



Tour of Missouri - Pro Cycling Race



Yellow jerseys, signifying a stage winner, are handed out at the Oct. 17 press conference announcing the Tour of Missouri. Pictured are (from left) pro-cyclist Kevin Livingston, St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay, pro-cyclist Brad Huff, Lt. Gov. Kinder, Gov. Blunt, pro-cyclist Freddy Rodriguez, KOM Sports Marketing's Steve Brunner.

Governor Matt Blunt and Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder held a press conference announcing Missouri will host the "Tour of Missouri" professional cycling race, Sept. 11-16, 2007. In its initial year, the Tour of Missouri will be anointed one of the nation's top three stage-races, behind the prestigious Tour of Georgia and Tour of California races, providing three stage-races on American soil.

"Missouri is known as the Show-Me State. We look forward to showing our state to spectators around the world through the Tour of Missouri," Gov. Blunt said. "This event has great potential to bring economic benefits to our state and is an opportunity for us to join these world class cyclists to spread the message of the positive benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle."

Lt. Gov. Kinder, in his role as chairman of the Missouri Tourism Commission, remarked, "The Tour of Missouri is an exciting way to showcase our beautiful state. The entire state will be surprised and pleased by the size and economic impact this event will have on Missouri and Missouri's tourism industry. This race represents millions of additional dollars each year being pumped into our larger cities and our smaller rural areas."

Missouri has received sanctioning from both USA Cycling and the International Cycling Union (UCI) for placement on the 2007 UCI calendar. Medalist Sports and KOM Sports Marketing are working diligently with Missouri to produce this top-level event. The Tour of Missouri will include up to 16

professional, international teams.

The Missouri Division of Tourism, a member of a multi-agency team, is involved in the extensive work required to facilitate a successful project. As the race plans develop, promotion will become an integral part of the free public event and rolling festival. The race will provide an unprecedented opportunity for communities to partner to attract visitors and encourage tourists to circulate throughout the state. The media coverage of the Tour of Missouri will peak during the week of the race. However, the promotional value will last far beyond the finish line.

For more information and to view a promotional video, go to www.TourOfMissouri.com.

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Blaine Luetkemeyer Assumes Duties as MDT Director

The Missouri Division of Tourism welcomed its new director on Oct. 16. St. Elizabeth native Blaine Luetkemeyer fills us in on his background and discusses the challenges facing the division and the Missouri tourism industry.

What attracted you to the possibility of working at the Division of Tourism?

I've lived and worked in the Lake of the Ozarks area most of my life and seen first-hand the area grow and

relationship and importance of the division to the tourism industry. So with this vast background, experience, and interest in the area of tourism, I felt I was well prepared for the job and it was something I should pursue.

What do you see as your top priorities at the division?

The top priority is to continue to help grow the tourism industry here in Missouri and the revenue dollars that are generated for our state. I be-

lieve we do that by continuing the great work this division has done in the past, constantly monitoring and fine-tuning our programs, and continuing to work closely with our tourism partners to be able to respond quickly to market changes. We are committed to making Missouri an attractive place to want to spend a vacation, and the experiences here memorable enough to want to come back.

Do you envision overhauling any programs or implementing new ones at MDT?

I believe the old saying "if it ain't broke don't fix it" is probably appropriate in this case. This division's return on investment is one of the best in the country. MDT has received many awards for its innovative and creative work. That being said, I believe there are a few things we can do to tweak our programs and make them even better and enhance our services. At present we don't have a strategic plan with which to guide and better focus our efforts. We intend to develop and implement a new five-year plan shortly. In doing so, we will look at all programs thoroughly to see if there are things we can do to improve them. I believe we also have opportunities to partner with other agencies and departments to improve or expand new and existing programs, such as the new small-town downtown initiative of the Department of Economic Development called DREAM. We should be able to work with those entities to help promote their historic areas and attractions, thus increasing their revenue generation and the state's.

Are you a native Missourian?

Yes. I live two houses up the street from where I was born and raised in St. Elizabeth, however, I did live in other



Deputy Directors Bob Smith and Bob Hain discuss strategic planning with MDT Director Blaine Luetkemeyer.

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What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the tourism industry?

