



In 2012, the Mat-Su Valley welcomed new tourism products, including two zip lines.

MAT-SU CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU FY2012 ANNUAL REPORT



Mission statement

The purpose of the Mat-Su CVB is to strengthen and cultivate a vibrant tourism industry.

2011-2012 Board of Directors

Dee Dee Kay President CIRI Alaska Tourism	Ruth Kimerer Alaska Railroad
Cheryl Metiva Vice President Morris Alaska	Craig Saunders Alaska Backcountry Adventure Tours
Steve Zadra Secretary Princess Tours	Mark Austin Palmer Musk Ox Farm
Nicole Bendle Treasurer National Bank Alaska	Mabel Wimmer Mendeltna Creek Lodge
Karen Harris Alaska Garden Gate B&B and Cottages	Darlene Hunter Susitna River Lodge

Elections are held each October for the board

Message from the President

In FY12, the Mat-Su Borough saw a record for bed tax revenue, something we are very proud of, considering the state of the national economy. It's a testament to the marketing efforts of the CVB, and the efforts of you, our members. We all share in that success.



The Mat-Su CVB works to market the Valley as a premier destination, a task we don't take lightly. Using a targeted marketing approach, the organization uses marketing dollars in an efficient way to reach the largest amount of potential visitors. You can take pride that your destination marketing organization is trying to maximize exposure while minimizing the expense it takes to reach that goal.

We all felt the economic downturn in 2009 and 2010. We're rebounding, though, which is great news. In FY12, the bed tax revenue increased 13.2 percent, and got above the \$1 million threshold for just the second time in history.

But we aren't sitting back and patting ourselves on the back. As an organization, we're committed to moving forward, and continuing to attract visitors – whether they be from as far away as Australia or right up the highway in Anchorage. Those visitors stay in our hotels and B&Bs, shop in our stores, eat in our restaurants and spend money on activities. We're proud of the strides we've taken, but we're equally excited about the future of the tourism industry in the Mat-Su Valley.

Marketing Report

VISITOR GUIDE

The 2012 Mat-Su Visitor Guide included new images, small design changes and more social media links. Distribution: 100,000, including 50,000 high-potential visitors identified by Alaska Travel Industry Association.

IN-STATE MARKETING

Local residents and their visiting friends and relatives are important to the Mat-Su visitor industry. The Valley Values campaign continued targeting Alaskans, and proved to be very successful both in the fall and in the spring.

Consumer shows

Oxygen & Octane Winter Recreation Show (Anchorage), Great Alaska Sportsman Show (Anchorage), Fairbanks Outdoor Show and the Mat-Su Outdoorsman Show.

Advertising

- Ad placements in the Anchorage Daily News, The Frontiersman, Valdez Star, Fairbanks Daily News-Miner and a variety of Alaska visitor guides.
- Year-round radio spots in the Anchorage market keep awareness high on visiting the Mat-Su Valley.

NATIONAL MARKETING EFFORTS

Consumer shows

- Continued Visitor Guide distribution through the Alaska Travel Industry Association at Florida RV SuperShow, Quartzsite RV Show, New York Times Travel Show and booth share at L.A. Adventures in Travel Expo.

www.alaskavisit.com

- New enhanced mobile site launched in March 2012.
- Pay-per-click advertising increased in FY12.
- 71,504 visits, 58,714 unique visitors and more than 180,000 page views.
- New QR code tents direct traffic to mobile site.

Advertising

Ad placements targeting domestic audiences appeared in Alaska Magazine, AAA, Alaska Highway Angler, Fish Alaska Magazine, The Milepost.

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

International Pow Wow

- Continued presence in the international arena at the Travel Industry of America (USTA) International Pow Wow Exchange held in May. Continued successful partnership with Valdez and the Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council, creating themed itineraries focused on similar activities offered in each region.
- ATIA Japan Sales Mission, where Mat-Su CVB met with more than 150 tour operators and wholesalers, and



Mat-Su CVB staff hosted several tour operator FAMs, including six China tour operators in June.

