

The Bureau Bulletin

A publication of the Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau

Winter 2010

Inside this issue

President Dee Dee Kay shares her thoughts on the industry outlook for 2011 and beyond.

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Mat-Su CVB members elected two new candidates to serve on the board of directors.

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The 2011 Visitor Guide has been published, and new features have been added. Find out what they are and how you can get more copies.

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The board of directors from the Greater Palmer Chamber of Commerce accepts the Northern Lights Award at the Mat-Su CVB Stars of the Industry luncheon on Nov. 19.

Stars of the Industry honored at Mat-Su CVB awards luncheon

The Mat-Su CVB honored four local businesses and organizations with the Stars of the Industry awards during the Nov. 19 annual meeting and luncheon.

The prestigious Gold Star Award was given to the DLOA Board of Directors for its efforts in promoting sportfishing issues in the Mat-Su Valley, and for infrastructure development at the landing.

Director Jason Votruba and members of the DLOA Board of Directors were on hand to accept the award. The Gold Star Award is given to a business or organization for overall excellence in the tourism industry.

The Tourism Angel Award honors an individual who goes above and beyond in the tourism industry. Outgoing Mat-Su CVB Board Member Wes Tegeler of Tegeler and Associates, CPA, was the 2010 recipient.

“Wes has been a tremendous asset for the Mat-Su CVB, serving on the board for nine years,” Mat-Su CVB Executive Director Bonnie Quill said. “He has been a mentor to me personally, and our organization is better off because of his service. He has been a great ambassador for the tourism industry.”

Tegeler had been a Mat-Su CVB board member for nine years before deciding not to run for reelection this fall.

The Cheechako Award is given annually to a new business that is succeeding in its youth. The Flying Squirrel Bakery in Talkeetna was honored with the 2010 award, and fellow Talkeetna business owner Kathy Stoltz presented.

The Northern Lights Award is given to a community or organization that works to promote tourism for the benefit of all. This

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**2010-2011
Mat-Su CVB
Board of Directors**

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From the president's desk

Set your sights on a positive 2011

With 2010 fading in the winter's moonlight, many of us have already started looking to 2011 and beyond. After two rough years in the tourism industry, we're cautiously optimistic about the upcoming season, and hoping for a return closer to the levels of 2008.

While cruise passengers were down in 2010, there are positive signs that we are turning the corner and heading into an upswing in visitation numbers. At the ATIA convention in October, executive director Ron Peck reported that outside of the cruise industry, visitor numbers actually increased – border crossings were up, ferry ridership increased, and air traffic was up. These are good signs that things may be changing.

The Mat-Su relies on all of these types of visitors, including cruise passengers. The organization has developed a strong marketing strategy that maximizes the budget to reach all these audiences in a cost-effective manner.

We've targeted group tours – including cruisers who add a pre- or post-cruise package – by attending the National Tour Association convention last November and the American Bus Association convention in January (see the related stories in the newsletter). We'll be targeting domestic travelers at the LA Adventures in Travel Expo in March, and by sending our visitor

guide to several national shows with ATIA. In April, the Mat-Su CVB will take part in the ATIA Japan Mission, targeting international tour operators.

We've made an emphasis to target the in-state audience as well through focused, call-to-action advertising via the Internet, radio, television and print. We'll also have trade show booths at three successful consumer shows in Alaska this spring.

In 2010, the CVB launched its new Web site. I encourage you to take a look at it if you haven't already – we added more benefits for members at no additional cost. You can now post two photos to your listing, add a 170-character narrative and even list your amenities.

We've put a lot of effort into marketing to all sectors of the visitor industry – in-state, domestic, international, group tours and more – for

the benefit of you, our members. If you have any questions about the marketing programs or about your member benefits, I encourage you to call the staff at 746-5000.

I hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday season, and here's to a successful start to the 2011 season!

Dee Dee Kay is the president of the board of directors for the Mat-Su CVB. She works at CIRI Alaska Tourism Corp.



