



THE BUREAU BEAT
A Monthly E-Newsletter From The Mesa Convention & Visitors
Bureau
MARCH 2009

Greetings ,

Grab your backpack, fill up your water jug, take the binoculars and head out into the desert – it's officially spring this week!

It's not often that our visitors and residents are met with such a lush Sonoran Desert and few realize that our unique ecosystem offers the most diverse desert in North America. Mesa's nearby hiking trails and desert landscapes are overflowing with hues of red, purple, orange, yellow and blue – all accompanied by the vibrant green shades of Arizona's indigenous desert flora. Better hurry. As Mesa temperatures continue to climb, most wildflowers will be reaching their peak as the desert once again heats up for summer.

And, like the many tourists that have visited our office this season, residents, too, are encouraged to stop by the Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau and peruse our many hiking trail maps and brochures. Be sure to ask our knowledgeable staff for suggestions on exploring Mesa's tourism treasures. A few of the most popular outdoor hiking parks for wildflowers are featured in Ginger St. Pierre's Concierge Corner column below.

Also this week, check your mailbox. The 25th Anniversary Celebration invitations are out and on their way. We are gearing up for a boot-stompin' good time in honor of tourism. We hope you all join us as we raise a toast to this incredible industry and all that Mesa has to offer its visitors. And, we've snuck in some nice surprises for our guests that night. Let's just say, we are planning for a great time to be had by all. Can't wait to see you all there!

And lastly, a special thank you goes out to all of you that helped with the YES on Proposition 300 campaign and for voting in last Tuesday's election. The resounding approval tells us that the citizens of Mesa are excited about the development and all that the future has to offer not just for them but also for the tourists that Gaylord will attract. I've said it before and I'll say it again – the future of tourism is a bright one for Mesa!

Sincerely,

Robert Brinton, President & CEO
Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau

BUREAU NEWS:

YES ON 300 WINS ASTOUNDING APPROVAL BY MESA CITIZENS, MESA PROVING GROUNDS PLAN UNDERWAY

Last week, Mesa voters said YES on Proposition 300 which outlines plans for what could be Arizona's largest resort hotel and convention center in Mesa. The victory resulted in an 84% approval for the project at Mesa Proving Grounds, the former General Motors Desert Proving Grounds. DMB Associates, Inc. and Gaylord Entertainment agreed to bring a destination resort

and convention center to this region laying the foundation for substantial ongoing private investment and development. The parcel is a 3,200-acre portion of land and the state's largest resort and conference center is slated to be built on 100 acres. The property is planning to be a minimum of 1,200 rooms and offer a minimum 225,000 square feet of meeting space. The theme and character of the resort and convention center have yet to be finalized, however, the Gaylord name ensures that the facility will celebrate the geographical heritage of the Southwest, introducing regional themes and attractions designed specifically for this project. A Tom Fazio 18-hole championship golf course and a Westcor (Macerich) retail center are also being planned in conjunction with the Mesa Proving Grounds development. Located next to the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, Mesa Proving Grounds is the largest remaining parcel of contiguous land within the core Mesa planning area. The property is of tremendous importance to the future growth and development of Mesa and the Southeast Valley. No timeline has been set for construction of the project which has a proposed completion date of Dec. 31, 2014. For more information, visit www.DMBMesaProvingGrounds.com.

GET ON YOUR BOOTS! THE CVB IS CELEBRATING TOBY KEITH STYLE

The Mesa CVB will be wrapping up a year-long celebration of tourism with their 25th Anniversary celebration, A Toast to Tourism, held April 22 at Toby Keith's I Love This Bar & Grill. Like any great party, guests will be treated to live entertainment, signature food including dishes from Toby Keith's menu of American favorites, and dancing. Tickets are \$35 and that includes two cocktails, unlimited non-alcoholic beverages, two raffle tickets and a souvenir amenity. Throughout the event, guests can win prizes including airline tickets, hotel stays and more. A number of fun activities promoting tourism in Mesa are also part of the celebration event that evening. To learn more about the Toast to Tourism event, or to order your tickets now, call the Mesa CVB at 480-827-4700 or download a Ticket Request Form at www.VisitMesa.com/Celebrate.