- members of the Japanese media in four cities.
- Attended Mid-Atlantic Seminar in Reykjavik, Iceland to meet with European and UK tour operators.

MEETINGS AND RETREATS

- Directly assisted 14 meeting planners with their Mat-Su meetings, while providing assistance to more than 25 planners looking for more information.
- Staff answered inquiries and assisted meeting planners with conferences and small groups throughout FY12.

DOMESTIC TRADE, GROUP TOURS & MEDIA

- Participated in the National Tour Association Convention, meeting one-on-one with more than 30 domestic operators.
- Participated in the American Bus Association, meeting with more than 20 motorcoach tour operators directly.
- CVB staff hosted 26 tour operators on various FAM trips around the Valley.
- Sponsored lunch and met with 40 Gate 1 travel agents.
- Participated in the Alaska Media Roadshow, setting advance appointments with some of the most influential travel media in the U.S. and Canada. More than 40 major travel writers registered.
- Hosted one travel writer on a Mat-Su specific FAM that resulted in coverage on msnbc.com and three blogs.
- CVB staff sponsored and escorted more than 10 travel writers from around the world, generating stories in the Wall Street Journal, the New York Post, Huffington Post, numerous online publications and radio coverage.
- The bureau provide assistance to 28 media inquiries and provided information about the Mat-Su Valley to travel writers, Alaska wholesalers, travel agents, television producers and media.

Membership Report

Totaled 235 members, with a retention rate of 84 percent. In FY12, the Mat-Su CVB welcomed 27 new businesses to the membership.

Hosted monthly membership educational luncheons throughout the year, updating member businesses on current tourism issues and providing tools for continued success.

Assisted members with online presence at www.alaskavisit.com, including a 170-character narrative, two images and the ability to post coupons for free.

Hosted a successful mini-convention featuring an educational seminar focusing on South Denali developments. Also hosted the "Stars of the Industry" awards luncheon in conjunction with the "Voice of the Membership" meeting in November 2011.

Teamed with the Alaska's Mat-Su B&B Association to manage the Mat-Su Online Vacancy Report. Members have indicated this Web site is an important tool in filling last-minute vacancies.

Hosted the annual Visitor Information Center Open House in May, with approximately 50 members in attendance.

Coordinated successful travel auction and wine tasting "ExTRAVELganza," which serves as the largest fundraiser for the Mat-Su CVB. The April 2012 event sold out once again.

Communicated regularly with members through newsletters, biweekly E-bulletins and site visits.

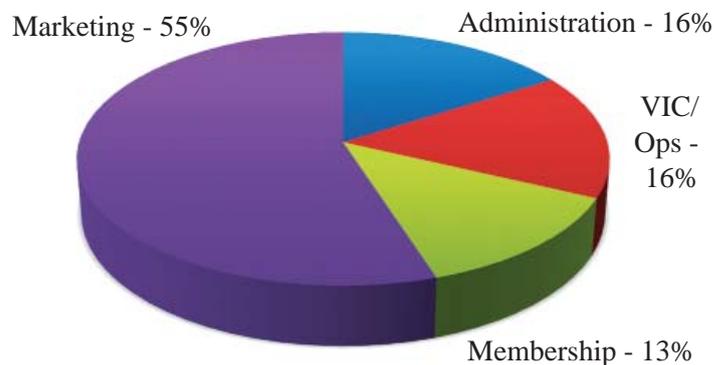


Former Mat-Su Borough Assemblywoman Lynne Woods presented Cindy Bettine with the Tourism Angel award in November.

