

TRAVEL

South Dakota

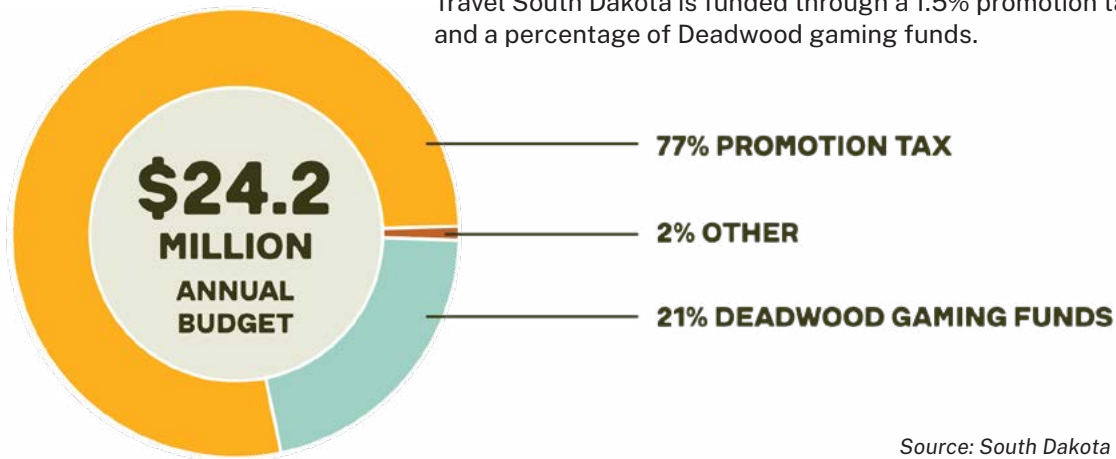
2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Travel South Dakota’s unique mission is to enhance the quality of life for all South Dakotans by strengthening communities and their tourism economies, encouraging responsible stewardship of our destination, and creating meaningful experiences for all to enjoy.

We pursue this mission by enhancing and expanding the South Dakota brand, advancing the development of our destination, advocating for responsible destination management, and prioritizing organizational excellence.

FY26 ANNUAL BUDGET

Travel South Dakota is funded through a 1.5% promotion tax and a percentage of Deadwood gaming funds.



Source: South Dakota Department of Revenue

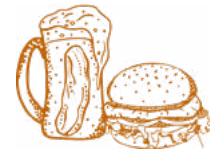
ECONOMIC IMPACT*



South Dakota welcomed **14.97 MILLION VISITORS** in 2025, a **0.38% increase** from 2024.



These visitors spent a **record-setting \$5.16 BILLION** in 2025, which generated **16.5%** of all state sales tax collections.



The tourism industry supported **59,145 JOBS** in 2025. Visitor activity generated **\$2.3 billion** in labor income for South Dakotans.

Source: Tourism Economics

*Refer to SDVisit.com for a comprehensive listing of monthly travel indicators, and the full 2025 Tourism Economics report.

TOTAL 2025 RESULTS

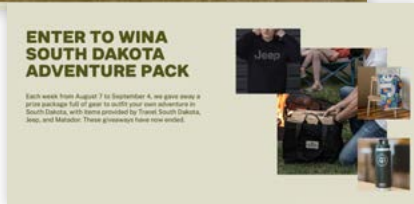
- 668M+ paid media impressions
- 10.1M+ searches generated
- 3.2M+ site visits generated (TravelSouthDakota.com & partner and other sites)
- 718K+ estimated total hotel & flight bookings generated
- 1.3M+ estimated total hotel nights booked
- 916K+ estimated total travelers from generated bookings
- \$182M+ estimated total hotel & flight revenue generated

All Types of Crazy Welcome

This award-winning niche campaign, aimed at promoting attendance for the 85th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, delivered major shifts in audience makeup and impressive booking results. Through the campaign window of April to July, Travel South Dakota saw significant growth in the highly sought-after 20-39 age group, a 96% increase in estimated bookings, and a 90% increase in revenue from hotel bookings.

