

FY2018–2020 DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

# *Strategic Plan*



*South Dakota*

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

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### *Introduction*

In 2016, the team at the Department of Tourism enlisted the help of Coraggio Group out of Portland, OR, to assist with an extensive strategic planning process, including a structural reorganization. We wanted to create a strategic plan that allowed us to leap forward as a department, and as an industry.



At the outset, it was clear that the department's strategic planning process was going to be a healthy and productive undertaking. Discussions amongst the team centered around being proud South Dakotans, being passionate about seeing the tourism industry succeed, and coalescing around the idea that every traveler should spend at least a little time in South Dakota.

## STAFF INPUT

Staff surveys and interviews revealed that the team felt positive about the department's direction and culture. It was evident from the responses that the culture was solid, there was a strong desire for excellence, and the team had a servant mindset. However, there was room for improvement.

Two main areas of improvement emerged from staff input:

- 1 A need to realign our current structure to better meet the needs of our stakeholders and the changing trends in marketing strategy.
- 2 A desire to clearly define our goals and vision to guide our future work.



“WE ALWAYS NEED TO KEEP IN MIND THAT OUR ROLE  
IS TO BE OF *service to the industry* –  
THAT THEY CAN TURN TO US FOR SUPPORT.”

– SECRETARY JIM HAGEN





The Department of Tourism cannot function in a vacuum. Without input and collaboration from the tourism industry, the department's work won't benefit those it's meant to serve. Once staff input was gathered, it was time to move the discussion outside the walls of our department and listen to what the industry had to say about our work moving forward.

## STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

The department sent surveys to our tourism industry email database and received 264 responses. The responses represented a solid mix of regions and business types, from lodging and attractions to CVBs, Chambers, event committees and DMOs.

### PERCEPTION OF THE DEPARTMENT

- Innovative
- Professional
- Progressive
- Knowledgeable
- Supportive

### UNDERSTANDING

- 86% of respondents said they understood the department's primary mission.
- Respondents believed the department's mission was critical to South Dakota's tourism industry and they wanted more access to programs that could help their businesses/organizations thrive.

### SUPPORT

- Stakeholders said they wanted to see more support of small businesses and communities through marketing and a more equitable distribution of promotional funds and focus.
- Stakeholders valued the department's focus on increasing South Dakota's brand exposure nationally and wanted a higher level of stakeholder engagement in the marketing efforts.



## STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE

In addition to the stakeholder survey, the department wanted to dig in a little deeper with some tourism industry partners to gain an even greater wealth of insight into the future of the industry. As the roundtable progressed, some specific ideas and thoughts emerged. These ideas and thoughts are what ultimately informed the five major areas of focus for the department for the next three to five years.

The stakeholders were asked what they believed were the most important questions the strategic plan needed to address. Those questions were:

- 1 How can we stay ahead of our closest competitors in terms of product development and marketing presence?
- 2 How do we prioritize our marketing efforts for certain niches and demographics?
- 3 Is the department prepared to succeed in moving its market-share in the future? If not, what is needed?
- 4 How do we grow funding for product and destination development?
- 5 How do we stay ahead of the curve?
- 6 How does the department help the industry address challenges like crumbling infrastructure, ever-changing technology, and price-gouging?







FROM THIS INPUT, OUR *strategic anchors* BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE.



## Vision

Our vision is what we project to those outside of our department, how we want visitors to see South Dakota, and the ideal future state we are trying to create.

**“With world-renowned monuments, breathtaking landscapes, rich culture and heritage and warm hospitality, South Dakota inspires a heightened sense of freedom and optimism and is one of America’s most desired and meaningful vacation destinations.”**



## Mission

Our mission is what we bring to the table; the reason our department exists.

**“We work to maximize tourism’s impact on South Dakota’s economy by increasing domestic and international travel to our state.”**



## Values

The five values of the Department of Tourism are the tenets by which we live and work, day-in and day-out. These values shape the way we interact with and treat one another, and they inform how we approach our work.

- 1 Collaborative Culture
- 2 Passionate Enthusiasm
- 3 Communicative
- 4 Can-do Attitude
- 5 Safe Place to Cultivate Ideas



## Brand Intention

The brand intention is the enduring perception of our department. We know we’re not the ones that own our brand, our stakeholders do. So, we asked ourselves what experience we intend to create for our industry - how do we want stakeholders to describe us after interacting with our team?

