

***“Telling our story”***

**Mat-Su CVB FY2018 Annual Report**





# A message from the Board Chairman

## FY18 Board of Directors

Cheryl Metiva  
Extreme Fun Center  
Chair

Karen Harris  
Alaska Garden Gate Bed &  
Breakfast

Mark Fleenor  
Sheep Mountain Lodge  
Vice Chair

Israel Mahay  
Mahay's Jetboat Adventures

Mark Austin  
Musk Ox Farm  
Treasurer

Cole Chambers  
Rust's Flying Service and K2  
Aviation

Roberta Warner  
Explore Tours  
Secretary

Fernando Salvador  
Talkeetna Alaska Lodge/  
Pursuit Collection

Craig Saunders  
Iditarod Trailside Lodging  
Past President

Collette Hand  
Alaska's Harvest Bed & Breakfast

*Our mission is simple ...*

# “GROW TOURISM”

It's been a pleasure to serve as the Chair of the Mat-Su CVB Board of Directors for a third year.

As Alaska has faced economic challenges, tourism has remained a bright spot, with growth experienced across many sectors of the industry. Many of you whom I've talked to have mentioned record years for your businesses as well. This is important as other industries have slowed.

In FY18, we commissioned the McDowell Group for an economic impact analysis for out-of-state visitors to the Mat-Su Borough. Those findings show just how vital tourism is to the overall local economy.

The analysis surveyed 2016 visitors and found that the Mat-Su Borough welcomed 391,000 out-of-state visitors who spent \$98 million directly. When factoring indirect spending, those visitors contributed \$133 in total economic output to the Borough's economy.

Tourism is also important because of the career opportunities it presents. The McDowell Group reported 1,700 tourism-related jobs in the Mat-Su Borough, which accounted for \$47 mil-

lion in labor income. That's money that circulates around our community and benefits us long after the visitors have gone home.

That's great news, but how did we get here? Marketing. The CVB staff and board tells our destination's story through an efficient and effective marketing plan. We tell that story to tour operators, international visitors, travel agents, meeting planners, general consumers and the travel media using a variety of strategies that are highly targeted.

We're particularly proud of the performance of our largest marketing investment, the web site. This tool is a direct link from the consumer to your business. We saw tremendous growth in FY18 in attracting visitors to the site and showing them why the Mat-Su is a premier visitor destination.

The staff and board thank you for your continued investment in membership with the Mat-Su CVB. We are passionate about our destination and sharing it with the world, and your support is instrumental in helping us accomplish our goals as an organization.



# MEMBERSHIP

*Through strong partnerships with our members,  
we help tell your story to visitors*

Your membership is important to the Mat-Su CVB. It allows the organization to provide you with marketing tools, as well as a voice in the industry. With one of the lowest membership dues in the state, your investment gets maximum value with Mat-Su CVB!

- ▲ Web site listing with photos, descriptions, links
- ▲ Affordable print advertising in the visitor guide
- ▲ Affordable advertising online at [www.alaskavisit.com](http://www.alaskavisit.com)
- ▲ Networking events to help build referrals
- ▲ Familiarization trips for tour operators and media
- ▲ Cooperative brochure distribution at five in-state shows and the Los Angeles Travel and Adventure consumer show.
- ▲ Advocacy on tourism-related issues both locally and statewide



*Hosted networking luncheons  
throughout the winter*

*Hosted successful evening networking event*

*Hosted Summer Kick-Off event*

*Annual Wine Tasting & Travel Auction Extravelganza*

*Launched member Extranet on web site*

*The Mat-Su CVB represents your interests through membership  
with the Alaska Travel Industry Association, U.S. Travel,  
Destinations International and Destination Marketing  
Association of the West.*





# MARKETING

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*We tell our destination's story far and wide, in a variety of ways, to maximize a return on investment. Online, in print, on the air or in person, we make sure the Mat-Su Valley's message is right in front of potential visitors*



## CONTENT CREATION

In FY18, there was a conscious effort to create new and original content that showcases the Mat-Su Valley as a premier visitor destination. We accomplished this through new and enhanced pages on our web site, including the launch of user-generated content; weekly blog posts; in-house production of videos on the web site and YouTube; and more in-depth use of social media. Using strong visuals helps strengthen the message that Mat-Su is a place you can't miss.

## ONLINE VISITORS

The first thing a potential visitor does is research a destination online. That's why it's important to not only have an informative and beautiful web site, but also market that web site so you stay in front of visitors. The Mat-Su CVB has a strategic web site marketing program that includes investment in search engine optimization and paid search engine marketing. This means that potential visitors will see your member listings more often, leading to more business.

### Social media statistics

|           | <u>FY18</u> | <u>FY17</u> | <u>Growth</u> |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Facebook  | 12,193      | 11,750      | 3.7%          |
| Instagram | 806         | 340         | 137%          |
| Twitter   | 922         | 825         | 11.7%         |

### Web site statistics

|                | <u>FY18</u> | <u>FY17</u> | <u>Growth</u> |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Total users    | 89,271      | 65,613      | 36%           |
| Total sessions | 111,573     | 82,747      | 35%           |
| Pageviews      | 203,740     | 179,434     | 13.5%         |



## TRAVEL TRADE & INTERNATIONAL

The Mat-Su CVB had one-on-one meetings with more than 50 tour operators and agents at the American Bus Association Marketplace and National Tour Association Travel Exchange. Between providing assistance and meeting on familiarization trips, we reached more than 30 additional tour operators in FY18.

International visitors stay longer and spend more in Alaska, so they are vitally important to the local tourism industry. The Mat-Su CVB partnered with the Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council and the Valdez CVB at IPW, the largest gathering of international operators in the U.S. We had appointments with more than 40 international tour operators and assisted three international familiarization trips with 22 attendees.

