

TravelSouth

All Y'all Are Welcome **USA**

Monthly Report – May - Benelux

Prepared by:



RIANNE VAN DER LINDEN, Marketing & Account Executive

rianne.van.der.linden@targettravel.nl

MARJOLEIN FRAANJE, General Manager / COO

marjolein.fraanje@targettravel.nl

Bisonspoor 3002 – A701

3605 LT Maarssen, The Netherlands

P +31 30 57 70 757

W targettravelmarketing.com





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 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:

The Travel South region was featured in **50 social media posts** throughout May.

AmericA Magazine shared 4 posts, highlighting **Kentucky, North Carolina, Louisiana** and **Rhythms of the South**. *Amerika Only* shared 12 Youtube shorts and 5 social posts on **Missouri** and **Rhythms of the South**. *Go Amerika* shared 10 posts, mentioning **North Carolina, Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina**. The news outlet *NOS* shared a reel about the upcoming world Cup in Kansas City, **Missouri**. *Tioga Tours* shared 4 posts about the World Cup and Route 66, mentioning **Missouri**. *Visit USA Netherlands* shared 6 posts highlighting **Kentucky, Alabama, Missouri and Tennessee**. *Your Travelreporter* shared 7 posts about **Kentucky** following her participation in Global Week. As part of our co-op *The Outdoors* shared the article highlighting the **whole travel South region**.

Publications:

The Travel South Region received media attention through **33 online articles**.

Target Travel Marketing shared an article about Global week, mentioning **Alabama, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri and Rhythms of the South**. *TravEcademy* shared an article about the World Cup mentioning **Missouri** and an article highlighting America250 mentioning **North Carolina, Rhythms of the South and Tennessee**. News outlets *NRC, Telegraaf, Jeugdjournaal* and *NOS* all shared an article about the World Cup in **Missouri**. *Amerika Only* shared 9 articles about Atlanta, **Rhythms of the South**, and 12 articles highlighting **Missouri**. *Visit USA Belgium* shared two articles, one about **Tennessee** and one about **Mississippi**. *Tioga Tours* highlighted Kansas City, **Missouri** in an article. *ManOeuvre* highlighting the **whole Travel South region and Rhythms of the South** in an article inspired by our newsletter.

Global Week:

As part of Global Week *Your Travel Reporter* shared an article about 10 things to see in Mobile, **Alabama**.



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Newsletters

This month **2 newsletters** included the Travel South region. *Tioga Tours* shared a newsletter about Route 66, mentioning **Missouri**. *Brand USA Benelux* shared a newsletter about the World Cup, mentioning Kansas City, **Missouri**.



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International metrics FY25-26

	July	Aug	Sep	Q1 TOT AL	Oct	Nov	Dec	Q2 TOT AL	Jan	Feb	March	Q3 TOTAL	April	May
Benelux														
Trade														
Trade Meetings/Trainings	4	11	8	23	8	4	3	15	7	6	11	24	6	10
Number of Agents Trained	0	0	150	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	119	0
Travel Trade Newsletter Receptient	0	0	531	531	658	659	659	1,976	656	656	652	1,964	647	646
Trade Newsletter Open Rate	0	0	41.30%	41.30%	47%	46%	46%	46%	30%	28%	30%	29%	30%	28%
Managed Media														
Media Meetings	1	1	1	3	3	2	1	6	2	2	4	8	2	1
Total number of articles published	4	11	10	25	13	8	7	28	13	7	18	38	15	33
Impressions	11,100	15,739	57,225	84,064	24,724	28,226	23,384	76,334	1,804,576	507,076	339,525	2,651,177	58,315	413,683
PR Newsletter Receptient	0	0	354	354	350	345	344	1,039	342	339	336	1,017	335	333
PR Newsletter Open Rate	0.00%	0.00%	44.00%	44.00%	43.00%	42.00%	40.00%	41.67%	18.00%	21.00%	21.00%	20.00%	18.00%	18.00%
Social Posts														
Facebook Page														
Followers	1,760	1,780	1,780	1,780	1,780	1,781	1,780	5,341	1,775	1,774	1,773	5,322	1,771	1,768
Likes	1,760	1,780	1,780	5,320	1,780	1,781	1,780	5,341	1,775	1,774	1,773	5,322	1,771	1,768
Facebook Posts														
Reach	0	291	906	1,197	466	4,555	7,107	12,128	4,269	4,124	9,356	17,749	6,134	6,778



