13:01:32 afternoon's before outreach, we appreciate the time you are spending with us today.

13:01:37 I know it's been a busy summer, a summer unlike any other that we've ever experienced before.

13:01:46 We wanted to have this call today to kind of just give you a little bit of an update on things that are going on
13:01:54 in the Minnesota tourism industry, similar things that are going on specifically with Explore Minnesota
13:02:03 and planned for the future.

Before I begin, if everyone could mute your phones if you have not already
13:02:09 done so, if you're not speaking, that would be appreciated to avoid any background noise.

13:02:19 We will have an opportunity hopefully if there is time for some questions at the end, people can tax those to us
13:02:23 and we will try to address those.

I want to talk to you a little bit about the status of our industry.

13:02:34 We are going to hear from Pat Simmons, our main researcher on some of the latest research, things are going on
13:02:44 in Minnesota and throughout the country as well as Katharine Kelly from adventure and as well, talk about
13:02:51 consumer marketing and public relations activities are going on right now.

I want to start off briefly by giving
13:02:57 you a quick overview of some of the broader issues with tourism nationally and in Minnesota.
From a Minnesota perspective, we are still, and we all know, we are in phase three of the stay safe order.

And you know, there's been some gradual reopening discussion regarding bars and restaurants, and guidelines are continually revised based on the state's desire to balance economic growth as well as public health.

I have had a chance to work pretty closely with Commissioner Steve Grove and I know he's been holding a number roundtables throughout Minnesota with various industry groups to get input on issues relative to public health and economic growth and try to bring those thoughts and concerns back to the governor.

I know that we just even had a call this morning regarding various large events throughout Minnesota, he did some surveys to find out what is the status of the industry, what are some of the desires moving forward and I know those are being evaluated especially as we head into the fall to winter with a lot more indoor activities.

And it's going to be a very crucial time for our industry.

Right now, no further firm dates have been set. I know that's something a lot of our industry needs to start planning.

But there is nothing that's quite been able to be set yet.

On any further relaxation.

National sentiment and activity is somewhat on the object depending on which research panels you're looking at, I think Pat is going to talk about that.
13:04:43 But there is concern about safety and about travel.
People still as you know are staying
13:04:50 closer to home, avoiding air travel and postponing trips.
But there still is somewhat of a
13:04:55 latent demand and desire for people to get out.
The U.S. travel Association is
13:05:04 currently planning a domestic marketing campaign that many of you may have heard about, it's called "let's go
13:05:09 there" and that's planning to start after Labor Day, the domestic marketing campaign.

13:05:15 Minnesota is very pleased to be a part of this effort and we will share with you the industry toolkit with you that
13:05:22 I think it is supposed to be released later on this week.
This campaign can be adapted to your
13:05:31 destination if you wish and will be available at no charge.
Internationally, brand USA which
13:05:38 currently still serve on the board, I currently serve as the chair, they are planning to
discontinue, or continue
13:05:45 to discontinue their international marketing until April of 2021.
But they are still engaged in efforts
13:05:55 to keep the U.S. top of mind including virtual brand USA travel week in Europe so Minnesota hopes to be a part
13:05:58 of that.
We unfortunately won't see international flights resume anytime
13:06:06 soon this year a tentative date I think was just, we heard about this morning, now March 28th through October 30th
13:06:19 2021 for Delta flights to Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Paris, and London.
So that certainly will cause some
13:06:20 problems in getting international travelers to the United States and specifically to Minnesota.
Minnesota, our summer is very mixed in terms of activity, downside and upside obviously.

But resorts and campgrounds are doing quite well. Originally they had a lot of early cancellations but a lot of those dates have filled in because people just want to get out, they want to venture out and do some kind of vacation.

But larger cities and communities are significantly hurting because of a lack of group visits and events. That really are hurting a lot of our hotels and convention centers throughout the state. Sports tournaments, some groups have been picking up but still the challenge with so much of the desire and the need to have that advance.

