



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

Greetings,

*“We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year’s Day.” ~ Edith Lovejoy Pierce*

We come to you this month with a reminder that another fiscal year is coming to an end for the Mesa CVB, and a new year is quickly upon us on July 1. This was a spectacular year in that it celebrated an incredible milestone – your Mesa CVB turned 25! This past year, we made sure to recognize the many Mesa businesses that have joined us on this journey promoting our city’s attributes to a nationwide audience. Our staff visited several businesses throughout the East Valley and honored them for their contributions to tourism. In addition, we hit some incredible milestones over the past 12 months:

- Donna Cluckey, Tourism Sales Manager, hosted more than 30 travel agents from the US & Canada who experienced our offerings first hand during tours of Mesa, and her missions and follow up efforts distributed Mesa materials to more than 900 travel agents throughout North America.
- Sports Tourism & Development Manager Aaron Muth played an integral role in securing the WAC Baseball Championships for the next three years in Mesa as well as helping develop unique events for our tourism industry including the 2010 Citrus Classic and both the VisitMesa Basketball Challenge and Desert Dual expected later this year.
- Pam Williams, Convention Sales Manager, established a new seven-touch program for potential clients seeking out Mesa for meetings. In addition, Williams played a key role in helping move the Miss Arizona USA Pageant to Mesa.
- Online, the CVB added advertising through our Go Local program giving our partners a unique, and targeted, showcase for their products. We also added Travelocity to our homepage giving our visitors the opportunity to book directly from the site.
- Our Visitors Center hosted an open house for the public and gave out more than 200 Tourism Survival Kits chock full of Mesa materials and goodies. Year to date, more than 8,700 guests have come in seeking information on Mesa.
- Our Sales Director James Tevault implemented the bureau’s Quarterly Hotel Communications Meetings this year, giving our valued hoteliers an opportunity to address current issues while also learning about new bureau offerings and the latest trends in tourism. The bureau’s monthly email blasts are gaining followers as more and more potential visitors seek out information on Mesa attractions and values.
- Michelle Streeter, Public Relations Director, tracked Mesa in the headlines and distributed more than 20 targeted releases to national travel media promoting the latest and greatest tourism developments. She held a media tour and produced in-depth itineraries for more than a dozen key travel writers visiting Mesa this past year.
- Director of Marketing Milt Fort helped ignite an aggressive advertising campaign with Allegiant Airlines, and further strengthened the bureau’s outreach efforts to the Allegiant cities. By the end of the fiscal year, the bureau’s ads will have reached more than 18 million viewers/readers and listeners.

And our partners, too, celebrated equally impressive milestones this year. Allegiant Airlines load factor increased from Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, while the airport expanded to account for more visitors choosing Mesa as their gateway to Arizona. Several of Mesa's properties completed multi-million dollar renovations keeping Mesa contemporary and fresh for our guests and business clients. Hohokam Stadium expanded their capacity which helped our Chicago Cubs come out on top again as the most watched team in the league setting a single-season record. Unique attractions like Pro Ranch Market and Mekong Plaza, along with new venues like Toby Keith's I Love This Bar & Grill and the Mesa Planetarium not only selected Mesa as a great place to do business but are helping our city get noticed. And who could forget the strides our elected officials made in recognizing the tourism industry as a means to helping secure a great future for Mesa's residents. The City of Mesa and its residents helped bring to a reality the development of Mesa Proving Grounds. With partners like DMB Associates and Gaylord Hotels, it's clear that tourism will play a vital role in developing Mesa's vision.

As with anything, even in dark times, it's all about perspective. We know the year ahead will be full of uncertainty as our economy continues to correct itself and get back on the right track, but, we also feel there are blue skies ahead. Your bureau staff is excited, optimistic and anxious about facing a new year of programs all aimed at getting Mesa the attention it deserves. Look for a special email next month with our complete program of work (Marketing/Sales/Communications/Online) for fiscal year 2009 – 2010 and be sure to let us know when and how you can play a part in our efforts to increase tourism for Mesa.