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Views	0	1,390	1,122	2,512	662	6,007	8,105	14,774	7,034	7,022	13,829	27,885	8,103	9,034
Likes	0	23	22	45	14	554	43	611	622	490	145	1,257	258	650
Comments	0	5	1	6	0	0	1	1	19	12	3	34	4	19
Shares	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	8	7	2	2	11	1	4
Instagram														
Reach	0	61	236	297	245	3,865	7,228	11,338	8,215	9,166	12,300	29,681	6,941	6,711
Views	0	2,058	1,581	3,639	1,956	5,806	3,277	11,039	1,869	4,636	2,946	9,451	3,031	4,095
Followers	0	83	122	122	192	248	271	711	298	381	405	1,084	428	479
Likes	0	65	73	138	77	72	58	207	50	77	71	198	59	90
Comments	0	5	4	9	3	3	4	10	12	5	4	21	11	6
Shares	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	2	3	0	1



II. Communication & PR

Coverage book has been updated:

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



Actua ▼ Festifever Fun ▼ Life ▼ Tasty Travel Win





TRAVEL

De geur van bloemen en BBQ's

7 MEI 2026

BV

#ALABAMA, #ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN, #AZALEA, #BBQ, #BLOEMEN, #CHARLESTON, #DURHAM, #EVENEMENTEN, #FESTIVALTERREINEN, #FOODSTANDS, #FOWL RIVER, #GARNALEN, #GEUR, #GIN ROOM, #GRILLS, #KENTUCKY GARDEN TRAIL, #LEXINGTON, #LOUISIANA, #NASHVILLE, #NATCHEZ, #PARKEN, #PECORINO, #PROEVERIJEN, #SOUTH CAROLINA, #TENNESSEE, #TRAVEL SOUTH, #TRAVEL SOUTH USA, #TUINEN, #VERENIGDE STATEN, #ZUIDEN

DIT DELEN:





In het zuiden van de Verenigde Staten komt het voorjaar tot leven in tuinen, parken en op festivalterreinen waar natuur en eetcultuur samenkomen. Tussen bloeiende azalea's, irissen en tulpen wandelen bezoekers langs foodstands, grills en proeverijen waar regionale gerechten centraal staan. Deze evenementen zijn meer dan alleen een seizoensactiviteit: ze laten zien hoe buitenleven, de lokale keuken en het gemeenschapsgevoel in de Travel South USA-regio met elkaar verweven zijn.

In Tennessee zijn de Cheekwood Estate & Gardens iedere lente het decor van het voorjaarsfestival 'Cheekwood in Bloom'. De tuinen rond het historische landhuis vullen zich dan met tulpen, viooltjes en narcissen. Verderop, in South Pittsburg, staat tijdens het National Cornbread

Andere taal

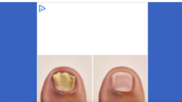
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Overdracht Rianne_1372442





III. Sales Calls

Media contacts

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
Saskia van Gulick - AvantGarde	Avant Garde is a premium Dutch lifestyle magazine, originally launched in the 1980's, but was discontinued in 2011. After about 14 years of absence the title was relaunched in 2025. The modern publication covers a balance mix of topics including fashion, art & culture, interior design, travel and luxury lifestyle. They got in contact with us about a World Cup publication, to be released early June, and which will be on display in stores for three months. Kansas City is included in this advertorial. This publication is part of the representation proposal package for Visit Kansas City, but can be considered an out-of-scope project for the GPP program.	

Trade contacts

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
Ludwig Verbruggen - Joker Reizen	Although Joker Reizen is suffering as well, they remain positive on the future. They decided to continue their USA/Canada reisbeurs. We have explained that we feel the impact for our region is bigger if we make it part of our strategy.	
Lianne Boersma - Riksja Travel	Whilst she is sad that her good colleague is moving to the sales department of Europe, a new colleague, Sophie, is joining Riksja Travel as a USA specialist. For July she already planned a trip to the Travel South region, as she is a big fan of music. Partners in Nashville, New Orleans and Memphis are helping by offering some access into attractions. She'll be able to use her experiences first hand. In her first month Sophie already sold 2 trips to the Travel South region.	
Irene Dijkstra - Van Verre	Things are going quite alright in the business, given the current circumstances. Their total business comes for 75% out of Van Verre, their consumer label and 25% out of Special Traffic, their B2B label. She gave us some insights into how they work with the various receptive operators. Some, compared to others, are very easy to work with and have a large offer. They work mostly with Travalco (50%), ATI (35%) and with Tourmappers & RMHT. Irene is very excited that she will be joining the Travel South International Showcase this year.	
Jose Kraan - UStravel.nl	They are putting together a trip for a group of podcasters, who will travel to the region in May 2027 to learn about the roots of country music in Tennessee, and the Bluegrass in Kentucky. Based on their trip, they will be creating a dedicated country itinerary. They will keep us updated about any publications, and inclusions in the various podcasts. And they will reach out to us if they need any assistance.	
Bart Verhoeff - AmerikaNU	Bart recently contracted a planning tool to help streamline his booking process, and to help get a draft itinerary over to the client. This is also part of a larger development within the company, which is that they are now also working with travel agents. He has again expressed an interest in	Follow-up on participation TSISC



