



THE BUREAU BEAT

A Monthly E-Newsletter From The Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau

JANUARY 2009

Greetings

Happy New Year!

Can you feel it? Baseball fever is rising as fans gear up for what could be another record-breaking season. Never before has Arizona's spring training season crossed into three months, consisted of 14 teams and involved the hosting of the World Baseball Classic. The Cactus League additions of the Los Angeles Dodgers in Glendale and the Cleveland Indians in Goodyear give a boost to next season with 245 games planned over a five-week season that starts February 25 and extends into early April. Last weekend, in a very cold Chicago, Cubbie fans were kicking off their Cubs Convention and earlier this month fans made their annual pilgrimage to the Hohokam Stadium box office where the Cubs sold more than 48% of the available tickets for home games!

We want our tourism partners to know that this coming baseball season could be the economic stimulus package we've long been waiting for when it comes to potential visitors to our state. Year over year, the Cactus League sets attendance records with the latest record of more than 1.3 million fans from the 2008 season. And, the Mesa Historical Museum kicked off their permanent exhibition, *Play Ball! The Cactus League Experience* giving fans another reason to come to Mesa for baseball! Hall of Famer Gaylord Perry was on hand to commemorate the exhibit's opening. The collection and interactive displays are sure to lure in fans from all Cactus League teams when they flock to the Valley in a few months. If you haven't had a chance to visit, make sure you plan to this spring!

Here at the bureau, we've been actively promoting our Spring Training packages for months now which feature an assortment of Mesa properties and our call volume is high. We know why baseball fans flock to Mesa each year – you simply can't find a more enticing package anywhere else. We hope you feel the same. So, let's get ready to welcome baseball fans young and old as we show off our great weather, world-renowned golf courses, countless recreational activities, award-winning properties, dining, shopping, entertainment and so much more.

Sincerely,

Robert Brinton, President & CEO
Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau

BUREAU NEWS:

WELCOME ASU INTERNS!

This spring semester there will be two new faces joining the team at the Mesa CVB. Megan Kelly joins us from the Walter Cronkite School of Telecommunications & Journalism and will be assisting our Communications team. Megan previously interned at the East Valley Tribune and is

anxious to get back to covering Mesa. During her tenure, she will be helping work on several key public relations projects including the development of a 13-page electronic press kit, revamping the bureau's online media center and assisting with on-going media relations efforts. Allison Bartholomew will be assisting the Sales team and comes to us from the Tourism Development & Management School. Allison will play an integral role in helping the sales team prepare for missions, and assist with the bureau's marketing and social media efforts. Both students are seniors at ASU and will earn college credit for their service at the bureau.

MARKETING NEWS:

Each month, hundreds of thousands of readers across the country learn about Mesa through the bureau's advertising efforts. The following publications will feature advertising placements in February. The combined circulation of these placements is 5,962,830 readers. This list includes both advertising and advertorial sections featuring Mesa. To learn more about cooperative marketing efforts with the bureau, contact Milt Fort at Milt@visitmesa.com.

- § AAA Midwest
- § Arizona Drive Guide
- § Canadian Traveller
- § Courier - Student Planner
- § Frommers Budget Travel
- § Group Tour Magazine
- § National Geographic Traveler
- § Phoenix Magazine
- § Sports Events Magazine
- § Student Group Tour
- § Tucson Visitors Guide
- § US Airways

COMMUNICATIONS NEWS:

PR TEAM HOSTS EVENTS IN CHI-TOWN IN ADVANCE OF SPRING TRAINING

Michelle Streeter held a media reception at the Park Hyatt this month with partners the Greater Phoenix CVB and Scottsdale CVB. A dozen media were in attendance at this casual cocktail and conversation event which included promotion of spring training. In addition, the bureau participated in the Greater Phoenix CVBs "Phoenix Shines" travel trade and media event at Rosewood Grill in Rosemont, IL. This event included several area hoteliers and DMOs who showcased their tourism product to travel writers, editors and travel agents. For more information on how to participate in media missions and upcoming events, contact Michelle Streeter, Director of Public Relations at 480-682-3638 or Michelle@visitmesa.com.

