



April 2015

ASTA Mid America Chapter



*Chapter eNews*

# CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2014

Dear «First Name»,

Last month we recognized six of our Ohio ASTA Mid-America members as they served as our voice in opposition to legislative proposals to increase taxes on small business. We are happy to announce due to their efforts and the efforts of other small businesses, that this tax has not been included in Ohio's new budget. This month Maryland is making the news as they look for ways to increase revenues, again partially on the backs of small business. The repeated efforts suggest two things.

1. Small business is such a large part of the economies in most states, that raising their taxes translates to big revenue increases to the state.
2. Small business is thought to be an easier target than some other will funded special interest groups

What they always seem to overlook is that "all politics are local" and state legislators are much more sensitive to well organized grass roots pressure. This is exactly why an effective state by state strategy, funded and represented by a large number of ASTA members is so important.

If every ASTA member gave even the minimum donation to ASTAPAC the message to those legislative bullies would be clear. "You better think twice before you decide to pick on Travel Agencies and other small businesses that are the backbone of the US economy!" [Donate Here](#)

ASTA's National Convention, which will take place in Washington DC from 8/29/15 – 9/1/15 deserves your attention and participation. Take a moment to view the dynamic program that has been planned for our [National Global Convention](#).

We have some special ASTA Mid-America plans for the convention, so let us know when you register, so we can include you! Register soon, the **["Early Bird" rate expires May 1, 2015!](#)**

I am pleased to welcome these new members to ASTA Mid-America. We look forward to their active participation as we continue to grow our Chapter:

Carmel Lapa  
CruiseOne – The Lapa  
[Groupclapa@cruiseone.com](mailto:Groupclapa@cruiseone.com)

Tony Huffman  
Huffman Travel  
[Tony@huffmantravel.com](mailto:Tony@huffmantravel.com)

Kimberly Jones  
Lets Jet Travel Service  
[letsjettravel@aol.com](mailto:letsjettravel@aol.com)

J. Douglas Risser  
MTS Realty, LLC  
[doug@theexchangeoshen.com](mailto:doug@theexchangeoshen.com)

David Schooler  
Town and Country Travel  
[david@tandctravel.com](mailto:david@tandctravel.com)

## **Calendar of Events**

### **Chapter Events:**

Recommended Webinars and upcoming April webinars are now listed on the website and below at the bottom.

**TravelFest Dates:** Save the Dates - [Registration](#) is Now Closed!

April 20 - Pittsburgh at [The Rivers Casino](#), 777 Casino Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

April 21 - Cleveland at [St. Michael's Woodside Center](#), 5025 E Mill Road,  
Broadview Hts, OH 44147

April 22 - Columbus at [Bridgewater Conference Center](#), 10561 Sawmill Drive, OH 43065

April 23 - Indianapolis at [The Mansion at Oak Hill](#), 5801 E 116th St., Carmel IN 46033

### **National Events:**

[ASTA Premium Business Summit | June 8-9, 2015 | Chicago](#)

[ASTA Global Convention | Aug 29 - Sept 1, 2015 | Washington DC](#)

Best Regards,

*Claudia*

Claudia Darling  
Chapter President

Board Members:

Dan Lanser, 1st Vice President

Barbara Mazzola, 2nd Vice President

Ann Waters, Treasurer

Pam Faust, Secretary



## **April 2015**

### **News from Headquarters**

#### **Business Travel Exchange Moved to July 30 in San Francisco**

The ASTA Business Travel Exchange (BTE) is now scheduled for July 30 at The Fairmont in San Francisco. You can [register now](#) for this event aimed at the agency trying to sell to the small to

mid-sized unmanaged corporate travel market. [Program details can be found here](#). The discounted hotel room rate at The Fairmont of \$220 per night is valid only until June 16. Call 800.441.1414 and reference ASTA Business Travel Exchange when booking, after you register on [ASTA.org](http://ASTA.org).

### **Lottery for White House Tours, Photo Contest Planned for Global Convention**

ASTA staff are in full-throttle ASTA Global Convention (AGC) mode in an attempt to more than double attendance at this year's AGC, Aug. 29-Sept. 1 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. They want 1,000 attendees. So, to get there they are planning some [special events](#). First, anyone who registers for the conference by the Early Bird cutoff date of May 1 will have their names entered into a lottery for a White House tour. Only 20 agents get that tour, [so sign up now for your chance](#). Also, watch for details in April on an agent photo contest to be used for a future marketing campaign. Sponsors are being sought now for big prizes using travel agents' own trip photos...more on that to come.

Anyone who attends AGC this year in Washington will be able to take advantage of tours of the monuments, Capitol, Smithsonian and other historical venues. Full tour details to be added to [ASTAGlobalConvention.org](http://ASTAGlobalConvention.org) before the end of the month. Anyone who attends the [Global Travel Exchange](#) on Saturday Aug. 29—a meeting to bring together international agents and tour operators with U.S.-based agencies to learn and network—will be able to attend that evening's Embassy receptions.

