

CenStates TTRA Conference Schedule



Thursday, October 23

8:45 AM - 9:30 AM - Unified Brand, Local Flavor: Crafting Countywide Marketing that Resonates Everywhere



Tim Crouson, CHIA, CAHTA, CTA, Destination Ann Arbor, Director of Research



Maria Skrzynski, CTA, Destination Ann Arbor, Content Strategist

Serving an entire county comes with opportunities and challenges to ensure content feels authentic and represents every unique destination. This session highlights Destination Ann Arbor's work to bridge gaps in representation—both geographic and social—through intentional strategies, stakeholder reporting, and community engagement.

9:30 AM - 10:00 AM - Mapping the Road Ahead: U.S. Travel Trends and Sentiment



Kelsey Waite, Longwoods International, Director of Client Engagement

An insightful look at the evolving landscape of domestic travel, based on Longwoods International's American Traveler Sentiment survey. Topics include: U.S. and Canadian travel perceptions, AI in trip planning, domestic tourism opportunities tied to major events, electric vehicles' impact on travel, and the U.S. Resident Sentiment on Tourism study.

10:15 AM - 11:00 AM - What Does Fun and Fulfilling Look Like? Mobile Ethnography to Drive Your Destination Forward



Kelly Heatly, MSMR, Root Research and Insights, Partner

Discover how mobile ethnography and online qualitative tools capture authentic visitor perceptions and motivations. A case study demonstrates how entertainment attraction visitors shared insights via video, text, and visuals—revealing emotional drivers and unmet needs. Learn how this approach inspires actionable strategies to enhance visitor experiences.

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM - Tourism at a Crossroads: Addressing Rural Workforce Development Challenges in Central Indiana's Fastest- Growing County



Allyson Gutwein, Discover Boone County, CEO

Boone County, Indiana, is among the fastest-growing counties in the U.S., yet faces acute workforce shortages in hospitality and tourism. This session explores the challenges of workforce development in a tight labor market and presents solutions involving public-private partnerships, education, childcare innovation, and workforce mobility.

11:30 AM - 12:00 PM - Pretesting of Advertising: How to Stay Out of a Marketer's Biggest Trap



Jane Ghosh, Discover Kalamazoo, President & CEO

Drawing on experience at The Kellogg Company and Discover Kalamazoo, Jane shares lessons on the three jobs of advertising and the importance of pretesting. A case study demonstrates how pretesting two versions of an ad campaign informed strategy and improved performance.

2:15 PM - 2:45 PM - The Tourism Friendly Texas Certified Community Program



Spencer Zamora, Travel Texas, Office of the Governor, Research Specialist

This designation program supports communities in using tourism as an economic development strategy. Learn how it strengthens partnerships, educates leaders, encourages participation in state programs, and assists small or rural communities with limited resources.

2:45 PM - 3:15 PM - Designing Insight: Data Visualization for Destination Marketing and Research



Jordan Musall, Destinations International, Business Insights Specialist

Learn how to transform data into stories through effective visualization. This session covers design principles, storytelling techniques, and practical tools for creating dashboards that engage and inform.

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM - Attribution at Work



Laura Speicher, Tourism Economics, Sr. Solutions Engineer



John Packer, Arrivalist, Account Director

Explore why attribution matters, how it works, and how DMOs are applying it. Real-world use cases highlight how analytics refine digital strategies, improve user experience, and maximize marketing ROI.

Friday, October 24

8:45 AM - 9:30 AM - Ad Intelligence: The Confluence of Creative, Content, and Conversion Data in Tourism Marketing Campaigns



Dave Serino, TwoSix Digital, Founder and Chief Strategist

Learn how research, creative strategy, and AI-driven tools combine to optimize tourism ad campaigns. Gain insights on measuring conversions, choosing the most effective ad formats, and tailoring strategies for destination marketers.

9:30 AM - 10:15 AM - The Total Accommodations Landscape: U.S. and Regional Lodging Trends and Outlooks



Bram Gallagher, AirDNA, Director of Economics and Forecasting



Raquel Ortiz, MS, CHIA, STR, Director of Financial Performance

Session description TBA.

10:30 AM - 11:00 AM - Strategic Level Up: Evolving Strategy Beyond the Big Campaign



Camille Ziccardi, Karsh Hagan, VP, Growth & Strategy

Learn how to embed tools like AYTm, social listening, and behavioral research into everyday decision-making. Discover underutilized insights and consumer trends shaping travel behavior, along with practical strategies for small DMOs to elevate marketing efforts on limited budgets.

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM - Small but Mighty: How a Mid-Sized DMO is Making a Big Impact Through Storytelling, Strategy, and Stakeholder Engagement



Steve Trosin, Experience Jackson, Outdoor Recreation Manager



Rachel Buchanan, Experience Jackson and Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, VP of Marketing & Communications



Phil Eich, Storyville, Founder



Ryan Tarrant, Experience Jackson, President & CEO

Experience Jackson demonstrates how a mid-sized DMO can lead with innovation—launching podcasts, crafting an outdoor recreation strategy, and setting a bold 20-year vision plan. This session highlights lessons learned, collaboration wins, and practical takeaways for other DMOs working with limited resources but aiming for transformative impact.