This campaign is a public/private partnership between Travel South Dakota, Black Hills & Badlands Tourism Association, LIV Hospitality, Sturgis Buffalo Chip, and Visit Rapid City.

- 30+ million impressions
- 5.47% paid social CTR
- 56.2% YouTube view rate
- 18,653 bookings



Unexpected South Dakota

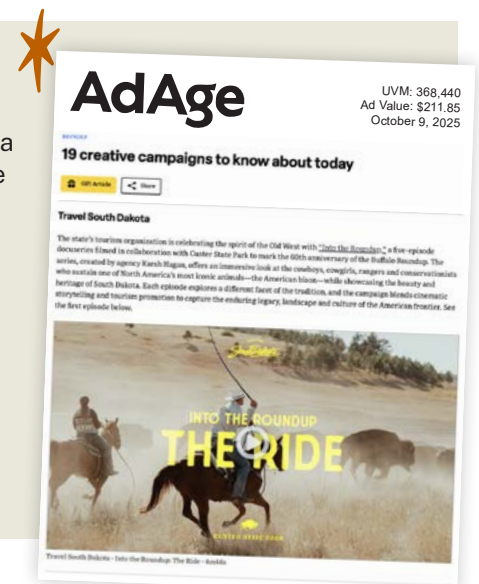
In July, Travel South Dakota kicked off a partnership with Jeep, Matador Network and adventurer Forrest Galante. The partnership included a three-episode video series dubbed “Unexpected South Dakota” that showcased specific sights, experiences, and flavors that many travelers may not know exist in South Dakota. Each episode highlighted the balance between heritage, culture, and stewardship.

The collaboration produced content for social, digital, and streaming platforms including Roku, Matador Network, and YouTube. The series accumulated more than 32 years’ worth of total view time across the three episodes and achieved 30,000+ leads from four weekly gear giveaways.

INTO THE ROUNDUP

To pay tribute to one of South Dakota’s most iconic events, Travel South Dakota launched a five-episode series that takes viewers deep inside the Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup and the Western heritage that defines South Dakota. The longform storytelling of the series allowed for exploration of the purpose behind managing a herd or more than 1,300 bison, the legacy carried by generations of riders, and the pure adrenaline of the event.

- 16.9M total impressions
- Nearly 6 years total watch time
- \$1.3M+ estimated attributable booking revenue
- Featured by AdAge on its list of 19 most creative campaigns to know



GLOBAL PUBLIC RELATIONS & CONTENT SERVICES

2025 DOMESTIC EARNED MEDIA RESULTS

- Earned media reach – 10.7B
- Earned media placements – 489
- Hosted media – 21
- Total media value - \$4.1 million

2025 SOCIAL MEDIA STATS

- Total impressions – 92M (+17%)
- Engagements – 685K (+37%)
- Net new followers – 40K (+11%)

➔ In 2025, influencers helped Travel South Dakota reach an additional 13.6M strategically targeted social users.



Samantha Brown Partnership

Samantha Brown added South Dakota to her “Places to Love” list in a dedicated episode featuring Custer State Park, Deadwood, Minuteman Missile National Historic Site, Wall Drug, Badlands National Park, Crazy Horse, Prairie Edge Trading Company, Palmer Gulch, and beautiful Black Hills scenery. “Places to Love” is the highest-rated travel show on PBS and reaches an estimated 69 million people through nearly 250 PBS stations across the country.

Launch of [TravelSouthDakota.com](https://www.TravelSouthDakota.com)

In July, after months of auditing content, addressing accessibility needs, developing and testing, the new [TravelSouthDakota.com](https://www.TravelSouthDakota.com) was ready to launch. The new and improved website prioritizes user experience and mobile-first design, ensuring the same great site for every user regardless of their device. Another priority of the site was making it truly accessible for all. In the first post-launch report, the site achieved a UsableNet accessibility score of 98%.