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	attending TSISC. We will see if there is a spot available - Bart has attended the past 3 years in a row.	
Sarah vandermaesen - Connections	Sarah informed us that just before IPW their colleague Zenobia and one other product manager has been let go, due to the decrease in requests and bookings. Not only for the USA, but also for Asian destinations. Connections' majority of USA bookings are city trips to NYC, which is what the organization started off with initially, and that segment is facing a hard hit at the moment.	
Lieze Lattre - Exciting West	Exciting West continues to experience booking growth and remains on a positive trajectory since launching three years ago. The company recently completed a website update and is investing in staff development through participation in travel trade events across the United States. In addition, a representative from Exciting West has confirmed participation in TSISC, which is expected to further support product development and sales opportunities.	
Edwin van Delden- Travel2America	Edwin reported a decline in bookings but remains optimistic about future business. He noted that current inquiries are coming from highly engaged clients, allowing for more detailed and tailored itinerary proposals. He believes the effort invested in nurturing these opportunities will contribute to stronger conversion rates and long term growth.	
Thijs Boogaard Aeroglobe	Aeroglobe continues to invest in the development of its destination portfolio. Africa and the United States remain key destinations for the company, both in terms of product offerings and destination expertise. While the USA continues to be Aeroglobe's strongest destination, the company sees opportunities for further growth in Australia and New Zealand.	
Olivier VandenBroecke USA-Travel	Olivier is currently exploring promotional opportunities for the upcoming season and is considering participation in BT Expo once again. The event is held in two locations in Belgium. He reported that last year's French language edition in Nivelles performed well, while attendance at the Dutch language edition in Ghent was lower. In addition, the travel fair in Liège was very successful. Olivier is currently seeking destination partners interested in supporting his participation in this year's event.	





IV. Newsletter

Newsletter to the trade & media

The newsletter sent in May focused on the theme of *The Roots of Southern Food & The Bounty of the Sea* and achieved a strong click-thru rate from the trade.

Status	Topic	Subscribers	Open rate	Click-thru rate
Newsletter sent out on: May 11th	<i>The Roots of Southern Food & The Bounty of the Sea</i>	Trade		
		646	28,4%	0.78 %
		Media		
		333	18,0%	0.0%

View the newsletter here: <https://mailchi.mp/b5658e119fe9/nieuwsbrief-travel-south-usa-smaken-zuiden>





V. Social media

We have been posting all throughout April on our social media platforms. 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, Atlanta was featured. The content for the posts is based on the matching month's newsletter theme.

This month the social media performed well, we've had the highest number of interactions on both Facebook and Instagram. In addition, Facebook posts generated 180 link clicks, indicating strong audience engagement and interest in the region.

The best performing Facebook post highlighted barbecue in Alabama, generated **878 impressions** and **111 interactions**. On Instagram, the strongest performance came from the post featuring Louisiana, reaching **656 people** and securing **16 interactions**. See posts below:



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Among our regular Travel South posts, we also share the **Michelin articles** on social media as they are published. These are posted once a week on Sunday, on Facebook (as we can include a link to the article) there and will continue as long as the articles are getting published. The article is then also shared on Instagram in the stories (as can be seen above), which are put into a highlight on our profile – so it can always be viewed.



Instagram stories

In addition to feed posts, we share daily stories featuring all GPP partners on a rotating basis. This approach increases overall visibility and helps keep the Travel South region top of mind among our audience. The stories are also saved in highlights on our profile for continued exposure. During Global Week, as well as the pre- and post-FAM trips, we shared content from Rianne's travels through the region and stories created by the Benelux media delegation.

Followers

We have been boosting social media posts since November, which has led to consistent growth on Instagram. The Facebook following, however, has a slight decline. A potential issue with the connection to the main Travel South Facebook page is being investigated by Ivonne.

	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Facebook												
Followers	1,760	1,780	1,780	1,780	1,781	1,780	1,775	1,774	1,773	1,771	1,768	
Instagram												
Followers	-	83	122	192	248	271	298	381	405	428	479	





VI. Market Update

Vakantiebeurs relaunches as The GetAway

Vakantiebeurs, the largest consumer travel fair in the Benelux, is being repositioned and relaunched under a new concept: The GetAway. After more than 55 years, the event is evolving to reflect changing consumer travel behavior and the growing demand for inspiration, storytelling and immersive travel experiences.