**Dee Dee Kay,
Mat-Su CVB Board
President**

Join a CVB committee and get involved

Do you want to have some say in what kind of programs the Mat-Su CVB participates in, and help shape the direction of the organization? Joining one of the Mat-Su CVB committees is a great way to get involved with the CVB.

Committees meet approximately four times a year, and provide insight into what the membership wants to see.

Currently, there are openings on the membership committee, marketing committee and the Internet committee.

Committee meetings average about two hours. The role of the committees is to provide feedback to the entire Mat-Su CVB Board of Directors, to help determine

future projects, direction for the budget and more. There are opportunities for you to call into the committee meetings if you can't make it in person.

The Internet committee's next scheduled meeting is Jan. 10 at 10 a.m. at the Mat-Su CVB office, and the agenda includes future projects to include in the FY2012 budget.

If you are interested in joining one of the committees, simply e-mail bonnie@alaskavisit.com or call Bonnie Quill at 746-5001.

We'd love to have your participation, to best ensure we are meeting the needs of our members.

Members elect two new Mat-Su CVB board members

The Mat-Su CVB welcomed two new board members at the Nov. 19 annual meeting and Voice of the Membership meeting.

Mark Austin of the Palmer Musk Ox Farm and Bethany Buckingham of the Dorothy Page Museum each took their seat on the board of directors.

Jason Votruba of the Deshka Landing Outdoor Association also was reelected to a three-year term.

“We’re excited to have Mark and Bethany on the board, as they bring energy and great new ideas to the organization,” Mat-Su CVB Executive Director Bonnie Quill said. “Bethany has been active on the marketing committee, and Mark has been a fixture in Palmer for years.

“Jason has also been a great asset for the board, and we’re happy to have him back,” Quill added.

The board of directors consists of 10

Mat-Su CVB members, and meets throughout the year to establish policy and direction for the organization. For the 2010-2011 year, Dee Dee Kay of CIRI Alaska Tourism Corp. will remain the president. Votruba takes over for the duties of vice president, and Steve Zadra of Princess Tours will continue as the secretary. Nicole Bendle of First National Bank Alaska enters her second year as the organization’s treasurer.

The officers are joined on the executive committee by Craig Saunders of Alaska Backcountry Adventure Tours and Karen Harris of Alaska’s Garden Gate Bed and



**Mark Austin,
Palmer Musk Ox Farm**

Breakfast.

Rounding out the board are Ruth Rosewarne of the Alaska Railroad and Dan McDonough of Lifetime Adventures.

Cheryl Metiva and Wes Tegeler are outgoing members of the board and were honored for their service at the Nov. 19 meeting. Metiva will continue to chair the marketing committee for the organization, however.

The Mat-Su CVB Board of Directors will attend a two-day planning retreat on Jan. 13-14 to review the organization’s progress and set future agendas.



**Bethany Buckingham,
Dorothy Page Museum**

Borough mayor hopefuls to address membership at January luncheon

The Mat-Su CVB is hosting a candidate forum for Mat-Su Borough Mayor hopefuls on Jan. 7 at Turkey Red in downtown Palmer.

Candidates will be in attendance, and Mat-Su CVB members will have the opportunity to ask them where they stand on issues concerning the Borough.

“We host a candidate forum for the Assembly races each September, but since this is a special election for the mayor position, we felt we should give our members the opportunity to meet the candidates at this special luncheon,” said Bonnie Quill, Mat-Su CVB executive director.

The luncheon starts at noon and members are encouraged to bring their questions for the candidates. Each candidate will have the opportunity to answer each question posed by the audience during the one-hour forum.

In mid-December, the Mat-Su CVB mailed a survey to each candidate to get their responses to tourism-related issues facing the Borough.

The deadline to complete and return the surveys is the last week of December.

