



Branson Fares Well in 2006 ABA Best and the Rest Survey

Destinations asked ABA-member operators to name the best in group travel. This year, they selected the best – and the rest – in destinations, attractions, performances, dining and more.

Nashville, the 2006 Marketplace host city, won the honor of top city, while Lancaster, Pa. was awarded the favorite non-big city locale. And the hot seats for this year's theater tours go to

the delightfully evil musical "Wicked," while the Oprah-produced "The Color Purple" appears to be the next big ticket event. And with such a wide array of performances, it's no surprise that theater remains at the top group activity. Branson, meanwhile, remains a perennial favorite, earning honors in two categories. Here are additional questions and responses:

Excluding New York, Branson and Washington DC, what are the top three U.S. cities in you visited during the past year?

1. Nashville
2. Chicago
3. Philadelphia

Top Canadian cities?

1. Niagara Falls, Ontario
2. Toronto, Ontario
3. Tie: Montreal, Windsor, Winnipeg

Last year, what was your top non-big city destination in North America?

1. Lancaster, Pa.
2. Branson, Mo.
3. Tunica, Miss.

At which North American destination do groups get the most bang for their buck?

1. Washington D.C.
2. Branson, Mo.
3. Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

Last year, what new itinerary/attraction is turning into a hot sell?

- Tie:**
- Top of the Rock
 - The Color Purple
 - Mystery Tours

Which CVB works the hardest to help package tours?

- Tie:**
- Birmingham, Ala.
 - Philadelphia, Pa.

What play, show, or theater performance are the hot tickets for 2006?

1. "Wicked"
2. "The Color Purple"
3. "The Lion King"

Which hotel chain best accommodates groups?

1. Hampton Inn
2. Drury Inn

What is the best themed restaurant for groups?

1. Hard Rock Café
2. Cracker Barrel
3. Rainforest Café

Besides Las Vegas, what is the best gaming destination for groups?

1. Atlantic City, N.J.
2. Tunica, Miss.
3. Mohegan Sun Casino

What are the most

popular tour activities:

1. Theater
2. Shopping
3. Gaming

What is the best roadside attraction for groups?

1. Farmer's Markets
2. Wineries



Photo Courtesy of Silver Dollar City

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|---|
| Best and the Rest Survey ... | 1 |
| Cooperative Marketing Calendar | 2 |
| FY08 Cooperative Marketing Program | 2 |
| Floating Season | 3 |
| Civil War | 4 |
| Listings for 2007 MVP | 4 |
| Calendar Dates | 4 |





South by Southeast

by John Robinson

It was one of those times when life imitates art.

The furious buzz startled me, as the intruder plunged toward me from the treetops. Before I could react, the bright yellow winged creature zipped around my head and landed in a flat field next to my car. I should've anticipated such a surprise. Earlier in the day, this same crop duster zigged and dived like a nighthawk, building imaginary roller coasters as it completed its rounds south of Poplar Bluff.

Right out of a Hitchcock movie – sans the paranoia and mistaken identity – the spectacle provided cheap entertainment, for sure. Every

crop duster pilot is one part business, one part showman and two parts, well, guts. In my mental b-roll, this aerobic demonstration shattered the thrill meters of scores of air shows I've seen over the years ... good ones, too. Crop dusters win because of, well, guts. And reality. These guys do this stuff for real. It's business.

It's a precise business, dropping inches over power lines and tree limbs to drop critter-killing cocktails on cotton. And it's dangerous business, too. At the end of almost every season, the pilot roster gets shorter.

I'm not surprised crop dusting theatrics don't draw bigger crowds. They don't publicize the show times. I mentioned that to a gathering in Essex the other night. The group was brainstorming about tourism. The organizer wanted to focus on two things: 1) tourism as a revenue producer, and 2) thinking outside the barn.

Piece of cake.

Too often, people go too long without checking their own pulse. Locals easily become inured to their surroundings. They lose perspective on what makes them unique. "Why would anybody come here?" is the second-most-repeated phrase I've heard in my short stint as Missouri's official tourism whipping boy.

We're all guilty of that shortsightedness, even some of my favorite coworkers. But as sure as there's a world's largest ball of twine, people will come see something unique.

Enough preaching. I've got some free time coming. Think I'll go rent a Hitchcock movie.

MDT Introduces FY08 Cooperative Marketing Program

The Division is pleased to announce that during September and October 2006, it will host educational seminars in Independence, Jefferson City, St. Louis, Sikeston and Springfield to introduce the FY08 Cooperative Marketing Program.

The Cooperative Marketing Program, a 50/50 matching funds reimbursement program, has been assisting destination-marketing efforts since FY95. The program combines the creative and financial resources of local professional nonprofit tourism destination marketing organizations with Missouri Division of Tourism resources in a partnership promoting Missouri tourism. Through this program, the division provides matching funds for approved, performance-based tourism marketing projects, ranging from brochure development and printing to media advertising.