## TRAVEL MEDIA

Working with travel writers, bloggers and other media outlets allows us to showcase the destination to a wide audience. In FY18, we assisted journalists from Alaska Magazine, Northwest Travel & Life, NY Magazine, Food & Wine and AFAR, on a national level. Internationally we assisted German Roamers, a social media influencer, on their global campaign. And locally, we worked with outlets like the Frontiersman, Anchorage Daily News, KTUU and Alaska on the Go to provide specialized content that highlights the Mat-Su Borough as a “staycation” for residents.

# TRAVEL TRADE & MEDIA

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*Inspiring tour operators and travel agents from the U.S. and beyond is important - they tell the Mat-Su Valley's story to clients every day.*

*Writers, bloggers and broadcasters amplify our message to consumers*





## EYE TO THE FUTURE

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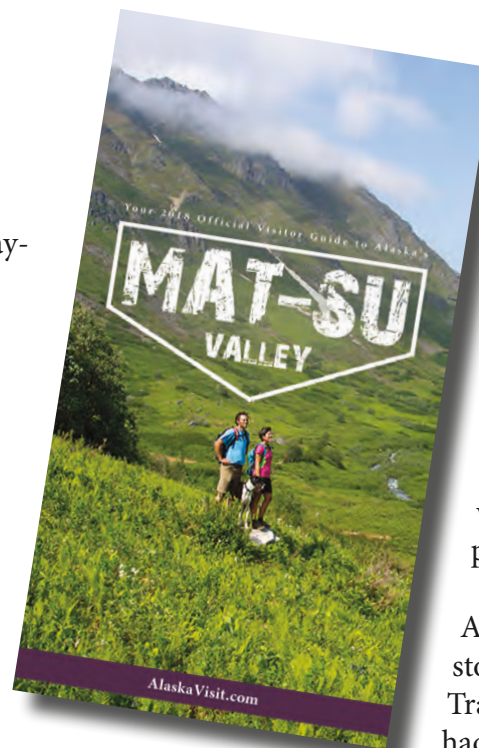
*This year, we formed the Mat-Su Visitor Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization, that will allow us to pursue grants and donations for the construction of the Gateway Visitor Center and other tourism infrastructure projects that will increase the visitor experience*



The Mat-Su Valley is Alaska's playground, so the in-state market is very important. We utilized a multimedia approach to the spring and fall shoulder seasons in a partnership with Alaska Grown. Four itineraries were developed, covering every corner of the Valley. Ads were placed in print, radio, online, social and television, and a social media photo contest increased engagement.

The Mat-Su CVB also had a booth at five in-state consumer shows, marketing to local Alaskans and their visiting friends and relatives.

### IN STATE & DOMESTIC VISITORS



In addition to the web site, the Mat-Su Visitor Guide is a great marketing tool to reach domestic travelers. Every member had a listing in the guide, and 100,000 were printed and distributed. Even in today's digital world, there is always a place for a printed visitor guide.

Additionally, we told the Mat-Su's story to attendees at the Los Angeles Travel & Adventure Show, where we had a booth. National advertisements were also placed in Alaska Magazine three times throughout the year, CVB members also received a discount on cooperative advertising.



## Statement of Financial Position (as of June 30, 2018)

### Assets

|                                  |                 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Current assets:                  |                 |
| Cash                             | \$27,525        |
| Membership and grants receivable | \$8,919         |
| Prepaid expenses                 | <u>\$43,732</u> |
| Total current assets:            | \$80,221        |

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Property and Equipment     |                   |
| Furniture and equipment    | \$73,716          |
| Accumulated depreciation   | <u>(\$61,740)</u> |
| Net property and equipment | <u>\$11,976</u>   |
| Total assets               | \$92,197          |

### Liabilities and net assets

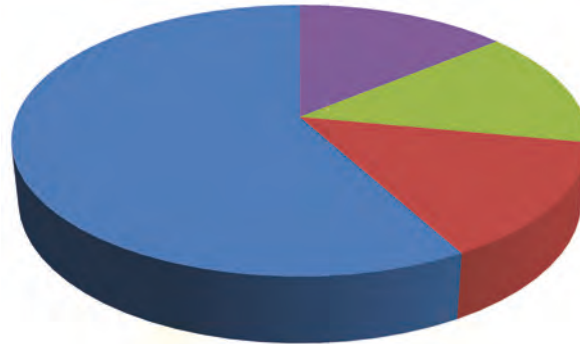
|                                  |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Current liabilities:             |                   |
| Accounts payable                 | \$31,009          |
| Payroll liabilities              | \$20,691          |
| Deferred revenue                 | <u>\$61,772</u>   |
| Total current liabilities        | \$113,472         |
| Unrestricted net assets          | <u>(\$21,275)</u> |
| Total liabilities and net assets | \$92,197          |

## FY18 Revenue Detail - \$842,211

|                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Bed Tax Grant Revenue          | \$715,000        |
| Membership Dues                | \$38,892         |
| Sales and Marketing Programs   | \$60,385         |
| Special Events and Fundraisers | \$26,186         |
| Interest                       | \$49             |
| Other                          | \$1,699          |
| <b>TOTAL REVENUE:</b>          | <b>\$842,211</b> |

## FY18 Expenses by Division

|                |           |     |
|----------------|-----------|-----|
| Marketing      | \$498,610 | 57% |
| Membership     | \$138,964 | 16% |
| Operations     | \$136,498 | 15% |
| Administration | \$103,521 | 12% |



# Fiscal Year 2018 Financials

*Per board policy, Mat-Su CVB's financial statements, accounting practices and reporting methods are audited every third year. The FY18 financial statements have been audited.*







**YAHOO!**  
**Mat-Su**

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