

# 2019 NEBRASKA TOURISM CONFERENCE

## AGENDA OVERVIEW

### OCT. 22-24, NORTH PLATTE, NE

#### MONDAY, OCT. 21<sup>ST</sup>

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Open Registration

5:00 – 7:00 p.m. **Welcome Reception**

*Golden Spike Tower*

With only a few days in town and a jam-packed schedule, it's hard to get around to all the hot spots, so the Golden Spike Tower is bringing them all together with the "Taste of North Platte." Featuring a Salsa Bar from our local Mexican restaurants (Margaritas, San Pedro and La Hacienda, Pulled Pork and Brisket Sandwiches from Good Life on the Bricks. Tin Roof Sundae Ice-cream from the Double Dips Ice-Creamery. Home-made Pie Bar with the Lincoln Highway Diner. North Platte's famous, Popcorn Balls with the Pop Corner. Signature Smoothies from the Coffee Bin. Gyros through R&R Electric Eats. Another Round Sports Bar with Snap Shot Nuggets. Fettuccine Alfredo pasta and the best bread from Luigis. Lazy RW Signature Whiskey drinks, and Micro Brews with Pals Brewery.

Transportation will be provided from the Ramada by Wyndham beginning at 4:45. Watch the sun set over the world's largest railroad yard and enjoy delicious Nebraska food and beverages while you catch up with your tourism colleagues from across the state.

#### TUESDAY, OCT. 22<sup>ND</sup>

8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Open Registration

9:30 a.m. – 5:45 p.m. NETA Silent Auction Open

8:00 – 9:30 a.m. **Sports Nebraska Roundtable with Randy DuTeau**

*Breakout Room C*

Randy DuTeau, sports tourism industry consultant, will be attending the Sports Nebraska meeting to provide guidance in growing the organization and sports tourism in Nebraska. There will be many interesting discussions that you won't want to miss.

8:15 – 9:30 a.m. **Nebraska Festivals & Events Meeting**

*Breakout Room A*

Network with peers to share tips regarding planning and implementing festivals and events.

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. **Newcomer Orientation**

*Breakout Room B*

Is this your first time at the Nebraska Tourism Conference? Feeling lost and don't know anyone yet? You're not alone. Join the Tourism Commission Staff and other new attendees for an orientation designed with you in mind. Get the lowdown on what to expect from the conference and meet fellow newcomers, industry peers, and soon-to-be new friends.

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. **Nebraska Byways Meeting**

*Caboose*

9:45 – 11:45 a.m. **Commissioner Meeting**

*Breakout Room C*

12:00 – 12:20 p.m. **Conference Welcome & Lunch**

*North Platte River Room*

12:30 – 1:45 p.m. **Keynote Pink Goldfish**

*North Platte River Room*

*David Rendall*

Companies need to stand out in a crowded market place, but true differentiation is increasingly rare. Based on over 200 case studies, Pink Goldfish provides an unconventional seven-part framework for achieving competitive separation by embracing flaws, instead of fixing them.

1:45 – 2:15 p.m. Networking Break

2:15 – 3:30 p.m. **1<sup>st</sup> Round of Breakout Sessions**

**1A: Resources for Enhancing Small Business Cybersecurity Efforts**

*Breakout Room A*

*Greg Hollingsead*

Greg Hollingsead, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, will be sharing the importance of online security and safety. This session will educate conference attendees on the cybersecurity resources that are available to assist companies. These resources can help you enhance your cybersecurity resiliency, cyber incident response, and recovery capabilities. Greg will also discuss the various cyber threats targeting companies and the need to have a cyber-incident response plan.

**1B: Using Quirky Events to Generate Revenue**

*Breakout Room B*

*Vicky Soderberg*

Events are the lifeblood of a community but sometimes they are also the bane of existence for organizers. Even worse, many are totally forgettable and have had the same 2,000 attendees since the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

What if your events were experiences that energize organizers, make volunteering appealing, and demonstrate an impact that entices more sponsors? From fire ant festivals and cow bingo to goat kick offs and ½ K races, sometimes the strangest and quirkiest ideas bring festival lovers and their cash to your community's bank account. Join us to learn how to channel your inner weirdness and set yourself up for success. Success that includes a solid economic return, repeat visitors, and maybe even a little more sanity in your life.

**1C: Making an Impact: Working with and Measuring Influencer Success**

*Breakout Room C*

*Amber Steffens & Deborah Park*

What does getting a "like" on a social post even mean and how does it translate to your business goals? TURNER will explore methods for working with influencers, measuring social media impact and how to interpret the data to show progress toward overall marketing KPIs for personal and professional brands. This panel will explore best practices for working with influencers, including how to determine

which influencers to work with and developing an itinerary that meets their specific needs. We'll distinguish the difference between having a large following and a large engagement; leveraging Google Analytics integration and the value of UTM links; and other invaluable metrics that demonstrate social media success.

