

Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau



Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report

Message from the Board Chair

To say the 2020 Fiscal Year was unpredictable is an understatement. A better term may be “roller coaster.”

We began the first quarter of the fiscal year in July 2019 with as much optimism as ever. Visitation was at an all-time high, and continuing to grow. Our businesses were filled, and we ended the summer season stronger than ever before. Building on that momentum, the Mat-Su CVB launched a winter in-state campaign that was performing well. Predictions for the 2020 summer season were very strong, and we were poised to have another record-breaking year.

Then, in February we all started hearing about the coronavirus in China. By March, it became apparent it was going to have a disruption to our industry. And as it continued to spread, it became obvious that the global pandemic was going to have a devastating impact to tourism in Alaska.

We’ve all managed to get through this, and I know it hasn’t been easy. Collectively we are stronger than individu-

ally, and that’s why the Mat-Su CVB’s efforts have been so important. As an organization, we were able to pivot and adapt quickly.

Throughout the last quarter of FY2020, the Mat-Su CVB shifted its efforts to provide members the resources, tools and information they needed to navigate a rapidly changing situation. They reached out to members to offer assistance, and just to check in with them. The board realized many members would be struggling financially, so we reduced our membership fee by 25 percent for FY2021 and extended membership by three months at no cost. We are committed to our members, and we are humbled by their support for the organization.

As an industry, as individual businesses and as an organization, we have brighter days ahead of us, and I look forward to the future as we rebound and lead the economic recovery.

Mark Fleenor is the Chair of the Board of Directors and owner of Sheep Mountain Lodge and Sheep Mountain Air.



FY20 BOARD

Board Chair
Mark Fleenor,
Sheep Mountain Lodge

Vice Chair
Roberta Warner,
Alaska Tour & Travel

Treasurer
Travis Taylor,
Premier Alaska Tours

Secretary
Israel Mahay,
Mahay’s Jet Boat Adventures

At-large Executive Committee Member
Cole Chambers,
Rusts Flying Service & K2 Aviation

Past Chair
Cheryl Metiva,
Extreme Fun Center and The Valley
and Kenai Cinemas

Fernando Salvador,
Alaska Collection by Pursuit

Rick Peterson,
McKinley Princess Wilderness Lodge

Dan Wilcock,
Alaska Backcountry Adventure Tours

Ina Mueller,
Lakefront Entertaining



Membership Report

MEMBERSHIP IS THE HEART OF THE CVB

Membership is the core of the Mat-Su CVB operations. In FY2020, we welcomed 19 new members to the membership for a total of 215. The CVB had a 90 percent retention rate. During the first three quarters of the fiscal year, membership events included monthly membership luncheons and the annual meeting. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in-person membership events were halted in March. Providing value to members is a priority and the CVB does that through cooperative marketing programs, member listings online and in the Visitor Guide, leads, advocacy, networking and resources.

Stephanie Nowers, Mat-Su Borough Assembly



Chair, Economic Impact Task Force



Mat-Su Borough Assemblywoman Stephanie Nowers led a webinar about the economic impact of Covid on May 20, 2020.

MEMBERSHIP WEBINARS

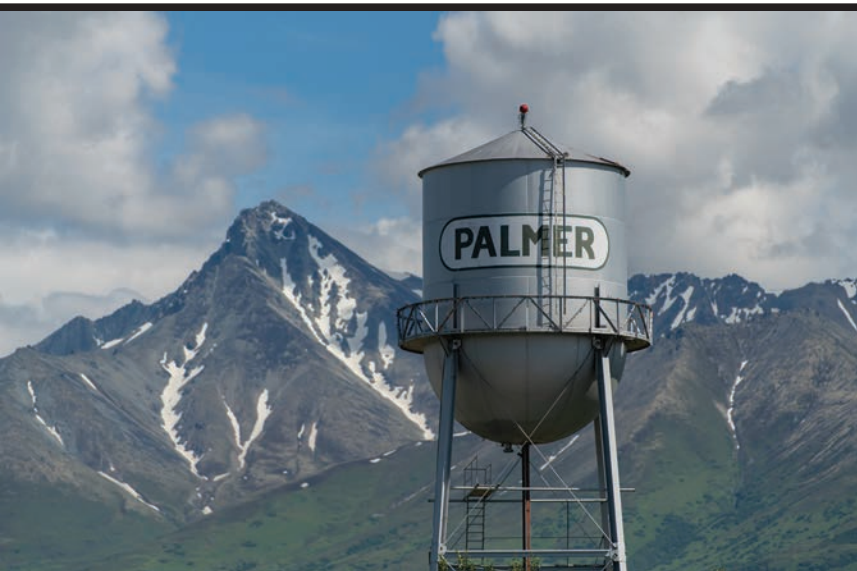
Covid-19 clearly posed challenges to everyone. In response to an ever-changing dynamic, the Mat-Su CVB offered webinars for members that covered a wide variety of topics, from assistance with disaster recovery loans to community spotlights. These webinars are available to view on demand on the Mat-Su CVB's YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/yahoomatsu).