Once the answers are compiled by CVB staff, they will be posted to www.alaskavisit.com. Printed copies of the candidates’ answers will also be available at the luncheon, prior to the candidates taking the stage. An e-bulletin will be sent informing members of the exact address on the site, once they are posted.

To RSVP for the luncheon, please contact Justin Saunders at 746-5032 or e-mail him at Justin@alaskavisit.com.

The Mat-Su CVB hosts monthly luncheons that cover a wide range of tourism topics. Luncheons are the first Friday of each month, September through April, and usually take

place at either Turkey Red in Palmer or Evangelo’s in Wasilla.

There is no cost to attend the luncheons, and food is available for purchase directly through the hosting restaurant. The luncheons are open to the public, not just Mat-Su CVB members.

“Luncheons are a great place to network with other business owners, and learn from each other,” Saunders said. “It’s a good way to build relationships that can lead to increased business in the future.”

**Borough Mayor
forum**
Jan. 7
Noon
**Turkey Red
(Palmer)**

AWARDS

Continued from Page 1

year, the Greater Palmer Chamber of Commerce took home the plaque.

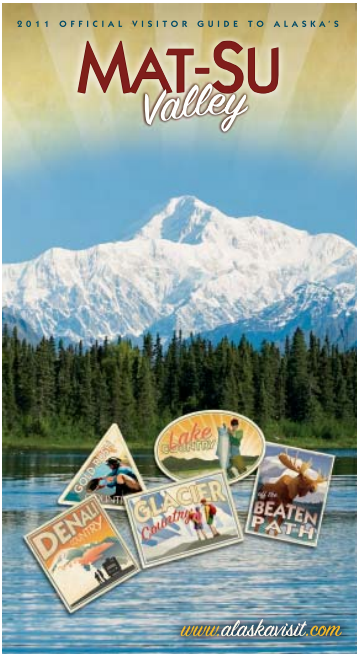
“The chamber has an active tourism committee that has worked to promote tourism in downtown Palmer. With a small budget, they have done big things,” Casey Ressler said when presenting the award.

A fifth award, “It Happens,” was handed out to Karen Harris, owner of Alaska Garden Gate B&B and Cabins. A few years after some zoning issues forced Harris to reconsider the location of her new business. This summer, she again faced a hurdle – the construction of the new Trunk Road, which sliced right through her property. She turned lemons into lemonade, however, by leveraging the construction into a fantastic panoramic view of the Chugach Mountains.

Award winners are nominated by the membership each fall.

An awards committee, comprised of Mat-Su CVB members and board of director members, meets to review the nominations and select the winners, which are annually named during the Voice of the Membership meeting in mid-November. Information about the 2011 awards will be sent to members in the fall newsletter.

2011 Visitor Guides printed, available for members



The 2011 Mat-Su Visitor Guide is available for members now. Featuring a gorgeous picture of Denali on the cover, the guide is filled with fresh photography and content.

Each year, the Mat-Su CVB prints 100,000 guides and distributed them around the globe. In January, 50,000 guides will be shipped directly to high-potential visitors who have requested information about Alaska through the Alaska Travel Industry Association. The other 50,000 guides get used at all Mat-Su CVB marketing programs, distributed to direct requests, and placed around the state at high-traffic areas such as visitor centers and airports.

The 2011 guide features a UV

coating on the cover for the first time. The coating adds luster to the cover, provides durability and makes the colors pop right off the page.

"In the past, it's been cost prohibitive to add the UV coating, but the cost has come way down," marketing manager Casey Ressler said. "The coating is a minor addition but makes the entire guide feel richer."

Palmer graphic artist Chris Whittington Evans, who owns Whittington Evans Communications, designed the guide once again this year.



A pressman at the Cenveo publishing house in Portland, Ore., does a press check on the internal pages of the 2011 Mat-Su CVB Visitor Guide in October.

"Chris has done a great job each year, and the 2011 guide is no exception," Ressler said. "We are very excited about this year's guide."