3:30 – 4:00 p.m. Networking Break

**4:00 – 5:15 p.m. 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of Breakout Sessions**

**2A: Star Grazing: Beefing Up Astrotourism Offerings in Nebraska**

*Breakout Room A*

*Jenna Bartja*

One third of the world's population and more than eighty percent of Americans cannot see the Milky Way from where they live. Thus, more and more people are searching for destinations where they can enjoy brilliantly starry nights amidst un-light-polluted dark skies. Recent studies have shown the market for astrotourism is growing and its potential economic impact goes well beyond tourist spending. With a little guidance, Nebraska has great potential to become an astrotourism destination. However, the pace of growth and eventual magnitude of night-sky tourism will depend on the willingness of local stakeholders to embrace and promote their region's assets. Attend this presentation to learn how parks and local communities can begin to view their dark skies as a valuable resource to be protected and leveraged in terms of local economic growth and development.

**2B: Lodging Tax Panel**

*Breakout Room B*

*Karen Barrett, Mike Kesselring, Jim Steele, Roger Jasnoch*

Counties of all sizes can benefit from collecting Lodging Tax. To build on last year's sessions, Panelists will share stories on how Lodging Tax Dollars and the Occupation Tax have been used to grow tourism in their counties. Panel includes: Karen Barrett, Nebraska Department of Revenue; Mike Kesselring, Sioux County Tourism; Jim Steele, Dakota County Tourism; Roger Jasnoch, Buffalo County Tourism.

**2C: Best practices for brainstorming, creating and submitting field guide content for VisitNebraska.com**

*Breakout Room C*

*Samantha Crespo*

What's a field guide to Nebraska, and how can you make the most of this FREE opportunity to share your unique destination with visitors? Samantha Crespo (Miles Partnership Content Director and Editor of print and digital initiatives for the Nebraska Tourism Commission) will share best practices for brainstorming, creating and submitting field guide content for VisitNebraska.com. Bonus: The session will be packed with additional tips for creating print and digital content that's both inspiring and effective for winning visitors and increasing stays.

6:00 – 9:00 p.m. **North Platte Community Showcase**

*Wild West Arena*

Experience North Platte's Brand of Hospitality at the Nebraska Tourism Conference community showcase event at the NEBRASKALand DAYS Wild West Arena. Feast on a prime rib dinner, complete with a drink ticket for some delicious adult beverages hosted by NEBRASKALand DAYS. One drink ticket per person, then cash bar. Enjoy a

Dutch oven dessert or make your own s'mores. And, they may not be for everyone, but why not try calf fries to find out if they're for you? Try your luck at branding and throwin' a rope, then sit back and enjoy live music from Big Daddy B and the Wrecking Machine.

The fun will be inside a large tent and overhead heaters will be blasting the heat, but you'll want to dress appropriately for outdoor activities in the October weather.

Buses will depart the Ramada by Wyndham for the Wild West Arena beginning at 5:45pm. The last bus will depart at 6pm. Buses will begin returning guests to the Ramada by Wyndham beginning at 7:30pm, with the last bus departing the Wild West Arena at 9pm.

### **WEDNESDAY, OCT. 23<sup>RD</sup>**

7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Open Registration

8:00 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. NETA Silent Auction Open  
*Exhibitor Area*

7:00 – 8:00 a.m. **Nebraska Tourism Commissioner's Breakfast Roundtable**  
*Breakout Room C*

Jumpstart the second day of the conference with this networking session. You can enjoy the most important meal while getting to know your District's Commissioner. Not sure what District you're in or who your Commissioner is? Don't worry – we've got you covered. We will have all that information and can even introduce you.

8:15 – 8:30 a.m. **Conference Welcome & Housekeeping Announcement**  
*North Platte River Room*

8:30 – 8:50 a.m. **Legislative Update**  
*North Platte River Room*

Stay in-the-know with legislation revolving around tourism. Andy Pollock will cover everything that's happening in our state legislature, how it is impacting the industry, and how it applies directly to you.

8:50 – 9:00 a.m. **Sponsor Recognition**  
*North Platte River Room*

9:00 – 10:15 a.m. **Keynote Introduction to Brand USA's International Marketing Efforts**  
*North Platte River Room*

*Christopher Thompson*

Chris Thompson, the President and CEO of Brand USA, will present an overview and update on our country's official DMO and its work to drive international visitation to the United States. Chris will share with attendees what types of marketing Brand USA is deploying to entice visitors from around the globe, what countries Brand USA is targeting with its marketing, what strategies and tactics they are utilizing to inspire and drive actual visitation, and what he sees as our biggest challenges and opportunities when it comes to attracting global visitors.

10:15 – 10:45 a.m. Networking Break

10:45 – 12:00 p.m. **1<sup>st</sup> Round of Breakout Sessions**

**3A: Sports Tourism as Economic Development**  
*Breakout Room A*

*Randy DuTeau*

Sports tourism is an \$11 Billion annual industry. Communities' large and small benefit from hosting sports tournaments and events in a tourism segment that seem to defy the economy. In this session, Randy DuTeau will give insight into the processes involved in developing a sports tourism program. This will include identifying suitable events for a community, providing service for rights holders, and maximizing local sports groups for finding event leads, getting sports-specific knowledge, and garnering event volunteer support.

