

TravelSouth

All Y'all Are Welcome **USA**

Monthly Report – September - Benelux

Prepared by:



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About the Global Network Program

We appreciate the continued support of Travel South USA and are proud to serve as your Global Consultants. Having worked closely with the region for several years, we have built a strong understanding of what the region has to offer, and how to best represent the region in the Benelux market. Our overall goal remains to grow sales, exposure and awareness of the travel possibilities throughout the Travel South region, which will ultimately increase visitation from the Benelux and visitor spending. Storytelling will be at the heart of this approach, highlighting the key themes like: Food, Music, Culture, History and Outdoors

We look forward to another year of keeping the Travel South region top-of-mind among trade, media and potential travelers in Belgium & The Netherlands, while continuing to strengthen the presence of the GNP partners in-market. Included in this years' Benelux program are: **Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Rhythms of the South.**

What you may expect from us as Global Consultants:

- Management of the destination's in-market reputation, covering both the Travel South region as a whole, while also ensuring equal exposure for all GNP partners.
- Developing and maintaining media and trade relationships, with continued focus on product development.
- Execution of approved marketing activities
- Recommendations for effective marketing investments and identification of new opportunities.
- Monthly analysis and reporting on relevant market trends and developments, but also monitoring market sentiment

Why the Benelux market?

- 81% of the Dutch population (18.5 million) and 74% of the Belgium population (11.9 million) is vacationing at least once a year.
- A steady and stable market. Small, yet big in our number of travelers 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 10 public holidays.
- The average time spent in the USA is: 18 days.





I. Executive summary

Joker Reisbeurs:

As part of our coop with Joker Reizen, Travel South USA was once again a main sponsor of the annual Joker Reisbeurs in Mechelen on September 27. The region was well represented through our prominent booth, promotional materials and presentations. The event attracted approximately 800 visitors. Additionally, we provided a training session for the Joker team ahead of the event. An extensive report of the event can be found in chapter VII.



Publications

Global week:

We received media coverage out of Global week 2026. America Magazine published a print and an online article that featured Mobile, **Alabama**.

Social media:

The Travel South region was featured in **18 social media posts** throughout the month September. *America Magazine* shared two posts, one highlighting Kansas City, **Missouri** and one promoting September edition of their magazine that features **Missouri** and **Alabama**. *Amerika Only* shared 11 posts, with content focusing on **Missouri** and **Rhythms of the South**, particularly Atlanta. *GoAmerika* shared three posts highlighting **Rhythms of the South**, including the French Quarter in New Orleans and Nashville in Tennessee. Dutch influencer *Jessie Maya* shared one post featuring **Tennessee** and **Rhythms of the South** city Nashville. *AmerikaPlus* shared one post about the Boots Court Hotel in **Missouri**.

Print: publications:

America Magazine published a print article about Kansas City, **Missouri**.



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Online publications:

The Travel South Region received media attention through **33 online articles**. *Travel and Tour World* published 13 articles featuring **Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky, North Carolina** and **Rhythms of the South** city **Nashville**. *Visit USA The Netherlands* shared four articles highlighting **Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, Louisiana**, and **Rhythms of the South** cities Nashville and New Orleans. *Amerikaantje* published three articles featuring **South Carolina, Mississippi** and **Rhythms of the South**. News outlets *Nu.nl*, *Ad.nl*, *Telegraaf* and *Headliner*, covered the renaming of Nashville International Airport in honor of Dolly Parton, mentioning **Tennessee** and **Rhythms of the South**. *Maxime and Blues Magazine* covered Cassandra Wilson, highlighting **Mississippi**. *National Geographic* mentioned **Tennessee**. **Missouri** was featured in an article from *Doets Reizen* about Route 66. *Visit USA Belgium* highlighted **Mississippi** in their newest blog. *TravEcademy* mentioned **Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee** in collaboration with *Brand USA newsletter*. *Target Travel Marketing* also shared an article about Hans Avontuur receiving the Travel South USA outstanding Travel Writer award. An article about a road trip, based on our previous newsletter, was shared by *ManOevre*, covering the whole **Travel South Region** and **Rhythms of the South**.

