

# The Bureau Bulletin

A publication of the Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau

Spring 2011

## Inside this issue

President Dee Dee Kay says we should spread the word that we are all part of the "I" team.

### Page 2

Member listings get an overhaul and a lead generations program gets developed for the Mat-Su CVB Web site, [www.alaskavisit.com](http://www.alaskavisit.com)

### Page 4

Members can get free access to post their locations on the Alaska Film Office's Web site. Find out how this program can work for you.

### Page 6

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## Proposed Visitor Center open house slated for May 11

How do you find the Mat-Su Valley Visitor Information Center? That's easy – all you have to do is go past the center on the Parks Highway, take an off ramp, double back, go through a roundabout, circle behind Mat-Su Regional Medical Center, then take a left.

The point is obvious – the Visitor Center, which assists tourists and provides with information to extend their time spent in the Mat-Su Valley, is simply not accessible, thanks to large-scale development surrounding the current location at Mile 35.5 Parks Hwy.

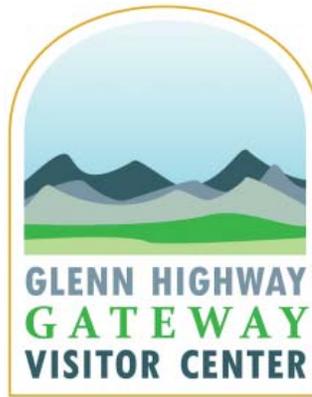
In 2008, the CVB was awarded a

grant by the National Scenic Byways program to start the planning phase

for a new visitor center. That comprehensive plan is now available at [www.matsvalleyvisitorcenter.com](http://www.matsvalleyvisitorcenter.com). We are now entering the next phase in this process – sight selections and building partnerships.

On May 11, from noon to 3 p.m., the public is invited to an open house, at Matanuska Lakes State Recreation Area on the Glenn Highway. The CVB board of directors, along

with other project partners, will lead tours around two of the potential sites



See VIC, Page 3

## Mat-Su CVB celebrates 25 years with member spotlights on May 11

The Mat-Su CVB is celebrating 25 years of marketing the Mat-Su Valley as a premier destination, and to celebrate the silver anniversary, members are invited to attend the annual Open House on May 11.

At the open house, members will have the opportunity to showcase their businesses to other members, meet the Visitor Information Center staff and network. Refreshments will be served, including VIC Manager Lorraine Jallen's nearly world-famous root beer floats.

Bonnie Quill, executive director of the Mat-Su CVB, said she's proud of how far



the CVB has come in 25 years.

"We have grown tremendously, both

See 25 YEARS, Page 3

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## From the president's desk

# Spread the word about our role on the 'I' team

"What has tourism done for me?" That is a question that many of us are asking in our everyday life. We are in a wonderful industry and many of us, including myself, are not very good about remembering it truly is an "INDUSTRY." If someone asks what I do, I say I am in tourism but seldom do I use the "I" word at the end of that statement.

I was having coffee with a friend recently who has a tourism business but spends much of their time speaking with those who don't. I was asking some advice about how to strengthen our message. Their number one piece of advice was to use the "I" word at the end of our sentences.

INDUSTRY is what decision makers need to hear – tourism is all about making people smile and showing others the great place in which we live but INDUSTRY is all about growth and jobs and property taxes and giving back to the community.

We all do this – we all pay property taxes, and we all hire Alaskans. We all pay for energy for our businesses, we all pay a mortgage or rent (as do our employees), we all wash our clothes and buy groceries and gas (as do our employees), we take our animals to the vet and we support our community. How many gift certificates for worthy causes have you donated this year? How many worthy causes have you supported with your time this year?

A few years ago the Mat-Su Assembly had a study done on what tourism brings to the Valley – at that time there were 1,600 sleeping rooms in the valley (which all collect a bed tax of 5 percent), there were 3,100 people that we directly employed by tourism business. As the Mat-Su was the largest growing community in the state between 2000 and 2010, I'm sure those numbers have

all gone up.

We as an INDUSTRY in the Mat-Su need to get better about telling our story – the economic impact of tourism in the Valley (and in the state) is far reaching.