I believe the biggest challenge facing our industry here in Missouri is to keep our market share and expand it. Other states are going after

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areas of the state while I was in college and for a couple of years while I was a bank examiner with the Division of Finance. Throughout the years as a result of my education, business, and family activities, I've traveled extensively around the state from corner to corner. As a result, I believe we have one of the most beautiful, diverse, and interesting states in the country.

What was the biggest surprise to you since joining MDT?

There really haven't been any big surprises as I knew a lot about the division and its mission before I came. Along those lines, the biggest challenge so far, as with any new job, has been learning the details of the job and the programs we administer, as well as getting to know all of the employees and what they do.

How do you spend your leisure time?

I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling, working on my farm, and I'm a sports enthusiast. When the family is not around, if it's a rainy or snowy day, and there's no game on the tube, I enjoy a good book.

What is your favorite vacation memory?

My most memorable Missouri trip was one that I took as a youth with my father, mother, and brother to Branson when we got to swimming in a real swimming pool instead of the local creek. My most memorable vacation trip out of state was with my wife and children when they were young and we went to Florida. We did the Disney World, Epcot Center, etc. thing. It was my turn to take the kids on a ride. They chose a roller coaster ride called Space Mountain, a roller coaster inside a mountain, in the dark. The kids still laugh and tell stories of me crawling out of the gate and kissing

the ground when the ride was over.

What is the one place in Missouri you haven't visited that you most want to see?

There are two places I hope to see in the near future. I'm a huge baseball fan and have not yet made it to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City. Also, I enjoy history and although I have been to Springfield hundreds of times, I have yet to visit the Wilson's Creek Battlefield National Park.

What new and undeveloped markets do you see as holding the most promise for Missouri Tourism?

Because of budget cuts in previous years, and limited increases, we have had to cut back on investing in our

ethnic, cultural, and foreign programs. In working with our staff, the preliminary data shows that we may be able to enhance our market share in those areas where we have had a presence before, thanks to the residual effect of our previous marketing efforts. Of course, this will take additional funds, but should those funds become available, we would certainly take a look at those areas and perhaps an additional foreign market.

To approach a new foreign market, our efforts may be more successful and our costs minimized by partnering with other states. Return on our investment over a reasonable period of time and availability of funds will drive our endeavors into these areas.

Third Quarter Room Rates on the Rise; Occupancy Dips

Room rates and hotel revenues showed strong growth for the third quarter of 2006, even with occupancy slightly down, according to results released by Smith Travel Research. STR reported a 6.8 percent increase in the average room rate to \$97.43 for the quarter, compared with the same period last year. Revenue per available room was up 6 percent to \$66.71. Occupancy, meanwhile, dropped 0.7 percent to 68.5 percent for the quarter from last year's levels. For the year so far, room rates are up 6.8 percent, RevPAR is up 7.9 percent and occupancy is up 1 percent. STR predicts the overall growth in 2006 RevPAR will be 7.9 percent. (*Business Travel News.com, 10/25*)



How is Tourism Faring this Year?

2006 First, Second, and Third Quarter Year to Date

The following information is compiled from several different sources in an effort to answer the question "How are we doing so far this calendar year?" No one source provides a complete picture, but the combination of all of these resources provides a way to monitor the tourism statewide picture. Questions? Please contact Dee Ann McKinney at (573) 526-1553

Indicator	2005	2006	% of Change	Data Source
Lodging-Occupancy	56.2%	56.8%	1.1%	Smith Travel Research
Lodging Rev Par (Revenue per Available Room)	\$40.48	\$42.42	4.8%	Smith Travel Research
Lodging-Revenue	5.9% increase over 2004	7.3% over 2005	Not applicable	Smith Travel Research
Inquiries * (Call Center, mail, contest entries, Web requests for Vacation Planners)	410,293	337,892	-17.6%	Ruf Strategic Solutions/USA 800
Web Visits *	1,801,030	1,762,530	-2.1%	Webtrends
Missouri State Welcome Centers	398,786	340,010	-14.7%	Missouri State Welcome Center Records
State Parks **	14,304,416	13,379,195	-6.5%	Department of Natural Resources

* Please note: Inquiries for last year include contest entries. Additionally, Spring 2006 campaign reflects a reduced budget.

** These numbers do not include Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park because it was closed for several months as a result of the breach of Taum Sauk Reservoir.