If members would like additional copies of the 2011 Visitor Guide to distribute at their business, please contact the Mat-Su CVB office at 746-5000.

Co-op marketing available at three Alaska spring shows

The Mat-Su CVB will attend three in-state consumer shows this spring, marketing the Mat-Su Valley to fellow Alaskans.

The first outdoor show of the season is in our backyard. The Mat-Su Outdoorsman Show runs March 25-27 at the Menard Memorial Sports Center in Wasilla. This show is well attended by locals.

The largest show in Alaska takes place March 31-April 3 in the Sullivan Arena in Anchorage. Thousands of visitors flock to the Great Alaska Sportsman Show to gather information, plan their summer getaways and more. This highly successful show has been great in generating interest in the Mat-Su Valley.

The last of the in-state shows is the Fairbanks Outdoors Show, which takes place April 15-17 at the Carlson Center. This show has been successful for the CVB because of the demographics of show

attendees.

"The Fairbanks show tends to have a very visible military attendance, and a lot of them are new to Alaska and are looking for things to do and see while they are stationed here," said Casey Ressler, Mat-Su CVB marketing manager. "The audience there is looking for activities and attractions to visit, and they are genuinely interested in coming to the Valley for recreation."

Mat-Su CVB members can send their brochures to these shows for \$25 (per show). It's a great way to get your business's information to people without having to pay for a booth. Information about co-op marketing at these shows will be announced in February. Prize giveaways are also needed for the shows. Donating a show giveaway is a great way to introduce people to your company, and lead to further business. For more, call Ressler at 746-5037 or casey@alaskavisit.com.

Spring 2011 shows

Mat-Su Outdoors Show
March 25-27
Wasilla

Great Alaska Sportsman Show
March 31-April 3
Anchorage

Fairbanks Outdoors Show
April 15-17

Co-op distribution of member brochures in the CVB booth is available for \$25 per show.

Mat-Su CVB markets to group tour operators at NTA

The Mat-Su CVB met with 25 tour operators during the National Tour Convention in Montreal in November, in an effort to increase group tour travel in the Mat-Su Valley.

Marketing Manager Casey Ressler joined a contingent of Alaska business owners and CVBs at the convention, where Alaska had a strong presence.

“NTA is an important event because you get to meet one-on-one with tour operators who are interested in coming to Alaska, or want to expand their current Alaska packages,” Ressler said. “It’s a great opportunity to showcase our area and tell them why it’s important to spend time in the Mat-Su Valley during their tour offerings.”

NTA uses a sophisticated scheduling model to ensure CVBs meet with operators who are interested in the area, making the 10-minute appointments highly qualified. Following the convention, Ressler followed up with operators who requested more information.

“Even though the appointments are only 10 minutes each, that is just a starting point in building relationships with the operators,” Ressler said. “Staying in contact with these tour operators throughout the year is important. We provide them with a wealth of information, put them in contact



Mat-Su CVB Marketing Manager Casey Ressler meets with a national tour operators during the NTA Convention in Montreal in November. Ressler met with over 25 operators who do business in Alaska, and encouraged them to add Mat-Su stops to their products.

with members they would like to use, and more.”

The tour operators Ressler met range from small mom-and-pop tour operators who bring as little as six visitors a year to Alaska, to large corporations that brings hundreds of visitors to Alaska several times a year.

“It’s an eclectic mix of operators, and they each have different needs,” Ressler said.

Leads from the NTA Convention are available in Excel format, and members can receive them for free, as a membership benefit.

Those interested in receiving them should e-mail casey@alaskavisit.com.

When using the leads, remember that these businesses specialize in group travel, and may have different needs in terms of pricing, logistics and more. Call 746-5037 for more information about the NTA leads.

CVB attending ABA Marketplace, international mission

The Mat-Su CVB will attend the American Bus Association Marketplace in Philadelphia in early January, marketing the Mat-Su Valley to motorcoach tour operators.

