

Destinations seek community input

Communities and destinations are turning to resident surveys so the voice of the people can be heard in regard to tourism.

Here are some recent examples:

CANADA

The Central Alberta Tourism Alliance is seeking public input about a new agritourism development strategy.

The group has launched an online survey that will run from Oct. 31 to Nov. 30 and will host info sessions on Nov. 15 and 17 for residents through video conference. They are looking for insight into opportunities, challenges and growth areas in agritourism.

According to a release, the group wants to work with citizens to ensure agritourism development happens in a way that supports businesses, stakeholders, and residents in the community.

— reddeeradvocate.com

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota tourism officials are about to seek input on the industry's needs and impacts in the state from a new demographic — the state's own residents.

During the 2022-2023 Southeast South Dakota Tourism Association (SSDTA) Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Luncheon at the Lewis & Clark Resort recently, South Dakota Secretary of Tourism Jim Hagen discussed plans for dual surveys — including a new survey of state residents — to take the public's temperature on tourism in

Continued on page 2



Photo by Dave Flessner

Chattanooga tourism leaders cut the ribbon on the new visitors center on Aquarium Way. Chattanooga Tourism Co. closed the previous downtown visitors center almost 3 years ago.

New visitors center funded via ARPA

In an age when looking up information online is the norm, sometimes travelers want a more personal experience.

So 2-and-a-half years after closing its downtown visitors center in the CARTA garage breezeway, the Chattanooga Tourism Co. has built a new information storefront near the Tennessee Aquarium on the downtown riverfront.

“We’ve built a strong social media presence to tell the Chattanooga story to help bring visitors here, but sometimes our visitors have

questions and want to talk with an individual about their specific request or need,” Hugh Morrow, president of Ruby Falls and chairman of the Chattanooga Tourism Co., said during a ribbon-cutting.

Using federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act funneled through Tennessee's Department of Tourist Development, the new facility includes both indoor and outdoor kiosks and interactive video screens. Staff members are

Continued on page 2



Digital magazine to promote cannabis tourism

Michigan Marijuana Report and Four20 Post LIVE are partnering with Charlie Strackbein of the Ann Arbor (Mich.) Street Fair to launch a new project focused on providing more cannabis tourism coverage.

“Sparx and Recreation” will feature stories about the companies building cannabis tourism brands in Michigan. Email Editor Mike Brennan at mike@mimarijuanaareort.com.

— mitechnews.com

Visitors Center to aid travelers & residents

Continued from page 1

on hand to answer questions, sell merchandise about Chattanooga and hand out print brochures.

The cost of design and construction of the Chattanooga Information Center was around \$480,000, according to Chattanooga Tourism Co. spokeswoman Hannah Hammon. The facility bills itself as Chattanooga Information, not Chattanooga Tourism, and Morrow said it is intended to provide information and assistance for visitors and residents.

Chattanooga Tourism Co., formerly the Chattanooga Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, previously operated an information booth in the downtown CARTA parking garage for nearly a decade until the pandemic forced its closing in the spring of 2020. Prior to 2010, the tourism bureau's main office was housed at the aquarium park.

Tennessee Tourist Development Commissioner Mark Ezell said Hamilton County was one of the top 10 counties in Tennessee last year bouncing back from the pandemic slowdown in travel, recording a 40% jump in tourism spending in 2021. Ezell said he expects the industry will be up again in 2022, and even with a softening economy, East Tennessee should be well positioned as a driving destination that is more affordable than many other tourist attractions.

According to the National Travel and Tourism Office, Chattanooga hosts more than 15 million visitors who spend \$1.5 billion annually.

– *timesfreepress.com*



File Photo

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Continued on page 2

the state, both at home and beyond. Hagen told the Press & Dakotan that the Department of Tourism will employ its first ever “Resident Sentiment Survey” in around a month.

Simultaneously, the Department of Tourism will also be employing a separate survey outside of the state’s borders to gauge image, perception and return on investment.

– *yankton.net*

COLORADO

The Northeast Colorado Travel Region is seeking community input on the future of tourism in the region.

The 15-minute survey will help the DMO better understand the community’s level of support for tourism and its impacts. Additionally, this survey will assist in establishing destination stewardship strategies.

– *journal-advocate.com*

TAMPA

City of Tampa residents for the third straight year expressed overwhelming enthusiasm for their city as a place to live, work, raise a family, and open a business, according to a survey of 1,300 residents.

The survey also found 90 percent of residents would recommend Tampa to a friend or family member as a place to vacation.

– *tampa.gov*

TORONTO

A new survey shows strong public support for building a public planetarium in Toronto to boost education, research and tourism for future jobs and economic growth.

The August survey shows that 74% of residents support or somewhat support a new public planetarium funded by the private and public sectors.

– *yahoo.com*