Happy New (Fiscal) Year,

Robert Brinton, President & CEO  
Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau

#### **BUREAU NEWS:**

##### **EMBRACING CHANGE ONLINE**

Over the past month, you may have noticed changes to the VisitMesa.com website. Through our server, SimpleView, the bureau has actively implemented numerous SEO (search engine optimization) efforts which have helped Mesa appear in top online searches via Google, Yahoo and other web engines. We are now connecting many of our social media efforts to our VisitMesa.com site where guests can view our Make it Mesa blog, click to our Flickr photo account, and view our YouTube videos all directly from our site. In addition, guests can now view archived monthly e-mail newsletters and opt-in to receive future versions with deals and breaking alerts. This proactive approach is driving better quality traffic to our site, which in turn benefits all our industry partners featured throughout VisitMesa.com. Each month, the bureau is learning about the latest online technology and increasing key words and meta-tags that are intended to even boost traffic from our site to the sites of our partners. We know that to engage our customer is key and you will see the bureau continue to actively monitor the online search habits and keep Mesa top of mind to potential travelers seeking leisure or business in the Southwest. For the latest online updates, opportunities and news, contact Gayle Savo at [Gayle@visitmesa.com](mailto:Gayle@visitmesa.com) or 480-682-3682.

##### **MAKE IT MESA – NEW BLOG**

Utilizing free online services such as WordPress, the Bureau has started an online blog, [www.MakeitMesa.com](http://www.MakeitMesa.com). Used by the bureau staff as a means to promote and speak candidly about our experiences in Mesa and the surrounding area, the blog has been well received so far. This new outlet is not only a free service, but allows for the latest online technology allowing for Twitter feeds, embedded photos, hyperlinks and backend analytics. Already, the blog is climbing up the search engine charts for guests seeking out Mesa as a key search term. We encourage all our industry partners to follow us on our blog and comment on our posts. This outlet will be just another tool in our social media toolkit for promoting Mesa businesses. For more, visit [www.MakeitMesa.com](http://www.MakeitMesa.com). To create your own blog, visit [www.WordPress.com](http://www.WordPress.com), or download one of the many tutorials offered online.

## **MARKETING NEWS:**

### **2010 MAP & GUIDE AVAILABLE IN JULY**

The bureau will be unveiling a new map and guide next month. This new version will serve dual purposes – both as our standard fulfillment Mesa Map & Guide, and as the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Map & Guide distributed to all Allegiant Airlines cities. The bureau will print 100,000 copies of the map which is now featuring advertising. Numerous Mesa hotels joined in on the map, all of which will be positioned on the map itself. In addition, the map will feature listings of Mesa offerings in a variety of categories including Dining & Shopping, Attractions & Adventures, Theatres, Museums & Entertainment, as well as Golf and Accommodations. To order copies in advance of the Mesa Map & Guide for your brochure racks, contact Milt Fort at [Milt@visitmesa.com](mailto:Milt@visitmesa.com) or 480-682-3639.

## **COMMUNICATIONS NEWS:**

### **PRESS RELEASES:**

The following press releases were distributed in May:

- **MESA TOURISM BUREAU TURNING STAY-CATIONS INTO SAVE-CATIONS WITH DISCOUNTS AND ONLINE PLANNING TOOLS** *Bureau-Generated Savings Program and Citywide Summer Values Help Make Low-Cost Summer Vacations Possible*

### **TOBY KEITH'S VISIT PUTS MESA ON NATIONAL MUSIC STAGE**

Earlier this month, country superstar Toby Keith was in Mesa to kickoff the grand opening of Toby Keith's I Love This Bar & Grill. More than 1,000 guests attended the exclusive opening event including dignitaries, celebrities, and the who's who of the Phoenix metropolitan area. And, the media took notice. The event was covered by several Phoenix stations including Ch. 3 (KTVK), Ch. 10 (FOX), Ch. 15 (ABC) and Ch. 5 (CBS). Both the Arizona Republic and East Valley Tribune sent out photographers capturing the crowds. *The Tennessean* newspaper in Nashville also ran a feature story on the grand opening event. To view photos, visit [www.AzCentral.com](http://www.AzCentral.com) and click on their slideshows. In addition, Toby Keith's camp distributed a national press release alerting the music media and industry trades about the opening event in Mesa. Google alerts also tracked coverage on a variety of country music-related online sites, fan blogs, facebook pages and other outlets. Michelle Streeter, public relations director, helped secure the media attendance at the event working alongside the City of Mesa in the event planning. Streeter helped secure several advance news stories on a variety of topics from the economic boost the restaurant is bringing to the Riverview area, to the unique attributes of the 20,000 square-foot venue. For more on Toby Keith's new restaurant in Mesa, visit [www.ILoveThisBarMesa.com](http://www.ILoveThisBarMesa.com).