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 April. The combined circulation of these placements is 1,109,200 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.

- Arizona Drive Guide
- Leisure Group Travel
- Los Angeles Magazine
- Outside Magazine
- Recommend Magazine
- Sports Events
- True West

COMMUNICATIONS NEWS:

SUNNY ARIZONA PRESS TOUR – URBAN TOURISM OFFERINGS ON DOCKET FOR TRAVEL WRITERS

The Mesa CVB, along with partners Chandler Tourism and Tempe CVB, will host six travel writers to a whirlwind tour of the east Valley, April 2 - 5. The tour will cover unique, urban offerings in each city and feature an array of activities for the guests including planned visits to all three downtown areas. Additional activities include visits to a Chicago Cubs game, the Veteran's Oasis Environmental Awareness Park in Chandler, a tour of Tempe Town Lake by Segway, a guided hike at Usery Pass and more. Media on the tour are from AAA Highroads, About.com (Phoenix), Black Meetings & Tourism magazine, GSA Travel and several Valley-based travel writers that regularly produce for national print and online outlets. For more information on this and other planned media tours, contact Michelle Streeter at Michelle@visitmesa.com or 480-682-3638.

PRESS RELEASES

The following press releases were distributed in February:

- WHAT'S NEW IN MESA, ARIZONA: SPRING 2009

SALES NEWS:

GOT SUMMER SAVINGS? TIME TO GET VALUES LISTED ON VISITMESA.COM

The Mesa CVB is busy planning their summer savings campaign and will once again promote the many values that can be had when enjoying Mesa in the summer months. The campaign will be targeted to the local drive market and regional feeder markets including Show Low/White Mountains; Prescott; and Flagstaff. Stay tuned this week for ways to participate in this year's efforts which will be centered around a "Free for Me – In Mesa" theme. In the meantime, if your attraction, hotel or business is offering any values or discounts to guests this summer, please send those specials to Milt Fort, director of marketing. The values received will be featured on a special website: www.VisitMesa.com/Values and promoted each month in the statewide publication, Arizona Tourist News. For more information on submitting your value offer, contact Milt Fort at Milt@visitmesa.com or 480-682-3639.

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN:

Leisure Sales:

AAA SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SALES MISSION: Last month, the Mesa CVB teamed up with Tempe, Flagstaff, Sedona, Scottsdale, Chandler, Glendale, and Tucson on a sales mission to southern California which included visits to 70 travel offices and approximately 600 AAA agents. The group conducted a training session at the Costa Mesa AAA office where all partners hosted a lunch and tradeshow with 45 agents. During this event, Mesa CVB had the opportunity to visit with each agent and share the latest updates out of Mesa. This annual mission is one of the most effective ways to reach travel agents in this region, which offers a great drive market to Arizona.

SUNNY ARIZONA TRAVEL AGENT TOUR SUCCESS ONCE AGAIN: Earlier this month, Donna Cluckey hosted 8 travel agents from across the U.S. and Canada to an in-depth tour of Mesa with Sunny Arizona partners Chandler and Tempe. The tour included numerous Mesa offerings including visits to the Arizona Museum of Natural History, Apache Trail, Dolly Steamboat, and a special evening at Rancho De Tia Rosa. For more information on Sunny Arizona travel opportunities, contact Donna Cluckey at Donna@visitmesa.com or 480-682-3646.

WHERE WE ARE GOING:

Sports Sales & Marketing:

SPORTS COMMISSION SYMPOSIUM IN APRIL: Aaron Muth will be traveling next month to the National Association of Sports Commissions annual symposium held in Denver. This event will further help in the development of Mesa Sports & Tourism Development, the sports marketing division of the Mesa CVB. The symposium includes three days of educational programming, networking, an NASC Sports Marketplace and more.

