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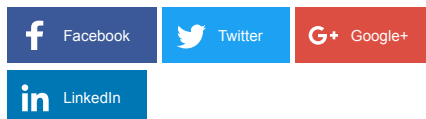


Tour coordinator Robert (left) stands with radio host and step-on guide Dennis Lindahl (right) on a tour to the Bakken. Photo: Karen Sanner, Country Travel DISCOVERIES, LLC.

## Destination: North Dakota

June 29, 2016

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Stewart D. Ikeda | Country Travel DISCOVERIES

### Comprehensive new tour takes travelers off-the-beaten-path throughout the Roughrider State and into oil country

Would-be travelers who assume North Dakota is a "drive-through" state may need to think again once tour operator Country Travel DISCOVERIES (CTD) shows them the state's wonders, including a couple of days in oil country.

The Wisconsin-based company specializing in guided tours with a rural emphasis throughout the Midwest, the U.S., and abroad, is bringing tourist groups to experience a week's worth of off-the-beaten-path sites, sounds, tastes and more across North Dakota this summer.

### Spotlight on The Bakken

A significant highlight of the North Dakota Legends tour will be a chance for travelers to learn about the oil industry and experience life in The Bakken. Following a tour Theodore Roosevelt National Park, visitors will get their first glimpse of oil's impact on communities between Watford City and New Town. After exploring the area around Fort Berthold Reservation, the group will overnight in Stanley before a full day in oil country.

In the morning, local radio morning show host Dennis Lindahl will provide an overview of the energy industries here and share stories about the amazing transformation of his hometowns of Stanley and Tioga

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into a “boom area.” The group may visit a crew camp, extraction facilities, local shops and more, although tour planners say that they’ve built some room for spontaneity and discovery into the schedule.

“Since things are in such flux,” says one of CTD’s tour coordinators, “what Dennis will show our group will vary greatly from week-to-week.”

After Lindahl’s tour, the group will head back to Tioga for lunch and a presentation about the oil industry from a local firm, Nese Consulting Service Inc., which provides experienced wellsite geology/geo-steering services.

## A Different Kind of Tour

Although these may not be what you might consider typical tourist attractions, such interactions with industry experts and authentic local color is precisely what CTD’s brand of traveler seeks, says Stewart Ikeda, the company’s Director of Marketing.

“Our customers are folks who aren’t all that interested in the standard attractions. There are people who love to travel back-roads, visit small towns and make local connections. We focus on taking them to places and providing experiences they would never be able to find on their own.”

CTD painstakingly seeks out local “step-on” guides who, like Lindahl, can climb aboard the motor coach to share authentic experiences – from narrators of Native American life, bison ranching, robotics, Nokota horses, Teddy Roosevelt lore and more. It takes a lot of effort and planning, but the results are worth it.

## Good for North Dakota



CTD travelers will tour the massive artworks along the Enchanted Highway with their creator, Gary Greff.



CTD goes behind the scenes at New Leipzig’s MRISAR Institute, whose robotic creations have been featured in museums and movies worldwide.



At Linton’s Nokota Horse Conservancy, CTD travelers will get up close to the magnificent descendants of wild horses of the Northern Plains.

Tours like this don’t happen overnight, says Deanne Cunningham, Group Travel Marketing Manager with North Dakota Tourism. It’s Cunningham’s job to increase exposure of North Dakota to the tourism industry.

“Other bus tour companies may spend one to two days and zip through on the interstate highways,” says Cunningham, “but we’ve never had a tour this in-depth, over seven days, six nights – and North Dakota is their total destination. CTD’s tour planners took the time to create a comprehensive and authentic new itinerary filled with hidden gems that even many state residents haven’t experienced. And with 17 select destinations on the itinerary, they’re going in to communities where the people are really excited to host them.

“Our hope is that it will lead to more tourism after these particular folks have come and gone, as well as to more North Dakotans coming up with rural and industrial tourism offerings that we can then offer those extra tourists,” says Cunningham.

With three separate bus tours filling fast (two already sold out), not only will the needle move on awareness of the state’s most inviting features, but on spending here as well. The total economic impact of the Country Travel DISCOVERIES excursions will contribute some \$200,000 into the state’s economy – a number based on hotel nights, meals, operating expenses, and discretionary spending, which includes everything from entertainment to alcohol to souvenirs.

Country Travel DISCOVERIES’ North Dakota Legends tour departs from Bismarck and runs July 24-30, July 31-August 6, and August 28-September 3, 2016.

For more information, visit [CountryTravelDiscoveries.com/NDL](http://CountryTravelDiscoveries.com/NDL) or call 855-744-8747. Happy trails!



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