Not only do many of us collect a bed tax, but we pay property tax, some of us pay medical/dental/vision for our staff, most of our staff lives in the Valley and all of us give back.

Giving back is part of being part of a community but I guarantee you there will be more tourism products featured than any other industry at most fund-raisers.

We are very good at being community involved but we also need to make sure that we are politically involved as well. We need to make sure that our political representatives understand that tourism is an INDUSTRY, and as an industry we need their

support locally and state wide.

We are a strong, vibrant, growing INDUSTRY in Alaska. So the next time someone asks what do you do, instead of saying I have a bed and breakfast or a fishing business or a tour guide service, let's all start out by saying – I am in the tourism INDUSTRY!

I also challenge you to state that you pay property taxes, that you support employees that all spend dollars in the community and that you give back at least to the community in donations and time. In fact, it would be great to be able to have a percentage of just how much you give back out of your revenue each year!

Let's become a little more "I" focused and see what happens!

*Dee Dee Kay (dkay@ciri.com) is the president of the Board of Directors for the Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau. She works at CIRI Alaska Tourism.*



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

## VIC

Continued from Page 1

identified in the plan. Refreshments will be served, and a presentation detailing the plan and the process will take place just after noon.

A new visitor center would have several impacts on the community. The vision for a new center focus on the "gateway" aspect – it would serve as an initial stop for visitors coming from Anchorage along the Glenn Highway. Through ease of access and location, we can attract more visitors to the center. That means we can get visitors more information about the area, including lodging opportunities, activities and more. The end result is visitors will stay longer, spend more and make a bigger contribution to the economy of the Mat-Su Borough.

Another aspect of a new visitor center is the effect on the community. The long-range plans for the center include it being a community center that could be utilized for gatherings, meetings and more. The Morris Thompson Cultural Center in Fairbanks is a perfect example of this concept in action – and the results for the Fairbanks community have been tremendous. The center has even hosted weddings in three years it has been in operation.

A new visitor center makes sense for the Valley not only because it would help strengthen the tourism industry's contribution to the economy, it also makes sense because it boosts the infrastructure locally, which helps enhance the destination as a whole. It's a cycle that only helps local business - tourism infrastructure development increases visitation numbers, higher visitation numbers bring in more money to the community, creating more demand for further infrastructure development.

We invite everyone to visit the project's Web site, [www.matsulleyvisitorcenter.com](http://www.matsulleyvisitorcenter.com), and to plan on attending the open house on May 11. For more information about this project, interested people can contact Bonnie Quill, the Mat-Su CVB executive director, at 746-5000.

## Alaska State Parks announce daily operation in Hatcher Pass

The Alaska State Parks have announced that Independence Mine State Historical Park Visitor Center will be open daily this summer, beginning June 11

The Visitor Center had limited openings last season, leaving a void at one of the Valley's most visited tourist attractions. Mat-Su CVB Executive Director Bonnie Quill said it's welcome news for the summer season.

"This is great news because Hatcher Pass and Independence Mine have a lot of visitation in the summer, and it will help the tourism industry as a whole in the Mat-Su," Quill said.

Matt Weaver is the new park specialist, and he said he's excited about having the park up and running all summer.

"We're looking forward to seeing everyone at the park this summer, and

we're going to be having guided tours offered twice a day, every day," Weaver said.

The historical area opens on June 11, the 113th anniversary of the formation of the Willow Creek Mining District.

Self-guided tours are available any time, and guided tours will be offered at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. daily, with park staff. Tour tickets can be purchased at the Visitor Center, and cost \$6 for adults and \$3 for children.

Commercial operators need to obtain a commercial use permit in advance by calling (907) 260-4882.

Weaver said getting the center open daily was helped by the Friends of Alaska State Parks – Mat-Su organization. For more information about the Independence Mine State Historical Park, interested people can contact Weaver at 745-8907.

## 25 years: Mat-Su CVB Open House

Continued from Page 1

as a destination and as a CVB," Quill said. "There were humble beginnings for sure. Cindy Bettine and a group of dedicated volunteers got the CVB up and running, and for a long time, handled the day-to-day operations as a working board.

