



**THE BUREAU BEAT**  
***A Monthly E-Newsletter From The Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau***  
**DECEMBER 2008**

Greetings,

As we near the end of a very turbulent year, we are aware that no business in Mesa is spared during our nation's economic crisis and so many of our constituents have told us how they are deeply and personally affected by the turndown. We, too, are feeling the effects of a weakening travel market and last month Mesa was met with one of the biggest declines in bed-tax collection in more than a decade. Valleywide, bed-tax revenues are experiencing double-digit declines and will continue to do so over the next quarter with some projecting losses well into 2010. Because of this we want to remind our valued tourism partners that we are all in this together. As your tourism bureau, we intend to remain aggressive in the new year and continue with our tried, true and tested marketing efforts. We pride ourselves in developing targeted and strategic approaches to promote Mesa and all our offerings. In the months ahead you will see your bureau staff continuing to brave the cold and sell sunshine when the rest of this country is under a layer of snow. You will see us partner with Arizona Office of Tourism and align with neighboring bureaus in Tempe and Chandler as part of the organized Sunny Arizona marketing effort. You will see us engage in new mediums connecting Mesa to the online traveler and you will see us host industry professionals, travel press and welcome attendees to our city and all our incredible attractions. You will also hear more about the bureau's plans for our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary tourism celebration and all this industry has done and will continue to do for Mesa and generations to come. Rest assured, that we will weather this storm with you and proudly showcase and share Mesa's incredible tourism attributes to every individual we come in contact with.

We are also pleased to say sunseekers are visiting our website every minute of the day, taking advantage of our new online booking engine powered by Travelocity, and our phones are ringing off the hook from folks far and wide keeping our staff engaged in conversation about below-freezing temperatures as they plan their escape from old man winter. And, the anticipated 2009 spring training season is shaping up to be one for the record books with 245 games planned over a five-week season that starts in February and extends into April.

May the holidays find you and yours enjoying the spirit of the season with friends and family.

Sincerely,  
Robert Brinton, President & CEO  
Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau

**BUREAU NEWS:**

**CHICAGO CUBS SPRING TRAINING TICKETS ON SALE JAN. 6**

Cubs fans get ready – tickets for the 2009 spring training season go on sale next month and it's shaping up to be another banner season. This spring Hohokam Stadium will play host to 19 Cubs games and the

stadium is adding just over 400 seats to accommodate more fans. Individual game tickets for the 2009 Chicago Cubs home spring training games will go on sale Tuesday, January 6 at 10 a.m. CST on [www.cubs.com](http://www.cubs.com) and [www.tickets.com](http://www.tickets.com) and also by calling 1-800-905-3315. The ticket box office at HoHoKam Park will open for the sale of individual game tickets beginning on January 13, 2009 at 9 a.m. MST. Hohokam Stadium is located at 1235 N. Center Street. Box Office hours are Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Year over year, the Cactus League sets attendance records with the latest record of more than 1.3 million fans from the 2008 season. According to the Cactus League, more than half (57 percent) of those attending a spring training game in Arizona come from out-of-state to cheer on their hometown teams and out-of-state baseball game attendees spend approximately \$170 million in the state of Arizona annually with the league's total impact growing to an estimated \$311 million. For an updated automated message on Cubs Spring Training call: 480-964-4467. Additional information can be found at [www.HohokamStadium.com](http://www.HohokamStadium.com).

#### **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 January. The combined circulation of these placements is 8,461,530 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](mailto:Milt@visitmesa.com).