Important Calendar Dates

November 3-7
NTA Annual Convention,
Salt Lake City, Utah

January 27 -February 1, 2007
American Bus Marketplace,
Grapevine, Texas

April 21-25, 2007
TIA International Pow Wow
Anaheim, California

July 17, 2007
Missouri Travel Council, Joint
Meeting Planners Tradeshow
Jefferson City, Missouri

August 27-28, 2007
Missouri Travel Council, Missouri
Showcase Marketplace
St. Louis, Missouri

November 2-6, 2007
NTA Annual Convention
Kansas City, Missouri

McKinney Captures President's Award



MDT's Dee Ann McKinney with her President's Award. TTRA Chapter President Aileen Thorne displays the plaques listing past winners.

Joining an elite group of past winners, Dee Ann McKinney, Missouri Division of Tourism's research administrator, was presented this year's President's Award by the Central State's chapter of the Travel and Tourism Research Association. The presentation was made during the international travel organization's fall conference held Sept. 26-29 in Chicago.

According to chapter President Aileen Thorne, of Hartford, Wis., the award is only given in those years that some one individual has shown an "outstanding commitment to the

organization." After contacting the past presidents over the last 10 years, McKinney was the "overwhelming choice." Thorne noted McKinney's dedication and devotion to the success of the international TTRA organization overall, as well as the chapter specifically. Particularly, McKinney was applauded for "always being ready and willing to volunteer" every time something was needed. From helping to obtain conference sponsorships to coordination of the silent auction, "she was instrumental in our success this year. For the first half of the year, Dee Ann even edited and published our newsletters," Thorne added.

In addition to serving as the strategic planning and research administrator at MDT, Dee Ann McKinney is a past CenStates TTRA Board of Directors member and currently serves on the international TTRA Board.



Dear Tourism Partner;

My first few weeks on the job have been peppered by fairly significant events. First there was the Tour of Missouri bike race announcement. That was followed by the need to dive head-long into the search for a new advertising agency. Over a period of several days we received word that several of the state's tourism destinations have been selected for the new DREAM (Downtown Revitalization and Economic Assistance for Missouri) Initiative, and that revenue from international travelers is expected to grow significantly during the next couple of years. And, of course, the underdog St. Louis Cardinals pulled off a World Series win. Whew!

While working to process all of that information and where the Missouri Division of Tourism fits in either as leader, partner or simply cheerleader, there were other significant tasks needing attention, most importantly – finding my way from my office to the nearest gents room and locating the cafeteria. Another priority was getting to know the staff at MDT and learning about their programs and current foci.

Making the rounds and visiting with staff, the comment came time and again that the division needs to develop a five-year strategic plan. Reviewing the list of recent news and events, I had to concur: With so much happening almost daily that could serve to blow us

off course, we need a plan in place that will act as a rudder. Not that we should be inflexible or be unwilling to adapt to changing currents, but we need to set the course for the state's tourism program in order to make sure that any veering off still keeps the end destination – growing the state's tourism industry and dollars – in our sights.

To that end, we have scheduled a retreat for November 15 in order to roll up our sleeves and begin the process of drafting our strategic plan. As we begin writing this document, I invite your comments and concerns about what you, as an industry member, need from the division.

Best regards,

Blaine

Important Cooperative Marketing Dates

FY06 Final Reporting Requirement

Dec. 1, 2006 – Project Summary Report postmark deadline

FY07 Projects

July 1, 2006 through 5 p.m. April 15, 2007 - FY07 Brochure applications accepted at MDT

Nov. 30, 2006 – 1st Quarterly Project Update/Reimbursement Request postmark deadline

FY08 Draft Applications

Dec. 1, 2006 is the deadline for FY08 Draft Applications (optional) in the following categories: Leisure Travel Marketing, Statewide Marketing, Convention Marketing and Tourism Research.

FY2008 Final Applications Deadline

Jan. 31, 2007	Leisure Travel Marketing
	Statewide Marketing
	Convention Marketing
	Tourism Research
Mar. 1, 2007	Summer/Fall Small Project Marketing
April 15, 2007	Destination Advertising
July 1, 2006 – 5:00 pm	Brochure Program
April 15, 2007	
Sept. 3, 2007	Winter/Spring Small Project Marketing

Questions? Please contact Becky Heeren (573) 751-3246.