Newsletters

This month **three newsletters** included the Travel South region. *Brand USA* sent out a newsletter mentioning **Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee** as part of their road trips. *Visit USA The Netherlands* shared two newsletters, both highlighting **Mississippi**.



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International metrics FY26-27

	July	Aug	Sep	Q1 Total
Benelux				
Trade				
Trade Meetings/Trainings	8	5	16	29
Number of Agents Trained	0	0	15	15
Travel Trade Newsletter Recipient	/	/	634	634
Trade Newsletter Open Rate	/	/	30.8	30.8
Media				
Media Meetings	4	2	2	8
Total number of articles published	8	17	35	60
Impressions	577,810	1,143,853	458,135	2,179,798
PR Newsletter Recipient	/	/	314	314
PR Newsletter Open Rate	/	/	22.6	22.6
Social media				
Facebook				
Followers	66	77	320	320
Likes	66	77	320	320
Reach	1,826	12,540	8,247	
Views	2,524	25,059	13,165	22,613
Likes	258	183	196	40,748
Comments	7	5	1	637
Shares	3	3	1	13
Instagram				
Reach	1,980	2,106	1,818	5,904
Views	1,252	1,708	2,236	5,196
Followers	511	525	533	533
Likes	57	67	206	330
Comments	1	5	1	7
Shares	0	0	0	0





II. Communication & PR

Coverage book has been updated:

<https://app.coveragebook.com/29490/books/9aea807d50216ba7>



Waar Mardi Gras tot leven komt,
maar de geschiedenis nooit ver weg is
Mobile, city of pleasure!?

Mobile is een stad die volledig opgaat in de tradities van Mardi Gras. Het hele jaar werkt Mobile, Alabama, toe naar deze extravaganza. Een traditie die in 1703 door de Fransen werd geïntroduceerd en de Britse, Spaanse en Amerikaanse overheersing heeft overleefd. Die eeuwenoude traditie vormt nog altijd het kloppende hart van Mobile. Maar achter de kleurrijke parades en feestelijke maskers schuilt ook een andere geschiedenis. Een geschiedenis van slavernij, segregatie en burgerrechten. Nieuwe musea en historische locaties laten zien hoe Mobile met dat verleden omgaat en houden de samenleving een spiegel voor.

TEKST: LARA VRIJLING
FOTOGRAFIE: LARA VRIJLING & SHUTTERSTOCK



Mardi Gras leeft in de stad

Mobile in Mobile, Alabama is niet alleen het belangrijkste feest van de regio, het bepaalt het ritme van de stad. De eerste keer dat Mardi Gras in de Verenigde Staten werd gevierd, was in 1703 in de doot de Fransen gescheit. In 1713, nog voor de ontdekking van de andere eilanden, werd de eerste parade gevierd. Een kerkelijk feest op de laatste dag voor de eerste parade van viering dagen vanden begin. Op deze dag, die is in Amerika bekend als Fat Tuesday, wordt uitsluitend feest gevierd en mag al het reuzen masker voorbeeld worden

'Mobile is de bakermat geworden van de beroemde Moon Pie Cookies en Mardi Gras'

Mystic societies
Meer dan twintig zogenaamde Mystic societies zijn actief in Mobile met als doel een fascinerende Mardi Gras presenteren van de stad en haar inwoners. Er zijn verenigingen die hun eigen bijdragen, zoals voor leden,

dansen en de LHBTQ-gemeenschap; en er zijn verenigingen die zich expliciet bezighouden met het organiseren van parades. Mobile kent gedurende de rectoring dagen voorlopende aan Fat Tuesday maar liefst viering parades. Elke parade probeert zich te onderscheiden door originaliteit. Zo zijn er sproken die volledig in segmenten-creatie zijn worden gepresenteerd, met aan de eeuwenoude parades op Mardi Gras zelf. Een van de bekendste tradities tijdens deze parades is het geïmproviseerde dansen van krakelingen en allehande de praluten. De krakelingen zijn in de diverse kleuren, waar van groen, paars en goud de overhand hebben. Deze kleuren staan symbool voor het geloof, rechtvaardigheid en macht.

