

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

Membership: We were busy with programming during the last month. The Holiday Party in December was hosted by the Limelight Lodge and was attended by over 400 guests. The Aspen Interfaith Association Holiday Gift Basket Program was a huge success. A couple hundred toys were collected along with over \$1000 in cash donations. For the second year in a row the Wintersköl Luncheon was held at the St. Regis Hotel. Over 200 guests attended the luncheon. Thanks to all the board members who helped out over the holiday season. The ACRA presented our business of the year awards to:

Non-profit of the year: Aspen Historical Society
Emerging Business of the Year: Aspen Brewing Company
Business of the Year: Limelight Lodge

Our 2010 Aspen Business Directory is in the process of being updated and prepared for printing. The format will be similar to last years. We hope to have the Business Directory in our member's hands by the end of February. We have scheduled a Workers' Comp Safety Committee Meeting for Tuesday, February 9th.

We started working on the annual ski pass compliance audit on Jan. 11, 2010. 10% of the membership who received discounted ski passes will receive a certified letter asking for proof of compliance. The audit should be wrapped up by the end of the February.

Visitor Services: In 2009 the entire Guest Service Program had over 204,485 individual contacts (12 months of data), up from the 2008 year end total of 171,591. In June, July and August visitor counts were up at the Guest Pavilion with 38,165 visitor contacts. Over the holidays there was a boost in visitor contacts for 2009 with 6,718 compared to 4,772 in 2008 for December. The visitor center staff has also been helpful in assisting the membership department with projects as well as the special events department with 12 Days of Aspen and Wintersköl. We are now getting ready for X-Games.

FACES of Aspen/Snowmass: In December Dorothy gave a Guest Service seminar to Gant employees and also two seminars at the Limelight Lodge in conjunction with the Historical Society's Aspen 101 at the Wheeler. KAJX interviewed ACRA for two stories and both were aired – one highlighting the Airport Ambassador program and the other on the new "Ask Me . . . I Live Here" button. The button represents the next stage of the Guest Service program – an outreach to our long time valley locals to encourage them to reach out to our visitors. A newspaper ad will run twice a week in both papers featuring the button and its message. This ad replaces the one that focused on the tokens.

Airport Guest Services: We had an on-going issue this year at the airport which Dave Ulane, Assistant Manager helped to correct. Departing passengers were not arriving with enough time to check in and go through security and therefore missing their flights. Dave prepared a flyer addressing this issue. Dorothy and her staff personally delivered copies of the flyer to 22 Aspen lodges, High Mt. Taxi and both Limo companies explaining the situation so they could follow through with their guests. We've already seen an improvement. It was devastating to see our visitors miss their flights and have that be the last memory of their vacation.

Operations: In early December a water pipe burst in one of the restrooms due to the extreme cold weather in the Rio Grande Office. It has been repaired and is back in working order. We welcomed new part-time employee, Toni Case, to the marketing team as our Marketing Coordinator. We are glad to have her on board.

This and That: Debbie is attending the Western Association of Chamber Executives annual conference on Feb. 3-5 in Burlingame, CA. The conference theme this year is "Connecting you to Success". Over 400 of my peers will meet for professional development, networking, and hear from an impressive lineup of speakers. ACRA will also be receiving an award for our 2009 redesign of our WEBSITE. Debbie will be a speaker at the website breakout session. In early February ACRA will be meeting with ALA to determine how our organizations will move forward with a ballot question to increase marketing funds. More information will be provided next month. Julia and Debbie are still working with the City on the Mining For Ideas – the 200k economic stimulus monies for new events. The City granted ACRA \$15,000 for Winter Fest (thank you!)

Sales and Marketing: The Aspen/Snowmass vacation planner is being produced in partnership with Aspen Sojourner Magazine. The production of the guide has begun and will be in-market at the end of March. An RFP for creative design work for the Destination Marketing program closed January 22nd. We have received many entries which will be reviewed by a committee of staff and MAC members in February. DM is partnering with Winter X Games 14 for the second annual Retail Scavenger Hunt in downtown Aspen. The Scavenger Hunt runs from Wednesday, January 27th through Saturday, January 30th at 5p.m. To participate in the Scavenger Hunt, an individual needs to pick up a Hunt Card at one of the 13 retail locations participating or at one of the ACRA visitor centers. One must visit each of the 13 retail locations to pick up featured item and then bring all items along to the Wheeler Opera House Visitor Center to enter to win two Special Guest Passes for Sunday, January 31st X Games event. The DM team will be at the SIA show on January 28th and 29th. DM has been in discussion with Outside Magazine for potential event in early June.

Aspen Groups hosted a luncheon in Dallas earlier this month. While in Texas, JoAnna attended the Annual Education Conference hosted by the Professional Convention Management Association. When not traveling this month, JoAnna is focusing on collecting pillow fees and commissions from our lodging partners.

Special Events: Thank you to everyone for your help and support of Wintersköl 2010. This year's event was an EPIC success and we really couldn't have done it with out the assistance of so many people in the community.

Highlights of the Aspen Chamber's Wintersköl events included:

Soupsköl – Restaurants participation increased to 27 this year compared to 19 in 2009. As part of our effort to go green, we utilized all compostable spoons and soup cups. New this year, we combined the judge's scores with the popular vote to select this year's winner. Soups were judged on taste, texture, aroma, and appearance. This year's decision went down to the wire, with Garnish receiving 386 votes, Noodles by Kenichi closely behind with 366 votes and Merry Go Round placing third with 350 votes. Congratulations to the best soup in town!

Canine Fashion Show & the K9 Kings – Featuring ACRA's mascot, Fido the fashion dog, over 40 participants and the K9 Kings ultimate flying dog show!

2010 Canine Fashion Show Winners:

Most Adorable – Keith Bulicz with Chedi

Best Theme – Lisa Ruggieri with Tima

Best Multiple – Mona Klinger with Cha-Cha, Whoopee and Jenny (as Tater Tots)

Best Celebrity Look-Alike – Karen Lynch with Olaf (as Johnny Depp)

Funniest – Blake Skilken with Roxie

Best In Show – Melinda Goldrich and Stacey Gluck with Dolce, BenZai, Zigi & Lulu (as "Secrets of Aspen")

Canine Fashion Show Judges

1. Richard Geiske, aka Scooper Man
2. Bland Nesbitt, Aspen Animal Shelter
3. JD Platt, K9 Kings

EPIC WinterFest – New this year the ACRA hosted EPIC WinterFest, an all day festival and pre-fireworks celebration, on Saturday downtown Aspen. Thanks to the support of the City and our many community sponsors the day was filled with lots of free, fun, family activities. We were very pleased with the events and look forward to building on them in the future.

The Food & Wine Magazine Classic in Aspen is scheduled for June 18 – 20, 2010. Staff from New York will be in Aspen February 3-5 for our next set of planning meetings. Tickets for this year's event are currently on sale at Stay Aspen Snowmass.