While the event remains focused on connecting consumers with destinations and travel brands, the renewed format places a stronger emphasis on experience driven travel inspiration. Visitors will be encouraged to engage with destinations through food, culture, personal stories and interactive elements, reflecting broader developments within the travel industry and changing consumer expectations. The new concept acknowledges that travelers increasingly make decisions based on emotions, experiences and personal interests rather than solely on price or destination offerings.

As part of the repositioning, the event will evolve from a traditional trade fair format into a more immersive platform, with increased focus on destination storytelling, culture, gastronomy, nature and adventure travel. The overall event design and visitor experience are also being redeveloped to align with current consumer expectations. Organizers are currently working with both existing and new partners to further develop the concept ahead of future editions.

The event will continue to take place at Jaarbeurs Utrecht from January 7 to 10, 2027.

How generation Z searches and books travel

Generation Z is becoming an increasingly important audience within the travel industry, driven by high travel intent and a strong interest in experiences, wellness and authenticity. During the annual RMC Meetup at Transavia, organized together with TravMagazine, industry experts discussed how younger travelers are reshaping search and booking behavior across the market.

Insights shared during the event showed that Generation Z values flexibility, convenience and transparency throughout the entire customer journey. Having grown up in a digital and rapidly changing world, this generation expects fast communication, mobile first content and



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authentic storytelling rather than highly polished campaigns. Platforms such as TikTok now play a central role, functioning not only as entertainment channels but also as search engines and travel inspiration platforms.

Dutch Travelers head into summer with strong travel intentions

The ANVR Travel Survey 2026, conducted by NielsenIQ, confirms that travel remains a priority for Dutch consumers. Nearly half of respondents plan to book an international trip within the next three months, with sun holidays, city breaks and touring holidays remaining the most popular travel styles.

The survey also shows that travel demand remains resilient despite rising prices and geopolitical developments. While a small but growing number of travelers use AI tools for inspiration and trip planning, personal advice and professional guidance continue to play an important role in the booking process.





VII. Activities overview

This chapter provides updates when activities have been executed, when there is an update on the progress, or any action points.

WideOyster

The 2-year cooperation has been completed, and a separate report has been shared with the full results.

The Outdoors

The Travel South region was featured on the homepage of theoutdoors.nl as the 'destination of the month', throughout May. All 5 articles were highlighted on the homepage, mentioning all GPP partners:

National Parks & State Parks – alle 8 GPP states

The Gulf Shores – LA, MI & AL

Water activities in the Carolina's – NC & SC

Trails in Southeastern USA – alle 8 GPP states

Cycling in the American South – MO, TN & KY

Publications were pushed by a dedicated newsletter, social media and advertising. The combined activities are expected to generate a reach of approximately 1 million.

Visit USA Associations

Through the continued membership that Travel South has with Visit USA The Netherlands and Visit USA Belgium, they continue to generate frequent exposure through the newsletters, on social media and the various events that we attend.

Benelux Trade & Media newsletter

Every month, a newsletter is sent out to the Benelux Trade and Media database. Each month focusing on a different theme, highlighting all GPP states. Please view chapter IV for the monthly analyses.



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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 for the monthly analyses.

Product Survey

This project has been completed, and the final Benelux results have been shared.

Out of Scope

Global Week: The media marketplace took place in Mobile, Alabama in April 2025. The following five journalists were a part of this years' Benelux delegation. A first initial report will be provided June 2026, followed by an updated report (November 2026) and final report (June 2027).

Amerika Magazine – Edwin Vrielink | FAM: West Virginia

Amerika Only – Michelle de Vos | FAM: Missouri

Foodies – Bas Erkens | FAM: North Carolina

Hey!USA – Sebastiaan Klijnen | FAM: Tennessee

Your Travel Reporter – Mila Jaipal | FAM: Kentucky

New Orleans Promotion Jazz in Duketown festival

Prijsvrij Vakanties/D-reizen, one of the largest independent travel agencies in the Netherlands, participated as an official partner and sponsor of Jazz in Duketown, which took place from May 22–24, 2026 in 's-Hertogenbosch. The event is the largest free open-air jazz festival in the Netherlands and attracts approximately 150,000 visitors annually.

As part of the sponsorship, Prijsvrij Vakanties/D-reizen organized a spin-the-wheel giveaway with an 8-day trip to New Orleans as the main prize, linking the destination to the festival's jazz theme.

The sponsorship package also included destination visibility through construction fence banners placed throughout the city center and festival grounds. Ten banners featured the New Orleans prize promotion and were displayed at prominent locations before, during and after the event. Based on visitor numbers and regular city visitors, the total estimated reach was approximately 250,000 impressions.