Het laatste restant van Fort Condé

De kleuren paars en goud worden gedurende de Mardi Gras periode de hovenissen in Mobile. Het oorspronkelijke doel van Mardi Gras was ze ook terug tijdens de parades. Zo worden er ook rode en blauwe en marshmallows uitgegeven. Sommige van deze dingen worden er die nemen, begroten en eigen leven te leiden. Zo is Mobile de bakermat geworden van de beroemde Moon Pie Cookies. Het vanden van deze zoete lekkernij behoort inmiddels tot een van de belangrijkste van de parades. Zoals kalen het traditionele feestmaal in tijdens Thanksgiving, en is de King Cake onmisbaar onderdeel met Mardi Gras. Deze kleurrijke cake, het maad van de suiker, heeft een extra betekenis. In de cake zit namelijk een

'Mobile werd in 1702 door de Fransen gesticht naast een bestaand dorp van de inheemse Mobile-stam'

kleine plastic baby verstoppen. Oorspronkelijk was deegne die deze troef in zijn stuk van de cake werd verantwoordelijk voor het regneren van de volgende King Cake en daarmee voor het voortzetten van deze traditie. Een modernere variant hiervan is dat deegne die de baby vindt in het komende jaar zal gaan trouwen.

Mobile leeft voor Mardi Gras. Vele heriden van carnavalsteden staren de straten en pleinen. De stad beschikt zelfs over een speciaal Mardi Gras Museum. Sinds 2019 is een van de vermommingen gewijd aan de Mystic Societies. Elk half jaar terug en van de ruim twintig verenigingen de gelegenheid zich te presenteren. Dit geeft een fascinerend beeld van de culturele impact van deze groepen op Mobile.

Colonial Fort Condé
Aan het Mardi Gras Park liggen de laatste resten van het in 1723 door de Fransen gebouwde Fort Condé. Later kwam het fort achtereenvolgens in Britse, Spaanse en Amerikaanse handen terecht. Aan de overkant van de straat





III. Sales Calls

Media contacts

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
Saskia Gulick – Avant Garde	Saskia spoke with Jill at Brand USA Travel Week about a collaboration on a Dolly Parton tribute publication in Avant Garde. The feature will be 20-pages, including a 10-page photoshoot, being a modern interpretation of Dolly Parton. The other 10-pages will be editorial content featuring Dollywood, Nashville and broader Tennessee. Saskia was already in contact with Jill about this, and back then Jill reached out to us, asking for our expertise and insight on the publication. The release will be November 2026.	
Boy Tijbosch – AmerikaOnly	He was very pleased with this year's edition of Brand USA Travel Week in Amsterdam, and it was very effective for him. He is working on a new video project called 'small town America' and already got some positive responses from US partners at Travel Week. Within the 'small town America' project he will highlight the smaller cities and towns, outside of the traditional itineraries and with the iconic main streets. This will be done through a short video format on socials and a longer videoformat (documentary style_ on Youtube. For this project he is partnering with GoAmerika/Style in Travel, who will be publishing new bookable itineraries that will include these small towns. Timeline will likely be as follows: filming in 2027 and publication of itineraries and video content end of 2027 (focusing on booking momentum for 2028). Video content will roll out throughout 2028.	Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi have shown an interest in partnering on this campaign. Discuss the best approach. Suggestion to pitch as an out of scope project

Trade contacts

Contacts	Interests / Status	Follow-up
Bart Verhoeff – AmerikaNu.nl	In the first weeks of September AmerikaNu.nl launched its new website and is already seeing an increase in inquiries. Interest and traffic are covering a wide range of U.S. destinations, from Nashville to the Western states and from Yellowstone to Route 66. He also let us know that Shanti is no longer with AmerikaNu.nl due to cost reductions and the company's increased focus on improving conversion.	
Thies van Marwijk-Kooij – Little America	Thies will be the main contact for U.S. and Canada-related business and will likely attend IPW this year, particularly if Priscilla has not returned to the office. She is currently absent for an indefinite period. There are several changes within the Little America team. Sjanneke, Product Manager Canada, will leave in February and exit the travel industry. Yuri Peters has left the travel industry effective immediately. Loes Rikmanspoel recently joined the team and will primarily focus on Canada, building on her previous work experience. Robert Eelkman-Rooda is gradually returning to	