The CVB has previously attended the national convention, but did not attend in 2010 due to budget constraints. Marketing Manager Casey Ressler said he’s excited about participating in the 2011 event.

“Building relationships with national tour operators is so important, so getting to sit down and talk to them face to face is instrumental,” Ressler said. “These operators are different than the operators we meet at NTA, so it’s important to have a presence at ABA.”

A computer scheduling program is used, much like the National Tour Association. Ressler has 24 prescheduled appointments with operators, and will be working to pick up more appointments while on the convention floor.

Alaska has a large delegation attending



Marketplace, including the Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau, Fairbanks CVB and Valdez CVB.

“Alaska is a unique destination, and there is a lot of interest from the national operators,” Ressler said.

When Ressler meets with tour operators, both at NTA and ABA, they are interested in new products, particularly for the group tour market.

“It’s important that members keep the CVB up to date about their new product offerings, whether it be a new tour or even some improvements made to their

facility,” Ressler said. “We get asked about new products all the time – from tour operators, from media, from meeting planners.”

If you have information you’d like Ressler to be aware of, including new information about your business, please e-mail him at casey@alaskavisit.com or call 746-5037.

In April, the Mat-Su CVB will participate in the Alaska Travel Industry Association’s Japan mission, where we will meet with tour operators and travel agents who sell Alaska products in Asia. In the past, the CVB has participated in the mission but in 2010 it was cut from the budget.

ATIA holds similar missions in Germany and Australia each year.

“International marketing accounts for about 1 percent of our budget, but yields big returns,” Ressler said. “I think it’s important that we have at least one international marketing program.”

Roadshow brings together journalists, destinations

In October, the Mat-Su CVB attended Alaska Media Roadshow in Santa Barbara, where staff met with leading national travel journalists to pitch them stories about the Mat-Su Valley.

The event is organized each year by Thompson and Company, the Alaska Travel Industry Association's public relations firm, and leads to excellent coverage of Alaska in such publications as USA Today, MSNBC and leading travel magazines.

"It's a great opportunity to meet all the journalists at once, and develop relationships with them. Roadshow generates an amazing amount of positive coverage for our area, and for the state," said Mat-Su CVB Executive Director Bonnie Quill. "By meeting with them on a one-to-one basis, you can pitch stories you know each journalist will be interested in."

The Mat-Su CVB met with 25 writers during the one-day event.

The journalists represented newspapers such as the Los Angeles Time and the Oregonian, and also online writers that are picked up by national news Web sites and travel blogs.



Casey Ressler and Bonnie Quill of the Mat-Su CVB meet with a national travel writer during Alaska Media Roadshow in October. The Mat-Su has already seen press coverage on msnbc.com from a writer met at Roadshow.

Every journalist is screened prior to the event, to make sure they are qualified and will potentially produce stories about Alaska. The journalists and the Alaska representatives then request appointments,

making them even more qualified.

"The journalists were all very interested in Alaska, and excited about the story ideas we presented," said Casey Ressler of the Mat-Su CVB.

Update from the Mat-Su CVB Internet Committee

By JASON VOTRUBA

The Internet Committee recently met to review the response from the launch of the redeveloped alaskavisit.com and forge a plan for the future to increase traffic

In 2008, the Mat-Su CVB hired a contractor to do a comprehensive Web assessment. This assessment identified many issues with the site architecture, searchability, and bounce rates, and was the catalyst for the major redesign project the CVB undertook last spring and summer.

At this point we are happy to announce that the new site has fixed over 90 percent of the identified issues, making it much more streamlined - and more effective for users. One of our goals in the next year is finish solving the remaining issues.

We can now confidently promote the site to in-state and out-of-state visitors now that the site has launched and most of the bugs have been worked out.

In order to pay for the redesign project, along with a new database that feeds the member listings to the site, we had to

Internet Committee meeting

Jan. 10, 10 a.m.

