

TravelSouth

All Y'all Are Welcome **USA**

Monthly Report – June - Benelux

Prepared by:



RIANNE VAN DER LINDEN, Marketing & Account Manager

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 **8 social media posts** throughout June. *GoAmerika* mentioned **Tennessee** in two posts. *Your Travel Reporter* shared one post about **Kentucky** as part of their Global Week participation. *Amerika Plus* shared two posts, one featuring **Rhythms of the South, Louisiana, Tennessee and North Carolina**, the other featuring **Rhythms of the South and Louisiana**. **Rhythms of the South** and **Tennessee** were also mentioned in a post by *Visit USA Belgium*. *Amerika Magazine* mentioned the Outerbanks in **North Carolina** in two posts.

As a result of the World Cup between The Netherlands and Tunisia, Kansas City, **Missouri**, was highlighted in an outstanding 50 posts by outlets: *Amerika Only*, *Ons Oranje*, *Voetbal Primeur*, *RTL Nieuws*, *Voetbal International*, *Reisbizz*, *Yuki Kempees* (influencer, DJ and part of the official Orange Fan Team), *AD Sportswereld*, *Rotu/Aeroglobe*, *AD*, *Grofgeld Podcast*, *Amerika Plus*, *Tioga Tours* and *Go Amerika*.

Publications:

The Travel South Region received media attention through **11 online articles**. *AmericA Magazine* mentioned **North Carolina** in their article about the Outerbanks. *Manoeuvre* mentioned the **whole region and Rhythms of the South** in an article about music, nature and culture, based on our newsletter. *Visit USA Belgium* shared an article mentioning **Rhythms of the South** and **Tennessee**, and another article mentioning **Mississippi**. *Your Travel Reporter* shared 3 articles about *Atlanta*, **Rhythms of the South**.

In addition to the media attention highlighted above, Kansas City, **Missouri**, also received attention through **24 online articles**. The online articles came from newsoutlets *AD*, *NOS*, *Nu.nl*, *Parool*, *Rotterdam Vandaag en Morgen*, *RTL Nieuws*, *Sportnieuws*, *Telegraaf* and *Hart van Nederland*, *Het Koninklijk Huis*, *Hey!USA*, *Reisbizz*, *UStravel*, *Voetbal International*, *Voetbal Nieuws* and *Voetbal Primeur*. Kansas City, **Missouri** was also mentioned during the live television news from *NPO*.



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Global Week:

As part of Global Week *Your Travel Reporter* shared 3 articles about Kentucky, and one article about a roadtrip through **Kentucky, Alabama** and Atlanta, **Rhythms of the South**.

Newsletters

This month **2 newsletters** included the Travel South region. Both *Tioga Tours and Amerika Only* shared a newsletter about Kansas City, **Missouri**.



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International metrics FY25-26

	Q1 TOTAL	Q2 TOTAL	Q3 TOTAL	April	May	June	Q4 TOTAL	FY25/26 TOTAL
Benelux								
Trade								
Trade Meetings/Trainings	23	15	24	6	10	16	32	94
Number of Agents Trained	150	0	0	119	0	0	119	269
Travel Trade Newsletter Receptient	531	1,976	1,964	647	646	644	1,937	6,408
Trade Newsletter Open Rate	41.30%	46%	29%	30%	28%	31	1053%	36.30%
Managed Media								
Media Meetings	3	6	8	2	1	3	6	23
Total number of articles published	25	22	38	39	16	33	35	170
Impressions	84,064	51,884	2,651,177	2,375,539	336,165	413,683	1,445,364	4,706,699
PR Newsletter Receptient	354	1,039	1,017	335	333	332	1,000	3,410
PR Newsletter Open Rate	44.00%	41.67%	20.00%	18.00%	18.00%	20.00%	18.67%	41.44%
Social Posts								
Facebook Page								
Followers	1,780	5,341	5,322	1,771	1,768	1,763	5,302	21,285
Likes	5,320	5,341	5,322	1,771	1,768	1,763	5,302	21,285
Facebook Posts								
Reach	1,197	12,128	17,749	6,134	6,778	3,372	16,284	47,358
Views	2,512	14,774	27,885	8,103	9,034	5,286	22,423	67,594
Likes	45	611	1,257	258	650	490	1,398	3,311
Comments	6	1	34	4	19	13	36	77
Shares	0	8	11	1	4	11	16	35
Instagram								
Reach	297	7,387	9,451	3,031	4,095	4,644	11,770	32,247
Views	3,639	14,990	29,681	6,941	6,711	5,917	19,569	64,537
Followers	122	711	1,084	428	479	503	1,410	3,327
Likes	138	207	198	59	90	86	235	778
Comments	9	10	21	11	6	2	19	59
Shares	0	2	3	0	1	0	1	6