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	work at Little America. He will no longer be involved in product and is expected to move into a different department.	
Hans Tattersall – AmerikaNu.nl	After a few years of decline in the sales of motorcycle tours, Hans anticipates, this is going to change, and the demand is still there. The Benelux has an estimated 2–2.5 million motorcycle license holders and around 1.4 million registered motorcycles. Motorcycle travel in North America is a relatively small but high-value niche, with trips typically lasting two to three weeks or longer and higher rental costs than car travel. The market includes both escorted group tours and tailor-made FIT itineraries. An additional long-term benefit is that motorcycle travelers often return later for a fly-drive or motorhome holiday with their families. They therefore plan a more active approach and have started a cooperation with Meridian magazine for a magazine dedicated to travel experiences in the United States and Canada, called AMERICAN ROADS.	
Ludwig Verbruggen - Joker Reizen	Ludwig Verbruggen, Product Manager USA, will leave the company to pursue a new professional opportunity. His last working day was September 27, coinciding with Joker's travel fair. The company says the transition is expected to have minimal impact on day-to-day operations. The USA and Canada remain key destinations and strategic priorities, with continued focus on developing the product and strengthening partner relationships. The USA/Canada/Camper team currently consists of Kristien De Beukeleer, Joeri Delbaere, Stefanie Berwaerts, and Leen Persoons. Leen, who has been with Joker for ten years, mainly in Marketing & Communications, will take on a more active role in the sales and development of the USA product. She already has previous experience with the destination. Katleen Van Lombeek, Team Lead FIT Travel, and Jeroen Vincken, Chief Commercial Officer, will also remain involved. Ludwig started on September 28th with Connections, kicking off his new employment at Brand USA Travel Week.	
Wim Jaap Berkhout - AirCanada	They have a good year with full flights. The only month that is showing less is November. It would be best if the demand for US would increase, but they can't complain.	
Irene Dijkstra – Van Verre Reizen	The company has felt the effects of the middle east conflicts, as their most sold destination is Indonesia/Asia. The main issue here is that the Dutch government has listed the United Arab Emirates as 'orange' which means that it is considered unsafe to travel. However, some airlines are still flying through here. Therefore, when they offer a free rebooking option for their clients (excl. layover in e.g. Dubai), Van Verre is paying twice for a flight. This has cost them already significantly. Their sales team is 4 on North America. They have meeting spaces in their office in which they are open to host us during a sales mission, which we will consider. They send all their clients a package before their trip including a printed roadbook of their booked trip and the vouchers/tickets. After a trip is completed, they send a handwritten thank you note.	
Frank Bosteels – Connections	Frank Bosteels has temporarily taken over responsibility for the USA portfolio following the departure of Zenobia and Sarah. Annick Heirman is responsible for Canada. He says the company has been significantly impacted by the decline in demand for travel to the USA over the past year. According to Frank, Connections was unable to compensate for this decline through increased sales to Canada. Frank is critical of the company's commercial strategy during this period. He believes	



