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Welcome to VISIT DENVER's quarterly *Policy Perspectives* newsletter highlighting local, state and federal issues impacting the tourism and hospitality industry.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Carrie Atiyeh, Director of Government & Community Affairs, at catiyeh@visitdenver.com or (303) 571-9466.



LOCAL NEWS



- VISIT DENVER unveiled the Denver Tourism Roadmap at its annual partner meeting. Many thanks to our partners, the community, elected officials, business leaders, visitors, meeting planners and others who contributed to this 10-year plan to grow Denver's tourism industry! Learn more and read the full report at: DenverTourismRoadmap.com
- In November, Denver voters passed [Initiative 300](#) to permit the social consumption of marijuana in licensed businesses. Metro area voters overwhelmingly supported [re-authorization of the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District \(SCFD\)](#). VISIT DENVER's Board of Directors did not take a position on Initiative 300 and supported SCFD re-authorization.

- Elected officials, business leaders, and tourism representatives participated in a [leadership trip to Dubai](#) with the goal of enhancing economic development opportunities, increasing tourism, and possibly attracting [Emirates airlines](#) to Denver International Airport.
- The accolades for Denver continue, great news for our residents and visitors alike! The Mile High City is the [#3 food city](#), one of the [Top 10 Best Cities in the U.S.](#), #19 on [Fodor's Go List 2017](#), Denver International Airport is ranked as the [3rd best airport in the country](#) and Denver tops the list as the [#1 place to live](#).
- CH2M has been selected as the [project manager for the National Western Center](#), as the site is redeveloped to be a year-round destination for arts, entertainment, competition and education.

STATE NEWS



- In November, [Colorado voters](#) opposed Amendment 69 to create a state-wide health care system, passed [Amendment 70](#) to increase the state minimum wage, and passed [Amendment 71](#) to make it more difficult to amend the state constitution. VISIT DENVER's Board of Directors opposed Amendment 69, remained neutral on Amendment 70 and supported Amendment 71.
- The Tourism Industry Association of Colorado (TIAC) will hold its Legislative Reception on Monday, January 23rd from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Brown Palace. This annual event is attended by many state legislators and raises money to support TIAC's advocacy efforts. For more information and to purchase tickets, please contact Janie McCullough at janiemc@comcast.net.
- The American Hotel and Lodging Industry released [Economic Impacts of the US Hotel Industry](#), which includes a state-by-state analysis. In 2015, Colorado had nearly 1,300 hotel properties offering 111,000 guest rooms and hotel sales totaling \$5.4 billion.
- The Colorado Legislative Council and Office of State Planning and Budgeting released their [December budget forecasts](#), which are slightly improved from previous forecasts, though the state

still faces a projected budget shortfall of \$119-169 million.

- Rocky Mountain National Park achieved [record visitation](#) in 2016. In 2015, the park welcomed 4.1 million visitors, for the first time surpassing 4 million, and as of November 2016 the park had welcomed 4.4 million people.
- Governor Hickenlooper has proposed using more than [\\$18 million in retail marijuana tax money](#) to support housing for chronically homeless, low income and behavioral needs individuals.

FEDERAL NEWS



- In November, Colorado voters re-elected U.S. Senator Michael Bennet to serve in the United States Senate. And, [U.S. Senator Cory Gardner](#) has been selected to lead the National Republican Senatorial Committee during the 2018 election cycle.
- President-elect Trump has proposed to invest up to \$1 trillion in the nation's [infrastructure projects](#) including roads, bridges and airports through public private partnerships and private investments from tax incentives. In addition, he has selected [Elaine Cho](#) to serve as the Secretary of Transportation.
- U.S. Travel Association (USTA), the national tourism advocacy organization, , celebrated its 75th anniversary in November 2016. A [commemorative book](#) highlights the travel and tourism industry during this time.
- Of the 38.4 million overseas visitors to the U.S. in 2015, more than 35% of them [visited a national park or monument](#) and these numbers are expected to rise in the coming years.
- Following a three year review, the U.S. Department of Transportation has approved low-cost [Norwegian Airlines](#)' flights between Europe and the U.S.
- The U.S. Travel Association issued a [2016 year in review](#) video highlighting travel and tourism at the

national level.

PARTNER PERSPECTIVES



CHLA's Metro Denver Lodging Council continues to monitor several issues at the City and County of Denver:

Gender Neutral Restrooms

Last month, the Denver City Council approved an amendment to the building code that changes [signage requirements for single-stall restrooms](#). Single-stall restrooms that had were previously required to be signed as "men's" or "women's" will become gender-neutral. No changes to fixtures for these restrooms is required by this change; however, new signage for existing restrooms must be in place by May 1, 2018. This change does not apply to multiple-stall restrooms.