What’s happening in the state to do the booking a little bit farther out.

From and explore Minnesota perspective, our crisis grant program has been a huge success in terms of industry participation. So we are pleased that that has been very well-received.

And we’ve got a new new robust co-op program with very significant explore Minnesota buy downs and to really get the low cost of entry for businesses to participate, to get back into the marketplace.

I also want to mention our welcome center is gradually reopened with minimal staffing.

But the majority of staff at explore Minnesota and majority of staff at the state are still working remotely if they are able to do so.

At the end of this call I'm going to
13:08:14 talk a little bit more about plans for the future, a little bit about the legislative session and a few other at
13:08:19 meetings that are planned.

But I first want to take this time to turn it over to Pat Simmons.

13:08:28 Pat is going to give you just the latest on industry health, things going on nationally as well as from a
13:08:32 Minnesota perspective.

So with that, I will turn it over to you, Pat.

13:08:38 >> Thanks, John.

Hello, everybody.

I'm glad you could join us for our 13:08:47 webinar today.

I'm going to focus on a few things.

First of all, a couple of the most 13:08:52 recent research projects I've been working on.

One of them is still in process right 13:09:03 now and the other one, from a few weeks ago, since we last met with you this way so I'm going to share some results 13:09:13 as well.

Right now, what we have in progress is a survey that is pretty similar to 13:09:03 what we've done for a number of summers toward the end of the summer, we reach out to what has evolved into adjusted 13:09:32 combinations of lodging properties and camping properties as being perhaps the best indicator of how travel and 13:09:35 tourism is going although we recognize that that's not the full spectrum of what we've got.

13:09:43 But it's again consistent and provides a pretty good indication of what's going on.
You may, if you are lodging properly, hopefully you will see an invitation for that survey.

The third invitation went out today extending the deadline for the survey until tomorrow.

So far we have a pretty good response, we are hoping to get even more.

One of the reasons I'd love to get more is to be able to segment the responses between geographic areas of the state by our tourism regions and also the type of business so if you haven't already filled out one of those surveys, you have until 5:00 tomorrow to do so.

Right now, we are looking at roughly -- I'm going to give you the results from that survey so far.

They will change some but I think the trends are going to hold pretty well.

Through the rest of the survey.

So we've got roughly even numbers of resorts and hotels and motels, just over a third of each with a smattering of campgrounds, about 12% and other types of lodging.

Results are distributed pretty well across regions which is great.
Including a healthy dose from the metro area where we sometimes have had trouble bringing in responses.
Most of the respondents, 86% have been open the entire June through August.

I was a little bit surprised to see and hear that, I thought that was great news.

Results for how business has been this summer, the spectrum.
We've been hearing about that with well over a quarter of respondents saying it's up but also around 20% saying business was down 50% or more.

25 is down half or more compared to this time last summer.

40% of respondents said business picked up strength more than usual over the course of the summer so that lines up with restrictions being lessened and people as we've been hearing getting a little more comfortable with the idea of traveling but still 31% of respondents said business dropped off more than usual over the course of the summer so I was a little bit surprised to see those results.

I think perhaps indicative of a rush to get out and travel right away and perhaps also as the numbers have not dropped as much as perhaps most people would like to see in terms of confirmed cases, and indicators may have also cap some people from traveling that might have otherwise.

Nearly half of respondents, a bigger share of our this summer or Minnesota residents.

More respondents still even though the shift in economic conditions, more than half of respondents still had positive-leaning results on their financial health.

This is either growing or stayed positive in the spectrum of respondents.

Just over half.

That is considerably lower than normal.

But I will call it encouraging.
Combined, a third of respondents said their business activity has already surpassed preCOVID levels.

So again, there are certainly businesses that are doing well but under a third of respondents don't anticipate preCOVID levels until at least the second half of 2021. Until, during the second half of 2021.