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	Connections missed several opportunities to maintain demand for the USA, including leveraging promotional themes such as the Route 66 anniversary and offering more competitive pricing. The latest addition of Ludwig on the team will help them in the development of new product and improve what is now being sold.	
Wolfgang Hendrix – UStravel.nl	Wolfgang says that even though bookings were lower last year, the company remains healthy with closing last year's fiscal year with similar revenue results. Wolfgang says the USA itself has not become any less attractive as a destination. According to him, the decline in demand is primarily driven by the overall perception of the US, concerns about border controls, higher travel costs, and reduced destination visibility. He notes that while the destinations cannot influence national politics, they can focus on rebuilding traveler confidence by providing clear information, emphasizing value for money, and creating compelling reasons for travelers to book now. The biggest thing their company has been investing in is an open-source AI powered travel planner tool for travel agents: https://ustravel.nl/reisassistent/. It is not yet ready to use; they plan to have this ready by the end of the year.	
Olivier Dewitt – NAAR Bespoke Travel	90% of what they offer is the same across all markets. They are working on a new website and work with RMHT, LTpro, A4U, ATI. They have the most agents in Italy, followed by the Benelux (204), where they have been active 3 years now, French (160) and German (15). Germany they only started recently and are using support of a PR agency to build up the market. In terms of the Benelux market, the largest share of agents is in French speaking Belgium.	
Rosalie van Doorn – Avila Reizen	Rosalie started as an intern but has been working on the team for 4 years - does Africa & North America, everyone helps with all the continents now. US is slow like last year - used to be their best-selling destination, seeing less requests now, competition is high with other tour operators and prices worldwide. Seeing bookings for 2027.	
Helmi Ruigrok – Travelhome	Bookings are showing a slight increase, stabilizing. 1,000 pax for now for 2027. Southwest and Rocky Mountains are showing bookings mainly, Anchorage also some. New England is getting some attention. Helmi is excited to be attending Travel South International Showcase this year in Nashville, as they also see an increasing interest in requests for the American South.	
Christian Jabor – Aeroglobe	With the launch of their new B2B brand, they are organizing, for the first time, a trade fam with 3 of their agents and 3 independent travel agents. The first fam will go to Portland in October 2026. Next, they are looking to visit Utah. We will stay in touch for any possibilities for the Travel South region.	
Django Hofma – Let's Travel	We don't see Django often, as he is really selective in which events he attends, it was great to catch up during Brand USA Travel Week. Let's Travel mainly targets travelers that choose off the beaten path routes. And during Travel Week he was inspired by the I-65 route, published by Brand USA, and he is working on publishing this as a new route on his website. It will include overnights in Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi & Louisiana. And we are providing him with suggestions on including Alabama in the itinerary. Although he always thought that he would be a US specialist only, the current booking behavior of the Dutch has led to them now also offering Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.	



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Stéphanie van Straalen - TUI Group	Stéphanie is responsive for group tours for the German, Benelux and Uk markets. For the next years they will be focusing on expanding their current offerings, not only by adding tours, but also by adding more overnights and add-ons to existing tours.	
Birgitte Bosma – Visit USA The Netherlands	Visit USA recently organized a FAM trip for 7 travel agents, going to Florida. They have done this in the past, but it had been a while. It was very successful, and there was a lot of great interest from agents, so they are likely to organize one again next year.	If interested we can discuss to have the FAM go to the Travel South region
Bart pomp – ITG companies / Tenzing Travel	They sell family travel for the most part, who have shown a major drop last year, as these travelers tend to be more cautious. This year however the company is doing well, and they are compensating the overall sales with their other destinations. Japan is doing really well and also their Canada bookings have doubled. To Bart's surprise, as he said the value for money is much better in the USA at the moment, compared to Canada. The USA was always their Nr. 1 destination, it currently stands sixth. But he said interest seems to be on the rise again, and he is cautiously optimistic.	





IV. Newsletter

This past month, we launched the first newsletter of the new year, based on input from the GNP partners. Each edition will feature all nine partners and focus on one of the agreed-upon topics.

For the new year, we introduced a fresh layout and added an additional link for each partner, with the aim of increasing click-through rates.

Status	Topic	Subscribers	Open rate	Click-thru rate
Newsletter sent out on: September 2nd	Sunrise to Sundown: Photo Ready Road Trips in the South	Trade		
		634	30.8%	1.3%
		Media		
		314	22.6%	1.0%

View the newsletter and new lay-out here: <https://mailchi.mp/6bfe9e5ff63c/nieuwsbrief-travel-south-usa-beste-roadtrip>.



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V. Social media

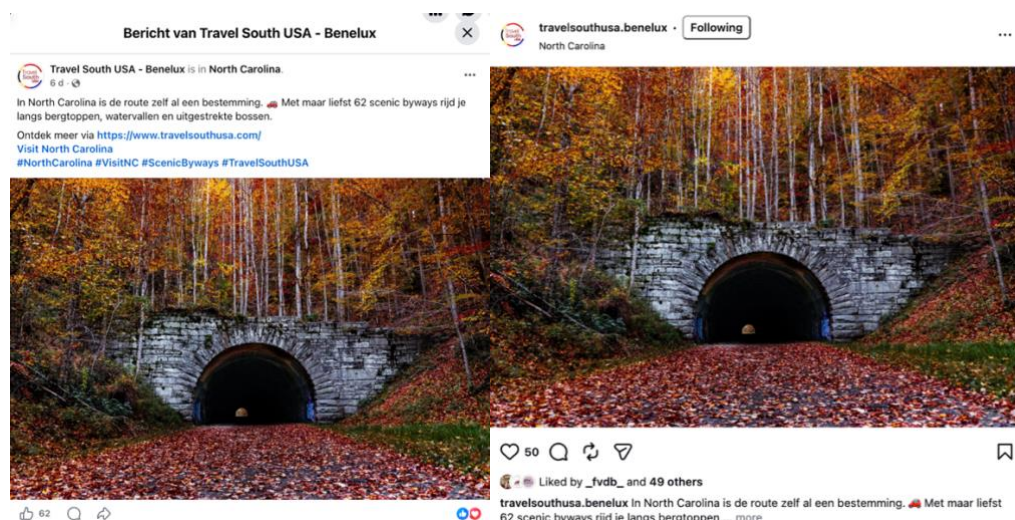
Social media posts are shared continuously throughout the year. Every month 9 posts are shared, both on Facebook and Instagram, highlighting each of the GNP partners in each post. For the Rhythms of the South posts, we rotate between the three cities each month. This month Nashville was featured.

