

# CONFERENCE PROGRAM



## HOSPITALITY & TOURISM **TRENDS**

*presented by* NEW MEXICO  TRUE

**JANUARY 27, 2026**  
**SANTA FE CONVENTION CENTER**

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HOSPITALITY & TOURISM  
**TRENDS**

presented by NEW MEXICO → TRUE

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The New Mexico Hospitality Association supports and advocates for New Mexico's hospitality and tourism industry. We bring industry expertise together to influence policy, strengthen the workforce, and support long-term economic growth across the state.

Tourism is a powerful driver of New Mexico's economy, and our members play a direct role in that success. By joining, you add your voice to a unified effort to protect the industry, access valuable resources, and help shape the future of hospitality in New Mexico.

**NM** 

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# HOSPITALITY & TOURISM TRENDS

presented by NEW MEXICO + TRUE

## AGENDA AT A GLANCE

<p>10:30 am - 11:00 am</p>	<p><b>TRENDS Welcome &amp; Kickoff</b> <i>Location: Ballroom F</i></p>		
<p>11:15 am - 12:15 pm <i>Concurrent sessions</i></p>	<p><b>The Power of Partnerships: Leveraging Global Travel Trade for New Mexico</b> <i>Location: Coronado</i></p>	<p><b>Looking Ahead: What the 30-Day Legislative Session Could Mean for Hospitality and Tourism</b> <i>Location: Peralta</i></p>	<p><b>AI, Search, and Storytelling: What's Next for Tourism Marketing</b> <i>Location: O'Keefe</i></p>
<p>12:30 pm - 2:00 pm</p>	<p><b>Lunch &amp; Keynote Address</b> <b>Aran Ryan, Director of Industry Studies at Tourism Economics</b> <i>Location: Ballroom F</i></p>		
<p>2:15 pm - 3:15 pm <i>Concurrent sessions</i></p>	<p><b>Unlocking New Funding &amp; Support Services for the Tourism &amp; Hospitality Workforce</b> <i>Location: Coronado</i></p>	<p><b>The Future of Influence: Smarter Partnerships, Stronger Results</b> <i>Location: Peralta</i></p>	<p><b>AI, Search, and Storytelling: What's Next for Tourism Marketing</b> <i>Location: O'Keefe</i></p>
<p>3:30 pm - 4:30 pm <i>Concurrent sessions</i></p>	<p><b>Online Discoverability: Three Ways to Elevate Your Event's Online Presence</b> <i>Location: Coronado</i></p>	<p><b>Route 66 Centennial: Turning Momentum into Visitor Demand</b> <i>Location: Peralta</i></p>	

## TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

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**10:00 - 10:30 am**

### Check in

Visit the registration area to get your name tag and digital program.

**10:30 - 11:00 am**

**Ballroom F**

### Welcome & TRENDS Kickoff

Speakers:

- Damen Kompanowski, Acting Board President, NMHA & Sheraton Uptown
- Lancing Adams, Acting Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Tourism Department

Kick off TRENDS with a welcome that sets the tone for the day, highlighting the power of relationships, shared learning, and what's next for New Mexico's hospitality industry, followed by a brief look ahead at tourism and legislative priorities shaping 2026.

**11:15 am - 12:15 pm**

**Coronado**

### The Power of Partnerships: Leveraging Global Travel Trade for New Mexico

Speakers:

- Mathias Jung and Kim Snape, RMI
- David Carr, Tourism Santa Fe
- Albert Herrera, Visit Las Cruces
- Holly Marquez, New Mexico Tourism Department
- Brenna Moore, Visit Albuquerque
- Matt Robinson, Visit Gallup

Join RMI for an inside look at how international travel trade is driving tourism growth in New Mexico. We'll explore the latest data from the RMI TRIP Report™ on statewide visitation, reveal where travelers are booking, and highlight the economic impact of visitor spending in local communities. The session features a dynamic panel with leading destination organizations sharing real-world insights and strategies to help you maximize international tourism's return for your destination.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

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**11:15 am - 12:15 pm**

**O'Keefe**

## **AI, Search, and Storytelling: What's Next for Tourism Marketing**

Speakers:

- Justin Gibbs, Miles Partnership
- Donyelle Lucero, Siarza
- Ceela McElveny, Visit Albuquerque
- Kyle Mazzei, McKee Wallwork
- Dezaree Vega, Sunny505

AI is changing how travelers search, discover, and decide. This session explores trends in AI-driven search and SEO, along with new ideas for using AI in tourism marketing while keeping authenticity and human connection front and center.

