

**Good Afternoon, Senator Myron Jackson, Chairman of the Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation, Youth and Recreation, Members of the Committee, other Senators present, and ladies and gentlemen in the listing and viewing audience.**

My name is Luana Wheatley, Assistant Director of Communications for the Department of Tourism. Commissioner Beverly Nicholson Doty is out of the territory on a marketing mission. Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on planning for the approaching 2017 Centennial.

The Department of Tourism continues to discuss strategies to promote and encourage travel for the Centennial. Some of these tactics include but are not limited to:

- A promotional package to be offered in all of Scandinavia to include some of the elements surrounding the year-long event.
- Discussions with a scheduled airline carrier to offer weekly flights for six months. This would replace the existing Bravo charter which only operates for 3 months.
- A major media event in Scandinavia in 2016, followed by a media familiarization trip in early 2017. This will give us the initial press coverage we need to promote the 2017 activities to the traveling audience. Media relations will be ongoing.
- A 2016 Travel Agent and Tour Operator Familiarization trip out of Denmark and Norway which will help to support not only the flight but any of our promotional packages.
- Strategic outreach via social and digital media to the Danish-American and Scandinavian clubs and associations in the United States. Large concentrations of these groups live in California, Wisconsin and Minnesota among other states.
- Social and digital media promotion of Commission-developed events, conferences and exhibits.

As we move forward, we must differentiate between events and activities which are intended to raise local awareness from those which can be promoted to vacationers. This will be important for the DOT when preparing marketing plans for FY '16 and FY '17, and issuing directives to our Advertising and Public Relations Agencies.

We look forward to additional brainstorming sessions to ensure that the voices of all people affected by the colonization and transfer are accurately represented. Many events will require long lead times (i.e. specially minted coins, cancellation stamps, possible Smithsonian Folklife Festival, et al) require immediate action by a committed staff. To this end, it is our recommendation that a permanent Commission office be established in the immediate future.

In conclusion, the Department of Tourism remains ready to offer marketing support for the celebration of the territory's 100th anniversary.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide the Committee with a brief update on some of the marketing plans for the Centennial. I remain available to answer any questions you may have.