"Without the determination of that original team, there's no telling where the CVB would be today," Quill continued. "We have several members – including Cindy's business, ABC Travel Time – who have been with us since the very start. We're grateful to those members, and the hundreds of other members who have joined our efforts since then."

The open house begins at 5 p.m., and members can sign up for a three-minute spotlight about their business when they arrive.

"In addition to celebrating 25 years, it's also a great opportunity for our members to network with other members, and generate referrals that lead to more business," said Justin Saunders, the Mat-Su CVB membership manager.

Members are also encouraged to bring a 3-inch stack of their current rack cards for distribution at the Visitor Information Center this summer.

For more information about the open house event, interested members can call Saunders at 746-5032 or e-mail [Justin@alaskavisit.com](mailto:Justin@alaskavisit.com).

### Travel auction tickets available this week

Don't delay - get your tickets to the Mat-Su CVB ExTRAVELganza on Friday, April 29 by calling 746-5000. Tickets are going fast!

# Improvements continue on CVB Web site

## Listings enhancements, lead generation system coming soon

Last year, the Mat-Su CVB launched its new Web site at [www.alaskavisit.com](http://www.alaskavisit.com), but that was certainly not the end of the development of the site, as the organization aims to give members more exposure than ever before.

Three important projects are near completion that will give members more opportunities to be found online, have a better online presence and have access to high-potential leads.

“You can’t just launch a site and then sit back and watch it. You have to constantly evolve online,” said Casey Ressler, Mat-Su CVB marketing and communications manager. “We’re constantly looking to improve our online efforts.”

A new lead generation program will be complete in the next few weeks, and this gives member a powerful new tool to attract business. When a visitor to the CVB site goes to the “request a visitor guide” page, they will be asked about their interests. Should they opt-in to receive information from our members, an e-mail will automatically be generated and sent to the appropriate members, based on their categories.

“This gives our members instant access to high-potential leads, and only to those visitors who have indicated they have specific interests,” Ressler said. “These leads are very qualified because visitors are indicating exactly what they are interested in, and we’ll be relaying that information to our members.”

Look for more information in the near future about specifics of this program. There will be no cost for participation in the lead generation program.

“We’re committed to giving our members as many benefits as possible to help them attract more visitors,” Ressler said.

The member listings section of the Web site will also undergo a redesign in the next two weeks, giving members a bolder presence.

“After the site launched, we’ve taken feedback from members and are implementing a few design changes so that our member listings stand out

### FEATURED LISTING

#### 1 Amazing Accommodations Alaska

950 S. Trunk Road  
Palmer, Alaska 99645  
Phone: (907) 746-2333

[Visit Website](#) | [Send Email](#)



Enjoy affordable luxury! Jacuzzis, fireplaces, King/Queens, private entrances, kitchens. Outstanding mountain views, bountiful country-style breakfasts. 25% off 6+ nights - your home base for activities within a couple hours' drive. [more](#)

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#### 2 Amazing Accommodations Alaska

950 S. Trunk Road  
Palmer, Alaska 99645  
Phone: (907) 746-2333

[Visit Website](#) | [Send Email](#)



Enjoy affordable luxury! Jacuzzis, fireplaces, King/Queens, private entrances, kitchens. Outstanding mountain views, bountiful country-style breakfasts. 25% off 6+ nights - your home base for activities within a couple hours' drive. [more](#)

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**The member listings are undergoing a major overhaul, giving them a fresher look and more functionality than ever before. Note: these are only design mark-up examples, not actual member listings. Some of the improvements include larger and easier to read fonts, shaded listings, the ability for site users to e-mail information or post to their social media accounts, and better overall design.**

more,” Ressler said. “Bolder fonts, larger fonts, larger photos and the ability to share information on social networks are a few of the things to look forward to.”

The Internet Committee identified the listings overhaul as an important project because the listings provide a direct link from consumers to the Mat-Su CVB members.

Finally, the site’s search function is undergoing a bit of a change, although visitors won’t notice a difference in terms of design.

After the site launched, a few

anomalies have been noted in how the search function works, and the Internet Committee, along with staff, has been working to correct them to ensure site visitors have complete access to all pertinent information.