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

Cooperative marketing programs make it affordable for members to reach large audiences. In FY20, the Mat-Su CVB offered a booth share at the Los Angeles Travel & Adventure Show, the country's largest consumer show. Additionally, Mat-Su CVB offered cooperative print advertising to members in national publications. (*The Mat-Su Outdoorsman Show, the Great Alaska Sportsman Show and the Fairbanks Outdoors Show were cancelled due to the pandemic.*)



Mark Austin of the Musk Ox Farm was the 2019 Tourism Angel award winner at the annual meeting in November 2019.



Marketing Report

A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH

Marketing the Mat-Su Valley as a premier visitor destination isn't a one-size-fits-all process. The Mat-Su CVB's marketing plan focuses on several key target markets, including domestic and international travelers, Alaskans and their visiting friends and relatives, travel journalists and group tours. We reach those markets through a variety of efficient programs and mediums. Covid-19 impacted marketing efforts as it became apparent visitation from outside Alaska would be negatively impacted. The Mat-Su CVB pivoted its focus to in-state residents in the fourth quarter of FY2020.

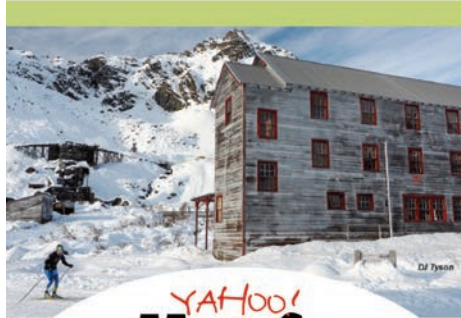
ALASKANS AND VFRs

The Mat-Su CVB targeted Alaskans and their visiting friends and relatives through two in-state marketing campaigns in FY20 - one in the fall of 2019 and a winter campaign in March 2020. These campaigns utilized digital ads, social media, radio, print ads and paid search engine advertising to drive visitors to a special microsite that highlighted Mat-Su Valley adventures for Alaskans. Unfortunately, the March campaign ended prematurely when travel mandates went into place. To keep the Mat-Su Valley top of mind during the quarantine, the CVB designed an online puzzle challenge contest and highlighted virtual tours.




The Mat-Su Puzzle Challenge highlighted destinations through an online contest held in May 2020.

WINTER IS AT ITS PEAK IN THE VALLEY!



YAHOO! Mat-Su

The Mat-Su Valley is the place to be in March! From fun events in Talkeetna all month to skiing at Hatcher Pass and snowmachine tours, winter is at its peak in the Valley!



Courtesy Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge

alaskavisit.com/winter



Marketing Report

A DIGITAL PRESENCE – www.alaskavisit.com

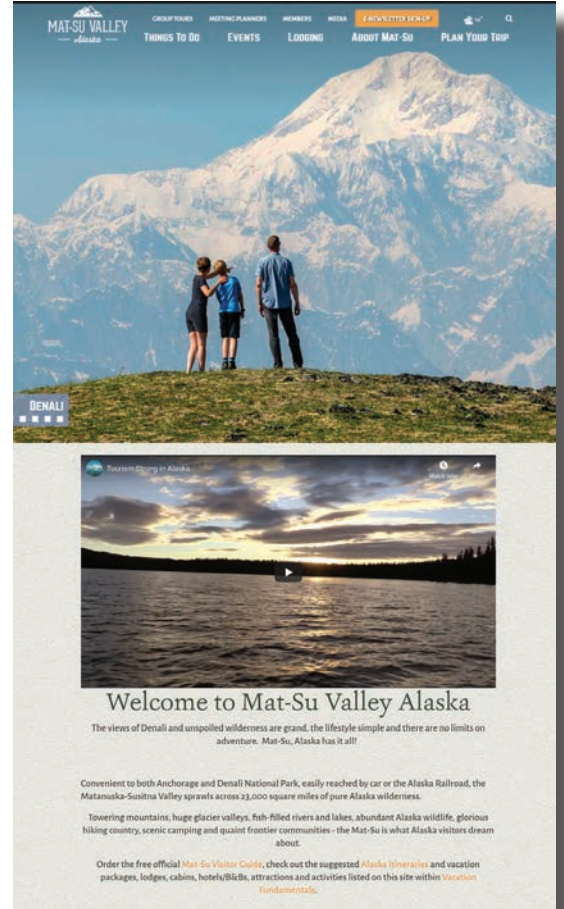
The largest marketing investment remains www.AlaskaVisit.com through content development, search engine optimization and paid search engine marketing efforts. In FY20, the site generated 131,000 sessions and more than 225,000 page views. New content, including a weekly blog, user-generated content and a robust calendar of events provides site visitors with trip planning information and referrals to member businesses.

