



Mesa, Arizona is fast becoming the Valley's next urban hot spot boasting an assortment of new tourism developments with more on the horizon. Located in the Valley of the Sun just minutes from Phoenix and Scottsdale, Mesa has long been revered as a winter haven offering premier accommodations, golf and an enviable location boasting a close proximity to Tonto National Forest showcasing Arizona's vast Sonoran Desert. Today, the state's third-largest city is home to its own passenger traffic airport, a new 250-acre retail destination complex and Arizona's largest art and cultural complex. Read on for more news about upcoming attractions, new hotel and shopping announcements, unique meeting venues, exclusively Mesa events and more.

HOTEL & SHOPPING UPDATES:

MESA RIVERVIEW EXPANDS AND WELCOMES FIRST HYATT PROPERTY TO CITY

Mesa Riverview, Mesa's newest large-scale retail and tourism development, recently announced the addition of a four-story, 150-room **Hyatt Place** hotel. The property will compliment the 250-acre development conveniently located along the Rio Salado corridor with convenient access to Tempe, Scottsdale and Phoenix. Hyatt Place properties feature guest rooms that are 25 percent larger than typical hotel rooms, walk-in showers, granite counters, wet bars, 42-inch high-definition televisions, sofa-sleepers and high-speed Internet access. This will be the first Hyatt property in Mesa which is scheduled to open in 2009. Currently, Mesa Riverview boasts more than 1.3 million square feet of retail space anchored by Arizona's only **Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World**, the Valley's first Cinemark Theatre, and an eclectic selection of specialty shops located in the Theater District. For more information, visit www.MesaRiverview.com. *For media information only, contact Nicole Traynor at 480-990.0282 or nicole@mcraeagency.com.*

MESA BOASTS NEW SHOPPING DESTINATION, PROJECT TO INCLUDE TWO HOTELS

National retail powerhouse DeBartolo Development has broken ground on **Mountain Vista Marketplace** in East Mesa marking the company's Arizona debut. The first phase of the 114-acre mixed-use project will open in Summer 2009 with SuperTarget as its anchor. Additional retailers confirmed are Marshalls, Old Navy, Shoe Pavilion and Dick's Sporting Goods to name a few. The marketplace will be designed with the pedestrian in mind featuring easily accessible walkways throughout the project. The mixed-use center is proposed to connect with and compliment the nearby Mountain Vista Medical Center. Also proposed as part of the development are two limited-service hotel properties: **Residence Inn by Marriott** and **SpringHill Suites by Marriott**. For more information, visit www.debartolodevelopment.com. *For media information, contact Stacy Pearson at 602-577-6888 or spearson@roseandallynpr.com.*

UPSCALE SHOPPING VILLAGE OFFERS NEW DINING

Dana Park Village Square, Mesa's 400,000-square-foot shopping center that is a reflection of some of Mesa's most affluent neighborhoods, is adding more dining options to its already impressive collection of high-end retailers and unique boutiques. **Ra Sushi Bar** is now open featuring made to order sushi and entertainment. New bistro **Bar Tepo** recently opened featuring new American tapas and a wide variety of entrees. Both Bar Tepo and Ra offer patio dining – a popular activity at Dana Park which features wide pedestrian walkways, fountains and palm-tree-lined driveways. Dana Park Village Square is also embarking on completing its third phase of development which, when completed this fall, will bring in Z Gallerie, Anthropologie, Victoria's Secret and Philosophy Cosmetics.

For more information on Dana Park retailers, visit www.DanaPark.com. For media information only, contact Heather Brechbill, (480) 890.0555 or Heather.Brechbill@triplefive.com.

