



## Session Updates, Spring & Summer Programs

February 2026

As the 101st Legislative Session winds down, TCSD has been extremely busy representing our members on issues ranging from ***gaming and hunting & fishing to economic development tools and property tax discussions***. Each of these policy areas directly impacts South Dakota's tourism industry, and we have worked diligently to ensure your voice was part of those conversations.

While the session winds down, our work certainly does not. We are actively preparing for our spring and summer initiatives, including our ***Statewide PR & Media Blitz*** leading up to National Travel & Tourism Week (NTTW). Below, you'll also see details on ***upcoming webinars*** designed to support and strengthen the industry.

At the federal level, we continue communication with our congressional delegation to schedule additional ***roundtable discussions*** and are awaiting confirmation on those meetings. Looking ahead, over the next four months we will begin ***community outreach meetings*** to discuss the ***Hotel BID modernization legislation that TCSD plans to introduce in 2027***. These conversations will be critical as we build understanding and alignment across the state. It will be a busy and exciting year — especially as we celebrate America's 250th. South Dakota is poised for great opportunities. As we move forward, growing our membership remains a priority. You can help by encouraging other businesses and organizations to join TCSD. A stronger membership means a stronger voice for tourism.

Here's to a great year ahead for South Dakota and our industry.

*Carmen Schramm - Executive Director*



### Help Us Grow TCSD!

Tourism is South Dakota's second-largest industry, yet TCSD is one of the smallest in terms of organized membership. You can help us change that. Refer a business or organization by sending an email introduction to the potential member. Include us, mention something that will benefit them, and encourage them to join. We will follow up and share the TCSD story and all we do for the



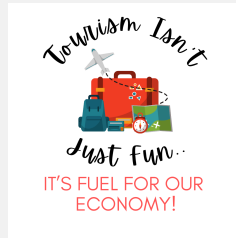
industry. You never know - there may be some cool swag coming your way if they join!

## Membership Challenge

## Statewide PR & Media Blitz Planning

April 27 - May 8, 2026

We've expanded the statewide event by kicking off a week earlier to generate media coverage leading into NTTW. Media visits and community outreach meetings will take place throughout that timeframe. We'll be connecting with DMOs and attractions to partner on interviews and highlight regional impact. More details coming soon!



## Election Year, Ballot Issues, etc.

Electing pro-tourism candidates ensures our industry's issues are taken seriously and that policies reflect the importance of tourism to South Dakota's economy. TCSD supports candidates who understand and recognize our value.

When ballot issues arise - including initiated measures, constitutional amendments, or referendums - that could impact tourism, our members look to TCSD to evaluate the proposal and take a position when appropriate.

Your financial support helps us represent the interests of South Dakota's tourism industry.

**Donate today!**

Donate to the TCSD Travel PAC



U.S. Travel's  
**DESTINATION  
CAPITOL HILL**

TCSD will be in Washington, D.C., April 14–15, 2026, with Travel South Dakota and hundreds of travel industry leaders from across the country to highlight the economic power of travel and

## Legislation Update

TCSD has been tracking legislation across twelve major policy categories.

That breadth shows something important - tourism touches so many policy conversations at the Capitol.

From air access to wildfire mitigation, from gaming to TIF's, from outfitters to property tax reform - tourism is woven into the economic framework of this state.

### Twelve Legislative Categories

- 3 Airport Bills
- 3 Gaming Bills
- 2 Wildfire Mitigation
- 12 Guide & Outfitter Bills
- 3 Hotel & Camping
- 2 Game, Fish & Parks
- 10 TIF Bills
- 3 State Economic Development
- 3 Mining
- 2 Alcohol
- 9 Property Tax / Tax Changes
- 4 Miscellaneous

As of the end of February - 35 bills we opposed or were monitoring were withdrawn or deferred. Five bills we supported have been passed and signed by the Governor.

Thank you to everyone who responded to our action alerts - you are making a difference! A complete recap will be provided next month after session ends.

## Increase H-2B Visa Cap for 2026

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) jointly announced on January 30 that they will increase the FY 2026 H-2B visa cap by 64,716 visas.

Originally they announced they would only be releasing 35,000 total supplemental visas. This changes the way visas are allocated, and there are no visas reserved for the country-

advocate for policies that position America for success during a historic decade of events. With the 2026 FIFA World Cup, America250, and the 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games on the horizon, these conversations are critical to ensuring our nation — and South Dakota — are prepared to seamlessly welcome millions of visitors.

specific allocations made available in prior years. To learn more - register for our H-2B webinar at <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/rdh5q9f>

## 2026 TCSD Board of Director Meetings

Board Meetings are held in communities across the state and are always open to our membership. As meeting details are confirmed, they will be added to the calendar on our website at [tourismcoalitionsd.com](http://tourismcoalitionsd.com). We encourage members to attend and stay connected to the conversations.

### Scheduled 2026 dates:

- **April 21** - Mitchell  
Bradleys Pub & Grille  
12:00pm CT
- **July 14** - Wall
- **October 13** - Pierre  
Annual Meeting/Ramkota

There may be additional planning meetings as we conduct our community outreach meetings. Stay tuned!