Energize Denver

Last month, the Denver City Council passed an ordinance that, beginning in 2017, requires [commercial building owners](#) in Denver to find out the Energy Star score of their properties using the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star Portfolio Manager tool. The city will then publish the scores in a clickable map and searchable database. The ordinance applies to buildings that are 50,000 square feet and larger, but after the first year will apply to buildings 25,000 square feet and larger.

Short-term rentals

The short-term online rentals ordinance that was passed last summer is now law and all hosts of such units must register and remit lodger's tax to the City. There have been some challenges with the online

registration system and with getting hosts to comply with registration requirements. Additional information on the City's short-term rental ordinance and the online registration system can be found by [clicking here](#). CHLA President, Amie Mayhew is serving on the STR Advisory Committee and will continue to provide updates as appropriate.

Marijuana social clubs

Last November, Denver voters approved initiative 300, which created a four-year pilot program to allow businesses to apply for permits to allow for the social consumption of marijuana. Applicants for permits must have approval from a city-registered neighborhood organization or Business Improvement District.

Following the election, the Colorado Liquor Enforcement Division adopted a new rule that clarifies [liquor licensees cannot allow the consumption of marijuana](#) on their premises. In addition, the City must adopt rules regarding the ordinance, a process that is just beginning. CHLA's President, Amie Mayhew is serving on the [Committee](#) the City has formed to oversee the implementation of initiative 300. Additional information on the implementation of initiative 300 will be provided as it becomes available.

Should you have questions or need further information on anything that CHLA is working on, please don't hesitate to contact Amie Mayhew, President & CEO, at 303-297-8335 or amayhew@chla.com.



COLORADO RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

What to Expect in the 2017 Legislative Session

As you know, protecting and advancing the restaurant industry is our top priority as an organization. Because of that, we are heavily involved in state legislative activities every year. Here are some of the

issues we will address in 2017:

Employees who can purchase alcohol for restaurants. (Sen. Baumgardner, Rep. Singer) This is a clean-up bill to make sure that the way that restaurants currently operate can continue. There was an interpretation of a section of law that stated that only the Registered Manager (i.e. the person associated with your liquor license) of a restaurant can order alcohol for the establishment. Standard practice is different for an estimated 95% of restaurants – where a bar manager or F&B director, etc. is actually doing the ordering. We want to clean up the language to make it clear in Colorado Law that the Registered Manager or their designated employee can legally order alcohol for the restaurant.

Music Licensing (Rep. Lebsock)

Music Licensing is primarily dictated by Federal Law. However, certain rules regarding fair and open communication between music licensing organizations and restaurants (as well as other businesses) are written into Colorado Law. This bill will add additional protections for restaurants against being double charged. It will also require artist/song lists to be filed with the Secretary of State, and will help further clarify rights of restaurants regarding the playing of music.

Hours of Alcohol Service (Rep. Lebsock)

Representative Lebsock is running a bill regarding hours of alcohol service in Colorado and has requested our input. He is considering several versions to allow for an extension of hours beyond the 7:00 a.m. – 2:00 a.m. timeframe. A few years ago when this same issue surfaced, our members told us (via survey) that they had mixed opinions on hours of alcohol service. Regardless of what the bill looks like, we will absolutely fight against any constriction/reduction of hours of service in any part of the state.

Restaurant Inspections

In 2016, the CRA worked with many stakeholders on a bill impacting the retail foodservice inspection program. The bill included pushing for more uniformity in inspections from county to county and banned letter grading (A, B, C, D, F) as a way to communicate results to the public. We have learned that Colorado Counties Inc. will try and reverse some of the pieces of the bill from last year – including removing the ban on letter grading.

Age of Tavern Employees Serving Alcohol

In 2016, SB197 was passed as a compromise between Grocery Stores and Liquor Stores regarding alcohol sales. Unfortunately, that bill contained a drafting error that accidentally eliminated the ability for 18-20 year olds to serve alcohol in a Tavern that serves meals (when they are directly supervised by someone over 21). CRA will work with others in the liquor industry to correct this error as part of a broader clean-up bill.

Please contact Nick Hoover, Government Affairs Coordinator or Sonia Riggs, President & CEO, at 303-830-2972, should you have questions or need further information on anything that CRA is working on.



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