These annual seminars provide important information for program veterans, and interested newcomers on program basics, what's new for the upcoming program year, the application process, certification and outcome measurement. Attendance is essential for all new organizations and any participating organization that has experienced staff changes. In addition, these meetings offer important networking opportunities with other experienced program participants.

The seminar schedule and registration information is available online at www.VisitMO.com in the Cooperative Marketing section. You will find the seminar information by clicking on "Industry Info," "Cooperative Marketing Program," then "Workshop and Seminar Information." Additional information is also available by calling 573-526-1551.

Cooperative Marketing Calendar

FY06 Program Schedule

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| June 30, 2006 | Program Year ends |
| Aug. 31, 2006 | Deadline for Quarterly Project Update/Reimbursement Request |
| Dec. 1, 2006 | Deadline for Project Summary |
| July 18, 2006 | Quarterly Project Update/Reimbursement Workshop HST Bldg., Jefferson City (time to be announced) |

FY07 Program

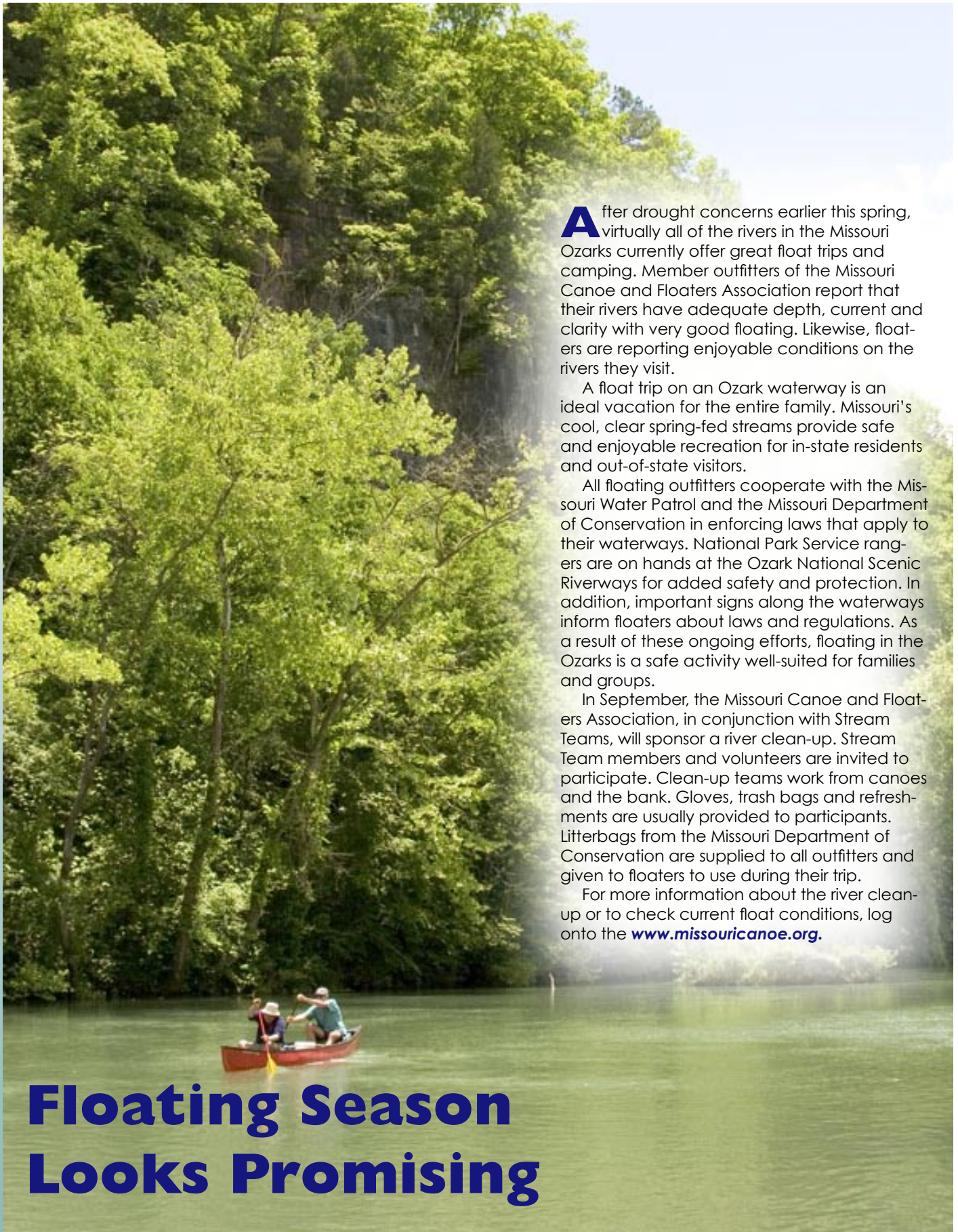
| | |
|--|--|
| July 1, 2006 | FY07 Program Year begins |
| July 1, 2006 through April 15, 2007 | FY07 Brochure application due at MDT |
| Sept. 1, 2006 | FY07 Small Project winter/spring marketing applications due at MDT by 5 PM |

FY08 Application Schedule

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Sept. and Oct. 2006 | FY2008 Application Seminar and Workshops - TBA |
|----------------------------|--|

Questions? Please call Becky Heeren (573) 751-3246 or Kathryn Capps (573) 526-1551

Don't forget to submit your Cooperative Marketing products for pre-approval.