TOURISM INDUSTRY UPDATES:

ALLEGIAN AIRLINES ENTERS PHOENIX MARKET VIA MESA GATEWAY AIRPORT

Starting last October, low-cost airline, **Allegiant Air**, LLC began non-stop service from Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport to several of America's small cities. With the launch of this new service, the low-fare airline provides the only non-stop, low-cost service to the following cities from the state of Arizona: Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Sioux Falls, S.D., Missoula, Mont., Bellingham, Wash., Fargo, N.D., Billings, Mont., and Rapid City, S.D. Additional markets will be announced for both year-round and seasonal service in the fall. Phoenix-Mesa serves as the fourth base for the Las Vegas-based airline which also serves McCarran International Airport (Las Vegas), Orlando Sanford International Airport and St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport. As a full-service travel company, Allegiant provides even greater savings to customers by offering complete, low-cost vacation packages. Allegiant has partnered with more than 20 area hotels including hotels in the Mesa, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tempe, Tucson and Sedona areas. Reservations may be made through the company's website at www.allegiantair.com, the airline's Reservations Center at 702-505-8888 or professional travel agents. For media information on Allegiant Airlines, contact Tyri Squyres, 702-851-7370 or tsquyres@allegiantair.com.

PHOENIX-MESA GATEWAY AIRPORT PROVIDES EASY ACCESS TO EAST VALLEY CITIES

Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport continues to serve as a dynamic reliever airport to Phoenix's Sky Harbor International Airport. The airport provides a convenient alternative for passengers flying in and out of Phoenix and serves as a gateway to East Valley communities including Mesa, Gilbert, Gila River Indian Community, Queen Creek and Apache Junction. The airport, which began offering non-stop passenger service in October last year, offers three expansive runways, a newly remodeled passenger terminal, convenient parking and on-site rental car service. Currently, the airport hosts Allegiant Airlines (see above) and will resume service with Vision Airlines offering seasonal flights to north Las Vegas in the summer. For more information and current flight schedules, visit www.phxmesagateway.org. For media information only, contact Brian Sexton at 480-988-7618 or bsexton@phxmesagateway.org.

ATTRACTIONS & ACTIVITIES:

FLYING DINOSAURS? FOSSILS ON LOAN FROM CHINA AT NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

The **Arizona Museum of Natural History** is showcasing *Feathered Dinosaurs and the Origin of Flight*, an exhibition that presents exciting evidence from fossils that are bringing new answers to the on-going debate about the relationship between dinosaurs and birds, as well as how they evolved the ability to fly. The collection of fossils are on loan from the People's Republic of China. Also on display are many life-size recreations that demonstrate startling changes in how dinosaurs have been portrayed over the years. The exhibition will run through September 28. For more information visit, www.ArizonaMuseumofNaturalHistory.org. For media information, contact Kathy Eastman at 480-644-5662 or Kathy.Eastman@cityofmesa.org.

ARIZONA'S FIRST DOUBLE-DECKER CAROUSEL AT SUPERSTITION SPRINGS CENTER

The newest addition at **Superstition Springs Center**, Mesa's largest indoor mall, is a colorful two level carousel that seats 40 guests. The double-decker carousel features an assortment of 24 animals, a spinning tea pot, and a chariot on the ground level. The new Victorian carousel is 45,000 pounds, 25 feet tall and 36 feet in diameter and is part of a partnership between Westcor, the mall's developer, and HQ Entertainment. Additional amenities at Superstition Springs Center include an indoor children's play area, outdoor amphitheater and a free weekly Kids Club program. The outdoor amphitheater is a popular entertainment venue, which hosts a weekly summer concert series as well

as various other events. **Free concerts** begin Memorial Day weekend and run every Saturday from 7-9 p.m. until Labor Day weekend. Hundreds of loyal fans – residents and visitors alike - come out each week to the outdoor amphitheater to hear their favorite bands. Music lovers can enjoy country, rock and roll, jazz, reggae, blues, and R&B. For more information visit, www.westcor.com. For media information only, contact Melissa Buxton at 480-924-5050 [or melissa.buxton@westcor.com](mailto:melissa.buxton@westcor.com).

