

# TravelSouth

All Y'all Are Welcome **USA**

## Monthly Report - Benelux

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 Rhythms of the South!

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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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:**

The Travel South region was not featured on any partners' social media platforms this month. However, the reach and interaction on our own Dutch accounts is continue to grow.

- **Publications:**

The Travel South Region received media attention through **10 online** articles this month. *TravEcademy* featured **all regions** in an online article inspired by our newsletter about hiking and biking in the region. They also published a piece highlighting **South Carolina**, the Palmetto State, and another about the USA-Canada Experience mentioning the **Rhythms of the South States**. *Verkeersbureaus.nl* shared an article about picnicking in **South Carolina**. *Travel and Tour World* published two articles featuring **North Carolina** and one about **Missouri** and **Tennessee**. **Rhythms of the South** and **Louisiana** were included in an article from *Travel Pro*. *Columbus Magazine* covered the world's busiest airports, featuring **Atlanta**. **Missouri** was highlighted in *Motor.nl* in an article about the anniversary of Route 66. Finally, *Rijnmond.nl* published a story about the Ultrarun in **Tennessee**.

- **Roadshow:**

The Visit USA Roadshow took place from September 23 – 25. Starting in Zwolle (the office of Tioga Tours), travelling to Rotterdam (former cruise ship SS Rotterdam) and lastly the business center at Eindhoven Airport. In total 150 travel agents attended. All days were set-up for 10-15 minute speed dating sessions, enabling us to speak to most of the attendees and give them an impression of the region. In general, all agents mentioned a drop in bookings. However, the spirit was optimistic towards 2026.



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## International metrics FY25 - 26

	July	Aug	Sep	Q1 TOTAL
<b>Benelux</b>				
<b>Trade</b>				
Trade Meetings/Trainings	4	11	8	15
Number of Agents Trained	-	-	150	0
Travel Trade Newsletter Receptient	0	0	531	531
Trade Newsletter Open Rate	0	0	41	41
<b>Managed Media</b>				
Media Meetings	1	1	1	2
Total number of articles published	4	11	10	25
Impressions	11,100	15,739	57,225	84,064
PR Newsletter Receptient	0	0	354	354
PR Newsletter Open Rate	0	0	44	44
<b>Social Posts</b>				
<b>Facebook Page</b>				
Followers	1,760	1,780	1,780	5,320
Likes	1,760	1,780	1,780	5,320
<b>Facebook Posts</b>				
Reach	0	291	906	1,197
Views	0	1,390	1,122	2,512
Likes	0	23	22	45
Comments	0	5	1	6
Shares	0	0	0	0
<b>Instagram</b>				
Reach	0	61	236	297
Views	0	2,058	1,581	3,639
Followers	0	83	122	205
Likes	0	65	73	138
Comments	0	5	4	9
Shares	0	0	0	0





## II. Communication & PR

Coverage book has been updated:

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



travacademy



👤 TravAcademy Team 📅 9 september 2025 ⌚ 16:58

### Hiking en biking in de Travel South regio

Het zuiden van de Verenigde Staten verrast met eindeloze mogelijkheden om de natuur in te gaan. Van fietsroutes langs rivieren tot wandelingen door nationale parken en picknicken onder eeuwenoude bomen: overal vind je plekken waar natuur, cultuur en ontspanning samenkomen. Zo geniet je niet alleen van indrukwekkende landschappen en charmante steden, maar ook van een reis die ruimte laat voor avontuur én ontspanning. Laat je inspireren door de vele





## III. Sales Calls

### Media contacts

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
Hans Avontuur	We have been in contact with Hans following up his press fam. He has been extremely busy during summer and is planning to follow up and publish in November.	

### Trade contacts

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
<b>Connections – Sarah Vandermaesen</b>	<p>Sarah Vandermaesen from Connections shared that bookings for the United States have been lagging behind expectations this year. However, since July and August, they have observed a positive upward trend. Connections is actively upgrading their U.S. product portfolio and making investments in the American market.</p> <p>Looking ahead, on October 19, Connections will host their annual World Day event. The United States will be promoted, and we will also be present to represent and actively promote Travel South, ensuring the region receives dedicated attention from attendees.</p>	
<b>Travelhome – Tabitha van Kessel</b>	<p>Tabitha van Kessel from Travelhome shared that the booking season is already well underway and performing positively. The United States market remains challenging, which will require extra attention in the coming months. She expressed confidence in the long-term potential of the U.S. market and emphasized her interest in continued collaborations to further promote America and strengthen its positioning.</p> <p>She also mentioned that, after many successful years at Travelhome, she has decided to pursue a new opportunity outside of the travel industry and will be leaving her current position next month.</p>	
<b>Dutchies Travel – Liana Weston</b>	During the recent roadshow we spoke with Liana Weston from Dutchies Travel. The company has just launched its U.S. product in the Dutch market. Their initial focus is on setting up the first destinations, after which they plan to expand with southern destinations, expected for next year.	
<b>World Explorers – Tessa Wanders</b>	During the roadshow we met with Tessa Wanders from World Explorers, the tour operator exclusively serving Personal Touch Travel. They only offer destinations their team has personally visited. Neither Tessa nor her colleagues have been to the South. She showed strong interest in the region. We agreed to add her to the mailing list for an invitation to next year's International Showcase.	Add Tessa to the mailing list for an invitation to next year's International Showcase
<b>WRC Reizen/ Outsight Travel – Jón Jonker</b>	We met with Jón Jonker, product manager for WRC Reizen and Outsight Travel. A meeting at our office is planned to provide more detailed information and support their product development.	