- AAA Midwest Co-op (all AAA Midwest Pubs)
- Arizona Office of Tourism Cactus League Insert
- Arizona Drive Guide
- Arizona Meetings & Events Annual Directory
- AZ Tourist News
- Canadian Traveller
- Experience Arizona Directory
- Group Tour Magazine
- National Geographic Traveler
- Native Peoples
- Packaged Travel Insider
- Recommend Magazine
- Southwest Airlines Spirit
- Sports Destination Management
- Student & Youth Traveler
- Trailer Life RV Directory
- True West
- US Airways Cactus League Issue
- Woodalls RV Directory

#### **MESA SUPPLEMENT FEATURED IN CANADIAN TRAVELLER**

For the fifth year in a row, the bureau commissioned a 15 –page supplement in Canadian Traveller, one of Canada's most widely-read travel trade publications. The supplement features Mesa and area attractions, spring training, events, golf, outdoor offerings and a whole section dedicated to new tourism developments. The monthly magazine offers in-depth coverage of travel destinations for people involved in Canada's travel industry and offers overviews of specific travel destinations from around the world as well as discussions on airline service, accommodations, transportation and sightseeing. To request a copy, contact Milt Fort at [Milt@visitmesa.com](mailto:Milt@visitmesa.com).

#### **COMMUNICATIONS NEWS:**

##### **PRESS RELEASES**

The following press releases are being distributed in December:

- CACTUS LEAGUE EXHIBITION OPENS JAN. 10 AT MESA HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
*Day of Play Planned as Baseball's Rich History is Celebrated*
- MESA CHOSEN AS FINALIST CITY FOR NCAA DIVISION II BASEBALL TOURNAMENT

#### TWO MEDIA MISSIONS IN FOUR MARKETS PLANNED FOR JANUARY

Next month, Director of Public Relations Michelle Streeter will partner with the Greater Phoenix CVB to host a media reception in Chicago in advance of the Cubs Convention. The event will focus on spring training travel and pitching deals to Chicago-area travel writers. In addition, Mesa was selected as a participant for the Arizona Office of Tourism Canada mission. More than 20 destinations entered a lottery to travel with the state office to Canada and participate in media receptions and press appointments. Only three destinations were selected and Mesa will be joined by Tempe and Sedona on the mission held Jan. 18 – 23. The event includes press receptions/tradeshows and appointments in Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver.

#### RECENT NEWS COVERAGE TOUTS MESA AS "PERFECT AND LESS EXPENSIVE"

This past quarter, Mesa has been featured in numerous national and international publications. Below is a list of recent publications featuring Mesa as a premier travel destination. To request copies of these articles, contact Michelle Streeter at [Michelle@visitmesa.com](mailto:Michelle@visitmesa.com):

- Western Group Tour Magazine, Summer 2008
- Discover Card's Discover EDGE, August 2008
- Meetings West, So Southwest, August 2008
- Canada.com, Arizona Rising, October 27, 2008
- Homes & Resorts (British Columbia), Snowbirds Fly the Coop, October 2008
- Southwest Airlines Spirit, Special Supplement: Raising Arizona, October 2008
- Meetings West, Cultural Desert, November 2008
- Canadian Traveller, Special Supplement, November 2008
- Smart Meetings magazine, Snapshot: Mesa, Arizona, November 2008
- RV West, November/December 2008

#### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: DEALS FOR CANADIANS

Michelle Streeter is seeking specials offered strictly to Canadian visitors this season. She will promote such deals during the planned Canada mission, Jan. 18 – 23 which includes tradeshows and media appointments in Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver. Please send your offering or value to Michelle by Jan. 12. [Michelle@visitmesa.com](mailto:Michelle@visitmesa.com).

#### SALES NEWS:

##### MESA CVB BEGINS TO TWEET ON TWITTER AND SECURE FANS ON FACEBOOK

Folks familiar with social networking site, Twitter.com, can now get Mesa messages on our weather, latest specials and new product offerings. The Mesa CVB has launched a page on the popular blogging site that allows users to send and view user updates. Asking the question "What are you doing?", subscribers are encouraged to share updates with others on a variety of topics. Since launching the [Twitter.com/VisitMesa](http://Twitter.com/VisitMesa) page last month, the bureau has garnered more than 190 followers and distributed more than 70 updates on items related to Mesa tourism. In addition, the bureau is following numerous organizations including media outlets, travel organizations and feeder markets with hopes to turn them into followers of the bureau's updates. In addition, the bureau created a Facebook page and is asking visitors, residents and industry partners to become fans of Mesa, Arizona. The page offers photos, video and updated content on Mesa happenings. The Facebook page is expected to go live next month. For

more on the bureau's social media efforts and to provide news or announcements to be featured on Visit Mesa's Facebook and Twitter pages, contact Director of Sales James Tevault at [James@visitmesa.com](mailto:James@visitmesa.com).

