



New Decade, New Generation

Welcome to 2020 - a new decade and new opportunities!

As I reflect on the collaborative and collective successes of Travel South USA and our partners, I keep coming to the same conclusion: we had a really good decade! In the past five years, our 12 states welcomed 7.2 million international visitors annually and projected spending is expected to be up 20%, reaching \$9.2 billion in 2019. More importantly, we are dispersing these visitors across the South.

We can take pride in the new tour programs featuring Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Virginia and West Virginia. Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina road trips are taking record numbers of people from the mountains to sea. Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee have seen unprecedented growth with music tourism and small town experiences. Kentucky and bourbon are a worldwide phenomenon. And our friends in Alabama can celebrate the largest percent-age of international growth in the country! More than 60 Travel South Ambassadors across the globe are actively selling our authentic destinations. We have award winning digital, print and social content in eight languages inspiring and engaging millions of consumers. In addition, more than 60 sales missions, trade shows, trainings and co-ops are planned yearly.

But we are never one to rest on our laurels - where do we go next?

The future is bright and we are shaping Travel South USA for **The Next Generation**.

I am happy to announce a series of Travel South Road Shows to take our "What's New, What's Available and What will Sell" program to receptive operators in Fall 2020 / Winter 2021. Formatted to be "beyond speed dating," the Road Show will offer destination in-depth training opportunities with high-value receptives. Registration will open, starting April 2020, to all suppliers and limited to those with pre-designed itineraries and hotel products available. This is the next generation of relationships with RTO's.

Travel South USA's Inaugural Global Summit will take place April 12-15, 2021 in Atlanta, Ga. The Global Summit is designed for global marketing, sales, research and social media teams to use all the tools available when creating a marketing plan targeting international visitors. A series of Skift-like programs and networking stations will allow for discussions about a range of mediums and distribution channels and will stimulate one-on-one advice from Brand USA, global partners and state tourism leadership.

We had a really good decade in the 2010's... now let's kick it up a notch and make it a great 2020 and beyond.

Together, we are stronger. Together, we can achieve more international visitors, increased spending and longer stays here in our unique region.



Liz Bittner
President and CEO
Travel South USA