

## **American Bus Association Annual Convention, Louisville, KY - January 25-29, 2019**

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DTTD attended the American Bus Association Annual Convention in Louisville, KY from January 25-29, 2019. About 18 delegates from New Hampshire representing different regions, hotels, attractions, receptives, and transportation companies also attended. During the convention, New Hampshire managed an exhibitor booth, participated in 47 prescheduled appointments, and attended seminars.



New Hampshire's exhibitor booth was located in the New England isle which was the most popular location on the exhibitor floor during the Saturday reception. Each New England state had served food during the reception. New Hampshire prepared Polly's Pancake mix with maple syrup from the Rocks. The mix created more samples than expected so it is recommended that the state reduce the order to four bags of mix and to two gallons of maple syrup.

Through the entire conference, New Hampshire gave out famous buttercrunch chocolates sponsored by Kellerhaus in Laconia. This was the 7<sup>th</sup> year that Kellerhaus sponsored the chocolates, and every year, they get more and more of a cult following. All samples were distributed prior to the show end and many operators say that they've waited "all year for these chocolates." The chocolates are responsible for opening conversations that have led to completely new tour programs to New Hampshire.



New Hampshire participated in 47 prescheduled appointments with tour operators who specialize in group tours. All of the operators have programs to New Hampshire and more than half are asking for information to potentially launch entirely new programs. Some highlights include:

- Conway Tours, RI is developing a brand new waterfalls and covered bridges series
- Globus, CO launched a brand new annual tours series that stays in Jackson
- Ambasadair, IN wants to develop a new tour series that includes VT and NH
- Hampton Jitney, NY launched a brand new lupine tour this year and it is nearly sold out
- Miller Transportation, KY launched a summer in New England program for the first time and they are encouraged by the interest so far
- There and Back Again Adventures, NC is launching an entirely new product line for leisure tours
- Upstate Transit of Saratoga, NY launched a new White Mountains of NH tour and wants to do more for 2020 outside of fall foliage.
- Vacations by Rail, IL adding their 5<sup>th</sup> fall tour series to New England that includes the lakes and mountains of New Hampshire.
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ABA is New Hampshire's strongest domestic trade event in which nearly all of the operators that attend sell or intend to sell New Hampshire in some way. It is recommended that DTTD continues its active involvement next year in Omaha, Nebraska from January 10-14, 2020 and consider coordinating a New England supplier buffet dinner at a nearby hotel.