Statement of Financial Position

(as of June 30, 2012)

FY12 Expenses by Division



Assets

Current assets:

Cash	\$81,583
Memberships and grants receivable	\$125,389
Inventory	\$2,315
Prepaid expenses	<u>\$24,741</u>
Total current assets	\$234,028

Property and Equipment

Furniture and equipment	\$127,627
Accumulated depreciation	<u>(\$124,286)</u>
Net property and equipment	\$3,341
Total assets	\$237,369

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current liabilities:

Accounts payable	\$35,541
Payroll liabilities	\$6,697
Deferred revenue	<u>\$58,049</u>
Total current liabilities	\$100,287
Unrestricted net assets	<u>\$137,082</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	\$237,369

Per board policy, Mat-Su CVB's financial statements, accounting practices and reporting methods are audited every third year. The FY12 statements have been audited.

FY12 Revenue Detail - \$855,939

Bed Tax Grant Revenue	\$704,393
Membership Dues	\$27,560
Advertising Sales & Marketing Programs	\$54,086
Special Events & Fundraisers	\$25,221
Gift Shop	\$7,277
Interest	\$94
Other	\$2,908
In-Kind Contributions	<u>\$34,400</u>
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$855,939

Administration Report

The Mat-Su CVB board of directors met an unprecedented eight times during FY12 to move forward and support bureau agendas. At the board planning retreat held at Susitna River Lodge on January 18-19, the board established a 2012 Strategic Action Plan that outlines seven goals and strategies with benchmarks and timelines.

The Mat-Su CVB board also continued its focus on advancing the Mat-Su Valley South Gateway Visitor Center by organizing a Strategic Partnership Board that met for the



first time March 26, 2012. The board's focus is on funding and partnership development. In January of 2012 the Mat-Su

Borough Assembly passed a resolution "supporting and directing that the funds received from any future sale of the current visitor

center parcel be dedicated to the development of the new South Gateway facility." This supportive action will help leverage future funding opportunities.

Staff attended meetings of local chambers and business organizations to communicate bureau announcements and events. These organizations included ATIA, the Alaska State Fair, Alaska's Mat-Su Bed & Breakfast Association, Glenn Highway National Scenic Byway Partnership Board, Palmer and Wasilla City Council and Mat-Su Borough Assembly.

Mat-Su CVB staff background and project focus

Bonnie Quill

Executive Director

A 28-year veteran of the Alaska tourism industry, Bonnie came to the Mat-Su CVB in 2000 from Bradley/Reid Communications, where she was the public relations account manager for the Alaska Tourism Marketing Council. She has also worked for the Alaska Visitors Association, Princess Tours and MarkAir.

Bonnie was elected to the ATIA Board of Directors in 2005, and serves on several community boards and organizations. She lives in downtown Palmer with her Westie, Tiger.

Casey Ressler

Marketing & Communications Manager

Casey joined the CVB in November 2006 after spending 11 years as an editor and reporter at the Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman. He has lived in Alaska for 30 of his 38 years. He works to market the Mat-Su Valley to



visitors, tour operators and the media. An avid fly fisherman, Casey and his wife Tracy have a 12-year-old daughter, Madison. They live in Wasilla.

Justin Saunders

Membership Manager

Justin joined the Mat-Su CVB team in January 2010. Justin works to recruit new members, develop member benefits and organizes membership events. Justin and his wife, Erin, have two young sons, Jacob and Ryan, and

live in Palmer. He is a lifelong Alaska resident with a genuine passion for the outdoors.

Neil Campbell

Administrative Manager

Neil moved to Alaska from Arizona in 1970 and lives near Wasilla with his wife, Kelly. He started at the Mat-Su CVB in 1996 and is responsible for all infrastructure, as well as accounting and office management. He has experience in construction, surveying, archaeology, the air transport industry and conference planning.

Lorraine Jallen

Visitor Center Manager

Since 1997, Lorraine has managed the visitor center and trained the information staff. She winters in Tucson, Ariz., where she hosts many visiting friends and relatives. She enjoys interacting with visitors to the center, and points them in the right direction for fun.