



## What Is National Travel & Tourism Week?

Too often, people use terminology, idioms and acronyms and forget that not everyone is “in the know”. I am certainly pointing at myself too. As we prepare for tourism’s biggest week as an industry, I thought it would be important to include everyone not just in understanding National Travel & Tourism Week but also in participating.

National Travel & Tourism Week (NTTW) is celebrating our 40th anniversary this year, during the week of May 7 – 13. Every year during this week, our industry celebrates the value of travel in communities around the country with regards to our economy, businesses, as well as residents and overall community well-being. It is our time to brag a little about what our industry means and how residents, visitors, elected officials and businesses can help impact the future of travel. This year, the theme for NTTW is **#TravelForward** and we are spotlighting the essential role that travel will play in driving economic growth and innovation.

Unless you work in the tourism industry, you may not be aware that travel serves as a major catalyst for the U.S. economy. The U.S. travel industry generated a \$2.6 trillion economic output in 2022 and supported 15 million jobs, fueling communities, small businesses and working families across the country. Here in Natchez, the impact is just as vital. The tourism industry here will generate more than \$100 million in expenditures by visitors in 2022 and directly support more than 1,500 jobs.

So how can we continue to drive and grow these results? There are several ways we can all support tourism. The city, county and tourism entities such as Visit Natchez are pushing for a number of legislative initiatives (far too many to list here) to support our community and industry. As we work on these initiatives, we will communicate them out and ask everyone to write letters or send emails to legislators in the state or in Washington, D.C. These communications are more impactful than most people realize so please make sure to send that letter. Legislators always hear from lobbyists and organizations regarding initiatives so when they hear from constituents, they take special notice.

Next, we can all support tourism by being tourists ourselves. Whether you enjoy restaurants, attractions and accommodations in Natchez or in cities around the country, you are contributing to the economic impact of our economy. You are helping to employ men and women and adding to the financial future of a destination. Tourism is one of the most eye-opening experiences you can enjoy. As tourists we learn about other communities, mindsets and we even learn about ourselves as we experience other destinations.

Lastly, we affect tourism here in Natchez by continuing to welcome our visitors from around the world as they explore our unique city. I am so thankful that we have a community that truly knows how to welcome people and do the little things like offer help with directions to a couple looking lost on the street, or even just by saying “HI!” with a warm smile. Visitors regularly tell me how impressed they are with our hospitality, and I pray that Natchez continues to extend this warmth and friendliness for many years to come.

Visit Natchez will be communicating about NTTW, and I hope everyone will join us as we **#TravelForward**.