“We’re trying to get as much information to visitors as possible and this project corrects a few problems we’ve encountered along the way,” Ressler said. “It’s nothing that a site visitor would notice, but it was something that needed to be taken care of to make sure our member businesses were as visible as possible on the site.”

## Japan sales mission rescheduled for September

The Alaska Travel Industry Association has cancelled the Japan Sales Mission, scheduled for mid-April, due to the devastation following the earthquake and tsunami in March.

The Mat-Su CVB was scheduled to participate in the sales mission for the first time in two years.

“Right now, our thoughts are with our Japanese partners as they deal with such a devastating natural disaster,” said Casey Ressler, the Mat-Su CVB marketing manager. “This is an important sales mission for ATIA and for us, but right now there are more important things for the people of Japan.”

The Japan mission is one of two international programs the Mat-Su CVB participates in. In May, Bonnie Quill will

*“Right now, our thoughts are with our Japanese partners as they deal with such a devastating natural disaster. This is an important sales mission for ATIA and for us, but right now there are more important things for the people of Japan.”*

- Casey Ressler,  
Mat-Su CVB

travel to San Francisco for the Travel Industry Association’s annual Pow Wow event, which is the largest gathering of international tour operators in the country.

“International travelers stay longer and spend more per person per day than other visitors, so it’s important to work to attract those visitors,” Quill

said. “International marketing programs account for less than one percent of the CVB budget, but international visitors account for far more than one percent of spending in the Mat-Su Valley. It’s a great return on investment.”

ATIA annually conducts sales missions in Australia, Asia and Europe, and while the Mat-Su CVB did not send a representative on those sales missions, the Mat-Su Valley does receive visitors as a result.

“ATIA represents the entire state, and works with operators abroad,” Ressler said. “We follow up with many operators who were first contacted through the efforts of ATIA sales missions.”

The Japan mission will take place in September.

## Highway Neighbors Conference held in Mat-Su

On March 19-20, the Mat-Su CVB hosted the annual Highway Neighbors conference in Wasilla and Palmer, bringing together 25 representatives from small businesses and community leaders to talk about topics impacting the tourism industry along the road system in Alaska.

The conference is held each spring, and returned to the Mat-Su Valley for the first time in more than eight years.

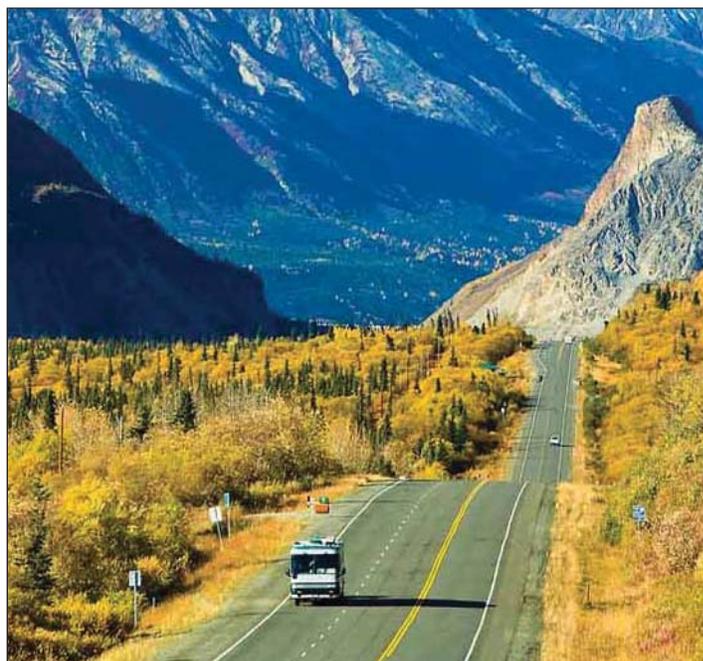
“It was very successful, and several Mat-Su CVB members took advantage of the educational workshops, and the opportunity to network with other tourism leaders around the state,” said Mat-Su CVB Marketing and Communications Manager Casey Ressler.

Following an opening reception at Evangelo’s, conference attendees participated in a full day of workshops and presentations.

Topics included the scenic byway program; how to take advantage of the Alaska Film Office; cultural programming that impacts local businesses; winter marketing tips; state tourism projections; and community roundtables. A closing dinner was held at Turkey Red in downtown Palmer.

