

Monday, April 28

The Minot Mixer: Don't Miss the Bus!

The conference starts with three stops to network and unwind. Get ready for a dynamic, interactive evening where networking meets inspiration! Hop on the bus from the Clarion Hotel at 3 p.m. and enjoy three exciting stops designed to spark ideas, foster connections, and set the tone for an incredible conference. *Must get on the bus to be part of the Minot Mixer stops.

◆ **3:30 – 5 p.m. | Stop 1: State Fair Center**

Kick off the evening with mini events designed for meaningful networking and real connections. Engage in roundtables and exchange insights with like-minded North Dakotans. Plus, pick up your conference packet and get ready for the next steps!

◆ **3-5 p.m. | Registration Open and Exhibitor Set Up**

◆ **3:30 – 4 p.m. | Networking Roundtables**

Choose a topic and network with peers in this requested pre-conference session.

- * Marketing
- * Tribal Tourism
- * Social Media
- * Sports and Recreation

◆ **4:15-5 p.m. | Be Bold**

Kick off the conference with this networking session that sets the stage for unlocking creativity. Through thoughtfully created prompts/questions where you are dared to share, you'll infuse more playfulness into your daily routines and marketing efforts.

◆ **5:00 - 6:00 PM | Stop 2: Atypical Brewery** 🍷

Enjoy two complimentary tastings of locally crafted beer from this award-winning brewery. Learn about Atypical's brewing methods, their creative approach to craft beer, and their exciting destination plans.

◆ **6:00 PM | Stop 3: Drop Off to Opening Reception**



After Atypical, we'll drop you off at the Foundry in the Brick + Mortar District of downtown Minot, where you can make, shop, and mingle at this vibrant local venue. Enjoy great food, meet new people, and celebrate the start of the conference in style! Bonus: two free libations of your choice.

5:45 - 6:00 PM | Bus to the Foundry for Opening Reception

If you're arriving later, hop on the bus from the Clarion Hotel and head to the Foundry in Minot's Brick + Mortar District for the opening reception. Enjoy food, drinks, and a chance to mingle with fellow attendees to kick off the conference.

Tuesday, April 29 – WEAR YOUR LOGO DAY	
7:45 a.m.	Registration Opens
8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Sponsor Exhibits Open
8-8:45 a.m.	<i>Breakfast Buffet with Exhibitors</i>
8:45-9 a.m.	Welcome from our hosts at Visit Minot
9-10 a.m.	General Session – No Bad Days Life hits you and how you respond determines your path forward. Draw from North Dakotan Hunter Pinke’s experience of going from Division I football player to a chest-down paraplegic at age 22 in this inspiring opening keynote. Pinke gives tangible examples on how to choose joy and live life with no bad days.
10-10:30 a.m.	<i>Break with Exhibitors</i>
10:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Navigating Digital Trends Shaping Travel Carrie Tomlinson Get a glimpse into the future of tourism with The Navigator, a review of the trends and innovations shaping the tourism industry. The 2025 edition dives into experiential travel, the rise of sports tourism, advancements in AI and the evolution of media. Packed with cutting-edge research from Miles’ leading partners, a global review of best practices and actionable examples from destinations worldwide.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Developing More Accessible Destinations Panel This panel will be moderated by Hunter Pinke and feature experts from Prairie Grit, Bottineau Winter Park – Annie’s House, and the Anne Carlson Center. Attendees will hear about actionable ways to make communities, events and attractions more accessible for travelers of all abilities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Content That Cuts Through Amanda Shilling and Jack Yakowicz Audit your visual brand to uncover hidden strengths and fix weaknesses, then create powerful cross-platform content that works in both print and digital spaces to attract visitors and boost economic impact across North Dakota communities.

11:45 a.m.-1 p.m.	The State of the Industry Luncheon This annual industry luncheon features a presentation and latest updates from Tourism Director Sara Otte Coleman.
1:15-2:15 p.m.	General Session – Think “Branding First” <p>The top companies in the world think branding first and marketing second. Josiah Brown, also known as the New York Sherpa, will guide how to strengthen your organization’s brand while also stewarding our industry’s brand in this keynote session.</p>
2:30-3:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Print Travel Guide of the Future Josiah Brown <p>Print is not dead, but yours might be. Learn from experiences of talking to thousands of travelers per year on what they are looking for in travel guides and why it’s an essential part of your local advocacy efforts as well.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Presence 2.0: Fueling the New Travel Search Experience Kim Palmer <p>Search results are more visual, transactional, and AI-powered than ever before - redefining how travelers choose everything from destinations to dinner. Learn how tourism businesses and DMOs can optimize their digital presence on major planning platforms, as this content directly fuels the recommendations and visual inspiration visitors encounter.</p>
3:30-4 p.m.	<i>Break with Exhibitors</i>
4-5 p.m.	The Great State Update <p>Get visitors to stay longer in your regions by increasing your knowledge of the key things to see and do. Local DMOs, CVBs, and tourism professionals will share updates on the fun things you need to know, pecha kucha style. Kicking off the updates will be North Dakota Department of Commerce Commissioner Chris Schilken.</p>

