

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PRESIDENT AND STAFF REPORTS
August 2015**

Special Events

Special Events loves August! It's a great time for us to reset, enjoy summertime and a little R&R. September is right around the corner which will bring along a busy fall planning period for our winter events – 12 Days of Aspen & Wintersköl!

The Events Department will also be looking for a new team member in the fall. After almost a decade with ACRA, Julie Hardman – Senior Events Manager – will be leaving to pursue her passion for health & fitness as the Programs Manager for the Aspen Club. This is no goodbye; she plans to work alongside ACRA and continue to help Aspen produce the very best events for our guests and locals alike! If you know anyone with event experience and would be an exceptional addition to the ACRA Events Team, please have them contact Jennifer Carney at jalbright@aspenchamber.org.

Membership

The Super Early ski pass deadline is September 11th, great response from current and new members on the spouse pass, we are definitely seeing an increase in new businesses inquiring about joining. As of 8/17/2015 there are 51 new members compared to 40 at the same time last year. Membership staff will be at the gondola ticket office on September 9th – 11th, from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. processing memberships and distributing vouchers. Erik has been working with Mitch Osur from the parking department and Beth Mobilian on a proposal to reduce restaurant employees from monopolizing key parking spaces in the core for the entire evening. The city of Aspen has agreed to run a 4 week test starting 8/24, where restaurant employees will be allowed to park in the Rio Grande Parking Garage for free from 2:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m., providing employees with a safe, convenient parking alternative. The chamber will distribute the parking cards and track the distribution similar to the ski pass program. At the end of the four weeks Mitch, Beth and ACRA staff will gather feedback to determine if the pilot program was a success and something that should be continued. Erik attended CCLC meeting on 8/5, the agenda focused on cleaning up the newspaper distribution racks within the core and installing a more uniform rack system. The city of Aspen is currently researching what is available.

Visitor Centers

What a summer we have had! All three locations in town were very busy the past couple of months, visitor numbers have slowed a little bit the past week but not much with families needing to get back home for school starting. Our Junior Ambassador program again this year was very successful in capturing visitors at our Rio Grande location. We were happy again this year to have a booth at the vendor village for the USA Pro Challenge to help assist with visitor information around town and with the bike race. As a reminder the Wheeler Opera House will be closing after Mountain Summit concludes on August 30th for the remodel of the box office and the upstairs lobby. They will be closed until completion the beginning of December. We have started getting many calls from visitors asking when they should visit for the fall colors, we always tell them they are pretty safe the end of September.

Airport Guest Services

We've had a busy and exciting summer season at ASE welcoming locals, visitors "Celebrity" Institute speakers and Music Festival and Snowmass musicians. As usual, the flight schedule will lighten up in September. If you are departing on **September 1st** just know that our tri-annual "Disaster Drill" will be taking place. The airport will operate normally and there will be signs indicating that we are having a drill and the outgoing and incoming flights will not be affected. This is treated very seriously and every valley police, sheriff and fire station are involved.

In mid-September I'll attend the Governor's Conference in Crested Butte to stay connected with the managers of the 12 Colorado State Welcome Centers located on our borders. Each year, over a million people drive into Colorado. After they ask about the area they're in, the great majority of them ask for directions to Aspen.

Destination Marketing/Sales

Recent PR coverage includes Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, Lonely Planet, Conde Naste Traveler "Best small cities in America", Wallpaper and many other outlets. We have hosted media from Mexico, UK and Australia and travel trade from UK, Australia and Germany. The fall campaign is currently underway with The Denver Post and we are adding restaurant deals to promote in conjunction with the Buy 2, Get 3 hotel promotion. Julia represented Aspen at the Colorado Tourism Office sales mission in Los Angeles presenting to over 75 travel trade for Japanese and Chinese visitation to Colorado. The group sales team traveled to San Francisco and Silicon Valley to represent Aspen at the All Things Meetings and MPI World Education Congress tradeshow. The team also reported into the hotel stakeholders at their bi-annual meeting to review 2015 results to date and begin 2016 planning.

Operations

Administration staff has reviewed the health benefits package for the renewal year and came to the decision to renew the current plan and review again next year. We looked into a new payroll service, TriNet which offered competitive health benefit plans and will be a consideration for the coming year. Review of the retirement plan is underway. Gathering of more information and plan comparisons could lead to a new or improved package for employees.

Save the date

Super Early Deadline season ski passes

Friday September 11th, 2015

Community Blend

Thursday September 10th,

2:30 p.m. upload Program 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Sundeck on Aspen Mountain

Tickets \$50 ACRA members/\$65 non-members

Call 925-1940 to RSVP