NATIONAL WRITERS HEAD TO MESA FOR PRESS TOUR

The Mesa CVB will host seven national writers this week as part of the Greater Phoenix CVB's "Myths, Legends and Southwest Stories" media tour. In addition to experiencing Mesa's lightrail station and a driving tour of downtown, guests will be hosted at Superstition Mountain Museum and head out to the Apache Trail to see the attractions. Media on the tour include editors from Metro Weekly, Teen Scene Magazine, About.com, Luxury Travel Review, and Global Trekkers magazine; as well as freelance travel media.

PRESS RELEASES

The following press releases were distributed in January:

- **HALL OF FAMER GAYLORD PERRY TO SIGN AUTOGRAPHS FOR DONATION**
Cactus League Exhibition Opens Jan. 10 At Mesa Historical Museum
- **CACTUS LEAGUE PRIMED FOR RECORD-BREAKING SEASON IN 2009**
Extended Schedule, New Teams and World Baseball Classic In Store for Spring

SALES NEWS:**SAVE THE DATE: BUREAU HOSTS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP, TIPS & TOOLS FOR SUCCESS IN 2009**

The Mesa Convention and Visitors Bureau is hosting "Be Successful in 2009" for Mesa area hoteliers. The event, held Jan. 29 from 9:00 – Noon at the Mesa CVB, will cover a variety of issues concerning Mesa's tourism industry including Airport Travelers, Working with Tour Operators, Spring Training Packaging, Tradeshow Incentives, Sports Sponsorships and more. The bureau staff will also offer ways to help align efforts with the bureau's on-going program of work. Refreshments will be provided. For more information and to RSVP, contact Director of Sales James Tevault at 480-682-3635 or James@visitmesa.com.

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN:**Leisure Sales: AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION VALUABLE FORUM FOR LEISURE MARKET:**

Tourism Sales Manager Donna Cluckey just returned from the American Bus Association Marketplace held in Charlotte, NC last week. The event was one of the best leisure shows attended by the bureau's sales staff. The event produced numerous appointments, professional educational opportunities and networking with industry peers. The ABA Marketplace is recognized as the motorcoach and group travel industry's leading business event. For more information, contact Leisure Sales Manager Donna Cluckey at 480-682-3646 or Donna@visitmesa.com.

Sports Sales & Marketing: TWO-DAY SITE VISIT COULD RESULT IN ANOTHER KEY EVENT FOR MESA:

Aaron Muth, Group Sales Manager, hosted the Western Athletic Conference to a two-day site visit featuring Mesa hotels, attractions and sporting facilities. They are considering Mesa as a host for the 2010, 2011 and 2012 post-season baseball championship tournament. The WAC includes seven collegiate teams including notable defending NCAA champs, Fresno State Bulldogs. The conference continues to evolve and offer some of the nation's best intercollegiate competition. For more information, contact Group Sales Manager Aaron Muth at 480-682-3650 or Aaron@visitmesa.com.

WHERE WE ARE GOING:**Leisure Sales: CROSS-COUNTRY CANADIAN TRAVEL TRADE MISSION**

Donna Cluckey will travel to three top Canadian cities this week promoting Mesa tourism offerings this spring and touting the affordability of our destination as well as the direct access offered through US Airways and WestJet. Donna will participate in the missions which are hosted by the Arizona Office of Tourism's Canadian office. Sales calls and marketplace events will be held in Toronto and Calgary, Alberta with VIP dinners also held in those cities along with Vancouver, British Columbia.

Sports Sales & Marketing: MESA HOSTS MLK BASKETBALL CLASSIC PRESENTED BY AMAR'E STOU DAMIRE

The bureau is a key sponsor of this year's MLK Basketball Classic, regarded as one of the elite holiday basketball events in the country. The event draws junior college and men's and women's high school teams from across the state to compete. The event takes place on Martin Luther King Day with match-ups held at Wells Fargo Arena on the campus of Arizona State University and at the McKale Center on the campus of the University of Arizona.

Convention Sales: FAITH-BASED TRAVEL OFFERS NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR MESA

On the heels of attending the ReJuvenate Marketplace, a three-day conference for religious meeting planners, the Mesa CVB will embark on a series of ways to actively promote to this travel sector. The bureau's efforts will include the creation of an email campaign, religious web page at VisitMesa.com and sales calls focusing on small to mid-size meetings, conferences, and retreats. The religious travel market represents an \$18 billion industry with an estimated 300 million travelers. For more information on how to get involved in such efforts, contact Convention Sales Manager Pam Williams at 480-682-3664 or Pam@visitmesa.com.