The content of the posts are based on each month's newsletter theme but is carefully adapted for the Benelux audience. We focus on creating an inspiring and varied content mix that highlights the unique character of each state and showcases the diversity of the Travel South region.

We also set up a separate monthly advertisement to generate more page followers on Facebook. This month, the advertisement focused on unique natural phenomena in the Travel South region, featuring the synchronous fireflies in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The campaign performed exceptionally well, generating 230 new followers while reaching 6,311 people. This result significantly exceeded our expectations and meant that we reached our annual Facebook follower KPI within just two weeks. See advertisement on the right:



The best performing [Instagram](#) and [Facebook post](#) highlighted scenic byways in **North Carolina**. On Facebook it generated 446 impressions and 62 interactions. On Instagram it reached 225 people and securing 50 interactions. See posts below:



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Followers

We closely monitor follower growth across both social media platforms, with particular attention given to our new Facebook page. Our KPIs for the upcoming fiscal year were:

- **Facebook:** reach 300 followers by the end of June. As this target was already reached this month, we have revised the KPI to 600 followers by the end of June.
- **Instagram:** reach 700 followers by the end of June.

As our latest Facebook advertisement made us reach our yearly KPI, we have revised it.

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Facebook	66	77	320									
Instagram	511	525	533									

* Follower count is noted at the end of the month.

Based on the numbers above, we suggest fully transitioning to the new Facebook page and hiding the Travel South USA (NL) page, so any new interested follower, will follow the new page. We will continue to focus our efforts on the new page and monitor the page growth.





VI. Market Update

New EU rules on environmental claims now in effect

As of September 27, 2026, new rules under the European Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive (EmpCo) apply to environmental claims in consumer marketing. Generic terms such as "sustainable", "green" or "eco-friendly" are no longer allowed without proof. Claims as "carbon neutral" or "climate neutral" based on greenhouse gas offsetting are prohibited, while sustainability labels must meet stricter certification requirements. It is important to review sustainability messaging across the website, campaigns, social media and other consumer-facing materials.

Dutch cabinet scales back planned long-haul flight tax increase

The Dutch government plans to partially reduce the previously announced increase in the flight tax from 2027. Under the revised plans, the tax on long-haul flights of more than 5,500 kilometers would be set at €59 per passenger, instead of the previously proposed €71.

The adjustment brings the Dutch long-haul rate in line with Germany. The change is particularly relevant for long-distance travel, as concerns had been raised within the aviation industry that higher Dutch flight taxes could encourage travelers to depart from neighboring countries where taxes are lower. The planned rates for short- and medium-haul flights currently remain unchanged.

Rising travel costs influence travelers plan and book

Rising travel costs are increasingly influencing how Dutch travelers plan and book their holidays. A recent survey by Columbus Travel among approximately 1,000 readers found that 83% are adjusting their travel plans in response to higher prices, particularly for accommodation and flights. Rather than giving up travel altogether, travelers are becoming more cost-conscious, for example by choosing less expensive accommodation, travelling less frequently or taking shorter trips.

Booking behavior is also changing. Around 21% of respondents are booking earlier to benefit from early-booking discounts, while 13% are waiting for last-minute deals. In addition, 20% indicate that they are booking less frequently through tour operators to reduce costs, compared with 10% who are using tour operators more often for the price certainty they can provide. Destination choice is also shifting, with 51% of respondents now more likely to choose a destination within Europe.