About a third expected their business to return to the level, another 21.5% anticipate a later return, 2022 or later. 4% of respondents who said they don't expect their business to ever return to preCOVID levels.

So that is a survey that is in progress right now.

Stay tuned for results from that to be included in an email to folks who responded to the survey.

The other survey I wanted to touch on is one that went out, about 120 of them from the crisis program mailing.

We were just trying to get a sense of how they saw business in their communities.

We found out from them, like we've heard, campgrounds and resorts have fared better and will continue to fare better for the rest of the summer. With their prediction that this went out mid-July.

The places in their communities that we saw having the most challenges were meetings and conventions, they are both expected to continue with the biggest sales declines for the rest of the summer.

Nine out of 10 respondents in the area of event cancellations postponement
13:15:15 said they experience cancellations or postponements for at least three quarters of their communities 2020
13:15:29 spring and summer events.

The events were canceled, 910 communities.

13:15:38 The importance of events to communities, this was something that you’re going to get a different
13:15:43 perspective perhaps and then you from others in the community.

This was something we just kind of
13:15:51 wanted to find out their take on just how important events are to their communities, more than 8 out of 10
13:15:55 respondents attribute at least a quarter their community's annual travel activity to events.

13:16:05 That was a pretty big number, we thought.

Included in that group over a quarter,
13:16:16 attributed more than half of their communities annual events.

We also asked our community's
13:16:20 sentiment towards travel.

Local businesses have a more positive sentiments for welcoming tourists
13:16:27 compared to the sentiments of local residents.

And local residents were pretty
13:16:36 lukewarm with about half, 70% of respondents were either slightly negative or slightly positive, about
13:16:45 evenly split so it really was very evenly split between the respondents saying that residents are welcoming
13:16:55 versus not welcoming.

Stay tuned again for the upcoming end of summer survey results.

13:17:05 I'm going to shift over to some coverage on the national level of things that are happening in
13:17:16 Minnesota.
I too in weekly to results that come out from a number of different 13:17:26 travel-related research companies.

Most of those we have lengths to from our industry web site on the COVID 13:17:37 page, the U.S. travel web site has even more resources in these regards.

One of the things I'd try to keep on 13:17:44 top of it is what are the current level of losses and how do they compare overtime for the amount of travel we 13:17:54 can see.

For the week ending August 15th, through mid-August, travel spending 13:18:04 rose 5% that week which is the fifth consecutive week of expansion.

While it's still registered 44% below 13:18:16 last year's level, instead beginning of March, the COVID pandemic has resulted in over $341 billion in cumulative 13:18:27 losses for the U.S. travel.

Focusing on Minnesota and the results that we've seen from estimates on 13:18:41 losses and travel expenditures, for that week ending August 15th, on a national level spending that week was 13:18:48 down about 44% from Minnesota.

Tourism economics is the name of the company that does this.

13:18:59 47% was below the same week a year ago, the week ending August 15th almost right around half of the travel 13:19:11 spending of the same week a year ago.

We've been tracking pretty closely with U.S. levels of travel spending, 13:19:22 loss estimates.

Again, that's 44% from the U.S.

Humility in Minnesota, we lost $4.8 13:19:37 million in travel spending.

While it's not an exact Apples to apples comparison, we have C million 13:19:45 dollars, that's the amount of leisure and hospitality sales in the state.
A couple other things that I will
13:19:55 touch on before I sign off, some other indicators of travel for the week.

TSA screenings group for the fourth
13:20:05 consecutive weekend reached a new pandemic peak of 863,000.

So that's an indication of how much
13:20:18 travel has, you know, come up.

But travel is still down.

That level is 71% lower than the same
13:20:28 period last year.

So improvement but improvement against need for a lot of it.

13:20:36 Highlights from three different travel research companies provide ongoing travel research to us at this point.

13:20:42 Domestic air and hotel bookings for future travel were up 7% last week compared to the previous week.