DOLLY STEAMBOAT CRUISES RE-OPEN ON CANYON LAKE

After four months in dry dock, the Dolly Steamboat has re-opened at Canyon Lake. Just minutes away from Mesa, for more than 20 years **The Dolly Steamboat** cruise has been voted as one of Arizona's most popular attractions for tourists and locals alike. A replica of a classic American sternwheeler, cruises take passengers to secluded inner waterways and the carved canyon walls of the lake accessible only by boat. Throughout the year, guests can capture Arizona wildlife in the landscapes surrounding the water including coyote, deer, bobcats, and mountain lion. The Dolly Steamboat operates year-round and is available for a variety of open cruises specializing in group tours. Nature Cruises, one of the most requested offerings, depart Tuesday through Sunday at Noon and 2:00 p.m. For more information visit, www.DollySteamboat.com.

BROADWAY PALM DINNER THEATRE ANNOUNCES NEW SEASON

Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, Mesa's popular dining and theatrical experience, will feature both classic hits and exciting new shows. The new season begins in October and includes: *All Shook Up*, Oct. 2 – Nov. 15, featuring the greatest hits of Elvis Presley rolled up in a charming story about love and the power of rock and roll; *Holly Jolly Christmas*, Nov. 20 – Dec. 25, an annual festive holiday revue; *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, Jan. 1 – Feb. 14; *Singin' in the Rain*, Feb. 19 – April 11, splashing its way across the stage; *Ring of Fire*, April 16 – May 30, featuring the songs of legendary Johnny Cash; *Disney's High School Musical*, June 4 – Aug. 1, just in time for summer break. The eighth season will close with *Mid-Life! The Crisis Musical*, Aug. 6 – Sept. 26, offering a satirical look at midlife. For more information and tickets visit www.broadwaypalmwest.com or call (480) 325-6700. For media information, contact Leslie Jabara, Manager of Marketing and PR at leslie@broadwaypalmwest.com or 480-325-6700 x106.

BOYCE THOMPSON ARBORETUM OPENS NEW INTERACTIVE CHILDREN'S GARDEN

After two years of construction, the newly completed Children's Garden at Boyce Thompson Arboretum is now open to the public offering kids a full-sensory desert experience. The garden features four interactive stations focusing on touch, texture, color, sound and scent as well as a human sundial and maze. Each interactive area allows children to strengthen their senses. For example, kids rely on sense of touch to feel their way through dark caves and mysterious forests in the Texture Garden; learn about the color spectrum and see how rainbows are formed in the Color Garden; hear a variety of animal sounds and chimes that warn of danger and hidden treasures in the Sound Garden; use their noses to discover plant aromas in the Scent Garden; and test their explorer skills in the Maze. Animal tracks and designated characters including Dani Deer, Reggie Roadrunner, Suzy Skunk, Frankie Fox and Javi Javalina lead kids from one activity area to another. For more information and hours of operation, call 520-689-2723 or visit www.BTArboretum.org. For media information only, contact Rick Elder at rick.americaneagle@yahoo.com.

NEW GALLERIES, CONCERT SERIES AND FLASHLIGHT TOURS AT BOTANICAL GARDEN

The always-popular **Desert Botanical Garden** has unveiled their new display, the **Sybil B. Harrington Cactus and Succulent Galleries**. This diverse form of texture and color features an array of cactus and a diverse group of plants from around the world. The new presentation is carefully designed to create a memorable experience for the visitor and enables the Garden to tell a more complete story about its collection and the evolution of desert plants. Designed by landscape architect, Steve Martino, FASLA, the galleries feature steel mesh as the arching canopy to provide shade for the plants, support columns painted in a desert-hued red to accentuate the color and textures of the

plants, and the design takes advantage of the vistas that are so distinctly a part of the Desert Botanical Garden experience.

Every Friday evening from 7-9 p.m. through June, guests can enjoy the sounds of jazz as part of the Garden's **Jazz in the Garden Concert Series**. Cost is admission with an additional charge for a picnic dinner and free wine tasting. Must be 21 or older to attend the concert series.

