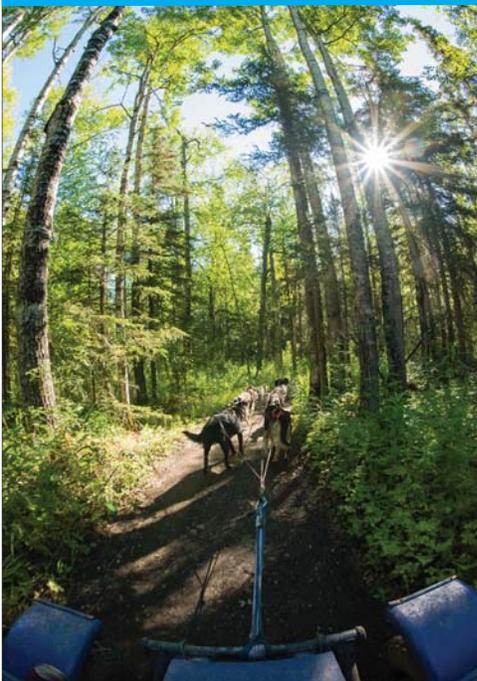


Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau

Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report



“Celebrating 30 years of growing tourism”



Message from the President

It has been my pleasure to serve as the president of the board of directors this past year, the Mat-Su CVB's 30th anniversary. This year, the Mat-Su CVB continued its mission to "Grow Tourism" and the results are evident – an increase in bed tax revenue generated in the Mat-Su Borough, new tourism businesses opening in our communities and new opportunities for success created.



Tourism is a leading contributor to our local economy, and the Mat-Su CVB is instrumental in marketing our area as a premier destination for visitors. The visitor industry plays a big role in economic development in not only the Mat-Su Borough, but the entire state of Alaska. With the state facing a fiscal crisis that is being felt in every community, having a strong destination marketing campaign is vitally important to the future success of our industry both here and statewide. The Mat-Su CVB's marketing plan is comprehensive, efficient and targeted to give us our best return on investment.

One of the biggest accomplishments of FY2016 was the launch of our redesigned web site, www.alaskavisit.com. The web site is the largest marketing investment, allowing us to reach visitors from around the globe. The new site is responsively designed and takes advantage of the ever-increasing mobile traffic. The web site gives members more tools than ever before to promote their businesses, including the ability to purchase digital display advertising on the site for the first time.

The board and the staff are committed to implementing a marketing plan that continues to "Grow Tourism" and cultivates a vibrant tourism industry that has a positive economic impact to our businesses and our communities. Your continued support is appreciated as we celebrate our 30th anniversary together!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cheryl Metiva, President
Extreme Fun Center

Karen Harris
Alaska Garden Gate Bed & Breakfast

Zack Steer, Vice President
A2Z Consult

Roberta Caenepeel
Explore Tours

Mark Austin, Secretary
Musk Ox Farm

Israel Mahay
Mahay's Jetboat Adventures

Travis Taylor, Treasurer
Premier Alaska Tours

Cole Ouellette
Rust's Flying Service and K2 Aviation

Craig Saunders,
Iditarod Trailside Lodging

Mark Flenor,
Sheep Mountain Lodge

Membership Report

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

92 PERCENT RETENTION RATE IS IMPORTANT

The Mat-Su CVB enjoyed a 92 percent membership retention rate in FY16, while welcoming 28 new members. The total membership for FY16 was 255. When measured against industry averages, the Mat-Su CVB's membership retention rate is consistently well above average. Members utilized several cooperative marketing programs such as brochure distribution, participation in FAM trips and much more. A strong and active membership is important to the success of the Mat-Su CVB.

NETWORKING AMONG MEMBERS

PARTNERSHIPS LEAD TO OPPORTUNITIES

When members work together and develop partnerships, everyone benefits. Mat-Su CVB networking events help foster these positive relationships among our members. Membership luncheons in the fall and winter focused on state