II. Communication & PR

Coverage book has been updated:

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



Actua  Festivever Fun  Life  Tasty Travel Win



TRAVEL

Muziek, natuur en cultuur in Amerika

12 JUNI 2026

BV

#ALABAMA, #AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE, #AMERIKA, #CLARK CREEK NATURAL AREA, #CONGAREE NATIONAL PARK, #CULTUUR, #DOT EXPERIENCE, #GREAT MISSISSIPPI NATURE TRAIL, #GULF COAST, #KANSAS CHIEFS, #KANSAS CITY, #KENTUCKY, #LIVE MUZIEK, #LOUISVILLE, #MARDI GRAS, #MISSISSIPPI, #MISSOURIE, #MUZIEK, #NASHVILLE, #NATUUR, #OCEAN SPRINGS, #PATRICK MAHOMES, #REGIO, #SOUTH CAROLINA, #STEVIE WONDER, #TRAVEL SOUTH, #TRAVIS KELCE, #TRIPLE CROWN BAKERY, #VERENIGDE STATEN

DIT DELEN:





In het Zuiden van de Verenigde Staten staan muziek, natuur en cultuur centraal. Van live muziek en bijzondere musea in de steden tot lokale festivals en activiteiten langs de kust: overal komt het unieke karakter van het Zuiden terug. De regio kent veel diepgewortelde tradities, maar de Travel South regio blijft vernieuwen zonder het verleden uit het oog te verliezen.

Met zomerfestivals, openluchtconcerten en live muziek op vrijwel iedere straathoek zijn Atlanta, Nashville en New Orleans populaire bestemmingen voor muzikliefhebbers. Van jazzclubs en festivals verspreid door de French Quarter in New Orleans tot rooftopbars en honky tonks in Nashville en grote outdoorconcerten in Atlanta. Deze steden combineren muziek moeiteloos met gastronomie, nightlife en lokale cultuur.





III. Sales Calls

Media contacts

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
Chloe Sterk – Freelance/influencer	Chloe contacted us as she was looking to publish about hiking in the USA and she did not know where to start. We have looked into her website and her socials and her content is valuable. Her original idea was to go hiking in Florida. We have advised her to look into the possibilities of the Travel South States and gave her the articles of The Outdoors as a reference.	
Bas Erkens – Foodies.nl	Within the travel section of their magazine and website, they provide inspiration on destinations worldwide. While the USA has not traditionally been a key focus, they partnered last year with tour operator Little America on a series of articles about Utah. Following this collaboration, they are interested in further expanding their U.S. coverage.	
Juriaan Teulings – freelancer	Juriaan was nominated for an award at IPW, for his article about Chicago. Although he likes writing about US destinations, he let us know that selling a USA article is tough these days. He has stable clients such as Conde Nast, FD (Dutch Financial times), and KLM's Holland Harald.	

Trade contacts

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
Birgitte Bosma – Style in Travel	After some months of delay, Birgitte was happy to report that their new website for GreatLakes-Travel is finally live. She also shared plans for their consumer travel fair, currently being considered for October or early November. The fair may be split across two days and hosted at two locations in the Netherlands.	
Martin de Boer – Corendon	Corendon, one of the largest package tour operators in the Benelux, expand its hotel portfolio beyond its core markets. The company has confirmed plans to enter the U.S. hospitality market, by investing in two hotel properties in Miami. Their core market has always been the Netherlands, Turkey, and Curaçao.	
Roderick Aalbers – GoCanada	They don't see a big difference in bookings to Canada compared to last year, as maybe would be expected with people choosing for Canada instead of the USA. They do however have higher revenue, with similar amount of bookings. Bookings for 2027 are already showing higher numbers than 2026.	
Priscilla Ootes-Melse – Little America	Priscilla mentions that Canada bookings are very high this year, USA in comparison down about 50%. They are focusing on contacting suppliers and gaining new contracts.	