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Brand USA Ambassadors

Brand USA has launched its new Global Ambassador Program as part of the USA's 250th anniversary celebrations in 2026. The initiative brings together 250 travel professionals from key international markets, including a strong Benelux representation with 15 ambassadors.

Netherlands (10 agents)

- Kim Giling (YourTravel)
- Maaïke Schoutsen (Just be Travellers)
- Tamara Poeth (Personal Touch Travel)
- Monique Talsma (TUI at Home)
- Tessa van Vliet (Personal Touch Travel)
- Dominique van der Geer (80Travel)
- Alicia ten Hoeve (Travel Counsellors)
- Therese van Eck (The Travel Club)
- Martine Snoek (Werelds Reizen)
- Bianca Brouwer (Travel Counsellors)

Belgium (5 agents)

- Ilse Varewyck (Joker)
- Sofie Verstraeten (De Strycker by Travel Experts)
- Gwendolien Depover (Best of Travel)
- Corentin Larue (Connections)
- Inneke Maes (Travel Counsellors)

They are selected based on their expertise, passion for the USA and active participation in the USA Discovery Program. The ambassadors will receive exclusive training, access to Brand USA resources, FAM trips and industry events. They were invited on the Thursday of Brand USA's Travel Week. They will also play an important role in sharing destination knowledge with fellow travel advisors, helping to increase confidence in selling the USA.

Vakantiebeurs

Target Travel Marketing is the organizer of the USA Pavilion at Vakantiebeurs. However, due to too few exhibitors' registrations, there won't be a USA Pavilion at Vakantiebeurs in 2027. The 2026 edition was not great, due to much lower visitor numbers, and additionally, many companies are curious how the newly announced set-up will perform, and are therefore hesitant to participate at the next edition.

Visit USA The Netherlands & Visit USA Belgium events

The Visit USA the Netherlands' annual Roadshow, with two new cities and locations this year (Arnhem and Leiden), welcomed a total of 26 exhibitors. A record, including many first-time attendees. The locations were unique and created an inspirational atmosphere for both the exhibitors and travel agents (72 total). That number was a bit lower than anticipated but could be as a result of many other event taking place in the same week.



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Visit USA Belgium had to make the choice to cancel their annual Visit USA Workshop. This is the first time in many years that the event won't be taking place. They informed their members that unfortunately there were not enough participations registered, for the event to be worthwhile. it won't affect our budget or activities as we decided not to participate this year. They will rethink the set-up of the event for next year.





VII. Activities overview

This chapter provides updates when activities have been executed, what the status is, and whether there are any action points.

Travel Diaries

The confirmed activity with Travel Diaries consists of 2 parts

1. Dedicated Travel South E-book + dedicated Travel South landing page

Destination landing page

A dedicated page about the Travel South region, in the form of travel guide, to inspire excited travelers with tips, activities and places to stay to plan their next trip. This page will also link to the E-book.

Includes: introduction of the destination, practical information, logo, top activities, 9 SEO-optimized blog posts (one per GNP partner), overnight stay tips and mention of Ambassador tour operators.

Dedicated E-book

Approx. 45 pages, designed by their professional content team, to inspire travelers. Their users and readers can download it free of charge, and we can offer it on our own website and social media as well.

2. E-book Chapter inclusion in E-book 'Unique Destinations'

All input for the dedicated E-book will be repurposed for a 6-10 page chapter in 'Unique Destinations' E-book.

- Focus on key themes: outdoor, food, music, history & culture
- Highlighting all GNP partners

July 26	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July 27
	Collecting input	Writing content	Publishing digital content & indexing		Creation of dedicated E-book + Release of Unique Destinations E-book	Release E-book & meta campaign	Distributing E-book via Benelux newsletter, social media and via Tour operators					

Currently we are ahead of schedule. The content has been written and is sent to all partners for review.



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Joker Reizen

A large part of the coop with Joker Reizen was the attendance of Travel South at their annual Reisbeurs.

The evening before the event we had a dinner with the team of Joker (15 people) and other participants of the event. During the dinner Rianne gave a 10-minute 'whats new and happening' presentation about the Travel South region, training the Joker staff.