### **3B: Opportunities with Brand USA**

*Breakout Room B*

*Maria Sheetz*

Each year, Brand USA deploys market driven programs to increase inbound visitor travel to the USA and drive international tourism to communities all across the USA. In this session, you will learn the resources available to you through Brand USA so your destination can begin to market internationally. Gain an understanding of the available co-marketing opportunities and come learn how to drive engagement with international travelers ultimately leading to increased visitation and spend in your community.

### **3C: Exceeding Motorcoach Expectations Together**

*Breakout Room C*

*Vicki Osman & Melanie Hinton*

Learn how the tourism industry comes together to attract business to Nebraska and your location. What are tour operators and group leaders looking for, how do we distinguish Nebraska as the place for groups to come and what resources and tools are out there. Learn and share ideas on how we all can work together and engage in the forthcoming opportunities to help destinations AND individual businesses exceed motor coach and group travel expectations.

**12:00 – 12:15 p.m. Lunch Served**

*North Platte River Room*

**12:15 – 12:30 p.m. Sponsor's Recognition & Pitch**

*North Platte River Room*

**12:45 – 1:45 p.m. Nebraska Tourism Strategic Plan**

*North Platte River Room*

**1:45 – 2:15 p.m. Networking Break**

*\*Please note that NETA's Silent Auction will close at 2:15 p.m.*

**2:15 – 3:30 p.m. 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of Breakout Sessions**

### **4A: Panel of Grant Experts – Learn How to Stand Out & Receive the Grant Funding You Want**

*Breakout Room A*

*Heather Hogue, Rachel Morgan*

Want to find out if your event, community, or region is eligible for grant funding? Heather Hogue, Nebraska Tourism Commission and Rachel Morgan, Nebraska Arts Council will walk you through grant

cycles and guidelines. Both panelists will bring their own area of expertise to the table, providing examples of how their grants can promote economic development and tourism efforts in your area. They will offer recommendations and insider tips for applicants. More importantly, they will provide advice on how to make your application shine and ways on how you can stand out amongst the ever-growing application piles.

#### **4B: Trends, Tribes, and the Expectations that are Changing Travel**

*Breakout Room B*

*Anne Faricy & Cody Gore*

We will cover shifts in desired destinations, booking, diverse target audiences, and how brands in tourism and hospitality are ever evolving for today's travel landscape.

#### **4C: The Secret to Attracting Group Tour Operators and Keep them Coming Back for More**

*Breakout Room C*

*Shebby Lee, Joey Spellerberg, Vicki Osman, Melanie Hinton*

If you've ever wondered how to tap into the group tour market, but didn't know where to turn first, this session is perfect for you. The group tour market does not consist of your average leisure travelers. This market wants to be treated like VIPs and enjoy activities that the general traveling public isn't able to experience. During this session, we'll have two group tour operators and a representative from the American Bus Association (a leader in the group tour market) on a panel to share with you the "ins and outs" and trade secrets to create dynamic group itineraries, attract more group operators to your area or destination, and develop exciting group activities that will continue to attract repeat business. Panel members include Shebby Lee from Shebby Lee Tours, Joey Spellerberg from Moostash Joe Tours, and Vicki Osman from the American Bus Association. It's time to get those motorcoaches rolling!

3:30 – 4:00 p.m. Networking Break

*\*Winners of the NETA Silent Auction are able to pick up their items in the exhibitor room*

4:00 – 5:15 p.m. **General Session Nebraska Tourism Marketing Update**

*North Platte River Room*

6:00 – 6:50 p.m. **Celebrate Nebraska Reception**

*Niobrara & Dismal River Rooms*

Spend some quality time mingling during the Celebrate Nebraska Reception. This event will be the start to an evening long celebration. It will include hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and music. Bring your old and new friends to reflect on our industry's year of success!

7:00 – 9:00 p.m. **Celebrate Nebraska Awards Banquet**

*North Platte River Room*

Join us as we close out the 2019 Nebraska Tourism Conference by celebrating the Nebraska Tourism Industry's best and brightest at the Celebrate Nebraska Awards Banquet! Plan to dress up and enjoy a mouth-watering dinner prepared by Chef Lalanne's Canteen Bar & Grille. Following the main course, the Nebraska Tourism Industry Awards and the prestigious Henry Fonda award will be presented. We will recognize the outstanding industry members, attractions, and events. You won't want to miss this party!

## THURSDAY, OCT. 24<sup>TH</sup>

### 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. **Nebraska Travel Association (NETA) Meeting**

*Breakout Room C*

Join us to learn about NETA and Nebraska's Tourism Industry. This meeting provides an opportunity for industry members to exchange ideas, network with partners, promote local programs, and participate in the state's tourism development. NETA is a diverse group of individuals from every segment within the tourism industry. Not a member? That's okay, come see what it is all about.

### 8:00 – 11:00 a.m. **North Platte Coffee & Donut Send Off**

*North Platte CVB*

Cement the new-found relationships you've made at the Nebraska Tourism Conference by joining fellow attendees for a coffee and donut reception at the North Platte Visitor Center, 101 Halligan Drive on Thursday morning from 8am to 11am. It's right across the street from the Ramada by Wyndham. Bring your travel mugs and fill up for the road!