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Gerald Ponsard - GeraldAmerique	Gerald let us know that media continues to play a strong role in influencing travel behavior in Belgium. While overall U.S. demand is down, he notes that repeat travelers are still booking. Works directly with both agents and clients through personal meetings. AI is helping him a lot to speed up his business, as he works alone. His database consists of approximately 2,500 B2B BE/LUX travel agent contacts and 9,000 FR. Communication is handled through newsletters in both English and French. Discussed participation in the upcoming B2C event in Liège. Last years' experience was positive. Gerald expressed his interest to participate TSISC. Since we do have a lot of interest we have placed him on the mailinglist.	
Anne Raamsteeboers - Victoria Camper Holidays	Victoria Camper Holidays reported that the average U.S. itinerary consists of approximately 17 overnight stays. The company primarily books accommodation for the first and last night of a trip and offers activities upon request. In addition, sister company &Olives Travel is considering adding the United States to its destination portfolio.	
Charonne in het Veld - Brand USA	We discussed the "Get Facts: Get Going" B2B campaign from Brand USA and industry education and reinforcing the expectations for their clients. Trade is reporting their down 40% YOY. However, product development is still happening, with confidence that the market conditions will improve over time.	
Ludwig Verbruggen - Joker	The company continues to recognize the United States as an important market and remains committed to promoting the destination through client presentations and destination expertise. Consumer questions are increasingly focused on fuel prices. Expectation is still on last-minute bookings. They are expecting more early bookings as a result from their show in October. They notice first timers are mainly staying behind, for all the USA destinations. We have opted to participate at their annual event with a min sponsorship, like we did before.	
Mats Tijssen- Doets Reizen	The company reported an overall decline of approximately 30% in U.S. bookings, with Florida typically being their strongest destination. Hawaii is currently showing an increase, as clients often do not perceive it as part of the United States.	
Jose Kraan - UStravel	Travelers returning from trips during March and April reported positive experiences, generating valuable word-of-mouth recommendations. The company is currently relying more on repeat customers and has adjusted its marketing strategy to focus on slow travel experiences rather than promoting the United States as a whole.	
Pieter DeMuynck – Penta's USA	Pieter reported March and April weren't the best months, mainly due to middle eastern conflict. May onwards has been better. Booking activity has improved significantly, with a conversion rate of 90%. Not a lot of demand, but the ones that are asking for a quote are booking. They are working on a new app and brochures. Pieter's wife designs the brochures/maps that they give to all their clients and to the travel agents that they work with.	



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Lucas van Ampting – Exit Reizen	The company has partnered with a Dutch ticket provider to offer package deals for World Cup matches in the United States. Initial sales have been positive, reflecting strong consumer interest in football-related travel.	
Sarah Vandermaesen - Connections	To cut costs, Connections had to let go of three product managers, including Zenobia for the USA. She was Sarah's right hand with a lot of knowledge. This, and also other reasons have led to Sarah making the decision to leave the company as well. Frank was with the company for years and is now coming back to take on part of the Asia product. For the other colleagues the company had to cut working hours -20% as a "temporary solution". They have been hurt by the decrease in long-haul travel. They will not organize their annual World Day event but focus on smaller events throughout the country. Sarah her last day will be July 17. Her new job will be at Hobo Reizen in Leuven, on the USA Product team.	
Hans Tattersal – Amerikanu	Their Motorbeurs participation isn't sure yet, they are thinking about it. Overall, the motorcycle tours are down. They will publish a Motorcycle Tours North America magazine together with Meridian Travel (November). What makes this project unique is that there is currently no dedicated motorcycle travel magazine in the Benelux market focused exclusively on North America. Motorcyclists travelling through North America typically take trips lasting two to three weeks or longer. These journeys represent a premium travel segment, as motorcycle rentals are relatively expensive and often involve a single traveler per vehicle, unlike car rentals.	
Denise van Drunen – NRV Reizen	NVR sell group trips mainly (only some FIT), and has seen a lot of cancellations. They need to fill 30 seats in a coach, minimum is 25 for a tour to go. Target group is 60+. Offer only 1 USA itinerary this year, 21-day family tour through West USA. Go West is their partner for the USA. They only sold the trip 3 times this year, last year 5.	
Dirk de Bruijne – Aeroglobe / AmerikaPlus	Dirk reported that over the past two years, the company has expanded its focus on Canada, where it continues to see strong growth, particularly in the motorhome segment. While U.S. inquiries remain below previous levels, interest related to the FIFA World Cup has generated additional requests. Although demand has not yet fully recovered, the company remains confident in the long-term potential of the U.S. market and expects bookings to improve as consumer sentiment gradually strengthens.	





IV. Newsletter

Newsletter to the trade & media

The newsletter for June was sent late May and focused on the theme of *music, nature and culture* and achieved a strong open rate.

