

[Click here](#) to view this message in a browser window.

January 2019



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 catiye@visitdenver.com or (303) 571-9466.

LOCAL NEWS



- We look forward to seeing you at the 20th Annual Denver & Colorado Tourism Hall of Fame dinner on Wednesday, March 13th at the Seawell Grand Ballroom! This year's inductees will be The Gart Family, John, Ken, Tom, The Gart Companies; Governor John Hickenlooper; Mary Motsenbocker, President, International Tourism Marketing; and, Enos Mills, Rocky Mountain National Park (Posthumous). The event supports the [VISIT DENVER Foundation](#) which provides scholarships to students pursuing hospitality degrees. Since its inception, the VISIT DENVER Foundation has awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships! Scholarship application deadline for the 2019-2020 academic year is March 15, 2019. Please help us spread the word about this great opportunity!
- Various stakeholders and partners are making numerous efforts to advance initiatives in the [Denver Tourism Roadmap](#), our 10-year strategic plan, particularly in regards to the goal of Enhancing Connectivity and Mobility:
 - The city has launched [Denver Moves Downtown](#), a comprehensive planning effort focused on transportation and mobility options specific to downtown.
 - Denver City Council passed new rules regarding [electric scooters](#) clarifying that they are to be used in bike lanes and on streets.
 - [Chariot](#), a shared van shuttle service, introduced a pilot program between downtown and Cherry Creek in the fall. However, it was just announced that Chariot is shutting down nationwide and Denver service will end later this month.
- The [United States Olympic Committee selected Salt Lake City](#) over Denver as its partner to bid on a future Winter Games. This unexpected selection process was two years earlier than the traditional USOC bid effort which was supposed to start in 2021.
- Denver's Department of Excise and Licenses is developing new regulations for [short-term rentals](#) to require a minimum of \$1 million liability insurance and to inform a Home Owners Association of short-term rental usage.

STATE NEWS



- The Tourism Industry Association of Colorado (TIAC) will host its annual legislative reception on Monday, January 28th from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Brown Palace Hotel. This is a great opportunity for the tourism industry to meet with newly elected and returning state legislators from across the state, we hope to see you there! To purchase tickets, please contact Janie McCullough at janiemc@comcast.net.
- Governor Polis has appointed [new Cabinet members](#) to his administration, including former U.S. Representative Betsy Markey as the executive director of the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) where the Colorado Tourism Office is housed.
- The 72nd Colorado Legislature convened on January 4th and Governor Polis was inaugurated on the 8th. Read first day speeches from [Senate President Garcia](#), [Senate Minority Leader Holbert](#), [Speaker of the House Becker](#), and [Housing Minority Leader Neville](#) along with [Governor Polis' inaugural address](#) and [State of the State speech](#).
- The I-70 Coalition is undertaking an economic analysis to determine the impacts of a [high-speed transit route](#) between Eagle County and Denver International Airport.
- Colorado's [outdoor recreation industry](#) is an economic powerhouse, supporting more than 500,000 jobs and generating \$62.5 billion, a doubling in just five years.
- With outdoor recreation tourism booming and the federal budget squeezed to operate and maintain trails and other outdoor amenities and resources, municipalities and other stakeholders are [picking up the tab](#) to ensure resources are protected.

FEDERAL NEWS



- The [partial shutdown of the federal government](#) is estimated to cost the U.S. travel economy more than \$100 million daily, according to the U.S. Travel Association.
- National parks welcomed a record 330 million visitors in 2017 but the level of impact these visitors are having is creating challenges for the [National Park Service](#) and nearby communities.
- As the United Kingdom prepares for Brexit, the US and UK have reached an agreement to preserve current air service access linking the two countries under an [Open Skies agreement](#).
- More than [81.3 million international visitors are expected to visit the U.S. in 2018](#), projected to increase to 95 million in 2023, according to recently released forecasts from the Commerce Department's National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO).

PARTNER PERSPECTIVES



The 2019 Legislative Session will prove to be a busy session for the Colorado Restaurant Association and many business groups. Many of the bills that have failed in recent years will likely be seen again and the outcome could be very different. The CRA has put together an aggressive strategy for this session in order to ensure that restaurants in Colorado are well represented and protected as much as possible.

The CRA has put together a legislative agenda that will allow us to gain some good will with elected officials, get ahead of some trending issues from other states that will likely be introduced in Colorado, and get some wins for restaurants at the same time. Here is a summary of bills the CRA is running or will be working to pass in the 2019 Legislative Session:

1. Tip Signage – Currently, if a restaurant includes non-tipped positions (cooks, dishwashers, etc.) in a tip pool they are required to post a very large sign with specific language. The required language makes it sound like the restaurant is keeping the tips, even though that is against federal law and is not the case. The bill we are running this year would remove the signage requirement, but still require a restaurant to provide customers a notification in another effective written means. It would allow the restaurant to place a notification on their menu, a table tent, or receipt, in their own words explaining that tips are shared with all employees who participate in creating the customer's dining experience. Additionally, we are putting federal law in to state law making it clear that owners, managers, and supervisors cannot participate in a tip pool.
2. Dogs on Patios – Currently, if a restaurant wants to allow dogs to be on their patios, outside of Denver, they need to get a variance from the food code. This is one of the most frequent phone calls the CRA receives from members. We are working to change Colorado law to allow restaurants to choose if they want to have dogs on their patio. We are modeling the legislation off of Denver's allowance for dogs on patios. If passed, every restaurant in Colorado could choose if they will allow customers to bring their dogs onto the restaurants patio.
3. Straws on Request – One of the issues that is moving around the country right now is packaging bans. Knowing that this is likely going to come to Colorado, the CRA is proactively running legislation that would set a statewide standard when it comes to the use of straws in restaurants. It would require restaurants to only provide a straw when requested by the customer. Restaurants would still be able to use plastic straws and the bill would exclude specific situations like drive-thrus, delivery, and a few others. It would also prohibit a local government from requiring restaurants to use compostable straws or banning them outright.
4. Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act – We are working with a coalition to change the Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act to ban the smoking of electronic cigarettes indoors where cigarettes are already banned. It doesn't change other provisions effecting restaurants like patios and distance restrictions from doors other than the main entrance. If a municipality has a law that goes further than state law, the restaurant would still need to follow the local ordinance.
5. House Bill 19-1014 Changes State Food Code Civil Penalties – We are working with a coalition to make changes to how civil penalties are assessed under the Colorado Food Code (does not change civil penalties in Denver). The changes will allow local health departments to focus on the businesses that need support instead of requiring them to run every single violation to the ground. It will make the

best use of local health department resources and will reduce the number of required re-inspections while still ensuring food safety. This legislation has been negotiated for almost 8 months with stakeholders that included restaurants, grocery stores, the state health department and local health departments.

Additional bills that we expect to be introduced in 2019 include:

1. Family and Medical Leave Insurance
2. Elimination of the Local Minimum Wage Preemption
3. To Go Packaging Restrictions
4. Liquor Law Changes

As part of the CRA's 2019 strategy, we are increasing the size of our current Government Affairs team. We are adding an in-house position who will likely focus on local government affairs issues, while assisting on state issues when needed. Additionally, we have hired an additional lobbying firm to represent the CRA at the Colorado Capitol.

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.

Copyright © 2018 Visit Denver

Our address is 1555 California St Suite 300, Denver, CO 80202

If you do not wish to receive future email, [click here](#).

(You can also send your request to **Customer Care** at the street address above.)