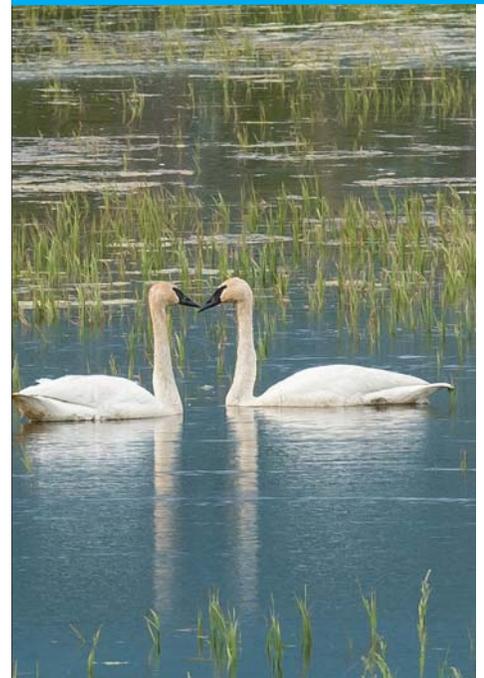
tourism funding, the cruise industry, Alaska State Parks and more. The annual meeting in November featured a guest speaker from Travel Oregon talking about how video storytelling can help grow a destination. In May, we kicked off the summer season with a barbecue where members learned about what other businesses are doing in the Mat-Su Valley, and how they can partner with one another to grow their businesses as well.



EMPOWERING MEMBERS

COOPERATIVE MARKETING MAKES SENSE

Giving members the tools to succeed in marketing is important to the Mat-Su CVB. In FY16, we offered low-cost cooperative marketing opportunities through brochure distribution at three outdoor shows, in Wasilla, Anchorage and Fairbanks. For the first time, the Mat-Su CVB participated in the Summer Showcase event, where we offered brochure distribution to participating members. Also for the first time, members were given the opportunity to purchase display ads on the all-new www.alaskavisit.com, including mobile and desktop ads that reach tens of thousands of users each year. Low-cost advertising opportunities is one of many benefits of membership with the Mat-Su CVB.





Reaching our Visitors

WWW.ALASKAVISIT.COM

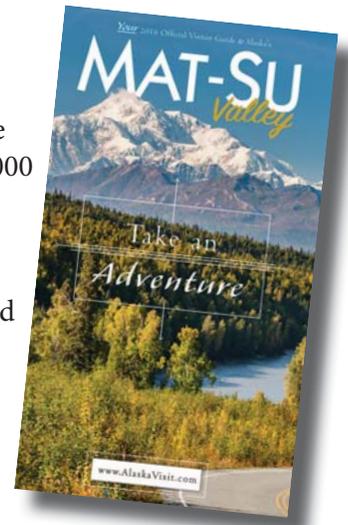
ALL-NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED IN FY2016

The Mat-Su CVB was pleased to unveil an all-new web site in May at the end of the fiscal year, which takes advantage of responsive design to deliver the most engaging content to visitors on desktop, mobile and tablet platforms. The new site also gives members more opportunities for exposure than ever before, with larger photos, long narratives and amenities. The web site is the largest marketing investment, and the most important tool in reaching potential visitors. In FY16, the desktop and mobile versions of the site saw 72,000 visitors, with more than 175,000 page views. The new web site will only help grow those numbers.

VISITOR GUIDE

THIS SUCCESSFUL TOOL REACHES MORE THAN 100,000 POTENTIAL VISITORS

Using a “Take an Adventure” theme, the 2016 Visitor Guide incorporated new photography throughout the planner, including the cover shot of Denali. The 100,000 copies were distributed through direct requests, to tour operators and travel agents, throughout Alaska in visitor centers and other high-traffic locations, at in-state shows and to high-potential leads as identified through state of Alaska marketing efforts. Members can take advantage of low-cost display advertising to market their businesses in the official guide.



GETTING SOCIAL

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS REACH THOUSANDS EVERY DAY

The Mat-Su CVB reached more than 100,000 potential visitors in FY2016 through social media. Through the more than 11,200 likes on Facebook to audiences on YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and our blog, visually appealing content is delivered to inspire visitors to chose the Mat-Su Valley when they travel to Alaska. The Mat-Su CVB also invested in paid advertising on Facebook during the “planning season” in December, which helped raise awareness of the Mat-Su area, as well as drive traffic to our web site.