GLOBAL TRAVEL AND TRADE

TOTAL 2025 RESULTS

- 330+ one-on-one trade show appointments
- 4 international missions (India, Australia, UK, Nordics)
- 53 destination immersion participants from 8 markets



India Mission

Travel South Dakota joined Brand USA and Crazy Horse Memorial in the department’s first-ever sales mission to India. India is the fastest-growing international market for arrivals to the U.S. and the second-largest overseas market, behind only the United Kingdom.

While in country, the Travel & Trade team made excellent contacts and conducted 75 one-on-one appointments with leading Indian tour operators.

International Roundup in Rapid City

Spring brought the International Roundup to Rapid City, drawing 45 international buyers and more than 80 suppliers to the city from the Great American West region.

Rapid City and South Dakota made a huge impression at the event, showcasing the host city with tours and even a full-blown rodeo that wowed international buyers. The weeklong event included hundreds of meetings between suppliers and buyers, followed by destination immersion tours that hosted 32 international buyers in all areas of the state.

➔ Destination Immersion Tour



INDUSTRY RELATIONS, DEVELOPMENT & RESEARCH

Spring Customer Service Seminars

In 2025, Travel South Dakota brought a top-notch hospitality speaker to seven communities across the state. Dr. Rebecca Heiss brought a message that inspired hope and actionable insights in times of uncertainty to 547 attendees across Custer, Deadwood, DeSmet, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, and Yankton.

To increase awareness and excitement for the seminars, Travel South Dakota ran a short digital campaign utilizing Display and Social to reach business owners and frontline workers in South Dakota. The campaign targeted 1.65M impressions, contributing to the seminars' healthy attendance.

Destination Development Launch

After months of planning, Travel South Dakota officially launched its Destination Development pilot program in 2025, with Lead and Wessington Springs as the inaugural participants. The program was developed to assist communities wanting to develop and enhance their tourism offerings, focusing on creating, growing, and enhancing visitor experiences and offerings particularly in rural communities across the state.

In the second half of 2025, the communities of Lead and Wessington Springs partnered with their tourism expert facilitators — Crosscurrent Collective and George Washington University — to complete strategic planning, community surveys, workshops, and data research. This work resulted in a Destination Assessment that identifies each community's priority projects for future tourism development.

Wessington Springs has selected trail development as its top priority, while Lead will focus on wayfinding improvements, downtown enhancements, and accessibility updates. Travel South Dakota will continue working alongside both communities throughout 2026 and beyond to help ensure project goals are achieved and to provide ongoing support as needed.



★
Lead
Destination
Development
←



2025 AWARDS

AMERICAN ADVERTISING AWARDS

AAF-SD:

- **Gold – Advertising and Promotion, Email:** Travel Focused Email Series
- **Silver – Advertising and Promotion, Email:** Travel Insights Email

AAF-CO:

- **Gold & Judge's Choice – Branded Content & Entertainment, Non-Broadcast:** Into the Roundup

MAGELLAN AWARDS

- **Gold – Promotions with Purpose for Destinations:** *Travel South Dakota Forever 605*
- **Gold – Promotional Video for Destinations:** *All Types of Crazy Welcome*
- **Gold – Advertising/Marketing for Destinations:** *Travel South Dakota Arts & Culture*
- **Gold – In-destination Visitor Information Program for Destinations:** *South Dakota Passport Program*

W3 AWARDS

- **Gold – Consumer Email Campaign:** *Travel South Dakota Consumer Emails*

ADRIAN AWARDS

- **Gold, Best of Category – Influencer/Content Creation:** *GoPro Winter Adventure in South Dakota*
- **Gold – Consumer Brand Campaign:** *All Types of Crazy Welcome*
- **Gold – Consumer Brand Campaign:** *Travel South Dakota Arts & Culture*
- **Silver, Best of Category – Purpose-Driven Campaign:** *Forever 605*
- **Silver – Consumer Brand Campaign:** *So Much South Dakota, So Little Time*
- **Silver – Influencer/Content Creation:** *Social Media Influencer Campaign*
- **Silver – Influencer/Content Creation, Owned Media:** *Apple Maps Guide Program*