Mat-Su CVB office

Come share your insights

suspend the pay-per-click advertising while we worked on the relaunch, during last fiscal year's budget. In the current budget, we waited until we were happy with the site to launch the pay-per-click campaign (Dec. 1), and we are encouraged to report that in the next five months we will be able to spend our entire PPC budget of \$31,000; this amount is normally our budget for an entire year.

The site is currently having its top Meta tags (search wording on pages) refined and maximized, search engine optimization completed with top search terms recognizing our site, and pay-per-click advertising.

The committee will meet again in early January to evaluate the first results from

the PPC advertising efforts, and to refine our strategy for promotion based off of some current research being completed by Apokrisis (our local web consultant) as to what areas of the website need to have improved content or promotion.

We are also discussing a potential plan to market to mobile device users through opt-in text message marketing, display advertising at Ted Stevens International Airport to the "boots on the ground" visitors on mobile devices, and more.

We are looking forward to the prospect of adding the Google Maps feature to our mobile in the immediate future and to diversifying our marketing of the website. If you would like to be a part of this committee please attend our next meeting on Monday, January 10 at 10 a.m. in the Mat-Su CVB office.

We'd appreciate more voices on the committee.

Jason Votruba is the chair of the Internet Committee for 2010-2011, and vice president of the Mat-Su CVB Board of Directors.

Internet marketing tip

Do you know where your business is located?

By Jason Votruba
Deshka Landing Outdoor Association

Alaska businesses face a considerable challenge of being correctly represented on Google Maps. Due to our various challenging locations, post office addresses and our general lack of Web savviness most of us may feel helpless every time we look at our business location on Google Maps.

I used to cringe every time I saw our business marker located about a half-mile down the road on top of a private house. Recently I finally sat down, rolled up my sleeves and brought snacks to help me get through the painful process of getting the Deshka Landing correctly represented on Google. To my amazement it took me less than two minutes to correct my marker location, and about another 10 minutes updating my business listing! I had drug my feet for the past two years dreading the expected hassle I would have to endure calling, e-mailing, banging my keyboard on my desk, and in the end it was satisfying to know that I conquered the Beast (Google).

You may wonder why you should update your listing on the Google Maps, but a more important question should be why haven't you updated your map and listing on Google? Millions of users utilize Google Maps daily, and with the increasing change in visitor planning habits in Alaska it is important to embrace the technology.

The Mat-Su CVB recently launched an integrated Google Maps feature on your business listing on our improved website. This feature is an awesome tool to help point people to your door. More importantly, as we look toward the future, we are planning to integrate the Google Maps feature in our mobile website which will continue to place your business a few clicks away when potential customers are making their plans with "boots on the ground."

The following is what you need to do to get your business marker moved to the correct location:

Type in your business's full physical address in the Google Maps search bar. When the map comes up verify if the address is located in the correct location on the map.

If the marker is in the correct location you should proceed to your business listing where you can update the information as



well as the map marker location.

If the marker is in the incorrect location you will have to follow the following directions.

Zoom in on the map if necessary. Find where the marker should be located on the map. In the bottom right hand corner click on the "Report a problem." This will bring up a bubble that you can fill out to change the location of the marker. Move the bumping yellow marker to the correct location on the map. Select "Address", and in the problem description provide enough detail for Google to know what the correct address is for the yellow marker that you just moved. If you want to get an e-mail when the problem is resolved you will check the box (you will have to sign-in to Google on the next page). Click "Report problem." You should receive an e-mail in a few days explaining what they did with resolving your problem. Check back a few days later to see if the marker has now been moved.

Sign-in to Google. If you don't have an account already click on the "Create an account now." This will take less than one minute to complete. In the Maps search bar type the name of your business, city and state. Verify that your business link shows up. Is the marker in the correct place, is the address correct, do you want to edit/add to the listing? If you need to make any changes click on the "more" where you can click on the "Edit details." At this point you can click on the highlighted "Is this your business"

to verify the listing and make changes. Phone verification came within about two minutes of my submission for verification.