“I’ve attended the Highway Neighbors conference three years, and each time, I take away valuable information from other attendees,” Ressler said. “Not only was this year’s program very informative, it gave us a chance to show off some of the great things we have in the Valley. Some of the attendees manage visitor centers around the state, so it’s important they know what we have to offer here, so they can inform their visitors as well.”

Next year’s conference will be held in early April in Tok. For information about the Highway Neighbors conference, interested people can contact Ressler at 746-5037 or casey@



The Highway Neighbors Conference focuses on issues facing communities and businesses located along the road system in Alaska.

alaskavisit.com.

“If you have the opportunity to participate next year, I’d highly encourage members to do so,” Ressler said. “The cost is minimal, and it’s a great way to meet others within the industry and learn about what is going on around the state.”

## Alaska Film Office opportunities abound for members

Film and television producers are discovering Alaska: our amazing locations are the initial draw but once they're here, the warm welcome and diverse range of supportive businesses and individuals "close the deal."

Over the past few years, Alaska's film and television incentive program has accelerated interest in Alaska and a steady stream of new production is coming. That means productions are looking for businesses to provide them products and services, and they're looking for new and different locations to shoot.

That's where you come in. The Alaska Film office has an online database of crew, talent and service providers as well as an online location library. You can help us make sure that those resources are comprehensive tools by including your business in either the support service listings or in the location library – or better yet, both! And best of all, as a state agency, the Alaska Film Office provides these services at no charge – either to you or to producers.

Here's how to get a no charge support service listing for your business: Go to the Film Office Web site ([www.film.alaska.gov](http://www.film.alaska.gov)) and click on "Find People and Services" on the left hand menu – once you're on the Crew, Support Service page click on the button in the middle, that will take you to our database.

Just below the three search buttons you'll see a "Register Now!" link in bold – click there and fill out the online form. Step by step instructions are also available on the "Creating Listings" page: (<http://www.film.alaska.gov/reelscout/index.html>). Film and crews need all sorts of help (including things to do in their free time), so don't assume they don't need what your business offers – you've got nothing to lose, just get a listing!

The process is very similar to list your business (or home) as a potential location for filming. At [www.film.alaska.gov](http://www.film.alaska.gov), click on "Find Alaska Locations" to go to the Locations Library page. Near the bottom you'll see this link: "Visit our location submission page" – simply click there and fill out the online form.



You will need to provide digital photos of the location - you can include up to 10 photos per location and we recommend as many as possible. Don't worry about getting professional shots, snapshots are fine, producers just want a feel for what the location will look like on film.

Get shots all around the property – sides, back door, kitchen etc. – remember, movies happen everywhere (how many times has James Bond chased the bad guy through the kitchen?). Any and all images are welcome on the site, and are used by potential filmmakers.

One cautionary note about submitting information to the online database for filmmakers – if having a dozen people (or possibly many more for a feature film) taking over your home or business for several days isn't going to work – don't list it as a location. However – the hassle could be well worth it ... you could see your location or business on the big screen in Hollywood.

Got questions? Visit the Alaska Film Office Web site ([www.film.alaska.gov](http://www.film.alaska.gov)) or give them a call, they're happy to help Alaskans take advantage of this new business opportunity.

*Dave Worrell is the director of the Alaska Film Office.*

The Alaska Film Office is marketing Alaska as a filmmaking destination by attending industry events, advertising in industry journals and making contact with key people. Members can submit their information to the Alaska Film Office database for free. Filmmakers use the database to select crew, find locations and more.

## Member ‘roundtables’ kick off in Talkeetna

In an effort to reach out to members, the Mat-Su CVB has begun a series of “Member Roundtables” in various communities.

The first roundtable was held in Talkeetna at Sheldon Air Service, and more than 20 Talkeetna-area members turned out to talk with CVB staff and board about a variety of topics affecting their business.

“These roundtable discussions are great because we don’t have an agenda, and members can talk freely about what they’d like to see, how we can work with our members better, and get some hands-on lessons on how to better use our Web site to their advantage,” said Mat-Su CVB Membership Manager Justin Saunders. “It’s a way to connect with the staff, and the board, and talk about whatever is on a member’s mind.”