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**11:15 am - 12:15 pm**

**Peralta**

## **Looking Ahead: What the 30-Day Legislative Session Could Mean for Hospitality and Tourism**

Speaker:

- Jason Weaks, Contract Lobbyist for NMHA

The 30-day legislative session moves fast, and decisions made in a short window can have long-term impacts on hospitality and tourism across New Mexico. This session will highlight emerging priorities and policy trends to watch during this year's legislative session. Attendees will gain insider context on where conversations are heading, what proposals could surface, and how the industry can stay informed, prepared, and proactive as the legislative landscape takes shape.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

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**12:30 pm - 2:00 pm**

**Ballroom F**

**Lunch & Keynote Address**

Speaker:

- Aran Ryan, Tourism Economics

Connect with colleagues over a networking lunch provided by Santa Fe favorite Cowgirl BBQ, then settle in for a data-driven keynote on what's ahead for travel and tourism. This session will explore current industry trends, demand forecasts, and the economic forces shaping tourism, using trusted research and analysis to help destinations and hospitality leaders plan, invest, and make informed decisions for the future.

**2:15 pm - 3:15 pm**

**Coronado**

**Unlocking New Funding & Support Services for the Tourism & Hospitality Workforce**

Speaker:

- Leticia Bernal, La Fonda Foundation
- Jenny Kimball, La Fonda Foundation
- Marcos Martinez, Deputy Secretary of NM Department of Workforce Solutions
- Jen Paul Schroer, JJS Associates
- Dené Shelton, NM Higher Education Department

A stable workforce is the foundation of a strong tourism economy. This breakout session highlights a modern, worker-centered approach to stabilizing, advancing, and creating long-term economic prosperity for New Mexico's tourism and hospitality workforce. Leaders will share how coordinated investments in education, workforce systems, and wraparound supports help workers move beyond survival toward career growth, financial security, and economic mobility, while strengthening employers and the broader tourism industry.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

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**2:15 pm - 3:15 pm**

**O'Keefe**

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**2:15 pm - 3:15 pm**

**Peralta**

## **The Future of Influence: Smarter Partnerships, Stronger Results**

Speakers:

- Lara Brockway, Visit Albuquerque
- Jessica Fox, Sandia Peak Tramway, Ten3, & Ski Santa Fe
- Caitlin Krantz, Simply Social Media
- Becky Wood, ABQ Adventures

Learn how evolving platforms, creator expectations, and audience behavior are reshaping influencer marketing, and what tourism organizations can do to adapt their approach for stronger outcomes in 2026.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

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**3:30 pm - 4:30 pm**

**Coronado**

### **Online Discoverability: Three Ways To Elevate Your Event's Online Presence**

Speaker:

- Marisol Lucero, New Mexico Tourism Department

In today's digital-first environment, events compete for attention across search engines, websites, email, and social media. A truly successful event must be easy to find, engaging to explore, and consistently visible where travelers and locals are looking.

This session will walk event organizers through three practical ways to elevate their online presence and increase event attendance. Learn how to optimize your event for search and emerging AI tools, use consumer marketing tactics to build awareness and intent, and leverage social media to stay relevant in crowded feeds. Attendees will leave with actionable best practices they can apply immediately, regardless of budget or team size.

**3:30 pm - 4:30 pm**

**Peralta**

### **Route 66 Centennial: Turning Momentum into Visitor Demand**

Speakers:

- Acting Secretary Lancing Adams, New Mexico Tourism Department
- Sharmin Dharas, Hotel Zazz
- Raymond Mondragon, Eastern Plains Council of Governments
- Erin Fogarty, Precept Wine & Spirits

As the Route 66 Centennial approaches, New Mexico is uniquely positioned to lead one of the hottest travel trends of 2026. This forward-looking session focuses on how communities and businesses can prepare now to capture visitor interest during and after the Centennial year. Hear from local businesses already activating Route 66 storytelling and experiences, alongside the New Mexico Tourism Department, as they share strategies, statewide plans, and ways tourism partners can plug in to drive traffic on and off the Route.