After drought concerns earlier this spring, virtually all of the rivers in the Missouri Ozarks currently offer great float trips and camping. Member outfitters of the Missouri Canoe and Floaters Association report that their rivers have adequate depth, current and clarity with very good floating. Likewise, floaters are reporting enjoyable conditions on the rivers they visit.

A float trip on an Ozark waterway is an ideal vacation for the entire family. Missouri's cool, clear spring-fed streams provide safe and enjoyable recreation for in-state residents and out-of-state visitors.

All floating outfitters cooperate with the Missouri Water Patrol and the Missouri Department of Conservation in enforcing laws that apply to their waterways. National Park Service rangers are on hands at the Ozark National Scenic Riverways for added safety and protection. In addition, important signs along the waterways inform floaters about laws and regulations. As a result of these ongoing efforts, floating in the Ozarks is a safe activity well-suited for families and groups.

In September, the Missouri Canoe and Floaters Association, in conjunction with Stream Teams, will sponsor a river clean-up. Stream Team members and volunteers are invited to participate. Clean-up teams work from canoes and the bank. Gloves, trash bags and refreshments are usually provided to participants. Litterbags from the Missouri Department of Conservation are supplied to all outfitters and given to floaters to use during their trip.

For more information about the river clean-up or to check current float conditions, log onto the www.missouricanoe.org.

Floating Season Looks Promising

Eleven Point River

LAST CHANCE TO SUBMIT LISTINGS FOR 2007 VACATION PLANNER

The deadline to submit listings for the 2007 *Official Missouri Vacation Planner* is June 15, 2006.

The annual publication carries more than 3,000 listings and chart items for attractions and accommodations around Missouri. Each year, a half million *Vacation Planners* spread the Missouri message to travelers throughout the United States and abroad.

Industry members must use the Missouri Tourism Web site extranet (www.VisitMO.com/directory) to submit their listings for the 2007 *Planner*. Username and password information, extranet usage instructions and detailed descriptions of listing categories and criteria are available at the extranet Web address. Industry members may contact Mike Murray, *Vacation Planner* editor, at 573-522-5501 if they run into difficulties submitting their listings.

No listings from the 2006 *Planner* will be automatically carried over to the 2007 edition. Industry members must update and re-authorize their listings online, even when there has been no change in their information. In addition, members are encouraged to update their Profile in the extranet, including e-mail address, so MDT will have current contact information to reach members with future deadlines.

The *Vacation Planner* carries listings and chart items in the following general categories: things to do, outdoors, equestrian, wineries and breweries, bed and breakfast, lodging, camping, golf and canoeing. Listings and chart items are published at no cost to business owners. Paid advertisements in the 2007 *Planner* are arranged through Madden Preprint Media, the publication's contract publisher. Call 800-284-0584.

Copies of the 2006 *Official Missouri Vacation Planner* may be ordered by calling 800-519-2100 or logging on to www.VisitMO.com.

Important Calendar Dates

June 12-13

Missouri Tourism
Commission meeting,
Lake of the Ozarks

June 23-25

Focus On Cultural Tourism,
Chicago

July 18

Joint Meeting Planners'
Tradeshow,
Jefferson City

August 19-22

ESTO,
St. Paul, Minn.

August 20-21

Missouri Showcase Marketplace,
Excelsior Springs

Aug. 22-25

Travel Media Showcase
Fayetteville, N.C.

September 10-12

American Society of
Travel Agents,
Orlando

September 18-20

Missouri Governor's Conference
on Tourism,
St. Charles

September 28-29

Centstates TTRA Marketing /
Research Conference,
St. Charles, Ill.

October 10-11

National Conference for
Attraction Professionals,
Boca Raton, Fla.

October 11-13

TIA Marketing Outlook Forum,
Boca Raton, Fla.

November 3-7

NTA Annual Convention,
Salt Lake City

Where the Civil War Began

The Missouri Division of Tourism has begun to aggressively market the state's Civil War history and sites of significance. In recent weeks MDT launched its Civil War Web site and trademarked the slogan, "Where the Civil War Began." In spurring debate about the geographic

origins of the conflict, the campaign will draw attention to Missouri's largely overlooked Civil War sites.

Content for the Web site, www.WheretheCivilWarBegan.com, will continue to be enhanced through MDT's partnership with the Missouri Civil War Foundation. MDT has

also created a Civil War map that details battle sites and other historically significant destinations tourists can visit to learn more about Missouri's role in the war. The map is a first draft that will be updated and improved as we move closer to the 150th commemoration of the war in 2011.

In other Civil War promotion initiatives, MDT participated in the recent dedication of the Gray Ghosts Trail, where Tourism Director John Robinson was a keynote speaker. MDT is offering a Civil War trip giveaway in which the winner can choose a prize package from among five itineraries.