- 1 Collaborative
- 2 Innovative
- 3 Leader
- 4 Responsive
- 5 Inspiring



## Culture

Our culture is how we view ourselves and our workplace. It is a manifestation of the ideal environment and state of mind required to remain competitive, and it speaks to our aspirations as a team.

**“We are proud South Dakotans who share a passion for our state, its people and beautiful places. Our team strives for excellence in creative marketing, innovative thinking and attentive service to our industry. We take pride in our can-do attitude and aspire to be a leader among state tourism offices nationwide.”**



# Areas of Focus

These are the non-negotiables. Our areas of focus will guide the department's work over the course of the strategic plan and will be the anchors for decision making. Each of these areas will be measured by a set of objectives, which will be carried out by several key initiatives.

## . AREA OF FOCUS . No 1

### MAXIMIZE SOUTH DAKOTA'S VISITOR ECONOMY

#### ANNUAL OBJECTIVES

- Increase year-over-year tourism-related economic impact by 2%
- Increase year-over-year tourism-related jobs by 1%
- Increase year-over-year visitation by 1.5%
- Increase year-over-year visitor spending by 2%
- Increase year-over-year contribution to state and local tax revenue by 2%
- Increase year-over-year tourism promotion tax revenue by 2%

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

- The Department of Tourism continually works to maximize the tourism industry's impact on South Dakota's economy, which means increased revenue and growth for everyone.



## AREA OF FOCUS NO 2

### ENHANCE & EXPAND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY SUCCESS

#### OBJECTIVES

- Implement a minimum of three new marketing opportunities
- Provide at least one new training and development program for industry stakeholders each year

#### INITIATIVES

- Research and develop new marketing opportunities
- Evaluate need for new co-op structure and make recommendations
- Conduct industry training needs assessment
- Improve industry reporting and communication
- Increase the department's visibility across the state

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

- A major goal for us is to ensure our industry partners have the resources needed to succeed, whether that's information on the latest trends, opportunities to plug into the department's marketing efforts, or research on South Dakota's target audiences.







## . AREA OF FOCUS . No 3

### MAINTAIN & EXPAND SOUTH DAKOTA'S BRAND PRESENCE

#### OBJECTIVES

- Increase year-over-year earned media impressions
- Test one new domestic market through either Global Travel and Trade, PR or paid marketing efforts
- Implement one new high-exposure, innovative marketing effort
- Improve year-over-year consumer engagement as measured by
  - Increased web traffic
  - Increased social engagement
  - Increased inquiries

#### INITIATIVES

- Identify one new high-exposure, innovative marketing effort
- Develop a strategy to increase earned media impressions
- Develop a strategy to increase consumer engagement
- Increase international and domestic tour options
- Expand investment in Brand USA
- Research new and emerging markets

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

- The Department of Tourism works to inspire travelers and ultimately convince them to choose South Dakota as their vacation destination. When we invest in research that helps us create an integrated marketing approach, expand our reach, and build awareness for South Dakota in the most efficient way possible, we're increasing the odds that our target audiences will step across our borders and into one of your communities or businesses.



## . AREA OF FOCUS . No 4

### ADVANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESTINATION

#### OBJECTIVES

- Quantify consumer demand baseline for:
  - Tribal tourism
  - Adventure tourism
  - Sports tourism
  - Agritourism
- Facilitate destination development guidance

#### INITIATIVES

- Maintain/elevate participation in state and national policy discussions
- Foster an entrepreneurial spirit within the department and the tourism industry
- Conduct feasibility study for new product offerings: Tribal, Adventure, Sports, Agritourism

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

- A healthy and growing tourism industry means a healthy and growing South Dakota. The Department of Tourism is committed to aiding in destination development and putting a special emphasis on four niche areas that we know hold tremendous potential for the industry. Additionally, this area of focus guides our work in ensuring South Dakota's tourism industry has a voice in both state and national policy discussions.







