

Monthly report Benelux

March 2025



Prepared by:



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About TSUSA - Global Partner Programming

We appreciate the everlasting support of Travel South USA, and through this support we continue to be top-of-mind with the beautiful Travel South region, amongst trade, media and potential travelers. We have the pleasure to already be familiar with the region for several years, and look forward to yet another year where we can focus on promoting the GPP states. We are happy and grateful that for the coming budget year we can again count on 9 states, with a small change: Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia!

We are used to multiple state marketing, and we will make sure every state will get its own fair share of attention, highlighting each unique selling points, highlights, and must-sees, together with an overall promotion of the Southern region. We will make sure you will get a good ROI on every marketing dollar spent. And the assurance you spend it in a healthy mature market, ready and eager to travel.

The overall goal is a growth in numbers of sales, exposure, and awareness of the travel possibilities to the Travel South states. Both the Dutch and the Belgian market are mature and healthy, with experienced and professional key trade and media players. We will continue to create and initiate smart marketing opportunities, resulting in a growth in visitation from the Benelux to the region and maximizing visitor spending and impact. Storytelling will play an important part in achieving our goals. Food, Music Culture, History and Outdoors are the main themes.

On a monthly basis we will be providing updates on the various marketing projects that have been approved for this fiscal year, we will provide an insight into the Benelux market and include any other information/ topics that are of relevance to the Travel South region.

Why the Benelux market?

- 81% of the Dutch population (17.9 million) and 74% of the Belgium population (11,7 million) is vacationing at least once a year.
- A steady and stable market. Small, yet big in our number of travellers to the USA. 4 out of 100 people visit the USA yearly.
- High potential for 2nd and 3rd tier destinations and potential for the shoulder season
- Both the Dutch and the Belgians receive an 8% annual extra salary called “vacation payout”
- The Dutch have at least 25 vacation days and about 10 public holidays, the Belgians have at least 20 vacation days and also 10 public holidays.
- The average time spent in the USA is: 18 days

I. Executive summary

- **Social media:** Over the past month, the Travel South region was featured in **33 social media posts**. *Amerika Only* led the way with **23 posts**, focusing primarily on the South's rich music scene, especially in **Tennessee, Mississippi, and ROTS**. *Amerikanu.nl* shared content about Mardi Gras in **New Orleans**, while *Reisbizz* posted about the Travel South webinar and a road trip through the region. *AmericA Magazine* spotlighted **South Carolina** in one post and **Missouri** in another. Finally, *VisitUSA The Netherlands* highlighted the GRAMMY Museum in **Mississippi** in one of their posts.
- **Publications:** In the past month, the Travel South region has received significant media attention, with **14 online articles, one print article, and one television episode** featuring the area. Several notable mentions appeared across various platforms. *Reisbizz* covered Walter Schut's journey through the South in both an online and a print article. They also published an article highlighting all the **Southern states** and one mentioning **Atlanta**. The publication *De Stad Amersfoort* featured an article on music that mentioned **Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina**. Meanwhile, *Manoeuvre.be* mentioned **Alabama and Missouri** in an article. *Amerika Only* published an online piece about Elvis Presley's birthplace in **Mississippi**, and *Tioga Tours* highlighted **Louisiana and ROTS** in one of their articles. *Brand USA* promoted several Southern destinations as ideal spots to visit during the spring and summer seasons. *AmericA Magazine* released an article on the **Kentucky Derby**, along with another that mentioned **North Carolina**. *Meridian Travel* published a feature on **Louisiana and New Orleans**. *TravEcademy* shared our previous newsletter in article form and also mentioned **Missouri** in a story about Route 66. Additionally, *Visit USA the Netherlands* mentioned Mardi Gras in **New Orleans** in their blog. Finally, the Dutch television program *Nachtdieren USA* aired an episode dedicated to a night in **New Orleans**, bringing even more attention to the vibrant culture of the South.
- On March 25th we partnered with Brand USA and Reisbizz (a B2B media platform) in hosting a webinar for the trade. The focus of the webinar was on the Brand USA itinerary '**At the movies – southern sights**', highlighting the states Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia. In total **49 travel agents** participated.
- To boost the Benelux newsletter, Rianne and Marjolein were interviewed by Reismedia to share information about the region, focusing on the main pillars – food, history, music & nature.