13:20:52 That's still down 66% year-over-year with considerable vast regional differences around the U.S.

13:21:06 From destination analyst, travel sentiment index report that they put together, fewer Americans are viewing
13:21:13 during the pandemic will worsen in the next month.

While 57 percent do still not want
13:21:18 visitors in their community yet, the mix of people wanting and not wanting people to come to their communities.

13:21:30 This is the lowest this sentiment has been since the week of June 15.

So in other words, there is an
13:21:36 improvement in a lowering of the number of people who don't want visitors in their communities.
Four of our first time since the end of June, the percent of those who said they will be happy seeing an ad promoting tourism for their community, 16% said they would be happy. This ties in, do we want people in our community, do we not? People are finally coming around to being okay with their communities being promoted to tourism ads.

When asked to rate the most unsafe aspects of air travel right now, behavior of other passengers is by far the issue that concerns travelers the most.

We saw that in our consumer survey earlier in the summer, the end of June where what we found was people were okay traveling to a greater extent than they were when they couldn't be under control of their own safety measures.

They don't trust other people more than they don't trust themselves in terms of being, staying safe.

Long Woods is another company that I tune into considerably and they say more than half of travelers said they are hesitant to travel since they are unclear about travel restrictions such as quarantines and their destinations. So this speaks to a lack of clear communication as received and reported back by consumers. I think we can't do enough as far as getting the word out about what is and isn't open and with the protocols are there. The other company that I tune into is, actually there are a number of them. I'm going to leave it at that because my time is running short.
13:23:34 But again, I encourage you to look on our web site, our COVID page and U.S. travel's web site for the latest on
13:23:42 both consumer sentiments and what has been the impacts of the pandemic so far on travel and tourism.

13:23:47 I think it's back to you at this point, John.

>> Great, thank you.

13:23:53 That was an awful lot of information to sort through.

I know we are all probably dealing
13:24:01 with just being overwhelmed with so much information, not sure exactly where to tune to monitor this on a
13:24:08 daily basis paid so if you have any further follow-up questions or thoughts or questions, please be sure
13:24:13 to let us know, contact Pat directly and we will be sure to get you your answers.

13:24:20 Next, we want to talk a little bit about summer and fall marketing plans and the other activities from a
13:24:28 communications perspective.

We heard from Pat how consumers are really wanting clear communication.

13:24:40 To talk to you a little bit about what we've been doing in that area, I think I don't know if Leann or Katharine
13:24:44 Kelly, you are going to take over at this point.

I will turn it back to you.

13:24:50 >> Thanks, John.

You can be the one to tell me if you can see my screen.

13:25:05 Can you see my presentation?
All right.

>> Sorry, I had to put my speaker on
13:25:11 to respond in the affirmative, yes, I can see that.

>> Excellent, let's get started,
13:25:14 then.

Thank you.

I'm going to give you some updates on
13:25:19 what we've been doing in marketing.

Obviously this is into the summer that any of us were hoping it was going to
13:25:28 be back at the beginning of the year.

But we've all gotten to test our flexibility and resiliency.

13:25:31 For explore Minnesota we've been pleased that we were able to get a few carefully chosen
messages back out
13:25:35 into the markets this summer.

And I just want to walk through what that's look like.

13:25:41 I'm going to start with this second spot that you've hopefully seen in the market.

13:26:28 ♫ [music]

So that spot is called "see you soon," a piece that was created very
13:26:34 intentionally to not be overly-promotional but allow us to make a soft reentry into the market
13:26:39 this summer.

We wanted to get people thinking about exploring Minnesota again.

13:26:50 So that Spot ran starting June 29th and ran through August 16th on broadcasts connected to
the display with social
13:26:58 and SEM supporting it.

We rented in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North and South Dakota and the
Chicago and Omaha areas, being very intentional of the fact that we know people aren't traveling far from home right now but I wanting to get out to some degree.

