

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PRESIDENT AND STAFF REPORTS
October 26, 2010 – THE ASPEN SQUARE**

Membership: The ACRA Business Expo will be held on November 16, 2010 from 12:30 p.m. – 6 p.m. at the Hotel Jerome. Information to participate and sponsor the expo was sent by mail. The membership department sent out reminder and final membership renewal invoices. The ability to create detailed reports through the CRM has allowed membership to identify past due amounts beyond 90 days and total dollar amounts outstanding per invoice cycle, which is valuable information when sending out invoice letters to the ACRA membership. The next ski pass deadline is Friday, Nov. 12th. The Business After Hours event hosted by the Hotel Aspen was well attended. Thanks to everyone who was able to come. December 13th will be the deadline for members to update their member information for the 2011 Business Directory which should be completed and ready for distribution in February 2011.

Visitor Services: The Guest Pavilion reduced hours for the shoulder season to 11a.m. – 5p.m. 7 days a week. Hours will increase again during the winter season. Visitor numbers showed a slight decrease for September from 8605 in 2009 to 8375 in 2010. Numbers were definitely higher on the weekends, with Labor Day weekend seeing the largest numbers with 1594 contacts over the three day weekend, and the end of the month with visitors coming to view the fall colors.

The Wheeler Opera House has changed their hours from 11a.m. – 7p.m. for the winter season. The visitor center desk will be open from 11a.m. – 6p.m. Numbers for September were down from 1264 in 2009 to 952 in 2010. The staff continues to provide tours of the Wheeler that have been extremely popular. The John Denver Tribute once again took place at the beginning of October which kept Wheeler and at other locations around town busy.

The Rio Grande visitor center will continue to operate Monday thru Friday from 8a.m. to 5p.m. and will be open on holidays when the Wheeler is closed. Visitor numbers saw a decline for the month of September with 3031 in 2009 to 2634 in 2010. Most visitors are coming in from Vail and the Summit County area for the day to see fall colors. Many visitors continue to come in with lodging requests. Those guests are directed to Stay Aspen Snowmass where most seem to be successful with finding lodging that works for them and their budget. During the third week of September the Rio Grande visitor center assisted the Membership department with the “Super Early” ski pass deadline in handing out vouchers as well as renewing chamber memberships and signing up new members. More calls are coming in for winter information and dates for special events, including our annual Wintersköl Celebration.

Sales and Marketing: Ref 2A Campaign – Debbie and Julia presented Ref 2A show on Grass Roots Television, at Aspen Rotary and are speaking to individual businesses in the downtown core. Presented marketing results and 2011 plan to Marketing Advisory Committee on September 14th, Aspen Lodging Association on October 6th and will be presenting to Aspen City Council on Monday, November 15th for final approval on budget for 2011. Currently they are working on detailed media plan and strategy for next year.

Sales – Sarah is preparing for group travel to Texas in November. She will be hosting the MPI (Meeting Professionals International) Houston Chapter meeting on November 17th and attending a Smart Meetings Magazine tradeshow in Dallas. Snowmass Tourism is partnering on both events as well as targeted sales calls while in Texas.

Operations: We are working with the City of Aspen to obtain proposals for a new furnace unit. The current unit is at the end of its life and needs replacement. All areas of the ACRA will be entering budget season including the chamber, which is switching over to a calendar year. First drafts of budgets will be completed in the next few weeks.

Airport Guest Service: The Ambassadors have been patient and kind with callers who are confused and frustrated by the “localizer issue” at the airport. We’ve been working with the Admin office and SkyWest to assist in getting the correct information out to our locals who are in vacation mode. It’s been excellent practice in advance of our “winter weather” airport issues! All month long the arriving passengers have been anxious to talk about the fall colors they’ve seen from the plane. Many of these folks are first time visitors to the area.

FACES of Aspen: Quite a few consumer complaints have been successfully addressed in the last month. People are pleased to have a professional way to connect with someone at the Chamber to get their grievances resolved to their satisfaction. One situation that is occurring more frequently is the challenge of VRBO’s (Vacation Rentals by Owners). This seems to be a growing aspect of the lodging industry, and part of the explanation and suggestion is to refer these folks to Stay Aspen Snowmass. Valley locals are presenting themselves as “Property Management Companies” when in fact they are merely trying to make a few bucks on a property they own.

Special Events: The Wintersköl committee would like to announce “A Cut Above the Rest” as the 2011 winning slogan. This year’s slogan reflects Wintersköl’s 60th “Diamond” Anniversary, January 13-16, 2011. The slogan was submitted by **Kim Allen** and will appear on the official 2011 Wintersköl button, in print, and in broadcast promotional materials. A full schedule of events will be available in November. For more information & Wintersköl lodging specials, please visit www.aspenchamber.org.

We are pleased to announce the addition of Tami Solondz as our Special Events Coordinator. Tami has worked with the special events department for several years during the FOOD & WINE Classic working as the volunteer director. She will be working full time November – January, assisting with all aspects of the production of Wintersköl.