Keep in mind that I found that the physical address marker and the business listing address marker each need to be moved because they are independent of each other. This is why it is important to verify the physical address, as well as the business listing map.

Once you are finished with updating the maps and other information it will take a few days for the changes to appear on Google. The last step is to log into your account on alaskavisit.com to update your member listing. It is critical that the listing has the same exact physical address spelled out as what is listed in Google to find your marker correctly. If there are any differences (even W. instead of West) Google will not correctly pick up your address and the Google Maps feature at alaskavisit.com will not work. Add pictures and a description to your listing.

If you are in need of assistance with this process you can always contact me or Justin in the Mat-Su CVB office. Justin has sent you your account information for logging on to your business listing on alaskavisit.com. Following the above steps should allow you to experience the feeling of tackling the Beast! Once things are corrected you shouldn't have to touch this issue again and you can be confident that people will be able to find your door instead of ending up finding out where your PO Box is located!

News from the Mat-Su CVB membership

Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats will hold its annual Winter Family Fun Day on Saturday, Jan. 15 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at beautiful Reflections Lake, (Mile 31.5 Glenn Highway at the Knik River Access exit). There will be snowshoes and cross-country skis (donated by REI) and ice skates (donated by the Mat-Su Borough Parks & Rec Dept.), hot cocoa and cookies, warming fires and more. This free event is open to everyone. Come out and experience the magical beauty of this Winter Wonderland right in our own backyard – walk the newly completed, ADA-accessible, 1-mile loop trail, rest on one of the strategically placed benches around the lake, take in the scenic beauty at the new overlook, and enjoy the comfort of new, permanent restroom. Visit www.PalmerHayFlats.org or call 357-8711 for more information.

MJ's Bread and Butter Charters is located on beautiful Prince William Sound in Whittier, surrounded by glaciers and the snow covered peaks of the Chugach Mountain Range. We have charters available for fishing and sightseeing, and transports for hunting and kayak dropoffs. We sell hunting and fishing licenses, and

Whittier Derby Tickets. We sell bait, fishing tackle and souvenirs, and fishing reports are available.

The Alaska SeaLife Center is offering free admission to all Alaska residents every Wednesday through February 2011. All visitors have to do is show some sort of Alaska identification and they will get in for free. Admission to the Behind the Scenes tours and Animal Encounters are available at a 20 percent discount to residents.

Alaska's Northland Inn is a great getaway for the entire family or, better yet, two families that love to travel to snow country together! The snowmachining is fantastic right now and our trails start right at the Inn and hook into other established trails in the Denali and Peters Foothills. The groomed trails are excellent for beginner to expert skiers. Views of Denali can be seen from the trail so bring your camera! See you in snow country! Visit us at www.alaskanorthlandinn.com.

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) announced that **Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) College**

professor, Ping-Tung "PT" Chang, Ph.D., is one of four recipients of the 2010 United States Professor of the Year. Dr. Chang, who's taught at UAA's Mat-Su College for 22 years, received this award at a ceremony held in Washington D.C., on Nov. 18. In 2009, Dr. Chang was named by CASE as Alaska's Professor of the Year; regional awards are given to educators in each state. The 2010 award honors the best of the best in the nation.

Riversong Lodge is featured in a new cookbook called "PACIFIC FEAST: A Cook's Guide to West Coast Foraging and Cuisine," which is in stores now. Riversong Lodge chef Dain McMillin creates a tasty Cream of Fiddlehead Fern Soup and also a Tempura Fried Fiddlehead Ferns with Ponzu Dipping Sauce for the publication. Look for this book in stores near you.

Sheep Mountain Lodge has been race central during the month of December, hosting a grueling bicycle race in the early part of the month and then the Sheep Mountain 150 dog sled race on Dec. 18-19. Four-time defending Iditarod champ Lance Mackey won the Sheep Mountain 150.