So this campaign was really intended to drive awareness and it did that, approximately right now, the number is 13.6 million total impressions from the see you soon campaign with 1.9 million views of that Spot on YouTube and the application on YouTube actually drove more YouTube views and subscribers to the EMT channel in July than any other month on record.

And as we were running our recovery campaign, as we got closer to August we realized we had an opportunity to start integrating some of our summer creative's that we originally had intended to run this summer on a bigger campaign than we normally would have. We change course a little bit and we were able to integrate a little bit into our recovery media by speaking to those who are ready to move from dreaming about travel to planning a trip.

If you banners that we see here, and the spots through August 16th. Also exciting is that because fishing and golf are both activities that are very conducive to social distancing and activities that lots of people are pretty excited about this summer, we were able to launch these, not quite as planned but we do get them into market on July 13th.

That started a bit later because a COVID and we are going to run them into September 6th to try to make the most of what's left of the season. These ads are running in the same markets as the recovery campaign and so far they've driven more than 196,000 session so we are excited about those results.
13:29:01 Now it's already time to start thinking about fall even though we are not ready to, we have exciting plans for
13:29:09 fall and I'm going to start by showing you the 30-second spot.

[Music]

13:29:34 >> Some things are here for just a moment.
But if you spend it right, a moment is
13:29:38 enough.
Find your true North.
Only in Minnesota.

13:29:47 >> So that Spot will be the cornerstone of our general campaign this fall and if it looks familiar it's because it
13:29:56 was also the star of last year's fall general campaign.
In addition we are running display
13:30:04 social ads and in our neighboring market, and then we also have a fun placement for the fall in Midwest
13:30:13 living, which I can show you.
This appeared in the September-October issue if you want to go pick it up,
13:30:19 it's pretty fun to see in the fall colors.
All right.

13:30:27 Also for fall outside of our General we have two new niche campaigns.
Dog lovers and family road trip or is
13:30:34 and I wanted to just take a second to share some of the insights that went into choosing these new niche is.

13:30:43 For dog lovers, we know Americans spend over $72 billion on their pets annually leading to a rise in pet
Dog lovers are more likely to enjoy outdoor activities.

Our content that included dogs has historically outperformed all other types of content.

Dogs are kind of universal and their appeal is what we sort of consider COVID-proof.

We still love our dogs. More than ever, may be.

On the family Road trip aside, 59% of Americans said they were planning to take more road trips in the next five years highlighting freedom and scenic views and now during COVID, not road trips are widely considered by consumers to be the safest or sometimes only option for travel. 87% of Minnesota travelers consider themselves Road trippers before the pandemic and we expect that that figure may actually go up now that so many people are looking at Road trips as their possibly only option to get out and explore right now.

So that all bodes well for the work that we've done in these two areas.

I'm going to play you each of our niche is, 62nd Spot we use on our social tabs, really quick but I'm going to show you first the dog lovers one.

>> Find your true North.

Only in Minnesota.

>> So that Spot's along with display, social, and native ads will run September 1st through November 1st.

And in the past our niche campaign ran nationally but with the focus on
staying closer to home we are targeting these campaigns within comfortable driving distance, which we determine to be 500 miles with 15% of our media being ran in Minnesota.

We are supporting dog lovers with the influencer activation called the Tails of Minnesota.

We are engaging four Minnesota dog influencers to help us get the word out that Minnesota is a dog-friendly destination.

So they are going to be going out on little trips to dog friendly places within Minnesota and posting content September through October.

At the same time we are going to be encouraging consumers to participate in the Tails of Minnesota by posting their own pictures of their dogs on Instagram using the hashtag #MNTails.

And shall be able to find more info about the influencer promo at ExploreMinnesota.com/MNTails once the campaign begins.

Lots of fun stuff there.

And then our other niche is road trippers, family road trippers.

I will play you that six second spot when we begin.

>> Find your true North, only in Minnesota.

>> And so like we've all talked about, people want to get out but they don't actually want to go too far from home right now.