E-MAIL MARKETING

In FY20, the Mat-Su CVB's e-mail marketing subscriptions more than doubled, to 2,200. Each month, subscribers receive an e-mail that highlights a Mat-Su destination, activity, event and blog links. This tool allows us to remarket to engaged potential visitors.

SOCIAL MEDIA – ENGAGEMENT

Reaching potential visitors on social media channels is important, and the Mat-Su CVB does this through multiple weekly posts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, using high-quality imagery and promoting all areas of the Mat-Su Valley.



Facebook
Visit Alaska's Mat-Su Valley



Instagram
matsuvallleyak



Twitter
@visitmatsu



YouTube
YahooMatSu



Marketing Report

TRAVEL TRADE

Promoting the Mat-Su Valley to tour operators and travel agents is important to growing visitation. In FY20, the Mat-Su CVB had more than 40 one-on-one appointments with operators during events held by the National Tour Association and American Bus Association. More than 3,000 visitor guides were also mailed to top-producing travel agents around the country. The Mat-Su CVB also provided assistance to agents and operators throughout the year.



Mat-Su CVB's Casey Ressler gives a presentation to tour operators at the NTA Travel Exchange event.



Mat-Su CVB's Casey Ressler and Bonnie Quill meet with a travel writer during the Alaska Media Road Show event.

TRAVEL MEDIA

Generating editorial coverage of the Mat-Su Valley helps promote our destination to potential visitors. The Mat-Su CVB attended the Alaska Media Road Show, with 25 personal appointments with national journalists. A highlight included the cover story in TravelAge West magazine in February 2020.

VISITOR GUIDE

In FY20, 100,000 copies of the Mat-Su Visitor Guide were published featuring trip planning advice, destination overviews and member listings and advertisements. The guide is also distributed to high potential leads purchased from the Alaska Travel Industry Association. Due to the pandemic, 15,000 guides were not mailed to these leads in March but will be distributed in late November 2020, in time for visitors to plan their 2021 visit.



Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Financial Position (as of June 30, 2020)

Assets

Current assets:

Cash	\$213,548
Memberships and grants receivable	\$150
Prepaid expenses	<u>\$20,942</u>
Total current assets	\$234,640

Property and Equipment

Furniture and equipment	\$73,716
Accumulated depreciation	<u>(\$73,716)</u>
Net property and equipment	<u>\$0</u>
Total assets	\$234,640

Liabilities and net assets

Current liabilities:

Accounts payable	\$49,318
Payroll liabilities & deferred revenue	<u>\$10,975</u>
Total current liabilities	\$60,293
Unrestricted net assets	<u>\$174,347</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	\$234,640

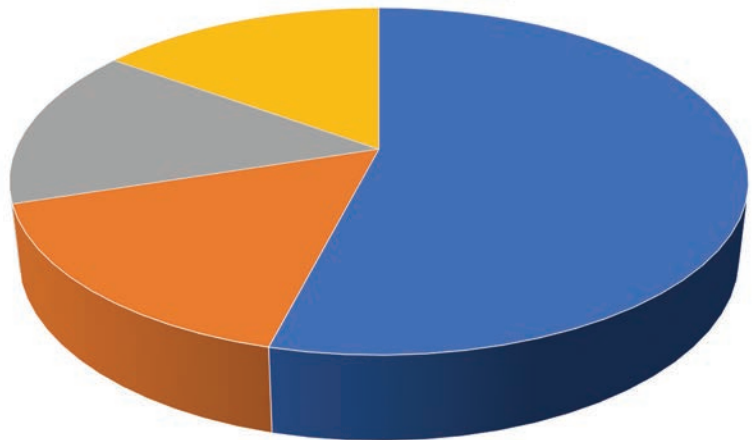
Per board policy, Mat-Su CVB's financial statements, accounting practices and reporting methods are audited every third year. The FY20 financial statements have not been audited.

FY20 Revenue Detail - \$1,039,262

Bed Tax Grant Revenue	\$928,443
Membership Dues	\$37,593
Advertising Sales & Marketing Programs	\$69,888
Special Events & Fund-raisers	\$3,285
Interest	\$53
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$1,039,262

FY20 Expenses by Division

Marketing	\$466,296	54%	■
Membership	\$140,146	16%	■
Operations	\$128,548	15%	■
Administration	\$129,792	15%	■





YAHOO!
Mat-Su

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