The idea for the roundtable discussion was born at the Mat-Su CVB Board of Directors’ retreat in January. The board voted unanimously to start the program this spring, and more roundtable discussion are being planned for other communities.

“A few times a year, instead of having a member luncheon that has a set agenda and limited time for member interaction, we’ll be going to a community and giving the members a chance to come together and talk about topics that affect us all in the tourism industry,” Saunders said. “Whether it be recommendations for the CVB, or just networking with other members, they are an opportunity to build relationships within



Mat-Su CVB members interact at the first “Member Roundtable” held at Sheldon Air Service in Talkeetna in March. The roundtable concept will be expanded to other communities in the next few months.

the industry.”

For information about upcoming member roundtable discussions, interested members can contact Saunders at 746-5032 or [Justin@alaskavisit.com](mailto:Justin@alaskavisit.com).

## Valley Values campaign continues through summer

The summer campaign of the Valley Values program debuted last week, and members are encouraged to take advantage of this free opportunity to reach Alaskans traveling within the state this year.

The program has a dedicated Web page, [www.alaskavisit.com/valleyvalues](http://www.alaskavisit.com/valleyvalues) that is filled with information for Alaskans, including trail conditions, tips about the Valley and most importantly, member specials for Alaskans and their visiting friends and relatives.

The Mat-Su CVB markets the Valley Values program in print in Valdez, Anchorage, Fairbanks and in military publications, online through targeted ads on Yahoo.com, on television with KTUU Channel 2 and on radio around Southcentral Alaska, including in the Mat-Su Valley on 100.9 Country Legends.

Members can e-mail their specials to [casey@alaskavisit.com](mailto:casey@alaskavisit.com) for inclusion on the site, and there is no charge to participate.

“It’s a way to connect with Alaskans who are going to be out and about this summer,” said Casey Ressler, marketing and communications manager for the Mat-Su CVB. “Member specials don’t have to be deep discounts, but rather an incentive for Alaskans to stop by your business and take advantage of what we have here in the Valley.”

With travelers - both Alaskans and out-of-state visitors - actively searching for savings, the Valley Values program



makes sense to continue, Ressler said.

Members who have specials for all travelers – not just Alaskans – can add coupons to their Web listings, and again, there is no cost. For information on how to add a coupon to your listing, interested members can contact Justin Saunders at 746-5032.

# ExTRAVELganza tickets remain for April 29

The Mat-Su CVB's annual wine tasting and travel auction ExTRAVELganza is Friday, April 29 at Evangelo's in Wasilla.

This is the largest fund-raiser of the year for the CVB, and is annually a fun and exciting evening.

Tickets are still available and cost \$35. Tables of eight are available for \$265. Tickets include a wine tasting from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., light hors d'oeuvres, jazz music and the chance to bid on a wide variety of items.

"We're just nailing down the final details, but it looks like we're all set for another successful travel auction," said Justin Saunders, the Mat-Su CVB Membership Manager.

Items donated include Alaska getaway packages, railroad tickets, boat cruises and even a seven-day cruise for two on either the Mexican Riviera or the Caribbean.

"We couldn't put this together without the generosity of our donors," Saunders said. "They all contribute to the success of the auction."

Those who can't make the auction can still be a big winner. Once again this year, MTA is sponsoring the Luggage Tag Raffle, in which you buy a luggage tag for \$20, and are entered into a raffle for two round-trip tickets anywhere Alaska Airlines flies.

"Mexico, Hawaii or even Nome - \$20 is a great price for a chance to win two round-trip tickets on Alaska Airlines," Saunders said.

Saunders also said the event wouldn't be possible without the help from corporate sponsors. This year's sponsors of the event include MTA, All I Saw Cookware, Alaska Backcountry Adventure Tours, Alaska Railroad, The UPS Store (Palmer), Alaska Airlines, Brown Jug, Princess Cruises and Tours, First National Bank Alaska, Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union, Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman and Royal Celebrity Tours.

For tickets to the auction or to purchase one of the luggage tag raffle tickets, interested people can call the Mat-Su CVB office at 746-5000.