So road trips are the perfect solution and it allows us to promote key attractions and activities within the Road trip narrative and lets travelers really control their own itinerary.
We can give them ideas of places to
13:34:10 go.
So the road tripping niche will run the same date, September first your
13:34:12 November 1st.
With display, social, native, and SEM and again targeting that 500-mile
13:34:21 radius, with 15% in Minnesota.
And to support road tripping, we have a really fun promotion, Road-Trip'n
13:34:27 bingo, we made a bingo card for each of the five regions of the state and as you can see there
is fun illustrations
13:34:32 on all the bingo cards and we were really careful in choosing items, that can be viewed from
the safety of your
13:34:40 car or from safe distance from others.
These aren't super specific things that everyone has to go to one very
13:34:46 specific place to see, all things you can hopefully experience throughout your drive.
13:34:53 And just a fun way to get people out there in a safe way.
We actually printed cards that are
13:35:06 going to be available at EMT welcome centers but then everyone has access to download
digital cards and at
We are encouraging people to share their pictures along the way by using
13:35:20 the hashtag #ExploreMNAgain.
That is what we are doing this fall.
You will see these in the market very
13:35:25 soon.
Ends of the last thing I wanted to cover is our diversity and inclusivity
13:35:35 initiative.
And this is something we are excited to take on.
Explore Minnesota identified an opportunity to attract more people of color to travel to and within Minnesota and ensure that our state is welcoming and inclusive to all ethnicities.

We know tourism marketing is not the singular solution to this challenge but we also know that our marketing strategies and campaigns must support these objectives.

So in July we engaged the research firm ebony marketing systems to contact consumer focus groups with black and Latino travelers to better understand perceptions of Minnesota, their travel motivations and capture feedback on existing and future advertising creative.

Along with ebony, what we did to structure these focus groups is we recruited people who are between the ages of 25 and 55, they had to have taken at least four trips in the past, they had to intend to travel for leisure within the next year, and they had at least one child and they had to identify as either Black or Latino.

The way we structured it is conducted eight focus groups total. Four of the groups were among Black travelers and four were among Latino travelers. We put the groups by age, 25 and 39 was their own group and 40 heaven 55 were their own group. Half of the participants lived in Minnesota.
We got that perspective and have resided in nearby states.

13:37:04 Illinois, North and South Dakota, Indiana, Colorado, Michigan, Nebraska, or Wisconsin.

13:37:14 We had moderators who were Black and Latino to facilitate these sessions, everything was facilitated via oom.

13:37:23 To give you an idea what that looked like, this is our Latino moderator, she had just shown the participants
13:37:29 and was asking them to sort of reflect on what was motivating or not motivating about them.

13:37:35 And as I said in addition to showing them spots we actually got their thoughts on travel in general and
13:37:41 what's important to them and we were able to show them some ideas for new spots and get feedback.

13:37:48 So here's a few of the key things we learned and are excited to incorporate.

13:37:56 Representation is very important but no group wants to be tokenized so marketing should include multiple
13:38:04 ethnicities.
Latino respondents are a vacation as activity well Black respondents found
13:38:08 it rejuvenating.
Both groups that food is a powerful indicator of culture and signifies
13:38:18 diversity so I am looking forward to showing more.
The presence of children was a strong
13:38:26 positive as well as depictions of multigenerational travel.
Safety was a key factor for Blacks in
13:38:36 deciding where to go and how they would travel there.
Yes, COVID was a discussion about this reference is specific to racism and the civil unrest that it happened.
So the destinations need to be worth
13:38:45 the trip.
Both groups expressed interest in trying new things on vacation,
13:38:50 however, Black respondents were less likely to embrace only outdoor recreation and wanted to see a range
13:38:57 of and more relaxing activities.
This is also true of some Latino respondents rate fall and winter
13:39:05 depictions were least motivating to Black respondents rate Minnesota residents looking for activities
13:39:10 extended beyond one region of the state.
They often enjoy outdoor activities
13:39:16 and finding hidden gems but they also wanted to see options within the Metro.

