

Governor's Council on Travel and Tourism
Minutes February 7, 2025
Kansas State Capitol, Auditorium 4-N

Council Members in Attendance: Kim Anspach, Karen Hibbard, Janet McRae, Donna Price, Suzan Barnes, Rob Bergquist, Chuck Magerl, Bridgette Jobe, Laura Rose Clawson, and Patrick Zollner

Kansas Tourism staff in Attendance: Rosa Cavazos, Babette Dixon, Andrea Etzel, Hunter Feyerherm, Kody Hardman, Jaimee Salalac, Jordan Roemerman, and Kelsey Wendling

Guests in Attendance: Sarah Moreland, Nicole Piel, and Allie Thomas

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Chair Karen Hibbard.

Council members made introductions.

Janet McRae moved to approve the minutes from November 15, 2024. Donna Price seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

There were no requests to make public comments.

Bridgette Jobe presented the Directors Report.

- House Bill 2037, "tourism clean-up bill" which adds 3 seats to the Council on Travel and Tourism, revises for-profit percentages for Attraction development grants, and updates language from when Tourism was at Wildlife and Parks passed the house and has been sent to senate.
- Budget update – this legislative session has brought a lot of process change. Kansas Tourism did request additional funding for World Cup marketing, Mobile Visitor Center, Sunflower Summer, and KANSAS! Kids publication. There is still a long way to go in the process before the budget is finalized.
- A handout was in the packet detailing the 13 communities that were awarded in the first round of Attraction Development grants for State Fiscal Year 2025. In total, \$401,400 was granted in this round.
- The Kansas Tourism 2024 Year in Review was handed out. The front page supplied tourism data collected for year of 2023 and the back listed accomplishments and awards for Kansas Tourism in 2024.
- Monthly reports for October, November and December were provided in the packet. These reports include hotel information, transient guest taxes collected, TravelKS.com performance and monthly highlights.
- Good News for Kansas Tourism, the newsletter that goes out every week to legislature has led to legislatures reaching out to Bridgette. The highest open rate is always during session. Plans are to continue to send this to legislators weekly.
- The Mobile Visitor Center took a break during the holidays but is now back on the road and scheduled most weekends through October.
- The TBEX Summit, which Kansas Tourism is co-sponsoring with Visit Wichita will be held in Oct 2025. As soon as the Summit concludes, Kansas Tourism will be hosting approximately twelve FAM tours.

Andrea Etzel, Kansas! Magazine Manager, presented on the successful KANSAS! Kids issue of KANSAS! magazine. For this project, we partnered with the State Historical Society, Department of Education, and Department of Wildlife and Parks. All 4th, 5th, and 6th graders in the state received an issue through their school prior to Kansas Day. It was sent to 115,155 students, plus we have received online 1,568 requests so far. The digital issue was linked to the Kansas Day page on TravelKS.com. On this page, 420 travel guides and 277 Byways guides have been requested in eight days. 833 Digital copies have been downloaded and the average read time is 6:34 minutes. 150,000 copies were printed.

Jordan Roemerman, Deputy Director, provided an update on the Kansas Day campaign. The campaign kicked off with the release of the Kansas Day video. She showed the video which featured kids talking about our state motto. The campaign collaborated with KANSAS! Kids by being linked to the same page and the QR code on the back of the issue linked to Kansas Day page with video. The organic social of Kansas Day helped us reach over 20K Instagram followers. Over the next few weeks, there will be 6 additional social reels that highlight an attraction in each region.

Rosa Cavazos, Tourism Special Projects Coordinator, presented on the Kansas 250 project. She shared the website at TravelKS.com/Kansas-250. The events page shows different ways of celebrating. The Daughters of the American Revolution group will be talking to all the city and county courthouses and asking them to place two lights for Paul Revere's ride on April 18 & 19.

Kansas 250 has worked with several businesses to promote Kansas 250 through their products, and they offer a Merchandise Store on the site.

Bridgette provided an update World Cup. The countdown has started, and January 27th represented 500 days to go. She is working with KC2026, by providing information about what is available for tourism to travelers throughout.

Council Industry Members updates

- Suzan Barnes, Travel Industry Association of Kansas. Suzan reported the last TIAK meeting was held on December 12th and the next meeting will be February 13th, following Destination Statehouse. The Kansas Tourism Conference will be held October 21st in Manhattan and will be the first 2-day conference vs 3-day.
- Rob Bergquist – Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association – Lodging. Rob reported businesses can officially charge people for credit card fees, but they must disclose the charges. He reported most businesses in his area are not charging the fees. The changes in food prices and availability have been a challenge but they are busy and back in business.
- Chuck Magerl – Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association – Restaurants. Chuck reports that consumers desire to eat out but also feeling the cost of inflation. There are still lots of unknowns and the challenges of changing menus due to availability and prices.

Ex-Officio Members provided updates

- Patrick Zollner, Kansas Historical Society. Patrick reported that 2025 marks the 150-year anniversary for the Historical Society. The current timeline for opening of the museum is October of 2025. The Curtis House is under contract to become a State Historical Site.
- Laura Rose Clawson, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Laura reported they will be working on a new website, their magazine, and coordinating engagement with the public and preparing for World Cup visitors.

Bridgette asked the group if they would prefer receiving calendar invites or continue receiving emails for meeting reminders. The group would prefer calendar invites.

Karen announced the next meeting is May 2, 2025. There was a motion to adjourn the meeting by Suzan Barnes, Donna Price seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 AM CST.