

Learn Tourism Marks Major Growth Milestones Ahead of Destinations International Annual Convention

As DI 2026 approaches, Learn Tourism marks major growth with 35,000 learners, 65 destination partnerships, and new industry advisors.

PORTLAND, OR, UNITED STATES, June 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As destination leaders from

“

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Stephen Ekstrom

around the world prepare to gather for the 2026

[Destinations International Annual Convention, Learn](#)

[Tourism](#),

the nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing tourism through innovative education and workforce development, is celebrating a series of milestones that reflect growing industry investment in people, place, and visitor experience.

Over the past year, Learn Tourism has surpassed 35,000 enrolled learners, launched its 65th destination learning environment partnership, expanded its advisory network with two new tourism industry leaders, and awarded a

professional development scholarship to Bryan Lavin, Professor at Johnson & Wales University, supporting his participation in the 2026 Destinations International Annual Convention.

Together, these milestones highlight an industry-wide shift toward education, community engagement, frontline workforce development, and resident empowerment.

"Across North America and beyond, we're seeing destinations recognize that marketing alone isn't enough," said Stephen Ekstrom, CEO and Co-Founder of Learn Tourism. "Communities are investing in the people who shape visitor experiences every day—from frontline staff and volunteers to residents, students, and local advocates. The destinations thriving tomorrow will be those that empower people to become better hosts, better storytellers, and better stewards of place."

Founded as a nonprofit organization focused on advancing tourism through adult learning science, behavioral psychology, and workforce development, Learn Tourism partners with destination organizations, attractions, associations, and tourism stakeholders to create

customized online learning environments and community engagement programs.

Its growing network of destination partners spans urban and rural communities, state tourism offices, convention and visitors bureaus, destination marketing organizations, chambers of commerce, and economic development organizations throughout North America and internationally.

The organization's recent growth reflects increasing demand for initiatives that help destinations:

- Strengthen community pride and resident engagement
- Improve visitor experiences through frontline training
- Develop [tourism ambassador](#) and destination advocate programs
- Support workforce recruitment and retention
- Advance stewardship and responsible visitor behavior
- Build stronger relationships between tourism organizations and their communities

Among Learn Tourism's newest initiatives is its continued support of tourism education and professional development. This year, the organization awarded a scholarship to Bryan Lavin, a Professor at Johnson & Wales University, enabling him to attend the 2026 Destinations International Annual Convention and bring new insights back to the next generation of tourism professionals.

Learn Tourism also recently welcomed two new advisors whose expertise will help guide the organization's future growth and impact across the tourism sector.

As destinations face increasing expectations around workforce development, community engagement, accessibility, stewardship, and visitor experience, Learn Tourism believes education will play an increasingly important role in destination success.

"The most successful destinations aren't simply attracting visitors," Ekstrom added. "They're creating cultures of hospitality, stewardship, and lifelong learning. That's where education becomes a strategic advantage."

Learn Tourism representatives will attend the 2026 Destinations International Annual Convention in Portland and meet with destination leaders interested in exploring new approaches to tourism ambassador programs, workforce development initiatives, stakeholder engagement, and destination-specific learning environments.

For more information about Learn Tourism, visit <https://learntourism.org>.

To learn more about destination learning environments and tourism ambassador programs, visit <https://learntourism.org>.

To connect with Learn Tourism during the Destinations International Annual Convention, visit <https://learntourism.org/contact>.

Stephen Ekstrom

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