13:39:23 And our nonMinnesota residents are they most associate Minnesota when winter and snow and when traveling
13:39:26 domestically, they want to find which experiences are most unique to Minnesota.

13:39:32 That was very loud and clear.
They want to know what is unique to Minnesota, why would I come here.

13:39:38 They want to know that Minnesota has a vibrant metro area and many of them said they would often use a city as a
13:39:44 base and venture out to other activities from that base.
All of America came up in every single
13:39:50 group as an iconic Minnesota destination and was expected to be seen in marketing.

13:39:54 Distinctions between age groups were not strongly pronounced by the older respondents did tend to not like
13:40:01 outdoor activities in the winter as much and look for a variety of options so everyone in the family would be
13:40:08 entertained on their vacation.
So what are we going to do with all this information?

13:40:15 So our spring and summer of 2021, next spring and summer is our next major opportunity to showcase new creative
13:40:23 to the largest and broadest audience possible, because that is specifically our largest base.
13:40:29 Our immediate action is to make sure that EMT has brand-right created for spring that reflects a deliberate and
13:40:34 authentic effort to engage in more racially diverse audience.
However, this is not a one-time
13:40:37 effort.
We intend to continue to incorporate and grow these insights into all
13:40:41 future marketing to ensure that we are welcoming and inclusive to all travelers.
13:40:46 The biggest plays are probably going to see it as next spring that we are going to be using this going forward
13:40:52 and making sure that we are taking them into account every single time we are creating something new.

13:40:58 And that is what I've got.
Feel free to submit questions via chat if you have them.

13:41:05 After that I will turn it over to Leann.

>> Thanks, Katharine.

13:41:12 Hi from everybody.
I am just going to follow up with some additional public relations updates.

13:41:22 First of all, throughout the month of August, we've conducted a variety of virtual meetings via Zoom with select
regional and national journalists and writers so we are taking the opportunity, because they have some casual two-way conversations with them. Some of the topics we've been addressing have been, how is of the pandemic impacting travel stories and their approach to travel stories.

What are the various media topics that they are focusing on for the rest of 2020?

And into 2021, whether they think the future of travel looks like beyond the pandemic?

What trends do they think are here to stay and also just giving them updates specific to Minnesota.

So John Edman and Alyssa Hayes, our P.R. officer have been having conversations one-on-one and some of the writers and editors we talked with so far include "The Washington Post," "The Wall Street Journal," Forbes, "lonely planet," "outside" magazine, "National Geographic traveler," "travel and leisure," "Chicago Tribune," "The New York Times" and there are more.

So we are concluding those efforts here in the next week or so and we hope that this strategy will give us some insight as we try to prioritize our marketing and communication efforts going forward in the next year.

Additionally, we are doing promotion of our fall colors with a joint press release and consumer emails and collaboration with this Department of natural resources so those efforts will begin in mid-September.

And finally just an update on the partnership front, we launched our fifth annual edition of hike man and that promotion and sweepstakes are
13:43:39 underway and we want and continue to encourage people to continue enjoying the outdoors state-wide and exploring

13:43:48 a variety of different types of hikes close to home or at least within the state and so that promotion is off and

13:43:53 running and we thank all the partners who have helped us put that together.

13:44:05 And with that I believe I send it back over to John.

>> Thanks, Leann and thank you,

13:44:10 Katharine.

You know, this clearly is not marketing tourism as we have done in

13:44:17 the past, this is an entirely different environment.

We are trying to deal with the issue

13:44:28 of public health pandemic but trying to really work on people’s interest in travel, to travel as safe as they

13:44:35 possibly can and to still keep our economy going at least from a leisure and hospitality perspective.

13:44:40 Maybe not today but we are looking forward to the future.