Travel Trade and International

TRAVEL TRADE IS BIG BUSINESS

GROUP TOURS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

Many visitors come to Alaska on a packaged tour. That's why Mat-Su CVB targets this sector by attending two national conventions, American Bus Association Marketplace and National Tour Association Travel Exchange. More than 40 prescheduled meetings take place with tour operators there. The Mat-Su CVB also participated in 8 familiarization trips and assisted more than 100 tour operators and travel agents with information about the Mat-Su Valley.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

VISITORS PROVIDE STRONG RETURN ON INVESTMENT

International visitors stay longer and spend more per day, research shows. While a small investment in the overall Mat-Su CVB budget, international marketing is

important. In FY16, we continued our participation in ITB Berlin, the world's largest international travel trade show. We also continued our participation in the Icelandair Mid-Atlantic Seminar, targeting tour operators from Europe. We also continued our long-standing partnership with the Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council and the Valdez CVB at International Pow Wow, meeting with tour operators and travel media.



MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS

TRAVEL JOURNALISTS PROVIDE EXCELLENT COVERAGE

The travel media is an important part of marketing the Mat-Su Valley. In FY16, the Mat-Su CVB provided assistance and/or hosted more than 15 travel writers and photographers, resulting in coverage in publications such as Travel Weekly,

Northwest Travel Magazine, Country Living's online publication, Alaska Airlines magazine, in-state publications and more. The Mat-Su CVB attended Alaska Media Road Show to generate interest among travel journalists.





Targeting Alaskans

ALASKANS AND VFRs ARE A MAJOR MARKET

REACHING THEM THROUGH PRINT, ONLINE AND OVER THE AIR

Alaskans, and their visiting friends and relatives, are a top marketing priority for the Mat-Su CVB. Using the award-winning “Put the U in Mat-Su” display ads, we highlighted outdoor activities that are popular with Alaskans and their visitors, such as hiking in Hatcher Pass, flightseeing in Denali, ziplining and the Nancy Lakes system.

In addition to printed advertising, the Mat-Su CVB utilized television and radio to target Alaskans. The Mat-Su CVB was also represented at four in-state travel shows - the Mat-Su Outdoorsman Show, the Great Alaska Sportsman Show, the Fairbanks Outdoors Show and for the first time ever, the Summer Showcase, promoting the Valley as a premier outdoor recreation destination. Member brochure distribution was offered at several of these shows, along with prize package giveaways.



A MULTI-MEDIA APPROACH

DESTINATION AWARENESS IS IMPORTANT

“Yahoo, Mat-Su!” - you can hear it in your head now. So can Alaskans around the state, and the jingle has proven extremely effective in creating destination awareness. The Mat-Su CVB uses the jingle in television and radio advertisements to keep the Valley top of mind to local Alaskans. Television advertising appeared on KTUU Channel 2 during a 6-week run, a major investment. On radio, the jingle played on two radio stations heard in Southcentral Alaska and North Slope markets throughout the year. Research has shown this jingle has created consumer awareness for the Mat-Su Valley that is well above industry standards.

PROMOTING EVENTS IN THE WINTER

COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS HELP ATTRACT VISITORS

Community events held during the winter help attract visitors to the Mat-Su Valley from other Alaska locations. The Mat-Su CVB helped market three such events in FY16 – Colony Christmas in Palmer, Talkeetna Winterfest and the Willow Winter Carnival. Through print and radio advertising, we generated awareness of the events to help increase overnight stays and visitation during December, January and February.

Financial Position

Statement of Financial Position (as of June 30, 2016)

Assets

Current assets:	
Cash	\$21,291
Memberships and grants receivable	\$62,059
Inventory	\$1,167
Prepaid expenses	<u>\$27,953</u>
Total current assets	\$112,470
Property and Equipment	
Furniture and equipment	\$70,167
Accumulated depreciation	<u>(\$22,621)</u>
Net property and equipment	<u>\$47,546</u>
Total assets	\$160,016

Liabilities and net assets

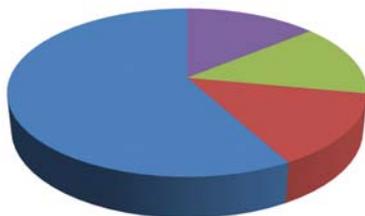
Current liabilities:	
Accounts payable	\$31,378
Payroll liabilities	\$19,184
Deferred revenue	<u>\$24,756</u>
Total current liabilities	\$75,318
Unrestricted net assets	<u>\$84,698</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	\$160,016

Per board policy, Mat-Su CVB's financial statements, accounting practices and reporting methods are audited every third year. The FY16 financial statements have not been audited.