Travel South was again a main sponsor at the Joker Reisbeurs, which took place in Mechelen on Sunday September 27th. The one-day consumer event aimed to inspire travelers through presentations, booths and opportunities to speak directly with the Joker team about future travel plans. Our booth was located near the entry and stood out on the event floor. Within the booth we distributed the Travel South brochure, our new Travel South swag and various state-specific flyers. It was good to see that visitors were not only inquiring about the more common routes but also interested in learning about lesser known areas of the region.

Throughout the day the team of Joker gave multiple presentations about the Travel South region, highlighting their itineraries. Additionally, Rianne gave one presentation, focusing more on the key themes within the region, and to ensure all states were mentioned and featured during the event. Five presentations were held simultaneously, resulting in uneven attendance across sessions. Some presentations attracted limited audiences, while others welcomed up to 250 attendees. For next year, the team will review whether fewer presentations and a stronger focus on information desks would create a more effective format.

The event attracted approximately 800 visitors, which was slightly below expectations. Joker suggests that September may be relatively early for a consumer-focused travel event. Attendance was also impacted by accessibility issues in Mechelen related to a marathon event and changes to parking arrangements.

For 2027, the Lamot venue in Mechelen has already been reserved for Sunday, October 17, aligning again with Travel Week. This year, the alignment resulted in a record-breaking amount of US destinations attending with a booth, including US partners: Visit Arizona, Visit Utah, Visit Park City, Visit Salt Lake, Scottsdale, Oklahoma Tourism, Oklahoma City, Visit Grapevine, Visit Tampa Bay, Explore Fairbanks, Visit Anchorage, Great American West, State of Washington, Travel Portland & Travel Oregon, Visit Fredericksburg TX and the spirit of Louisiana.



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Overall, feedback from the Joker team was positive, with visitors asking targeted questions and showing strong travel intent. This may lead to earlier bookings.

What's still to come as part of the larger coop?

- Dedicated social media post (reel or carousel)
- Dedicated newsletter item
- Poster or banner campaign

Visit USA Associations

Frequent and consistent exposure is generated through newsletter inclusions, which are a part of the continued membership that Travel South USA has with Visit USA The Netherlands and Visit USA Belgium.

Visit USA Belgium offers members the opportunity to give a webinar, as part of the membership. Travel South will again be making use of that opportunity this year.

Benelux Trade & Media newsletter

Every month, starting in September, a newsletter is sent out to the Benelux Trade and Media database. Each month focusing on a different theme, highlighting all GNP partners. 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.

Out of Scope

Global Week 2026:

The initial progress report has been shared. An interim updated report will be shared in November 2026, with a final report to follow June 2027.

Global Week 2027:

The upcoming edition will take place from April 21 - 29 in Bentonville, Arkansas.

Travel South International Showcase 2026:

The Benelux delegation consists of 10 tour operators and 1 trade media. Both Rianne & Marjolein will be attending this years' edition.



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	Company Name	Country	First Name	Last Name	Title	Post-FAM
1	Travel Trend	NL	Peter	van Veenendaal	Product Manager	Kentucky
2	Travel2America	NL	Edwin	van Delden	Managing Director	Georgia's Legacy
3	Go Amerika / Style in Travel	NL	Corrina	Flink	USA Specialist	Alabama
4	Ustravel	NL	Jose	Kraan	Product & Sales Manager	Georgia's Legacy
5	Exciting West	BE	Annaik	Temmerman	Sales manager	Tennessee Ties
6	Indelible Travel	NL	Paul	Van Harten	Managing Director	Tennessee Ties
7	van Verre	NL	Irene	Dijkstra	Senior Product Manager	Mississippi
8	Travelhome	NL	Helmi	Ruigrok	Management Team	Arkansas
9	Aeroglobe International	NL	Thjis	Boogaard	Product manager	Arkansas
10	USA Travel	BE	Alyson	Kersten	Travel Consultant	Mississippi

11	Reismedia	NL	Rob	Somsen	Editor	Tennessee Ties
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12	Target Travel Marketing	NL	Rianne	van der Linden	Account manager	Alabama
13	Target Travel Marketing	NL	Marjolein	Fraanje	General manager	Kentucky