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<b>Style in Travel</b> – Birgitte Bosma	They do still see a shift towards Canada, but the USA bookings are coming back. Even though the current prices are quite competitive, they don't see a rush in last-minute bookings for this year, which is still lacking behind a bit. However, booking for 2026 are coming in strong.	
<b>AmerikaNu.nl</b> – Bart Verhoeff	They have a lot of requests that are coming in, quite varied requests for different regions also, but they are having more trouble to convert them all – as some clients' choices are affected by current events.	
<b>Tioga Tours</b> – Paul Backer	We were approached by Paul to participate in one of their information days with a dedicated presentation. They anticipate to have between 150-250 consumers. Marjolein will attend the information day on December 6 <sup>th</sup> .	





### IV. Newsletter

#### Newsletter to the trade & media

Last month, the first newsletter of this fiscal year was distributed. The focus for the newsletter was biking and hiking in the Travel South Region.

Status	Topic	Subscribers	Open rate	Click-thru rate
Newsletter sent out on: September 9th	Biking & hiking	Trade		
		531	41,3%	0,4%
		Media		
		354	44,4%	0,9%

View the newsletter here: <https://mailchi.mp/b4afb276900d/nieuwsbrief-travel-south-usa-hiking-biking?e=172e3d432a>

Looking ahead, the next newsletter, featuring the theme of trick or treats, will be sent out next week and will continue highlight all GPP partners. This newsletter will also be in the completely new layout – to match the new brand.



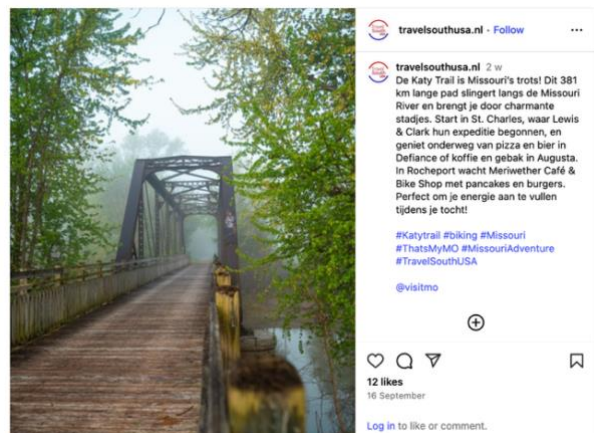
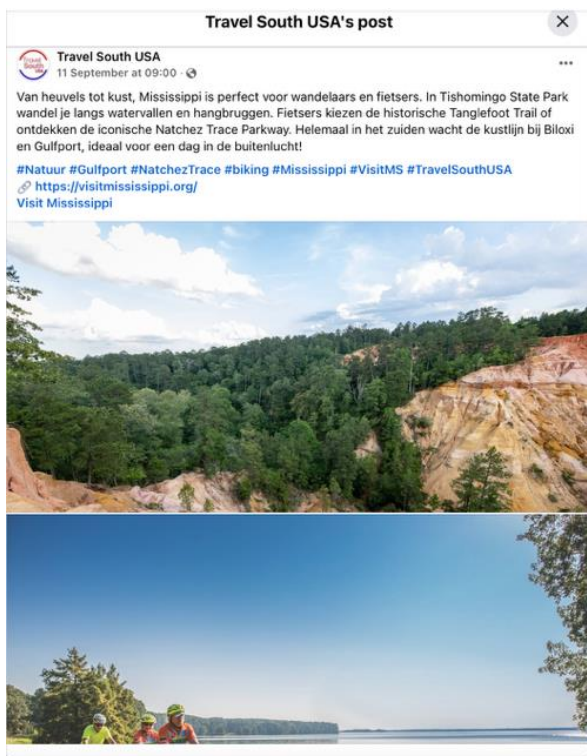




### V. Social media

This month the Benelux Instagram page gained new followers which resulted in higher reach and more interaction. The content for the posts is based on the newsletter and is shared across both channels. A total of **9 posts** were published on Facebook and **9** on Instagram. Each state being highlighted once, and the Rhythms of the South cities rotating every month. This month, Nashville was featured.