#### **WHERE WE HAVE BEEN**

##### **Leisure Sales: SUNNY ARIZONA FAM FEATURES MESA ATTRACTIONS**

Leisure Sales Manager Donna Cluckey hosted eight Canadian and US travel agents from CAA and AAA during the Sunny Arizona sales fam held Dec. 11 -14. The guests experienced a variety of attractions including Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, Az Museum of Natural History, Dolly Steamboat, Apache Trail Jeep Tour and could be seen strolling Main Street during MacFest. This is one of two tours scheduled annually as part of the Sunny Arizona marketing efforts with the City of Chandler and Tempe Convention & Visitors Bureau.

##### **Convention Sales: MODEL A FORD CLUB CONVENES IN MESA**

The Mesa CVB assisted the Model A Ford Group who held their annual membership meeting in Mesa earlier this month. The group attracted approximately 250 local and regional members at this year's event (held at Berge Ford). Six chapters attended including one from Canada. The group's sole purpose is to acquire, preserve, restore, exhibit, and make use of the Model A and AA Ford vehicles. They also encourage interest in literature, fashion, technical and historical information from this era.

The Model A Ford has been recognized as one of the world's top 10 automobiles of all time. The bureau addressed the group and provided welcome attendee bags filled with Mesa maps and guides. The bureau secured raffle items for this group featuring Mesa attractions and activities. For more information on how to be involved in welcome bags provided by the bureau, contact Pam Williams at [Pam@visitmesa.com](mailto:Pam@visitmesa.com).

##### **Sports Sales: MESA A FINALIST CITY FOR NCAA DIVISION II BASEBALL TOURNAMENT**

Mesa was selected as a finalist city to host the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Division II Baseball Tournament in 2009 and 2011. The Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau, City of Mesa, Grand Canyon University and the Phoenix Regional Sports Commission were instrumental in securing Mesa as a finalist. Hosting the tournament would bring eight teams to Mesa, nearly 250 student athletes and the potential of more than 1,000 out-of-state visitors. An estimated 1,300 room nights could be generated by hosting the tournament resulting in an estimated economic impact of \$750,000. For more information, contact Aaron Muth, Sports Sales Manager, Mesa Convention & Visitors Bureau at 480-682-3650 or [aaron@visitmesa.com](mailto:aaron@visitmesa.com).

#### **WHERE WE ARE GOING**

##### **Sports Marketing: ARIZONA BASKETBALL CHALLENGE HELD IN MESA**

For the second year, the Arizona Basketball Challenge presented by Tribune Varsity XTRA tips off December 26 at Mountain View High School. Arizona's premier holiday prep tournament welcomes 16 teams from around the country, including four teams ranked number one in their respective states. This year's tournament boasts several players who have already committed to Division I universities including University of Texas, Indiana University, Brigham Young University, and Arizona State University. For discounted tickets, and more information visit the tournament website at [www.ArizonaBasketballChallenge.org](http://www.ArizonaBasketballChallenge.org).

##### **Leisure Sales: MESA TO BE REPRESENTED AT ABA MARKETPLACE AND GO WEST SUMMIT**

Donna Cluckey will represent Mesa tourism offerings at the American Bus Association Marketplace, one of the best tour operator conferences in the country. Held Jan. 7 – 10, this year's event will be held in Charlotte, NC. The event provides buyers and sellers with the opportunity to meet one-on-one during pre-scheduled, seven-minute appointments. A variety of topical educational seminars and networking functions are also featured at the conference. In addition, the bureau will participate in the Go West Summit, Jan. 26 – 29 in Albuquerque, NM. The audience for this event is international tour operators and

wholesales interested in the products available in the 13-state region of the Western United States. Attended by European, Latin-American and Asian operators and receptive U.S. operators, this show also features pre-scheduled appointments, seminars and networking opportunities.