## **SALES NEWS:**

### **VISITMESA FINDING "TWEET" SUCCESS ON TWITTER, COLLECTING IDS FOR PARTNERS**

Since joining the twitterverse back in January, VisitMesa is now boasting more than 2,200 followers – all of which have elected to receive Mesa's messages via the online platform. In fact, VisitMesa has been getting noticed on Twitter as fellow tweeters recognize the bureau's efforts in this new social realm. Just recently, VisitMesa was ranked in the top 20 destinations using Twitter for destination promotion tracked by Go See Tell Network, the Portland, Oregon based internet company specializing in destination marketing. Using the Twitter Grader, Go See Tell tracks US and Canadian-based tourism organizations that have a presence on Twitter. VisitMesa moved up to the 14th position on the May report, outranking fellow Arizona-based Twitters including Arizona Office of Tourism (20), Scottsdale (24) and Flagstaff further down the list. While these statistics are only a snapshot of current activity on Twitter, it does show that VisitMesa is gaining valuable strides in a burgeoning territory for marketing and promotion. The Mesa CVB is actively collecting all tourism-related Twitter IDs for Mesa businesses and will be posting them online for guests to follow. Please send your Twitter ID to James Tevault at [James@visitmesa.com](mailto:James@visitmesa.com). For questions regarding the bureau's efforts on Twitter, contact James at 480-682-3635.

### **Sports Sales: NEW AQUATIC CENTER HELPS MESA CONTEND FOR NATIONAL SWIM MEETS AND COMPETITIONS:**

Sports Tourism & Development Manager Aaron Muth attended the College Swim Coach's Association Meetings & Convention in Chicago May 20-24. This convention proved to be beneficial as the Mesa CVB promotes the Citrus Classic and the recent opening of the multi-million Kino Aquatic Center. More than 150 attendees were there

including college coaches and exhibitors. For more information on the bureau's sports development efforts, contact Aaron Muth at [Aaron@visitmesa.com](mailto:Aaron@visitmesa.com) or 480-682-3650.

#### **WEBSITE NEWS:**

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

Requests for information: 172

Visits to web site: 46,880

Web site downloads: 10,196

Virtual VG downloads: 469

Travelocity Online Hotel Reservations: 9

Room nights generated: 11

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

##### **MESA VISITORS CENTER'S BUSY SEASON IN REVIEW**

Wow, what a busy year we have had here at the Visitors Center! Not only did our staff and volunteers assist visitors as usual but we also hosted our first ever Visitor Center Open House last November. We estimated 250 visitors in that one very busy day. Through May, we have helped over 8,700 visitors since last July in our visitors center and expect more as our fiscal year comes to a close. Our staff enjoys the interaction with our short term visitors and the regular repeat patrons. As I regularly stock our lobby and track the inventory of brochures, if you get an email or phone request from me for more materials, know that they are truly being put to good use! If you haven't been to our offices, there is always an open invitation for you to stop by and see your bureau in action. Not only do we provide information that focuses on Mesa and the metro-area, but we are also endorsed by the Arizona Office of Tourism as a Local Visitors Information Center (LVIC).

**SAVE THE DATE:** The next Mesa CVB Marketing Network Partnership Meeting will be held on Friday, July 17 from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. as we host our **Annual Power Networking Event**...last year there were more than 40 companies represented. See your email invitation for RSVP information.

#### **MEET YOUR CVB STAFF: Milt Fort, Director of Marketing**



Milt joined the Mesa CVB in January of 1989 as the Tourism Sales Manager and over the years has developed the bureau's Marketing Department. Milt is responsible for all of the bureau's advertising placements and oversees our creative, as well as our marketing materials. Though born in Oakland, Milt moved to Mesa when he was three-years-old. Milt loves to explore the Arizona wilderness and often camps. Along with working and traveling, Milt also serves his community. He is vice-president of the Mesa Sister Cities Association, belongs to the Mesa Community College Commission on Excellence, and serves on the Rose Garden Committee. Milt recently began serving on the Mesa Parks and Recreation Board and has served a number of years on the Mesa Constitution Celebration Committee. With the growth of Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and the Gateway area, Milt feels Mesa has a tremendous opportunity for the future of hospitality and establishing Mesa as a great vacation destination. Milt can be reached at [Milt@visitmesa.com](mailto:Milt@visitmesa.com) or 480-682-3639.