another mini trend comes from business travelers. They're adding a day to their business trips to extend their business travel for pleasure. The U.S. has the least number of vacation days. It's easier to take a long weekend than a full week of work. Byways should consider all of these traveler trends.



America's Byways Resource Center

provides information, connections and expertise that help build better byways. State coordinators, local groups, volunteers and organizations with ties to nationally designated scenic byways look to us for hands-on assistance in planning, preserving, promoting and managing scenic byways.

Please join us for 2005 Tele-Workshops
focusing on the following topics:

July 20

Transportation Roundtable

September 7

Making the Leap: A Motivational Discussion

November 2

Legal Issues and Ethics

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