*Thanks to the travel auction sponsors!*



**The UPS Store™**  
Key Bank Plaza - Palmer  
1150 S. Colony Way,  
Ste. 3



  
**PRINCESS CRUISES & TOURS**  
*escape completely®*



**First National Bank**  
**A L A S K A**

MEMBER FDIC



## In-state efforts boosted at outdoor shows

The Mat-Su CVB distributed more than 1,500 visitor guides to Alaskans during three weekends of Alaska outdoor shows, generating interest in visiting the Valley.

The CVB participated in the Mat-Su Outdoorsman Show, the Great Alaska Sportsman Show and the Fairbanks Outdoors Show the last week of March and the first two weeks of April.

"The shows are important because we reach a prime target market – Alaskans," said Casey Ressler, Mat-Su CVB marketing and communications manager.

At all three shows, Mat-Su CVB members donated show giveaways for the booth, which help attract showgoers to the booth. Special thanks to Alaska Backcountry Adventure Tours, K2 Aviation and Rust's Flying Service for donating these show giveaways.

For more information about in-state marketing at consumer shows, interested people can call Ressler at 746-5037 or e-mail him at [casey@alaskavisit.com](mailto:casey@alaskavisit.com).

## News from other members

In addition to multi day lodging and guided backpacking/lodge combinations, **Caribou Lodge** is now offering fly-in guided day hiking for those with limited time, as well as guided fly out fishing. Super location just southeast of Denali, going on 19 years of living in the Bush, small and personal, no crowds. For more information call Mike or Pam at 733-2163 or e-mail [info@cariboulodgealaska.com](mailto:info@cariboulodgealaska.com).

Fish for May king salmon with **Fishtale River Guides** on Mat-Su's most productive salmon streams for just \$100 in May. Depending upon river conditions, fishing trips are available starting May 9. Salmon catches increase as the month progresses. Morning and afternoon trips available. Inquire soon for best availability of dates and more specific information. Call (907) 746-2199 or visit [www.fish4salmon.com](http://www.fish4salmon.com).

The **Museum of Alaska Transportation & Industry** will be opening May 1 for the 2011 summer season. We have new exhibits and events planned all summer long. We would like to

announce that we are a Blue Star Museum, which entitles all active military and their families to free admission. Supporting our troops and giving our past a future. Check out [www.museumofalaska.org](http://www.museumofalaska.org) to get more information on this hidden treasure in the Mat-Su Valley, located at 3800 W. Museum Drive at Mile 47 Parks Hwy. Call (907) 376-1211.

**Denali Southside River Guides** are offering Mat-Su CVB members a discount of 50 percent on a select tour this summer - the Denali Raft & Kayak Full Day Excursion. The trip begins on Byers Lake, the largest lake in Denali State Park where you will glide on single or tandem Sit-On-Top kayaks. Paddle over pools of spawning salmon and look for the bears and eagles that come to feed on them. We then head to the river to embark on a scenic rafting float trip. Trip duration: 8-9 hours. \$99 per person (includes lunch and shuttle, splash gear and dry bags for cameras). Available June 6 or 23, July 19 or 23, Aug. 9, 11, 24, 25. For groups of 8 or more alternative dates may be available. Call Shelis or Craig Jorgensen at 733-7238 for reservations.

## Internet Committee chairperson shares tips and tricks

Have you ever thought about why you aren't getting more visits to your Web site? Even if you aren't Web savvy there are few things you can do. If you don't feel comfortable with the Internet ask your designer (it will cost you) or ask a family member for some help. Your new customers are increasingly using the Internet at home or on mobile devices to make their plans or find directions.

At the very least you should make sure your business listing is correct on Bing, Google and Yahoo search engines. The easiest way to find your business listing is to go to the "Maps," then type your business name. Hopefully your business comes up so that you can view what your customers are seeing. If your listing needs to be spiced up you will have to log in to each search site and verify yourself as the business owner to make updates. Each search engine has different instructions and ways to

change your listings for free. There are also some options for upgrading.

