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Subject: November 2016 News & Economic Indicators of Tourism in South Carolina

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Nov. 30, 2016

Table Rock State Park Reopens

Influence Expert to Speak at Governor's Conference

Featured this Month; Stories on DiscoverSouthCarolina.com

The Value of Wise Leadership

Duane Parrish

Director, SC Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism

I was proud to hear the news last week of Governor Nikki Haley's appointment by President-elect Donald Trump to serve as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations. We know her well in South Carolina for her wise and professional leadership and her profound respect for the economic impact of parks, recreation and tourism in the Palmetto State.

From the beginning of her term, Governor Haley has championed our causes and applauded our accomplishments; so much that, under her leadership, the state enjoyed a period of sustained tourism growth in spite of man-made tragedies and natural disasters. Among many accomplishments, Governor Haley helped secure sponsorship for the RBC Heritage presented by Boeing on Hilton Head Island, a critical event for

Statewide RevPAR -- RevPAR for September 2016 is ahead of prior year's. Overall, RevPAR continues to outperform last year's business.

*Admissions Tax -- An admissions tax report was not available for the month of September while upgrades are being made to the tax processing system.

State Parks Revenue -- All state park revenue categories reported increases for the month of September. Admissions had the highest gains.

Deplanements

The Myrtle Beach International Airport leads the state in growth for the month of September 2016. Overall YTD deplanements in South Carolina are up 7.3%.

tourism in South Carolina. She supported SCPRT's efforts to totally rebuild outdated welcome centers that truly serve as front porches for South Carolina. Governor Haley launched the Chef Ambassadors program and placed the state firmly in the culinary scene, which is growing in popularity among travelers. And she used her influence to secure critical funding for beach renourishment.

She also addressed the industry every year at the [Governor's Conference on Tourism & Travel](#), a gathering that helps us take cues from leadership and find new, innovative ways to grow tourism.

The upcoming conference, scheduled for Feb. 20-22 at the [Spartanburg Marriott](#), promises much of the same important leadership. The lineup of [speakers](#) includes Brian London, CEO of London Tourism Publications, who will share insights into the tourism marketplace. Also speaking will be an expert on the art of influence - Dr. Jonah Berger - who will discuss the subtle clues that affect decision making. We'll also hear from Jeff Fromm, President of FutureCast, who will address how to engage with the often under-appreciated generation of Millennials.

The conference also will offer breakout sessions covering social media, story-shaping and sports marketing. And it will offer educational tours of Spartanburg, including a trip to soulful attractions in Spartanburg's Underground, and to craft beverage purveyors in a Satisfy Your Thirst tour.

While no printed registration material will be mailed, [registration is available online only](#), beginning this week.

Occupancy Forecast

Hotel occupancy as forecast by STR, Inc. for the months of December 2016 to February 2017 is expected to be similar to the previous year.

Table Rock State Park Reopens

Occasionally, we are reminded that nature is more powerful than man's activity upon it, and the wildfire at Pinnacle Mountain caught our attention. As it moved slowly over 10,000 acres in the past three weeks, it burned the understory of some of South Carolina's most iconic mountain country and challenged crews of fire fighters who trekked long, steep trails to contain it.

What it didn't do was tarnish the jewel of nearby Table Rock Mountain or the popular state park at its base. Table Rock State Park reopened to the public on Tuesday, Nov. 29, welcoming visitors to spectacular fall color, a 95-site campground, and the picnic shelters and cabins built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. Interpretive programming at the park has resumed. The Historic Lodge is available for event rental and the trail around the park's Pinnacle Lake is open.

The system of trails that ascend for miles up to the top of Table Rock and Pinnacle, one of which eventually connects to the Foothills Trail, remains closed until park officials can make full assessments.

Come spring, as the forest continues to recover, visitors can expect an explosion of natural activity, as the removal of dense leaf litter creates a lush environment for more wildflowers like trillium, low bushes like mountain laurel and other indigenous plants and wildlife.