International Metrics FY 24/25

	July	Aug	Sept	Q1 TOTAL	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q2 TOTAL	Jan	Feb	March	Q3 TOTAL
Benelux												
Trade Meetings/Trainings	5	8	6	19	6	10	7	23	7	4	6	17
Number of Agents Trained	5	41	149	195	33	87	70	190	86	97	79	262
PR												
Media Meetings	5	3	4	12	4	3	5	12	5	3	2	10
Total number of articles published	18	5	5	28	13	20	12	45	8	14	15	37
Impressions	47,866	5,769	5,676	59,311	196,665	112,006	165,141	473,812	19,117	100,116	449,115	568,348
Newsletter												
Open Rate	37%	-	45%	41%	43%	34%	35%	37%	43%	40%		42%

II. Communication & PR

News Releases

■ Coverage book has been updated:

<https://app.coveragebook.com/29490/books/f8d792af8750ac9a>



Foto: Target Travel

REISINDUSTRIE

Ontdek het échte Amerika: zet het Zuiden van de Verenigde Staten maar op je reislijstje

25 maart 2025 - 08:06 Rianne Bak

Het Zuiden van de Verenigde Staten is een regio met een rijke geschiedenis en diverse culturele invloeden. Rianne van der Linden en Marjolein Fraanje van communicatieadviesbureau Target Travel, dat Travel South USA vertegenwoordigt in de Benelux, vertellen aan Reisbizz over de kenmerken van deze regio en waarom het een interessante bestemming is voor reizigers.

III. Sales Calls

Media Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
Marjolein Helder / Brand USA	We spoke with Marjolein about possible collaborations with Brand USA in regard to media fams. They do see opportunities to collaborate with other Benelux PR agencies more in the future. They don't do this very often as Brand USA prefers to feature US destinations that are not represented by a PR agency in the market, as they think these states/regions are already highlighted. If asked for support, they do require to be involved with the fam request from the start. We will consider this with future fams.	
Glen van Polanen / US Embassy, The Hague	We spoke with Glen about the current situation at the Embassy. He mentions that it's a bit crazy at their office in terms of workload. He mentions that in the next 9-14 months they are almost unable to handle visa applications and interviews. Due to the long waiting lines, they are advising new applications to be done in Germany (Frankfurt) or Belgium, but also there the work is piling up. They are also receiving many questions regarding m/f entries in passport of transgenders.	

Trade Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
Ilse de Smet / Best of Travel	We have been in contact with Ilse. Best of Travel is a small tour operator in Belgium, specialized in tailor-made travel. They offer the whole world, and have a small offering of USA travel. The published itineraries on their website are meant as an inspiration, rather than ready to sell product. They are open to expand their inspiration pages with our region.	
Frangken Tuhumena / 333 Travel	333travel is celebrating its 25 th anniversary this year. They mention that their success is thanks to the development of several concepts that cater to the needs of different travelers. 'Best Deal Tours' for travelers with a smaller budget, 'Highlights' where everything is included and 'Grand Tour' for those who want to travel longer and more intensively. One of their most successful concepts is 'Hidden Gems': trips that take travelers to unique places in addition to the highlights, often in small-scale accommodations with a special atmosphere. This aligns with the travel trends in the Benelux: to discover and authentic experiences. They still exclusively focus on distant destinations, deliberately leaving Europe out.	
Ellen Wigbers / The Travel Club	Spoke to Ellen Wigbers, responsible for product and marketing at the Travel Club. In general, she mentions that it is a bit slow for the time of the year. As for travel to the USA she notices that the consumer is hesitant to book, but it's also possible that people are just waiting to book. She also commented that it's important to keep on explaining and educating both their agents and their clients	
Ruben Greyson / Exciting West	Ruben contacted us, because he and his colleagues will be in Amsterdam early April. They will visit our office for a dedicated training on the South. At his point he is not experiencing any decrease in interest or bookings. He works with 40 travel agents.	
Jan Nijenhuis / Do-USA	Their website https://do-usa.nl/ has been under construction for some time. Jan mentions that they rarely booked trips through this website, and more through https://www.reisbureaubreukelen.nl/ and their in-person offices. They are working on updating the website, but it is taking longer than planned. They also merged their two offices to their location in Woerden, where they work with a team of 8 people. Their sales were record-high last year. They do notice a decline in USA sales, mainly due to high prices and the sentiment towards politics. They see cautious behavior from customers, for all regions, even for trips to NY.	
Ludwig Verbruggen / Joker Reizen	Ludwig reached out and invited us to join their annual USA Reisdag in October in Mechelen. We will include this event in our proposals, however, it might be a challenge, since the event is planned on the same day as the Connections USACAN Day.	

IV. Newsletter

Newsletter to the trade and media

The next newsletter, themed: “*Instagram-able spots*” was sent out in early April, so the results will be shared in the following monthly report.