To stay informed and up-to-date on our planned efforts, [Click here](#) to view our **Tradeshow and Email Campaign Calendar**. Be sure to check back often as we update this program of work regularly.

#### **WEBSITE NEWS:**

VisitMesa.com is the bureau's online site promoting Mesa and all our tourism offerings. Below is website traffic for the month of November:

- Web visits: 49,335
- Requests for information (web, mail, phone): 141
- Hotel reservations on website: 6
- Room nights from reservations: 16
- Brochure downloads: 12,744
- Virtual Visitors Guide downloads: 263

#### **CONCIERGE CORNER:**

Welcome back to the Concierge Corner!! We are preparing for the New Year with new beginnings....What is the biggest buzz right now??? The new METRO light rail service starting later this month. Mesa is hosting the largest of the kick-off celebrations along the 20 mile route, with special concert headliner Grand Funk Railroad on December 27th. (*What a great way to keep with the theme*) I had the pleasure of taking a sneak peek (ride) last week with colleagues from other Valley CVB's and arts and culture based entities along the rail. The ride was very smooth and almost rocked me to sleep. For detailed information visit [www.valleymetro.org/rail](http://www.valleymetro.org/rail) or feel free to stop by the visitors center for brochures or newsprints.

Wishing everyone a fun & safe holiday season with friends, family and loved ones!

**SAVE THE DATE: MARKETING NETWORK JANUARY MEETING**

**JANUARY 16, 7:30-9:30AM**

**SALTY SENORITA – MESA**

**INVITATIONS WILL BE SENT SOON...**

For information on events, things to do and more in Mesa, Arizona contact Ginger St. Pierre, Concierge & Visitor Services Specialist at 480-682-3666 or [Ginger@visitmesa.com](mailto:Ginger@visitmesa.com).

#### **MEET YOUR CVB STAFF: Ginger St. Pierre, Concierge & Visitor Services Specialist**



Ginger began her 10 year stint for the bureau on July 5, 1998. As Concierge & Visitor Services Specialist Ginger is the front line "meet and greet" for visitors coming into the office. She answers questions about Mesa, as well as the surrounding area and the state. She is lovingly referred to as the "Office Know it All". Ginger is a long-time member of the National Concierge Association, Director of Marketing and currently serves on their board. Ginger is not an Arizona native but she is a Native American. Born in South Dakota, she and her family relocated to Mesa 25 years ago. She graduated from Red Mountain High School and attended Mesa Community College. Ginger enjoys music and live concerts in her time away from the office. It is not unusual for her to attend several concerts a month ranging from heavy metal to country favorites. Another interest of is belly dancing, she has taken classes for 3 years but to date has not showed off her talent here at the office.

Since living in Mesa for more than two decades, Ginger has seen many changes. She believes Mesa to be a community that stands out in a crowd, and a place where people can be excited to bring their friends and family.

**BY THE NUMBERS:**

**Arizona Office of Tourism's Research Section has been Updated (From AOT in Action: Dec. 15, 2008)**

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov). For additional information or questions, please contact Beth Billings, Research Specialist, at 602-364-3689 or via e-mail at [bbillings@azot.gov](mailto:bbillings@azot.gov).

- [Lodging Performance October 2008](#)
- [Lodging Performance October 2008 \(By County\)](#)
- [Gross Sales and Taxes September 2008](#)
- [Airport Passenger Volume September 2008](#)
- [Airport Passenger Volume October 2008](#)
- [National Park Visitation September 2008](#)

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As always, you can learn more about all the items featured in this newsletter on our website, [www.VisitMesa.com](http://www.VisitMesa.com).

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