	<p>Downtown Minot Immersive Tours and Dining</p> <p>Visit Minot is offering four downtown immersive walking tours for those looking to explore and dine together. Each tour can accommodate 10-12 people.</p> <p> Sip, Savor & Shop</p> <p>Sip on local flavors, savor small bites, and shop your way through downtown Minot! This tour is designed with time to browse and buy—ending with a group dinner (<i>pay your own way</i>). Limited spots available. Parking options provided!</p> <p> Brews, Chews & Views</p> <p>Get a behind-the-scenes taste of downtown Minot with great drinks, small bites, and a few surprises—ending with a group dinner (<i>pay your own way</i>). Limited spots available. Parking options provided!</p> <p>Sign up here: https://forms.gle/27vexBYC27ZQWvBf7</p>
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Wednesday, April 30	
7:45 a.m.	Registration Opens
8 a.m.-12 p.m.	Sponsor Exhibits Open
7:45-8:30 a.m.	<i>Breakfast Buffet with Exhibitors</i>
8:30-9:30 a.m.	<p>General Session – My Town: You Have What Everyone Is Searching For</p> <p>The accepted narrative of Rural America is one of despair and decline, yet that does NOT reflect the reality as people are CHOOSING to live, work, and play in smaller communities at higher rates than we’ve seen in decades. In “My Town,” Emmy Award-Winning Documentarian and TV Anchor Cory Hepola inspires rural regions to understand the power of creative and authentic storytelling while detailing the outside challenges and offering positive solutions.</p>
9:30-10 a.m.	<i>Break with Exhibitors and Special Tribute to Darian Morsette</i>
10-11 a.m.	<p>General Session – Unlock Your Community’s Superpower: Resident Sentiment Toward Sporting Events</p> <p>It's no secret sports tourism is on the rise. But how can organizations best leverage this dynamic tourism sector to positively impact the communities they serve? This session by innovator Dr. Jennifer Stoll will dive into key insights and actionable take-aways stemming from the ground-breaking national benchmark study on Resident Sentiment Toward Sporting Events conducted by Cimarron Global Solutions and Longwoods International.</p>

11:15 a.m.- 12:15 p.m.	<div data-bbox="326 100 1516 1610"> <div data-bbox="326 100 1516 172"> Breakout Sessions </div> <div data-bbox="375 178 1471 289"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unique Cultural Heritage & Respectful Tourism: A Visitor's Guide into North Dakota's Tribal Nations Panel </div> <div data-bbox="422 336 1494 562"> <p>Enhancing visitor education and understanding cultural awareness by welcoming visitors to the heart of North Dakota's Tribal nations and emphasize respectful tourism. The North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance (NDNTA) leads the Nation in coordinated statewide tribal tourism development. The statewide alliance model – first funded by the NATIVE Act and developed by North Dakota tribes – is the most successful Native tourism development model in the U.S. today.</p> <p>Hear from the Five North Dakota Tribal Nations on the tourism positive effects that is providing education and awareness of our cultural history by telling our history with our own voices to bring sustainable economy to our Tribal Nations.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="375 783 1386 854"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Owning Your Voice: Telling Your Destination's Story with Authenticity Panel </div> <div data-bbox="422 900 1515 1283"> <p>Every destination has a story - but it's how you tell it that makes travelers take notice and sharing that story authentically is one of your most powerful tools as marketers. It's knowing your voice and using it to build real connections. Join Leslie Holbrook, Senior Vice President at Fahlgren Mortine, as she moderates a dynamic panel with two local champions of place-based storytelling: Amy Allender, the heart and humor behind Hey Minot, and Derek Hackett, affectionately known as the "Voice of Minot." Together, they'll dive into what it really means to "own your voice" as a destination and why it matters more than ever in today's travel landscape. Learn how leaning into your local identity can drive engagement, strengthen community pride, and set your destination apart in an authentic way travelers crave.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="375 1329 956 1556"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding North Dakota's Visitors Kelsey Waite This session will explore how to leverage visitor profile data from Longwoods International's 2023 Travel USA® study on domestic visitation to North Dakota to create effective marketing content, prepare for changes in the domestic leisure market, and better understand who your visitors are. </div> </div>
12:15-1:45 p.m.	<div data-bbox="326 1623 1516 1812"> <div data-bbox="326 1623 1516 1659"> Governor's Awards Luncheon For Travel and Tourism </div> <div data-bbox="326 1665 1516 1812"> <p>The exciting culmination of the 2025 Travel Industry Conference will be extra special this year. Governor Kelly Armstrong will present the Governor's Awards honoring leaders in Travel and Tourism and the annual Governor's Photo Contest Awards. There will also be a special announcement you won't want to miss!</p> </div> </div>