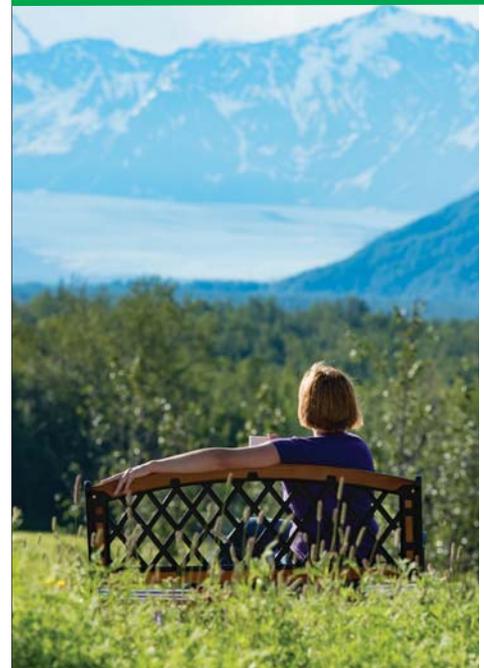
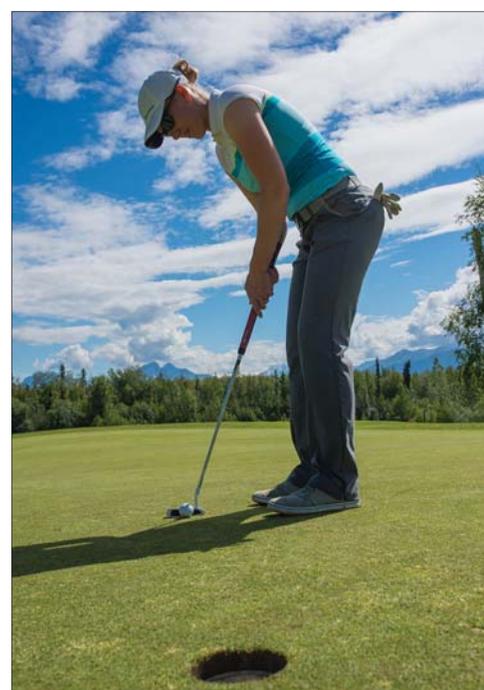
FY16 Revenue Detail - \$958,572

Bed Tax Grant Revenue	\$775,559
Membership Dues	\$42,700
Advertising Sales & Marketing Programs	\$64,630
Special Events & Fund-raisers	\$24,628
Gift Shop	\$3,801
Interest	\$48
Other	\$2,350
In-Kind Contributions	<u>\$44,856</u>
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$958,572

FY16 Expenses by Division



Marketing	\$485,329	54%
Administration	\$154,247	17%
Membership	\$141,709	16%
VIC/Operations	\$119,188	13%





Mat-Su CVB board members and staff celebrate the ground breaking on the original Mat-Su Visitor Information Center in 1988.

Celebrating the Past, Envisioning the Future

Founding board members

Cindy Bettine
 John Stein
 Val Moroney
 Wayne Burkhart
 William Barnes Jr.
 Helga Larson
 Inge Turner
 Ernie Brannon
 Jim Okenek

Past Board of Directors Presidents

Cindy Bettine 1986-1987
 Wayne Burkhart 1987-1989
 John McKee 1989-1990
 Rose Jenne 1990-1992
 Jim Nelson 1992-1993
 Lynne Woods 1993-1996
 Bob King 1996-1997
 Jim Lot Turner 1997
 Doreen Toller 1997-1999

Steve Mahay 2000-2003
 Doreen Toller 2003-2004
 Sandra White 2005
 Dan McDonough 2006-2007
 Karen Harris 2008-2009
 Dee Dee Kay 2010-2012
 Craig Saunders 2012-2014
 Cheryl Metiva 2014-

Charter members still active

ABC Travel Time
 Alaska Airlines
 City of Wasilla
 Gray Line of Alaska
 Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce
 K2 Aviation
 Mat-Su Regional Medical Center
 Matanuska Electric Association
 Matanuska Telephone Association
 Museum of Alaska Transportation &
 Industry
 Musk Ox Farm