Another popular treat for summertime guests to the Garden are **Flashlight Tours** offered Thursdays and Saturdays from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., May through August. Free with admission, flashlight tours are perfect for little ones letting them experience the desert environment at night complete with desert wildlife including nighthawks, tortoises, insects and night-blooming flowers. Guests must come equipped with their own flashlight for the guided tours. For more information visit www.dbg.org, or call 480-941-1225. *For media information only, contact John Sallot, 480-481-8101, or jsallot@dbg.org.*

THE DUTTONS HIT VARIETY SHOW MAKES PERMANENT HOME IN MESA

World-renowned performers, The Duttons, will make Mesa a permanent stop on their tour next year with the opening of The Dutton Family Theater. Beginning in January 2009, the theater, located at East Valley High School, will be transformed into a seasonal venue for the Duttons. The group is redesigning and renovating the new theater which will allow patrons to come early and combine the evening's performance with dinner beforehand. Recognized as one of the top 10 acts on NBC's hit show *America's Got Talent*, and voted Branson's Best Musical Variety Show, performances in the new theater are scheduled through March 27, 2009. The Dutton family also operates their own theater in Branson, MO where they perform nine months of the year. As a group, they have toured the world over and been featured on various television networks from China to Europe and most recently the U.S. where they have also hosted their own PBS special. Tickets are available now for the 2009 schedule of shows in Mesa. Advance ticket orders for each performance are \$25 with an additional cost for dinner. Group dinner and show discounts are also available. For tickets and more information, call 480-840-MUSIC (6874) or visit www.TheDuttons.com. *For media information, contact Holly Davis at 480-262-6560 or HollyDavisMktg@gmail.com.*

MEETINGS IN MESA:

ATTENDEES WILL FLIP FOR TRAPEZE TEAMBUILDING AT NEW SCHOOL

Trapeze U is the latest offering for small groups visiting in Mesa and the East Valley. This self-proclaimed institute of higher learning offers a unique teambuilding experience in the air and in the classroom for groups meeting in the Phoenix-Mesa area. Trapeze U founders spent the past decade traveling throughout the world performing at live shows, corporate events and teaching Trapeze to adventure enthusiasts. Trapeze U is the first program of its kind in Arizona and features an office, changing rooms, a modern classroom featuring video playback and a full-size flying trapeze setup outdoors. Offered for individuals as young as four years old, the company offers a taste of the trapeze for as little as \$20 with the most popular offering, Trapeze Arts 101, offered at \$65 for a two-hour intensive training course. All programs include air time in addition to instruction. Trapeze U specializes in corporate groups designing team-building exercises to meet a planner's goals. Specially-tailored programs and pricing are available upon request for groups. Future plans will include on-site catering for corporate outings. Designed to move, the trapeze can also be rented for a unique experience at conventions, corporate enclaves, and special events – Trapeze U can also supply additional cirque style performers, live music and a full range of event services. For more information, visit www.trapezeu.com or call 1-888-872-7101. *For media information only, contact Dylan Phillips at 888-872-7101 or dylan@trapezeu.com.*

MESA CONVENTION CENTER COMPLETES RENOVATIONS, UNVEILS NEW MARQUEE

Mesa Convention Center, a full-service event facility located in the heart of downtown, has spent the past year undergoing renovations. The entire 40,000 square foot facility was re-carpeted and new services were offered. New menus were debuted with the arrival of Ovations Food Services, and the center now offers on-site exposition and drayage services. A new, state of the art electronic message board was unveiled as part of the renovation. Funded by the Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau, the new marquee will promote events at the Convention Center and adjoining Amphitheatre using both text and video. In addition, new meeting room chairs were purchased for each of the Center's three buildings and the entire complex has been re-painted. The Center is located on 22 acres of mature parkland and features **19,000 square feet of exhibit space**, along with an additional **19,000 square feet of flexible meeting space**. **Fifteen meeting rooms** offer a wide variety of sizes and configurations and the adjacent 275 room Phoenix Marriott Mesa hotel makes sleeping room accommodations easy and accessible. *For bookings and media information, visit www.MesaConventionCenter.com, or contact Dyan Dwyer Seaburg at 480-644-2717 or dyan.seaburg@cityofmesa.org.*