Status	Topic	Subscribers	Open rate	Click-thru rate
Newsletter sent out on: May 28th	<i>Music, nature and culture (potluck June)</i>	Trade		
		644	30,7%	0.31 %
		Media		
		332	19,9%	0.61%

View the newsletter here <https://mailchi.mp/6e9750766e72/nieuwsbrief-travel-south-usa-muziek-natuur-cultuur>

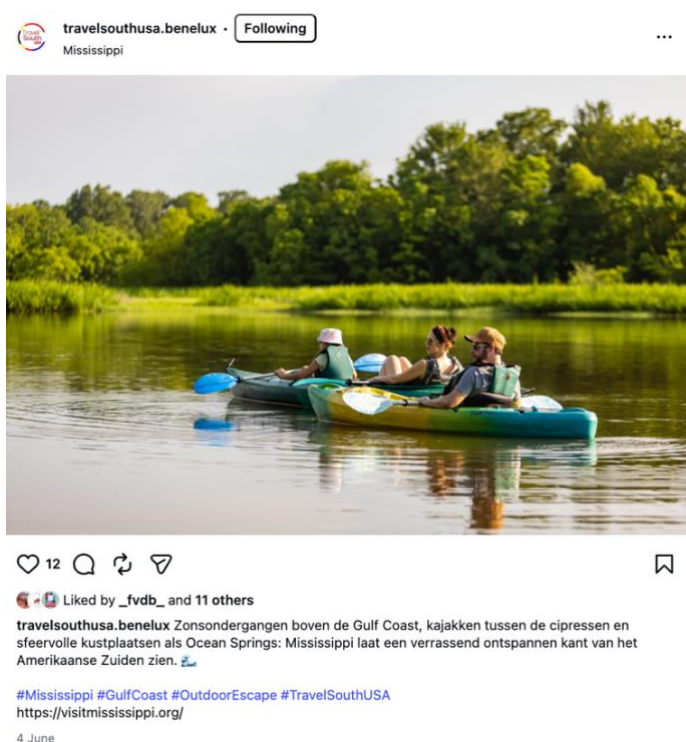


V. Social media

We have been posting all throughout June 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, Nashville 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.

The best performing [Facebook post](#) highlighted summer in South Carolina, generated **779 impressions** and **115 interactions**. On Instagram, the strongest performance came from the [post](#) featuring sunsets in Mississippi, reaching **813 people** and securing **12 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	1,763
Instagram												
Followers	-	83	122	192	248	271	298	381	405	428	479	503





VI. Market Update

Changing booking behavior driven by geopolitical uncertainty

According to TUI Group, holidays continue to be a high priority for consumers despite ongoing geopolitical challenges and dynamic market conditions. During the first six months of its financial year, the company welcomed 12.8 million travelers, an increase of 200,000 compared to the same period last year.

TUI notes that broader geopolitical developments, including the conflict in the Middle East, continue to create uncertainty in the market. Combined with concerns related to fuel and aviation, this is influencing consumer behavior. In this environment, the company emphasizes that package holidays continue to be the preferred choice for many travelers, offering reassurance amid ongoing uncertainty.

Artificial intelligence becomes part of the travel advisor's toolkit

Artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming part of the travel industry, shifting from an emerging technology to a practical tool for travel professionals. Rather than replacing personal service, AI is increasingly being used to improve efficiency, allowing travel advisors to spend more time on customer relationships, personalized advice, and business development.

Travel Counsellors recently introduced its proprietary AI platform, TC Co-Pilot, designed to support advisors with tasks such as creating travel proposals, improving customer communications, generating marketing ideas, and answering commercial questions. The company also emphasizes the importance of training advisors to use AI effectively, recognizing that the quality of the output depends on how the technology is applied.

Solo travel continues to gain popularity

Solo travel is becoming an increasingly important segment within the Dutch travel market. Recent booking data from Transavia shows that bookings made by solo travelers increased by 30% between 2024 and 2026, pointing to a clear structural trend rather than a temporary shift.



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According to the airline, nearly half of all bookings made during the first quarter of 2026 were for solo travelers, despite this traditionally being a quieter booking period. Freedom and flexibility are cited as the primary motivations, allowing travelers to choose their own pace, itinerary, and experiences. At the same time, solo travel does not necessarily mean traveling alone throughout the journey, as many travelers connect with others through guided excursions, workshops, and shared accommodations.

Millennials and Zillennials are driving this trend, particularly travelers between the ages of 25 and 34. However, solo travel continues to appeal to a broad demographic, with strong participation among women in both younger and older age groups, highlighting the growing appeal of independent travel across the Dutch market.





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

This cooperation has been completed, and a separate report has been shared with the full results.

Visit USA Associations

Frequent exposure is generated through the continued membership that Travel South has with Visit USA The Netherlands and Visit USA Belgium.

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.

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 initial progress report has been shared.

Travel South International Showcase: 9 tour operators have already been confirmed for the upcoming edition.