And I guess I just wanted to conclude

13:44:48 with a couple of comments about what’s next.

The happenings here at Explore


I think I would be remiss if I didn't make some mention of budget, I know a

13:45:01 lot of you are all dealing with budget in ways that you never thought you would be experiencing at this point in

13:45:07 your organization or business perspective.

But the state, too, is facing some

13:45:15 budget shortfalls this year as it well as into the next biennial.

We have not been given very specific

13:45:20 directions on cuts but we are anticipating that for Explore Minnesota.
13:45:27 Agencies throughout state government or throughout Minnesota are being asked to help with cuts of ten, 15, 20%.

13:45:34 We are planning for those scenarios and we will deal with it as it arises.
We hope that does not become the case
13:45:41 because we feel we can be the fuel for recovery but we will deal with whatever we are going to have to deal
13:45:52 with which you are as well.
But we are also looking beyond that, looking beyond just this current
13:45:57 fiscal year which ends June 30th and looking into the next biennial and looking at right now our ask for the
13:46:05 next legislative session and it's going to be very difficult.
I think it's no surprise that the
13:46:11 state does not have a revenue for us to make the case with investment in travel and tourism is going to be
13:46:16 really, really difficult.
But we are looking to working with you in the industry in working with the
13:46:25 Council to really come up with what are our specific asks, where do we most need to help, where can we, Explore
13:46:32 Minnesota, inject ourselves to best help on this road to recovery?
So we welcome any thoughts or input
13:46:39 anybody has on this call today or anytime down the road.
Our next council meeting, tourism
13:46:47 Council meeting is on September 15th.
It will be a virtual meeting and what we are looking at for the next
13:46:51 biennial will be one of the main topics of discussion.
I also want to point out that we have
13:47:01 several new members, newly-appointed members for the explore Minnesota tourism Council including Marine

We are one further position as a restaurant position and I know there been a few applications for that and that appointment is still pending.

I also want to mention that we are planning a series of fault listening sessions and a lot of you may recall we've been doing those, we did them last year in preparation for our strategic plans, we did commit to doing it again this year, we may not be able to do that physically but we do plan on doing them virtually this October, probably even by the industry sector group, look for more of that to come, information in the coming weeks.

13:48:07 And I also just want to mention, I know this may seem like a far time off but earlier I think I commented and people really need to plan ahead for meetings and conventions.

Well we, too, are planning ahead for our future meeting and convention specifically referring to the annual tourism conference which is scheduled for March 1st in the metro area.

We've heard from some of you about what your thoughts are on that but I just want you to know we want to hear from the entire industry so we are going to be doing an industry survey to get your thoughts on whether we continue, we have something entirely different, virtual and some combination.

But you'll be hearing from us in an industry survey shortly after.

13:48:54 I also want to mention that this session is being recorded and it is available on our industry site or will be later on this week.
And we'd be happy to answer any further thoughts or questions that any
13:49:10 view have at that time.
So unless there is anything else from members of my team, Katharine, are
13:49:15 there any questions that were submitted online?
>> No questions in the chat.

13:49:23 >> Well, it doesn't mean you don't have questions, I'm sure you all do.
And we would love to hear from you, to
13:49:28 hear about your thoughts, your ideas, your suggestions, your likes and dislikes about what we
are doing or
13:49:32 what we need to be doing in the future.
We want to hear from all of you.

13:49:40 But we wanted to hold this webinar, we just felt this is a good time getting towards the end of
the summer to give
13:49:46 you an update on things that are going on with the industry, to give you an update on some of
the things with
13:49:50 explore Minnesota, what we are planning in the future.
These plans are oftentimes going to
13:50:02 have to pivot and we will do that based on what we think is best for the industry based on the
direction we get
13:50:07 from all of you.
So with that, I think that concludes today's webinar.

13:50:13 We appreciate everybody taking the time to be with us and we wish you a great rest of the
afternoon and a great ball