Here's a [short video](#) from Rich Kizer and Georganne Bender on why you need to attend. In addition, three top sales executives from American, Delta and United will speak on an airline panel, and the leaders of several agency consortia will get together to talk about the future of the agent/consortia relationship. Confirmed so far are Alex Sharpe of Signature, Roger Block of Travel Leaders and John Werner of MAST. [Another highlight](#) is media training by award-winning journalist Andrea McCarren. Also, the National Association of Career Travel Agents (NACTA) is bringing its members, holding a member meeting out at National Harbor on Sunday Aug. 30, and offering two FAMS that can be taken by ASTA or NACTA members (FAM details still to come). Check out [airline and Amtrak discounts](#). AD75s are available to agents depending on revenue performance.

### **Consumers Beginning (Again) to See the Value of Using a Travel Agent**

ASTA President and CEO Zane Kerby has been on the media circuit lately, touting the benefits of using an ASTA travel agent. [This report](#) that aired on NPR in the first week of April explained that travel agents are coming back into demand. Numerous listeners called in to tell their stories about how an ASTA agent saved their vacation. Great press! This story reached 3,160 people on ASTA's [Facebook page](#) alone. You can go there too and share or like it. Also, [here is a link](#) to Travel and Tour World's cover story on the future of travel associations in the U.S., which prominently featured ASTA.

In March, ASTA partnered with The Travel Mom (Emily Kaufman) in five markets—Philadelphia, Las Vegas, Chicago, Miami and Phoenix—to tell the story of why a consumer needs to use a vetted ASTA travel agent to book their summer travel, in conjunction with the release of our Summer Hot Spots Survey. If you didn't see some of the video posted to ASTA's Facebook page, [here's one example](#). She spread the message that "agents know what you don't even know to ask." And that the ASTA directory on [TravelSense.org](http://TravelSense.org) is a great place to start to find an agent. So if you have not updated your directory profile in awhile, good idea to do that soon. Much more to come on the Consumer Awareness front this year, some of which you will see at the Global Convention in August. Future sponsors interested in hearing more about these efforts, specifically future opportunities with The Travel Mom, please call ASTA VP of Communications Jennifer Michels, [jmichels@asta.org](mailto:jmichels@asta.org), 703.739.8711. Also, send her items to post in the "My Travel Agent Rocks!" blog on [TravelSense.org](http://TravelSense.org). That's free advertising for you.

### **ASTA's 2015 Regulatory Compliance Handbook and Online Test Available**

ASTA's 2015 U.S. Travel Agency Regulatory Compliance Handbook is a plain-English white paper that explains the major federal statutes and regulations that directly impact travel agents. To help members meet their regulatory obligations, and to help reduce their risk of civil enforcement penalties, included in this handbook you will find links to the relevant USC, CFR, guidance letters and Advisory Circulars issued by the regulating government agency. [Download the handbook here](#).

New this year is an education course/test that can be easily administered to your front line agents to ensure your company's compliance from our [Online Training Center](#). This is a 40-question test that takes less than one hour to complete. We recommend you have all your agents take this test. As an ASTA member, you and your staff receive a significant course discount—It costs only [\\$25 before Aug. 1](#).

### **ASTA Members March on Washington**

ASTA's Second Annual Legislative Day [was a huge success](#) March 19 when at least 50 members representing all segments of our industry marched to Capitol Hill to present legislative priorities important to travel agents. Kicking off Legislative Day, ASTA held a reception in the U.S. Capitol building to present Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA) with the 2015 Global Travel Advocate Award. Speaking of advocacy, kudos to [ASTA Treasurer Jay Ellenby](#) of Safe Harbors Travel Group in Bel Air, MD for his many treks to Annapolis and public appearances to testify against or appear on TV to help stop Maryland from applying a 6% sales tax on the services fees and markups charged by any agent who books a Maryland hotel room. If you haven't seen our upgraded Advocacy Action Center on [ASTA.org](#) with tabs on Federal and State updates, and Key Issues, Calls to Action and ASTAPAC, [check it out](#).



### **Sample Cuba Travel Certification Form Available for Your Agency**

To make it easier for agency members to adhere to new U.S. government regulations pertaining to selling travel to Cuba, ASTA has developed a sample certification form for use with your clients. This resource, available exclusively to ASTA members, can be downloaded here: [Individual Certification of General License Authority to Travel to Cuba](#). ASTA held a [webinar](#) March 11 to answer more of your questions on selling travel to Cuba.

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### **Upcoming Webinars from ASTA Headquarters**

[Traveler Decision Making: What Motivates Consumers to Travel](#) | Apr 21, 2015 | 2pm ET

[Better Messaging Using the Results from "Traveler Decision Making"](#) | May 14, 2015 | 2pm ET

### **Recent ASTA Member Alerts & Press Releases**

[Maryland House Passes New Tax on Agency Service Fee Income](#) | Apr 8, 2015

[ASTA Members Rally Against Maryland Hotel Service Fee Tax Bill](#) | Apr 2, 2015

[Employment at Travel Agencies is Highest Since 2010, ASTA Report Finds](#) | Mar 31, 2015

[Maryland Service Fee Bill is Unnecessary Taxation on Travel Agents](#) | Mar 25, 2015

[ASTA Presents Pre. Sam Farr with Travel Advocate Award](#) | Mar 18, 2015

[ASTA Board of Directors Votes to Add Seat for Consortium Member](#) | Mar 17, 2015

[Orlando, London Picked by Travel Agents as Hottest Summer Destinations](#) | Mar 17, 2015

**The global advocates for travel. Go with the pros.**

To decline all e-mails from this chapter, [click here](#).