

Travel Alliance Partners TAPDance Conference 2015, Oklahoma City, OK
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June 18, 2015

The New Hampshire Division of Travel and Tourism Development (DTTD) attended the TAPDance Conference in Oklahoma City, OK from June 7 – 11, 2015. The Travel Alliance Partners is an ingenious collaboration between 32 different tour company partners throughout North America in which they can wholesale and retail each other's tour packages and work together to sell seats into the same motorcoach tour. The partnership dramatically increases the tour portfolios that the tour companies can offer to their respective clients, decreases the likelihood of tour cancellation, and saves time and resources on the product development front. When a supplier's product is included in a TAP tour, the tour is automatically on the booking engines of all 32 tour company websites and is promoted by all of the companies to preformed groups and retail clients. Even tours that are not uploaded into the TAP program are still shared between partners as needed. If a client approaches a partner with a travel request that they normally don't specialize in, the tour operator can refer the client to another tour partner instead of turning that business down. The organization also collaborates to create large scale events where they single handedly bring in thousands of guests. Their 2015 event this September will be a Great Gatsby Weekend at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island.



In order for tour companies to remain partners, they have strict standards and requirements that they need to maintain including but not limited to: legal standing and safety, bookings, homepage and email promotion of TAP Scheduled and Guaranteed Tours, participation in webinars, and attendance at TAPDance. TAPDance is a very unique conference in which suppliers have to already be in their Preferred Professional Travel Provider (PPTP) database which can only happen if a partner nominates and registers the supplier. PPTPs cannot register and attend TAPDance without receiving an invite. It is a very exciting opportunity to receive an invite from a TAP Partner.

Once at TAP, invited PPTPs have the opportunity to spend 20 minutes with every one of the partners in groups called "pods" which are small groups of three to five suppliers. This year, DTTD shared a pod with the Mount Washington Cog Railway, a Linchris Hotel Corp. representative from the Hampton Inn in Littleton and the Comfort Inn in Saint Johnsbury, the Vermont Tourism Network, and TripMate Insurance. Pods are expected to work together to present their tour area and what a tour concept could look like that involves each PPTP in the pod. DTTD and Vermont Tourism Network collaborated to present a suggested itinerary culinary tour of New Hampshire and Vermont which led to many great conversations and other ideas from the partners.



Many highlights from these meetings include:

- **Atlantic Tours** based in Nova Scotia has launched a new Merrimack/Portsmouth tour as a direct result from last year's meeting and now wants to explore building a Quebec City/Vermont/New Hampshire Girl Getaway tour.
- **East Coast Touring** based in Pennsylvania wants help to package a Grand Resorts of New England Tour in the summer that also includes the Trapp Family Lodge in Vermont.
- **Ed-Ventures** from Minnesota and Sports Leisure Vacations from California have both hired tour planners dedicated exclusively to building new product and both plan to launch more New England programs.
- **Anderson Vacations** based in Calgary opened an office in Australia and is eager to connect with Discover New England about tour offerings and other partnerships.
- **Fancy Free Holidays** uploaded a Guaranteed Departure, the best TAP level tour available, called *Autumn in New England* as a direct result of his meeting with a Massachusetts pod last year which benefits the entire New England region.
- Ontario based **Maxima Tours** wants to launch a New England Foliage tour.
- **Mid Atlantic Receptive Services**, wants to launch an African American tour of New Hampshire and Vermont.
- **OregonWest** has verbally committed to launching the NH/VT suggested culinary tour with slight modifications so the group can fly/drive out of Boston.
- **The Travel Authority**, based in Pennsylvania, wants to bring back her New Hampshire tour and use North Conway as the hub.
- **Twin Travel Concepts**, based in New York, has graciously agreed to be our pods partner to introduce a new tour series either as a scheduled or guaranteed departure. DTTD and Vermont Tourism Network will work with the owner to design a program with his guidance.

TAPDance is a unique and rare opportunity for DTTD. If DTTD receives an invite for TAPDance 2016, it is highly recommended that DTTD attends and sponsors. The relationships with these leading tour companies are invaluable and any gesture that shows PPTP commitment goes a very long way in regards to tour planning decisions. This was DTTD's second year at TAPDance and New Hampshire has seen immediate new, sold-out tour booking after the first year and will build new tour programs for 2016.