## . AREA OF FOCUS . No 5

### ENSURE OPERATIONAL SUCCESS

#### OBJECTIVES

- Ensure no more than 2% turnover in department talent
- Ensure 95% overall employee engagement
- Achieve 100% employee participation in at least one learning and professional development offering every year
- Immediately address process improvements when identified

#### INITIATIVES

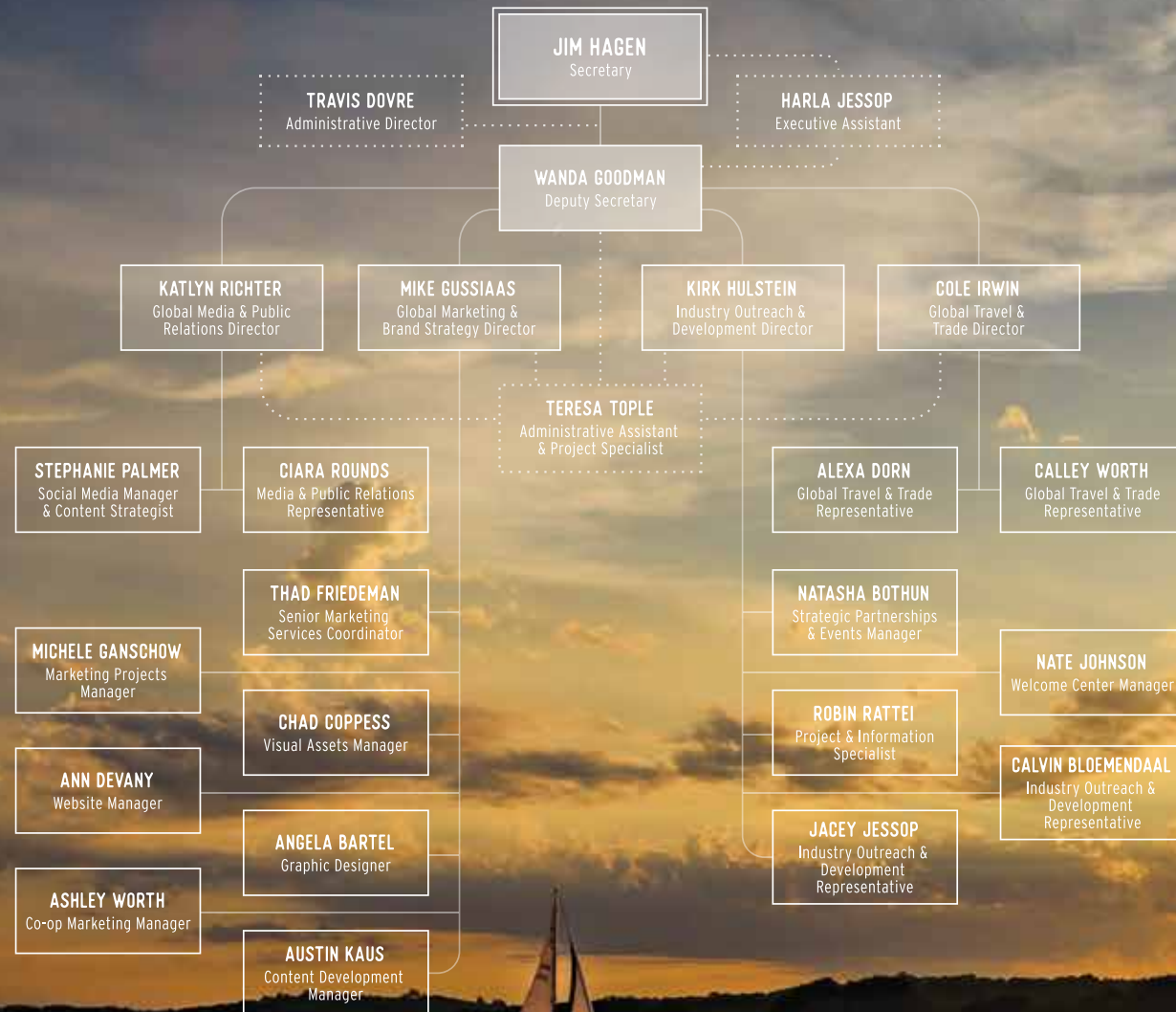
- Develop department-wide knowledge sharing method
- Foster long-term employee happiness/retention
- Enhance internal communication channels
- Identify and implement core process improvement projects

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

- The Department of Tourism is only as good as its individual team members. This area of focus puts a spotlight on our team, so they have the resources and support they need to do their jobs. And the more productive our team can be, the more we can help the tourism industry thrive.



# SOUTH DAKOTA *Department of Tourism*



## Conclusion

As a department we are striving daily to accomplish the work we've laid out in this strategic plan. We have authored hundreds of action steps needed to achieve the objectives and initiatives in this document and we are well on our way to marking them complete. Ultimately, we want to be accountable to the tourism industry and keep pushing forward to achieve positive results. With this plan guiding the way, we have the utmost confidence that success will be realized.





*South Dakota*  
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

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