

**Aspen Chamber Resort Association  
Marketing Advisory Committee Meeting  
Minutes – July 20, 2010  
The Gant**

**Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:10 am.

**In attendance:** Donnie Lee, Maureen Poschman, Tess Weaver, Eileen Tucker, Helen Klanderud, Rob Ittner, Susan Hamley, Cassandra Foister, Justin Todd, Richard Stettner, Kristen Drake, Laura Smith, Mitch Osur

**Staffed by:** Julia Theisen, Toni O’Neill-Case, Greg Fitzsimmons.

Call to order/Introductions

Update on Colorado State Tourism: Donnie Lee

Donnie Lee provided an update on the CTO budget in light of the upcoming lodging tax election in Aspen. Donnie reminded us that the CTO’s Tourism budget was cut from 20M to 15M for 2010, and will again be suspect to further reductions for the 2011 budget. Dialog has started regarding a statewide tax to fund tourism promotion so that it is not susceptible to being reduced or removed on an annual basis from the general fund. No specifics have been determined and there is great risk if the proposition is pushed forward and fails, but the conversation has begun.

Additionally, Lee discussed some legislation that will be on the state ballot this election year and if passed, these measures could have a negative effect not only to Coloradans, but tax funded initiatives like the state tourism budget. This legislation includes Proposition 101 and amendments 60 & 61. Amendment 60 would cut billions of dollars from local school districts, Amendment 61 would forbid local and state governments in Colorado from taking out debt in any form and Prop 101 would end FASTER (which funds road & bridge repairs) and reduce taxes that fund public schools. If these initiatives pass, CTO’s budget could be reduced. Lee expressed that on the surface, who does not want lower taxes, but if passed these initiatives would be devastating to funding for roads, schools and other public services.

**Summer Marketing Update:** Julia Theisen

Staffing changes at ACRA: Annie Dockter and JoAnna Eisler have resigned from ACRA. New hires are Greg Fitzsimmons - Communications & Social Media Coordinator, Toni Case - Marketing Coordinator and Eliza Mauk - Sales & Marketing Coordinator.

Presented key highlights of the summer:

- Successful launch of Outside in Aspen event in June. The event received good exposure including full page ads in Outside Magazine, 6K hits to the webpage and national media pickup. The event has great potential for growth and we will work to increase sponsors and visitors next year to grow into a significant destination event. Also working with the City of Aspen to partner on a competitive event (marathon or triathlon) the same weekend to grow participation.
- PRSA conference – great pr exposure and reported \$93K in hotel revenue in May 2010
- Occupancy is up 4.3% from June 2009
- Hits to homepage up 28% from May and June 2009
- Dorothy Frommer is going on Colorado Welcome Center service calls to keep Aspen top of mind with the Centers.

November Election: ACRA in conjunction with the ALA is moving forward with Lodging Tax increase for the November Ballot. Created a Lodging Tax webpage on ACRA’s site - [www.aspenchamber.org/lodgingtax](http://www.aspenchamber.org/lodgingtax), the page will contain FAQ’s, comparison documents on Tax and Marketing Budgets in other destinations.

A ballot number will be assigned to the lodging tax question in early September.

Committee discussed the items that need to be addressed by the FAQ's (why now & why we need it, why we need to market "Aspen", who benefits, when/how the money will be spent, what role will ACRA play, locals must know they are not paying the tax, positive effect on properties). Also discussed points that are relevant to the tax i.e maintaining or increasing jobs by growing tourism, money will go to group sales, special events and PR. Consumers don't look at hotel tax rates when making a decision about where they are traveling, Aspen is low or comparable to other resorts. We also discussed the importance of a good grass-roots campaign supporting the tax.

2010 Summer Research: currently working on our Summer Visitor Research, the results of this will be used in our 2011 Marketing Planning. During the course of the summer, 2000 in-person surveys will be conducted and the participants will be invited to answer additional questions via an online survey. We have also placed take-away cards at our visitor centers and with our lodging partners directing visitors/guests to take our online survey and we are incenting them to participate with an entry into a sweepstakes for hotel stay and dinner.

Marketing overview: presented our summer campaign print materials and revised online banner ads. ACRA is going to do a late summer / fall campaign targeting the Front Range. Viewed the creative samples for the fall campaign.

We are re-launching the mobi-site which should be live in two weeks.

Online: We have launched 3 international "Welcome pages" on the ACRA website, French, German and Spanish. Exploring making social media more prominent on the homepage of the website by bringing the Facebook and Twitter icons above the fold as well as updating our video player and video content on the site.

#### **P.R. Update: Maureen Poschman & Tess Weaver**

- Reviewed some clips have come out from the PRSA event. Event garnered good media buzz. Brought in 10 local media people from Denver that weekend
- Outside In Aspen received positive reaction from media
- Pick-up in July issue of Sunset Magazine
- Partnered with Food & Wine's PR team in inviting media to the event. Next year's goal is to have media stay longer to experience Aspen.
- Working on promoting Fall and newer events to NYT, Conde Nast, Lucky and online pitching
- Promo has taken over Twitter account for the Aspen Chamber and our followers have grown to 875.
- Reviewed Twitter Calendar, tweeting 8 – 10 times a day about various events and news in Aspen

**Meeting Adjourned: 10:20 a.m.**