## 2nd Annual Tee Off For Tourism Golf Tournament - Mark Your Calendar!

**Thursday, September 17 | Hillsvie Golf Course - Pierre**  
The date is set - and we want you to add it to your calendar now! This event will rotate to different locations around the state each year. In 2026, we're headed to [Hillsvie Golf Course](#) in Pierre. More details will be shared this summer, but mark your calendar and plan to join us for another fantastic day supporting tourism advocacy across South Dakota!

## Welcome New TCSD Members

### Sioux Falls Zoo & Aquarium

805 S Kiwanis Ave.  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104

**Denise DePaolo - Director of PR & Marketing**

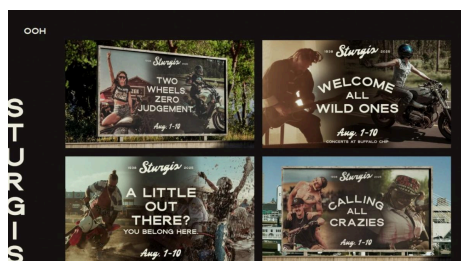
[ddepaolo@gpzoo.org](mailto:ddepaolo@gpzoo.org)

(605) 201-8087

[greatzoo.org](http://greatzoo.org)



SIoux FALLS ZOO & AQUARIUM



## Shout Out to Travel South Dakota

Travel South Dakota brought home seven Adrian Awards this week from the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMIAI), recognizing excellence in travel marketing. Selected from more than 800 global entries, these prestigious awards highlight the creativity, partnerships, and measurable impact driving

tourism growth across our state. Congratulations to Secretary James Hagen and the entire team and partners Karsh Hagan, Lou Hammond Group, Love Communications,

## Upcoming Webinars - Employment & Awareness

### **Save The Date: H-2B Visas for Next Season: Learn About This Staffing Solution for Your Organization!**

**Webinar | Wednesday, June 10 | 11:00 a.m. CT**

South Dakota employers — now is the time to plan for next season's H-2B visa petitions. Join us for a webinar featuring Attorney Keith Pabian of Pabian Law. He'll provide practical guidance, timely insights, and strategic tips to help you navigate the H-2B process with confidence. Whether you're new to H-2B or already

participating, this session will help you prepare early and stay ahead of key deadlines. Register here <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/rdh5q9f>

**H-2B Visas for Next Season: Learn About This Staffing Solution for Your Organization!**  
June 10, 2026 11:00AM (CT)  
via Google Meet  
Attend this webinar to help you understand how to successfully employ seasonal, international workers.

- Program Basics
- Practical Guidance
- Strategic Tips
- Timely Insight

**PABIAN LAW**  
Specializing in Immigration Law for the Hospitality Industry

**TCD**  
TOURISM COALITION OF SOUTH DAKOTA

### **Save The Date: Does Your Business Know the Signs of Human Trafficking? Webinar | Thursday, July 9 | 11:00 a.m. CT**

Human trafficking can occur anywhere people gather — including in tourism and hospitality settings. It is not always obvious and often does not involve visible signs like physical restraints. Traffickers frequently use force, fraud, or coercion, and victims may appear to be traveling with a family member, employer, or companion. Join us to learn how to recognize the signs and understand the role our industry can play in prevention and response. Register here <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/7z7scvk>



## Call to Freedom & Human Trafficking Awareness in the Tourism Industry

*Guest article by Becky Rasmussen, Call to Freedom*

The tourism and hospitality industry plays a critical role in preventing human trafficking. Hotels, transportation services, attractions, and visitor facing businesses are often on the front lines making awareness essential. Call to Freedom is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending human trafficking through prevention, intervention, and long-term aftercare for survivors. With offices in Sioux Falls and Rapid City, Call to Freedom provides local resources while partnering with communities to promote safe travel.

Human trafficking can occur anywhere people gather, including tourist destinations. It does not always involve physical restraints and may be difficult to recognize at first glance. Trafficking often relies on force, fraud, or coercion, and victims may be traveling with their trafficker, posing as a family member, employer, or companion.

Tourism professionals should be aware of common indicators of human trafficking, including:

- A guest who appears fearful, anxious, or submissive, especially when another person insists on speaking for them.
- Limited control over personal items, such as identification, money, or a phone
- Frequent room changes, refusal of housekeeping, or signs that multiple people are staying in a room meant for one.
- Inconsistent or scripted stories about travel plans, lodging, or relationships

- Signs of exhaustion, untreated injuries, or emotional distress

Victims may avoid eye contact, appear confused about their location, or seem unable to make basic decisions. It's important to remember that they may not ask for help due to fear, trauma, or threats.

If something doesn't feel right, do not intervene directly. Instead, follow your organization's reporting procedures and contact local authorities or trained organizations. Reporting concerns can protect both guests and staff while ensuring victims receive appropriate help.

Call to Freedom offers education and customized training opportunities designed to equip tourism and hospitality professionals with the tools to recognize and respond safely. Visit [www.calltofreedom.org](http://www.calltofreedom.org) to request a training for your staff and learn how your organization can be part of the solution.

Awareness is a powerful tool. Together, we can help protect visitors, employees, and our communities.



[Tourism Coalition of SD](#) | [Contact Us](#)

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