Special thanks go to professional responders who were instrumental in managing the fire. The lead agency - the South Carolina Forestry Commission - provided expert analysis and strategic response. Others who assisted were the National Guard, which deployed helicopters to drop water on the fire, the U.S. Forest Service, State Park personnel and local fire departments across the Upstate, who brought equipment and boots on the ground when requested.

When the smoke clears, Table Rock will emerge regal and proud, a natural landmark easily seen from a scenic foothills highway, surrounded by verdant, mature forest - just as nature intended.

Please make plans to join us at the conference, and help us move forward with the leadership legacy set in place by Governor Nikki Haley.

GC Registration Brochure will be Online Only

The registration brochure for the 2017 South Carolina Governor's Conference on Tourism and Travel will be available online only. Delegates will have the option of fully registering online or printing out the registration form and mailing it in with payment. The registration brochure should be available in a week at www.SCGovCon.com. The 2017 Governor's Conference will be held Feb. 20-22 at the [Spartanburg Marriott](#) in Spartanburg.

The industry's monthly e-newsletter *Tourism Today* will profile general session speakers and other key topics each month leading up to the [2017 Governor's Conference on Tourism & Travel](#). Scheduled for Feb. 20-22 at the [Spartanburg Marriott](#) in [Spartanburg](#), the conference is the industry's largest annual gathering, and discusses consumer trends, best marketing practices and industry insight to help grow tourism in South Carolina.

Dr. Jonah Berger

Author of *Invisible Influence*, Professor at Wharton School of Business
General Session Speaker, 9 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21

Dr. Jonah Berger, a best-selling author and professor at the Wharton School of Business, will be the keynote speaker at the South Carolina Governor's Conference on Tourism and Travel at a 9 a.m. general session on Tuesday, Feb. 21.

Author of *Invisible Influence*, Berger will address the subtle and secret influences that drive the decisions we make -- from what we buy to where to eat to what we wear and the careers we choose. A must-see presentation for HR, sales, and leadership teams -- and anyone tasked with persuading others to take action -- Berger argues that other people's behavior influences us at every moment of our lives, and that learning to better understand the influences driving you, your co-workers, employees, family members, potential partners, business associates, and clients can lead to more productive relationships and lives.

Berger is a world-renowned expert on decision making, social influence and word of mouth, and how products, ideas and behaviors become popular. A follow-up to his New York Times and Wall Street Journal best seller *Contagious: Why Things Catch On*, his latest book looks at the hidden forces that motivate our everyday decisions.

Exclusively represented by Leading Authorities speakers bureau, Berger has a PhD in marketing and consults, teaches and researches consumer behavior and trends, leading effective change, making better decisions, becoming more influential and getting things to catch on. He is an exciting and fresh voice on marketing and strategy.

Berger has spent more than 15 years studying judgment and decision-making and consulting for Fortune 500 companies. He looks at how organizations can sway behavior and describes how to prevent consumers from getting mired in "decision-making quicksand." With insights grounded in rigorous research and the best contemporary psychology and behavioral science, organizations can put Berger's ideas to use whether they are selling a product or crafting a new corporate culture.

Featured this Month!

Story whets appetite for wild game

Articles posted every week on www.DiscoverSouthCarolina.com continue to share insider intel and deeper stories about the South Carolina experience, encouraging travelers to find something new in the Palmetto State and explore. Among those posted to the website in November is a story about restaurants that serve wild game, surprising diners with choices on the menu like wild boar, buffalo, elk, duck, quail, pheasant and ostrich. The story notes:

"...there are ways to indulge your wild game appetite, no hunting gear required. Imagine sitting down to a perfectly grilled buffalo steak paired with a bold zinfandel, or braised rabbit with a smooth pinot noir."

Find sample restaurants at this [link](#).

Other stories posted in November include:

[Gravy Greats for your Southern table](#)

[Little Effort Required to take in Stunning View from Glassy Mountain](#)

[Segway Tour of Downtown Greenville](#)

[Three Top Young Golf Instructors in South Carolina](#)

[Blue Hole Falls Trail](#)

[Fall Creek Falls](#)

[Greens, Glorious Greens](#)

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