It is very important to have your physical address listed in your business listing. If you are listed with a PO Box, chances are people won't be lodging overnight in your PO Box. Customers want to be able to find your location with ease, and they want to know how close they are to where else they may be traveling. You also need to verify that your marker on the map is located correctly. If the marker is not in the correct spot you will need to report an error to the site to let them know that a change needs to be made. It took Google a few weeks to move the marker on the map for Deshka Landing.

Another way to make sure you optimize your potential results is to make sure your listing on [www.alaskavisit.com](http://www.alaskavisit.com) is up to date. The Mat-Su CVB has invested a lot of time

and money into the updated site. The business listings have seen to be the biggest struggle for us to get involvement and buy-in from the members. Staff has spent countless hours trying to improve these. It takes member involvement to update your information, add photos, and confirm what is now listed. For assistance please call 746-5032.

We are very happy to announce that in the next few weeks there will be an updated look to the business listings and their functionality will be increased. The most exciting announcement is the addition of the "automated leads generation program." Leads will be automatically sent to you when a person requests further information through our site. More information will be sent when the program becomes "live."

*Jason Votruba is the chair of the Internet Committee for the Mat-Su CVB.*

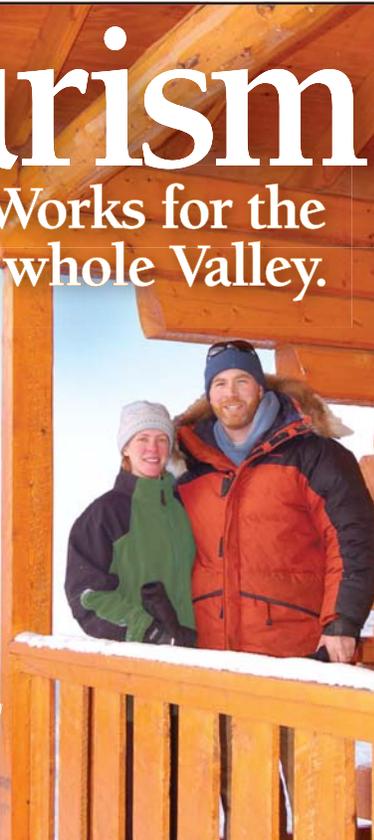
# Tourism

Works for the  
whole Valley.

*"There's been plenty of talk about the state of the tourism industry. I can tell you that thanks to working with groups, hosting events and catering to individual highway travelers, we actually managed to expand during this time. Tourism is open for business in the Valley. Of course, the work that the Mat-Su CVB does to promote our area is important to the success."*

YAHOO!

ZACK & ANJANETTE STEER  
SHEEP MOUNTAIN LODGE  
MP 113.5 GLENN HWY.



Celebrating 25 years of Mat-Su CVB success

MAT-SU CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU • [www.alaskavisit.com](http://www.alaskavisit.com)

These two ads appear locally in print as part of the Mat-Su CVB's local awareness efforts

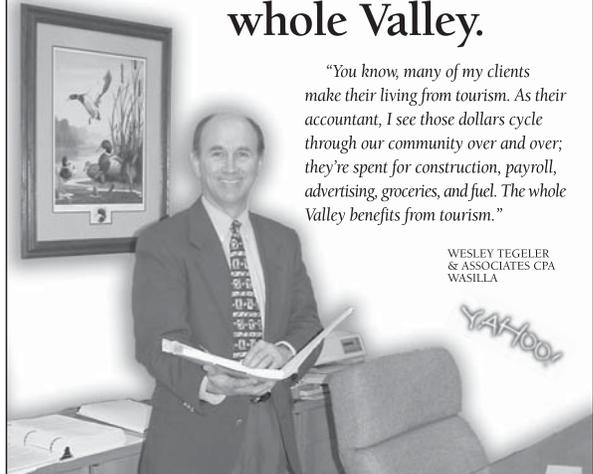
# Tourism

Works for the  
whole Valley.

*"You know, many of my clients make their living from tourism. As their accountant, I see those dollars cycle through our community over and over; they're spent for construction, payroll, advertising, groceries, and fuel. The whole Valley benefits from tourism."*

WESLEY TEGELER  
& ASSOCIATES CPA  
WASILLA

YAHOO!



Celebrating 25 years of Mat-Su CVB success

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YAHOO!  
**Mat-Su**

Mat-Su CVB

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