TAG - YOU'RE IT! GROUP TEAMBUILDING PROGRAM OFFERED AT LASER QUEST

Laser Quest Mesa is now offering a professional teambuilding program aptly titled *Quest for Success*. Offered to small groups of 50 or less, the program outlines the dynamics of trust, cooperation, communication and fun - essential team dynamics important for any organization. The *Quest for Success* program is a half-day experience where guests learn about the excitement and team aspects of live action laser tag – a combination of tag, hide and seek, and capture the flag all tied into one. The program also includes a video presentation and work book group discussion. For more information and group pricing, visit www.laserquest.com. *For media information only, contact Tom Payne, 480-752-0005.*

BASEBALL FANS UNITE - EAST VALLEY BOASTS BIG LEAGUE DREAMS FOR TEAMS

Big League Dreams Sports Park opened in the East Valley featuring scale replicas of baseball's most famous fields including Yankee Stadium, Fenway Park, Wrigley Field, Angel Stadium, Sportsman's Park, the Polo Grounds, Chase Field and Ebbet's Field. The park, which hosts tournament play year-round, specializes in corporate events and teambuilding activities. The 30-acre venue features a 20,000 square-foot indoor field house, eight baseball/softball fields, batting cages, children's playground, two full-service stadium club restaurants, and sports bar. With ample meeting space, on-site event planners can host a variety of events and activities on the fields including barbecues, carnival rides, obstacle courses and more. All fields feature electronic scoreboards that can be personalized, stadium lights and authentic stadium seating for spectators. For more information, visit www.bigleaguedreams.com. *For media information only, contact Doug Loucks at 480-813-1270 or doug.loucks@bigleaguedreams.com.*

SAVE THE DATE! NOTEWORTHY EVENTS:

DOWNTOWN: SQUARE MILE OF UNIQUE STYLE AWAITS VISITORS ON FRIDAY NIGHTS

Downtown Mesa is a thriving hub of business, government, culture, arts, recreation and entertainment – not to mention a hotbed of activity for tourists. Guests can meander down Main Street and find loads of unique shops, creative boutiques, diverse restaurants, and visit two award-winning museums within steps of each other. New to downtown is a series of events called **Friday Night Out**. Held the second Friday evening of each month, merchants stay open until 10 p.m. and offer live entertainment, special deals and sales, as well as themed activities. One month you'll find classic cars cruising up and down Main Street, the next you'll find princesses offering face painting and tea parties on the street. During this monthly outing, the Mesa Arts Center hosts free outdoor entertainment on their 7-acre campus and free admission to Mesa Contemporary Arts, the five-gallery visual arts complex. Outside vendors and artists displaying their talents align both sides of

Main Street offering must-have items for tourists and residents alike. For more information, visit www.DowntownMesa.com. For media information only, contact Dave Wilson at 480-890-2613 or dave@downtownmesa.com.

EXCLUSIVE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SERIES RETURNS TO MESA ARTS CENTER

National Geographic brings its acclaimed series back to the Mesa Arts Center for a second season featuring more presentations by dynamic National Geographic explorers, scientists, filmmakers, photographers and journalists. Currently, **National Geographic** only offers this series in five other markets across the U.S., including Chicago, Dallas, Minneapolis, Seattle and Washington, D.C. From adventures with photography and conservation in remote areas of the world to exploring the depths of the oceans for lost shipwrecks and working to create the first-ever map of human migration, these speakers inspire, enlighten and engage audiences worldwide. The second season of this successful partnership will feature lectures and multi-media presentations by National Geographic veteran photographer Annie Griffiths Belt; population geneticist and Genographic Project director Spencer Wells; marine geologist and underwater explorer Robert Ballard; and herpetologist and National Geographic Channel TV host Brady Barr. Following each presentation, speakers engage in Q&A with the audience and are available to sign copies of their published works. For tickets and information, contact Mesa Arts Center at 480-644-6500, or www.mesaartscenter.com. For media information only, contact Rachel Sherrill, 480-644-6614 or Rachel.Sherrill@cityofmesa.org.

MESACONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU NEWS & UPDATES:

MESA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU OFFERS THEMED VACATION PACKAGES

New this year for budget-minded travelers is a series of all-encompassing packages featuring year-round savings from area hotels, resorts and attractions. Packages are offered through the Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau and travel partner Award Vacations, a leader in private label vacation package programs. Serving as a one-stop travel resource, the Mesa CVB website, www.VisitMesa.com, offers exclusive packages in several categories including Chicago Cubs Spring Training, Golf, Water Adventure, Wild West, Romance, Family Fun and NASCAR. Travelers wanting even more variety can book the "Build-Your-Own" package including hotel and attractions options throughout Mesa. All packages offer ala carte amenities including top attractions and activities, as well as car rental through Dollar Rent-A-Car. Visitors can also book their packages by phone at 877-677-5813. All package rates vary, depending on accommodation selection, number of room nights and guests, and add-ons. A 10% commission is offered to travel agents booking packages. For a complete listing of current offers, visit www.VisitMesa.com. For media information only, contact James Tevault at 480-682-3635 or James@visitmesa.com.

MESA CVB OFFERS NEW, COMPREHENSIVE COMPLIMENTARY TOUR PLANNER

The Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau just released their new **Tour Planner**, a free tool kit for travel agents and tour operators available by request in hard copy format or online. The Tour Planner features several useful documents including complete listings of destination offerings in a series of categories including: Shopping, Transportation, Transportation Services Attractions, Accommodations, Events Calendar, and Dining. Other features include a Mesa Trivia & Quick Facts Guide, as well as a mileage chart for Travel Throughout the U.S. to Mesa and Travel Throughout Arizona. To request a complimentary copy, call 480-682-3660, or download a copy from the *Tour & Travel Planner* section at www.VisitMesa.com.

MESA CVB CELEBRATES 25 YEARS WITH SUMMER VACATION VALUES

It was in November 1983 that the Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau received their first hotel bed-tax revenue check thereby establishing the bureau as the city's main promotional arm to service Mesa's burgeoning tourism destination. Since then, the Mesa CVB has played an integral role over

the past 25 years helping establish Arizona's third-largest city as a leading vacation, small meeting and sports travel destination. To kick off the CVB's 25th Anniversary, the bureau will be launching a Summer Vacation Values promotional campaign May 10 – during National Tourism Week - encouraging out-of-area residents to “celebrate & save” when they visit Mesa and the Valley for their summer vacation. The promotion will feature Mesa area hospitality partners offering a discount on their services, admissions or other specials and incentives to summer travelers. Most offers will be tied into the bureau's 25th Anniversary theme, offering savings in increments of “25” (ex: 25% off, \$2.50 savings, etc.). The Mesa CVB will be promoting this summer travel campaign via a special website where guests can download a savings card for deals on accommodations, activities, dining and attractions in the Mesa area. The printable savings card will be the only item the guest needs to present in order to receive discounts. Visit, www.VisitMesa.com, for a complete list of deals and partners participating in the summer program.

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About the Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau:

The Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau is responsible for marketing Mesa, Arizona as a leading vacation, small meeting and sports travel destination to regional and national target audiences, including travel agents and group tour operators, meeting planners, leisure visitors and media.

Editor's Note: Readers can request a complimentary 2008 Official Mesa Arizona Visitors Guide at VisitMesa.com or by calling 800-283-6372.

Download Images: High-resolution images for editorial use are available for download at VisitMesa.com. Click on “Photo/Video Tour” and follow prompts. Images are offered in nine categories. You must complete a registration form to receive images. All requests are processed upon receipt during regular business hours.

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