Further, coming up in April is the newest newsletter, highlighting again all the GPP partners and focusing on the topic: “*Eating your way thru the South*”

Status	Topic	Subscribers	Open rate	Click-thru rate
Newsletter sent out on: April 11th	<i>Instagram-able spots</i>	Trade		
		536	t.b.d.	t.b.d.
		Media		
		359	t.b.d.	t.b.d.

V. Market Update

Impact on Dutch and Belgian travellers

The United States has long been a popular holiday destination for Dutch and Belgian travelers, with the Netherlands and Belgium consistently ranking as significant inbound source markets to the US. Over the years, Dutch and Belgian tourists have shown strong interest in exploring America's diverse landscapes and rich cultural heritage. The iconic national parks, vibrant cities, and scenic road trips across the US have long been among the most favored travel experiences.

However, recent social, economic, and political developments have started to impact outbound travel to the US. Rising costs across all aspects of travel — from airfare to meals — play a significant role in shaping travel preferences and decision-making. High prices, combined with an unfavorable exchange rate, mean that a US vacation is now significantly more expensive than in previous years.

Recent data from Dutch and Belgian tour operators indicate early declines in bookings for US-bound vacations, with some reports of cancellations. Economic uncertainties, increasing travel costs, shifting traveler expectations, and global political concerns are prompting some travelers to reconsider their plans.

Some tour operators report a noticeable rise in demand for **Canada**. With its vast national parks and wilderness, scenic road trip options, and a reputation for affordability and stability, Canada is emerging as a strong alternative — leading to a loss of US bookings in some cases. Additionally, destinations in **Southern Africa** and **Asia** have also seen a surge in popularity among Dutch and Belgian travelers.

Solo travel

Solo travel is on the rise, offering freedom, adventure, and opportunities for self-discovery. A survey by *Columbus Travel* and *Sawadee Reizen* among 1,100 solo travelers shows that most choose to travel alone for the flexibility (63%), the desire for personal time, and the chance to step out of their comfort zone.

Despite its appeal, solo travel comes with challenges. **Safety** is the biggest concern — particularly for women — followed by eating alone, higher travel costs, and carrying full responsibility for planning and decision-making. Interestingly, loneliness is less of a barrier than expected, and language or cultural differences are rarely seen as issues.

Solo travelers often connect with others through guided tours, hostels, or simply by walking around and being open to encounters. Social media, surprisingly, plays only a minor role in building those connections.

Gender differences stand out: women are more concerned about safety and often face social stigma, while men report more difficulty meeting new people. Many solo travelers hope to improve future experiences by increasing social interaction, budgeting better, adding more spontaneity, and spending more time in nature or focusing on self-care.

Airlift

The European Commission has largely approved the Dutch government's plan to reduce noise pollution around Schiphol Airport by cutting annual flight movements from 500,000 to 478,000 starting in November 2025, aiming for a 15% reduction in noise for local residents. However, Brussels raised concerns about the plan's calculations — particularly the lack of consideration for newer, quieter aircraft operated by airlines such as KLM. The Commission also criticized the limited use of modern landing and navigation technologies that could help further reduce noise levels, and questioned the exclusion of private and business aviation from the proposed measures.

VI. Actions

The proposals for the coming year have been confirmed and in this chapter we will be updating what is currently being done or what the upcoming actions points are.

Coops that have been concluded

- Visit USA The Netherlands Roadshow
- Visit USA Belgium Workshop
- Connections AmeriCan Day
- Joker Reisbeurs
- Travel PRESSentation
- Travel South International Showcase

Benelux Trade & Media newsletter

- A monthly newsletter gets send to the Benelux Trade and Media database. Each month focusing on a different theme, and highlighting all GPP states.
- With the media partners we have agreed on a package to share not only the content of the newsletter, but also promote the newsletter to aquire more subscribers.
 - For **TravelPro** the first of five editorials went live in February. The other four will follow in the coming months.
 - **Reismedia:** interview editorial publication to boost subscription to the newsletter. The final months of this FY a TSUSA banner will be included in their weekly newsletter, also including a call to action.

Product Survey

We are continuisly working on this project, en strive to present the results by early May.

Travel South USA Global Week

Final reporting on this event to be share by the end of May.

WideOyster

It's great to be working on this 2-year project with Hans Avontuur. And even more exciting that we can combine the opportunity with WideOyster, together with a great publication in AD magazine and an article in two motor magazinse.

Publications WideOyster: first publications based on press trip in May 2025, other publications in FY 25-26. Total publications: 1 editorial and 5 longreads.

Publicaiton AD magazine: Civil Rights story, slight delay in publication due to the current situation, expected fall 2025.

Publication ProMotor/Moto73: Both publications live.