

Governor's Council on Travel and Tourism  
Minutes February 6, 2026  
Docking State Office Building  
915 SW Harrison St, Ste 300

Council Members in Attendance: Susie Santo, Susie Coleman, Chuck Magerl, Bridgette Jobe, Laura Rose Clawson, Kim Anspach, Alexis Radil, Simone Elder, Janet McRae, Donna Price, Patrick Zollner, Tobias Schlingensiepen.

Kansas Tourism staff in Attendance: Jaimee Salalac, Jordan Roemerman, Julianna Hagen, Andrea Etzel.

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM by Bridgette Jobe in Chair Karen Hibbard absence.

Bridgette introduced and welcomed new member Representative Tobias Schlingensiepen to the council. Bridgette announced Suzan Barnes term expired and she will not be renewing – TIAK seat open. Council members then made introductions.

Donna Price moved to approve the minutes from November 7, 2025. Janet McRae seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

There were no requests to make public comments.

Bryan Schultz, Kansas State Fair General Manager – Bryan gave an overview of the Kansas State Fair and presented 2024 data for the estimated economic and fiscal impacts. Handouts were provided to council members.

Jordan Roemerman, Deputy Director for Kansas Tourism provided an initial report on the Kansas Day Campaign. The campaign included the release of a new Kansas video and a social media giveaway of 34 boxes filled with Kansas themed items.

- Preliminary Results – Still has about a week for ad set.
  - Total Video Views- Up 36.5% YOY
  - Facebook Engagements – Up 147.9% YOY
  - Instagram Reaction – Up 325.4% YOY
  - Social Media Followers – Up 3, 050

Andrea Etzel, Kansas! Magazine Publisher presented on the 2026 KANSAS! Kid issue

- Kansas Magazine Subscribers and Kansas 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Graders received the Kansas! Kids' Issue for Kansas Day. 140,000 copies were printed and distributed. Additional copies were made available to order through the website, travelks.com.
- Andrea invited council members to visit Kansas! Magazine's 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary temporary exhibit on February 11, 2026, from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM at the Kansas Museum of History.

Bridgette Jobe provided information on the following programs in her Directors Report.

- Monthly Reports Packet- October, November and December and the 2026 Kansas Travel Guides were provided to council members. She also mentioned that listings for the 2027 Travel Guide are already open.
- Grants:
  - Currently reviewing Attraction Development Grant applications and will announce awardees in early March. Kansas Tourism has \$1M to grant this fiscal year.
  - Received 41 applications with \$4 Million in request.
- Legislative Session:
  - HB2481 – Transient Guest Tax - Would remove the two-bedroom requirement to qualify as a hotel or motel and would require the collection of TGT and sales tax from the rental of a one-bedroom accommodation. Amends KSA 12-1692.
  - HB2346 – Sports Tourism Grant. This would establish a grant program in the Dept of Commerce to provide matching grants to tourism or sports related organizations to support attracting sports tourism events to the state. The grants are based on post-event data. Dept of Commerce is neutral on this bill and believe a program like this could be highly impactful but have requested changes that they believe would enhance the program and to allow it to be used to recruit new business to the state and would ensure it is supportive of events in smaller communities.
  - SB393 –This would authorize the sale of alcoholic beverages 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, between the dates of June 11 – July 19, 2026 – during the world cup.

- Budget:
  - Department of Commerce budget which includes Tourism has had hearings in both the House Ag and Natural Resources and Senate Commerce. Still a long way to go but at this time the Tourism budget and the Sunflower Summer budget have both been held to the FY25 appropriation amounts.
- TIAK Destination Capitol Hill:
  - TIAK (Travel Industry Association of Kansas) will be holding their annual Destination Statehouse Capitol Hill on February 11 and February 12, 2026. On February 11 from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Kansas Tourism is inviting attendees to a special viewing of the newly renovated Kansas Museum of History and a temporary Kansas! Magazine exhibit. Bridgette invited the council member to join.
- World Cup:
  - Tourism continues to work with tourism partners to ensure their listing are up to date on Travelks.com. KC 2026 will pull information from the state's website for the official FIFA World Cup App's Kansas City pages.
  - If rumors are true, Kansas City could end up with 4 team base camping here.
  - Kayla Savage, Dept of Commerce liaison for KC2026, provides updates on the monthly huddles and at least once a month in the weekly e-newsletter that goes out to the tourism industry. Bridgette asked council member to reach out if they have any questions from attractions, dining, lodging and she will get them to the correct person.

#### Council Industry Members updates:

- Ken Corbett, Kansas Sport Hunting Association – Absent
- Travel Industry Association of Kansas – Seat open
- Susie Coleman, Fuel Marketing Association - Susie reported on the fuel market. Retail stores are slow. People are anxious for March and warmer weather.
- Rob Bergquist, Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association - Lodging – Bridgette reported in Rob Bergquist absence - Q4 ended slow in mid-west travel but the year has started off on pace with 2025, so we are not seeing a downturn. We are still seeing massive price fluctuations on food, beverage, and supplies so flowing any kind of profit is very difficult for hotels and restaurants right now. That combined with labor that is more expensive than it's ever been. Overall looking for a positive trend in travel in this area with World Cup and all the other smaller things happening this year.
- Chuck Magerl, Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association – Chuck reported on the restaurant and hospitality industry. Free State Brewing Company has been nominated for the 2026 USA Today 10 Best Readers' Choice award for Best Brewpub. Chuck will send information to Jordan so that Kansas Tourism can share with the industry.
- Simone Elder, Kansas Sampler Foundation – Simone has been Director for a month and is working on building her team. Monica Fry has joined the team as Program Manager and Karley Frederick is the WeKan Program Manager. They are currently pushing renewals and new memberships. Postcard project – You'll receive a postcard to send a short, personal note encouraging legislators to keep rural Kansas front and center in budget decisions. The Big Kansas Road Trip Pop Up for 2026 will be held in Humboldt on May 1-2, 2026.
- Alexis Radil, Kansas Museum Association – The 2025 KMA Conference - Meet in the Middle was held on Nov 19, 2025, in Great Bend, about 100 people attended. The 2026 KMA Conference will be held in Atchison, November 4-6, 2026. American Alliance of Museums (AAM) Museum Advocacy Day in Washington DC will be held on February 23-24 where attendees will meet with Kansas Congressional Delegation on Capitol Hill to advocate for museums and funding support. March Madness kicks off March 17, 2026.

#### Ex-Officio Members provided updates:

- Patrick Zollner, Kansas Historical Society – The museum opened on November 22, 2025, with free admission for the remainder of 2025. \$2 million allotted to the new John Brown Visitor center. Working on staffing and operation for Curtis House.
- Laura Rose Clawson, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks – Laura reported that there is only 7 days left to get in for the Spring Turkey Draws. Hunting & Fishing Atlas will be available next month. State Parks will offer free entrance to all state parks on April 22, 2026. Spring shorebird migration is underway. Happy Little Tree Virtual 5K will be held April 18-26, 2026. Every step helps plant little trees in Kansas state parks. \$152 million contributed from State Parks. Bridgette asked Laura for the Economic Impact for state parks. Kansas Trails Appreciation Day is March 5, 2026.

Bridgette reminded council of the remaining 2026 Meeting dates – May 1, August 7, and November 6, 2026.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting by Janet McRae, Kim Anspach seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 AM CST.