DENVER SPORTS SALES MISSION: Aaron Muth will also be participating in a sales mission in Colorado next month with Tucson Sports. This effort will include events with the Triple Crown Sports Development Mission in Fort Collins, the Western Athletic Conference Development Mission in Englewood, and the U.S. Olympic Organization Development Mission in Colorado Springs. All three efforts are planned to promote Mesa as a premier tournament destination and increase awareness of Mesa's sports facilities and capabilities. For more information on this sales mission, contact Aaron Muth at Aaron@visitmesa.com or 480-682-3650.

WEBSITE NEWS:

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

Requests for information: 372

Visits to web site: 54,218

Web site downloads: 21,065

Virtual VG downloads: 1,257
Travelocity Online Hotel Reservations: 6
Room nights generated: 14

**CONCIERGE CORNER WITH GINGER ST. PIERRE, CTA & NCA Certified Concierge:
Wildflower Watch!**

It's springtime in Arizona! The weather is amazing and the desert is alive with vibrant colors as delicate wildflowers blossom. March and April are the ideal months to enjoy the variety of wildflowers that decorate the desert floor. Here are just a few of my local favorites for your guests to explore....

Usery Mountain Regional Park: 3939 N. Usery Pass Road, Mesa
480-984-0032; www.maricopa.gov/parks/usery/

Lost Dutchman State Park: 6109 N. Apache Trail, Apache Junction
(480) 982-4485; www.pr.state.az.us/Parks/parkhtml/dutchman.html.

Boyce Thompson Arboretum State Park: 37615 U.S. Route 60, Superior
(520) 689-2811; www.pr.state.az.us/Parks/parkhtml/boyce.html.

Desert Botanical Gardens: 1201 N. Galvin Parkway, Phoenix
(480) 941-1225; www.dbg.org.

Picacho Peak State Park: Sixty miles south of Phoenix, off Interstate 10, Exit 219.
(520) 466-3183; www.pr.state.az.us/Parks/parkhtml/picacho.html.

Rose Garden at Mesa Community College: 1833 West Southern Ave., Mesa
(480) 461-7396; <http://www.mesacc.edu/community/rosegarden/>
(Roses bloom end of March-beginning of May)

For additional ideas on where to go: www.visitmesa.com, www.arizonaguide.com or
www.arizhwys.com

Wildflower Hotline (sponsored by University of Arizona): (602) 754-8134

****Winners of Renaissance Festival Tickets from previous Bureau Beat – Kimberly Landstad @ Residence Inn
Mary McCaffrey @ Dobson Ranch Inn & Suites, & Melissa Wyatt @ Country Inn & Suites****

SAVE THE DATE: The next Mesa CVB Marketing Network Partnership Meeting will be held on May 17th see upcoming invitation for location and additional information.

MEET YOUR CVB STAFF:



Michelle Streeter, Director of Public Relations & Communications

Michelle joined the Mesa CVB in February 2008 after a brief stint at the Mesa Arts Center. Prior to that, she spent 9 years at the Scottsdale CVB in the Communications department. As Director of Public Relations, her primary role at the bureau is to "Shout the attributes of Mesa from the rooftops to everyone that will listen." Michelle keeps the travel media posted of all the exciting things going on in Mesa. Michelle was born in Canada but has proudly called Mesa home for the past 25 years and remembers her days editing the Mesa High School newspaper as a jackrabbit. She is married with children. If given the free time, Michelle is the first to hit the pavement on a bike ride with her kids. Michelle's take on tourism in Mesa: "We have incredible strengths here in Mesa that we need to own and celebrate as a destination. There is so much to offer, we can really cater to any style of visitor. Since joining the team here, I've never run out of things to tout and talk about."

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

Tell a friend: please forward your email or sign up for The Bureau Beat at info@visitmesa.com.

To unsubscribe to The Bureau Beat: send an email to info@visitmesa.com and we'll remove you from our monthly mailing list.