WEBSITE NEWS:

The following data represents website traffic for the month of December:

Requests for information: 285

Visits to website: 57,948

Web downloads: 15,777

Virtual VG downloads: 421

Hotel reservations on web: 4

Room nights: 9

GET NOTICED ON VISITMESA.COM – ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR AREA BUSINESSES

Did you know that the Mesa CVB has hosted national advertisements on the home page of VisitMesa.com for several months? Companies like Levi Jeans, MasterCard, Callaway Golf and even Iam's Pet Food have been featured on the most trafficked page of the website offering valuable discounts to viewers. Now, the bureau's tourism partners can take advantage of this opportunity to promote their business online. Spearheaded by Destination Travel Network, interested businesses must contact Gayle Savo and request the current media guide. Various sizes are available for the banner ads and all ads will provide direct click-thrus to your business website. Prices start as low as \$195 for month-long exposure and all placements require a minimum of three-month runs. The benefit for businesses is that all ads are placed on the home page of VisitMesa.com. The bureau receives an average of 40,000 unique web visits per month. Space is limited. To request the current media guide and to learn more about this opportunity, contact Gayle Savo at 480-682-3682 or gayle@visitmesa.com.

CONCIERGE CORNER WITH GINGER ST. PIERRE, CTA & NCA Certified Concierge:

BECOME A CERTIFIED TOURISM AMBASSADOR – CLASSES FORMING NOW

Around the office, I am referred to at the *Know It All*. Do you want to know everything I know??

You (and especially your front line associates) can get a great start by becoming a Certified Tourism Ambassador, through the Valley Tourism Ambassadors Program. This program is designed to provide you with tools and ideas to help enhance the visitor experience with word of mouth marketing about the metro area. What separates this program from other training programs is that it's a certification, not just training. The program is a collaborative project between participating Valley Convention & Visitor Bureaus and the Valley Hotel & Resort Association and is a nationally recognized affiliation. For \$25, which includes the initial year, you receive a reference guide (to keep and make notes), your initial class training and invitations to the CTA exclusive events hosted throughout the year. If you have already become certified, don't forget to renew for the next year. There will be more networking events planned in the upcoming months, don't miss you invitation to meet with fellow CTA's.

Valley Tourism Ambassadors Program

www.valleytourismambassadors.com

Program Manager Whitney Clark: wclark@vhra.net

Tel: (602) 375-1712

SAVE THE DATE: TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME MARKETING NETWORK MEETING

The next Marketing Network Meeting will be held at a Chicago Cubs spring training game on Tuesday, March 3 beginning at 11:30 a.m. Invitations will be sent out soon with complete reservation details. Space is limited. Stay tuned!



MEET YOUR CVB STAFF: Pam Williams, Convention Sales Manager

On those rare and wonderful free Saturdays, you will find Pam and husband Curtis (married 33 years), working on home upgrade projects or out in their yard. From garden design and implementation to interior painting, home projects are a welcome diversion from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Pam and Curtis relocated to Mesa Arizona in December of 2001 after living in the San Francisco Bay area, Honolulu Hawaii and Seattle Washington. If you ask Pam about her favorite home

town, she will happily state that she has enjoyed every place her family has called home. In fact, being close to family is a very important part of Pam's life and a large reason for moving to Arizona. Pam is also a natural born explorer and loves to travel to new destinations. Pam has been fortunate to travel throughout the country as well as a few International destinations like the Bahamas, Paris, Spain and Japan. Rather than exploring the more common tourist attractions, Pam likes to visit the places that local residents enjoy most to experience local culture. Working with the Mesa Convention and Visitors Bureau has been a real treat for Pam. As the Convention Sales Manager, Pam finds that her talents and past experiences have been very helpful. She loves the challenge that each group and each day presents. She looks forward to assisting even more groups as they discover her new hometown – Mesa Arizona.

BY THE NUMBERS – RESEARCH NEWS:

A LOOK AHEAD:

Stay tuned next month as we share all the details about the Mesa CVB's 25th Anniversary!

As always, you can learn more about all the items featured in this newsletter on our website, www.VisitMesa.com.

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