Welcome to these new members

Hotel Seward
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(907) 224-8001
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tjhotelseard@gci.net

Copper River Princess Wilderness Lodge

Kenai Princess Wilderness Lodge

Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge

Denali Princess Wilderness Lodge
800 5th Ave Ste. 2600
Seattle, WA 98104
800-426-0500
www.princesslodges.com
amcbride@princesstours.com

Honoring the Stars



Mat-Su CVB members honored industry leaders at the Nov. 19 Stars of the Industry luncheon at Evangelo's. The luncheon was held in conjunction with the Mat-Su CVB annual meeting and educational seminar.

Tourism industry calendar

Dec. 24-Jan. 2	Mat-Su CVB office closed for the holidays
Jan. 7	Mat-Su CVB Membership Luncheon, noon, Turkey Red Mat-Su Borough Mayor Candidate Forum
Jan. 8-11	American Bus Association Marketplace, Philadelphia Casey Ressler will attend
Jan. 10	Mat-Su CVB Internet Committee meeting 10 a.m., Mat-Su CVB office
Jan. 13-14	Mat-Su CVB Board Retreat
Jan. 11-16	Florida RV SuperShow, Tampa, FL Mat-Su CVB will send Visitor Guides
Jan. 22-30	Quartzsite Sports, Vacation and RV Show, Arizona Mat-Su CVB will send Visitor Guides
Feb. 11	February Mat-Su CVB Member Luncheon Topic, location TBA
March 11	March Mat-Su CVB Member Luncheon Topic, location TBA
March 19-20	Adventures in Travel Expo: Los Angeles Mat-Su CVB will attend booth share with ATIA
March 25-27	Mat-Su Outdoorsman Show Mat-Su CVB will have a booth (Member co-op opportunity)
March 31-April 3	Great Alaska Sportsman Show, Anchorage Mat-Su CVB will have a booth (Member co-op opportunity)
April 15-17	Fairbanks Outdoors Show Mat-Su CVB will have a booth (Member co-op opportunity)
April 18-22	ATIA Japan Mission Casey Ressler will attend
April 29	Mat-Su CVB ExTRAVELganza, Evangelo's (Wasilla)

Travel auction date set

Mark your calendars now for the 2011 Mat-Su CVB ExTRAVELganza wine tasting and travel auction.

The 2011 event is scheduled for April 29 at Evangelo's in Wasilla.

Each year, this fund-raiser sells out, so make sure to get your tickets early. Tickets will go on sale around February, and more information will be announced.

The travel auction is the largest fund-raiser of the year for the Mat-Su CVB and is so successful thanks to the generous donations of members and local businesses. Donation forms will be mailed to members after Jan. 1, and they will also be available online at www.alaskavisit.com. There is no donation too small, and we thank everyone in advance for their participation.

If you would be interested in sponsoring the travel auction, please contact Justin Saunders at 746-5032 or justin@alaskavisit.com. Sponsorships start at just \$300 and include event tickets, promotion in print and on radio, and recognition by the emcees the night of the event.

In the past, the CVB has everything from cruises to fly-out fishing packages in the auction.

Other popular items include gift certificates from local merchants, train trips and more.

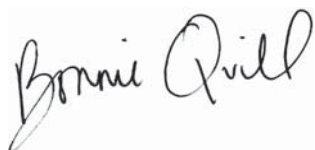
The luggage tag raffle is also returning in 2011 - for \$20 you get a luggage tag for your bags, and an entry into the raffle. Last year, the grand prize in the luggage tag raffle was two round-trip tickets on Alaska Airlines.

The Mat-Su CVB office will be closed from December 24 through January 2 for the holiday season. We will reopen for regular business hours on Monday, January 3



HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE MAT-SU CVB TEAM!

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy new year. We look forward to working with you in 2011!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bonnie Quill".A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Neil Campbell", written in a cursive style.A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Casey Ressler".A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Campbell".

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