The [Facebook post](#) with the highest reach focused on the diverse nature in Mississippi, generating **98 impressions** and **4 interactions**. On [Instagram](#), the strongest performance came from the [post](#) featuring Missouri, **reaching 190 people** and securing **12 interactions**. See posts below:





## VI. Market Update

### Luxury travel

Luxury is no longer defined solely by a beautiful place to stay, but increasingly by the quality of the entire journey. Travelers are shifting their expectations from standard premium products to curated experiences that prioritize ease, comfort, and personalization.

In a recent interview conducted by TravelPro with several tour operators, industry voices emphasized that luxury today means combining authenticity with comfort. Luxury travel is no longer just about material luxury, but about personal experiences, relaxation, and quality. Clients continue to expect the highest standards in accommodations and service, yet they now place equal value on elements such as personalized attention through concierge services, small-scale excursions, and high-level culinary experiences with a focus on local products. Wellness and relaxation offerings, from spas and yoga to mindfulness retreats, are becoming increasingly essential parts of the package.

Privacy and exclusivity remain central themes. Clients are moving away from pre-packaged itineraries, seeking flexibility and creativity instead. They want their journey to be adapted to their individual preferences, from the first inquiry to the last detail of their stay.

The luxury segment is also expanding in reach, attracting interest from a broader audience. This growth highlights the importance of combining creativity, flexibility, and attentive listening to deliver seamless, tailored travel experiences that truly resonate.

### Slow travel

According to recent trend analyses from Travel Trade Days, slow travel is emerging as a key preference among Benelux travelers in 2026. Instead of visiting multiple cities in a short timeframe, more travelers are choosing to spend extended periods in one region, prioritizing depth of experience over quantity.

This shift is driven by a growing desire for rest, authenticity and meaningful connection. Walking, cycling and exploring rural villages are increasingly popular activities, while natural settings such as forests, mountains and coastlines provide the backdrop for immersive stays.



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Travelers also view slow travel as a response to mass tourism and ecological concerns, favoring fewer flights, longer stays and more journeys by train.

The movement aligns closely with seasonality: off-peak months such as May and September are gaining popularity, when destinations offer more space, authenticity and calm.

### Decline in online spending

According to figures from Thuiswinkel.org, Dutch consumers spent slightly less online in the first half of 2025, with total e-commerce expenditures reaching just over €17 billion, a 1% decrease compared to the same period last year. The decline is most visible in services, where spending fell by 7% after a period of strong post-pandemic demand.

Online purchases of travel to the United States also fell sharply, with flight bookings and accommodation sales down by 33%.

This marks a continuation of a trend that began in 2022, when Dutch consumers made fewer online purchases for the first time. Following the pandemic lockdowns, physical shopping recovered, while the steep decline in online services was partly offset by gains in sales.





## VII. Activities overview

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. Coming up in the next fiscal year.

### Wideoyster

This year is a continuation of last year, as part of a two-year cooperation. Half of the publications has already gone live, the second half is expected to follow in fall 2025.

FY 24/25	
November 2024	Press trip North- & South Carolina
April 2025	Attending Global Week Louisville, KY   FAM: Louisiana
May 2025	Publication of three longreads
FY 25/26	
Nov 2025	Publication of two longreads
April 2026	Potentially attending Global Week Mobile, AL   FAM: TBD

### The Outdoors

We will be featured as a ‘destination of the month’, where the Travel South region will be prominently featured across all their platforms for a whole month. The 5 advertorials are written based on desk research and input provided by us. The combined activities are expected to generate a reach of approximately 1,5 million. Exact timing of this feature tbd.

### Visit USA Associations

This year the Travel South USA membership is again extended for both the Dutch and Belgian Visit USA associations. In September, we already attended the 3-day Visit USA The Netherlands Roadshow event to represent the region. In October we will be doing the same during the one-day Visit USA Belgium workshopday (October 14th).



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## Joker Reisbeurs

Travel South will participate again as an official Reisbeurs Sponsor, which includes a large booth during the Reisbeurs on October 19th. But also a presentation during the event, an agent training during the dinner on the Saturday before and a media breakfast on the event day. They expect 1,700 visitors.

## Connections AmeriCan Day

This year instead of participating with a full booth, we will be giving two presentations during the Connections AmeriCan Day – reaching an expected 2,000 visitors.

## Benelux Trade & Media newsletter

As of September, a monthly newsletter is sent out to the Benelux Trade and Media database. Each month focusing on a different theme, highlighting all GPP states. As of this month the new template is being used.

## Benelux social media

Content on Facebook & Instagram will be published throughout the month, using the newsletter as a source of inspiration. Please view chapter V – Social Media for the monthly analyses.

## Product Survey

This project will again be executed in spring 2026, reporting all tour operator data from 2025

## Out of Scope

Travel South International Showcase: For this years' edition in Kansas City a delegation of 8 has been confirmed for the Benelux. All flight details have been collected, and the delegation awaits the moment to request meetings.

Global Week: The media marketplace will take place in Mobile, Alabama in spring 2025. No current actions.

