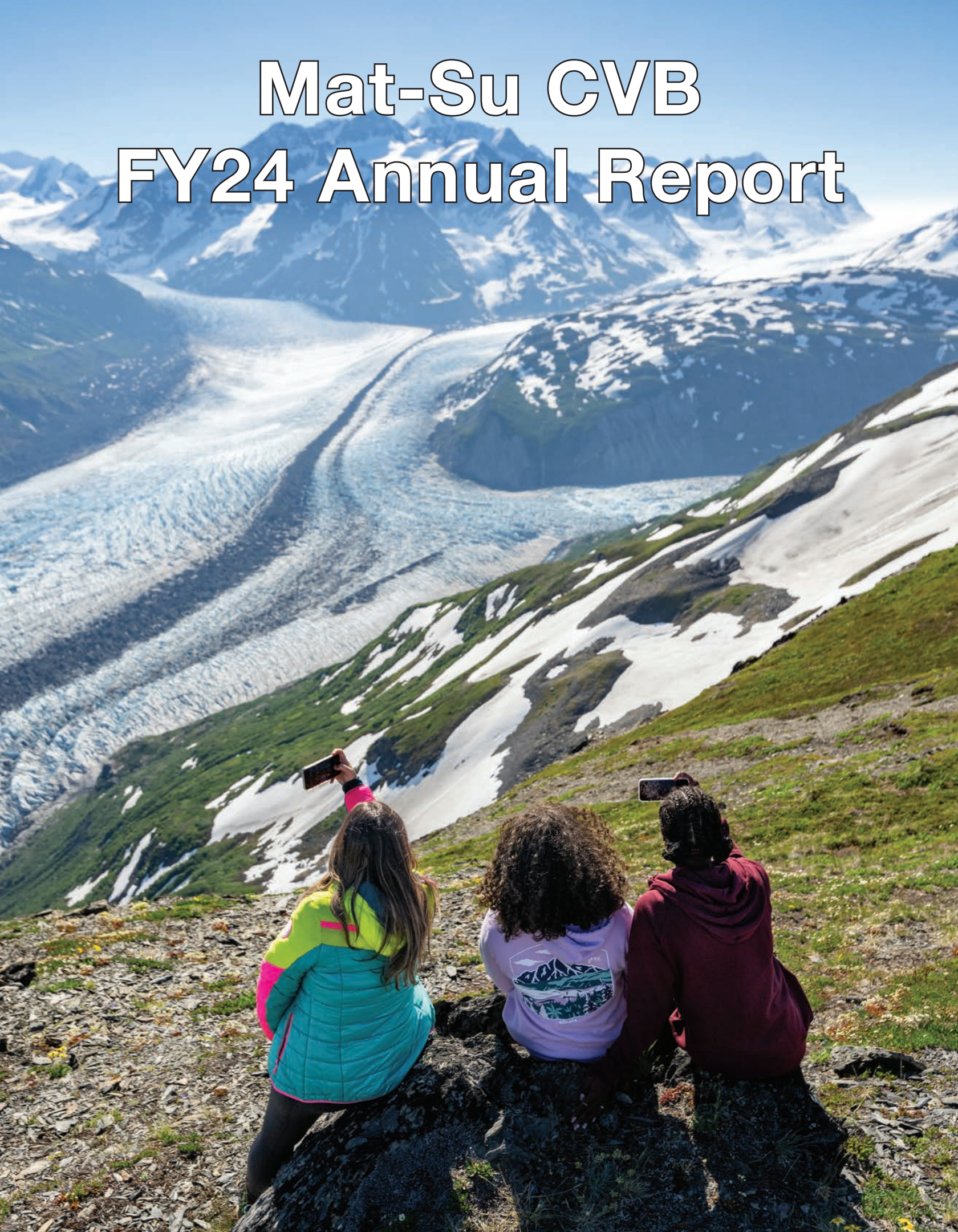


Mat-Su CVB FY24 Annual Report



From the Board Chair

“It’s not normal, but it is good.” In my experience in this industry I find myself repeating this often. The pandemic is in the past. Supply chain problems seem to be resolved. Even finding and keeping staff has returned to some equilibrium. Strong domestic travel fuels soaring visitor numbers while international visitation seems to be lagging. Travel preferences? Strong dollar? Politics? It’s hard to define in singular terms, but still good to see another very strong fiscal year. The new normal?



The Gateway Visitor Center still inches forward and much work lies ahead for us. Top of the list is the Board of Directors’ mandate to rebrand before the Gateway doors open. “Yahoo Mat-Su” had a good run. There is a nice ring to it, but what we need is a stronger sense of place. CivicBrand was a clear standout in a nationwide search for a firm to shepherd our branding project. Their methods have been fascinating. Defining the diversity of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, as seen through the kaleidoscope of geography, activity, opportunity, and personality, is no small chore. CivicBrand has proven itself up to the task.

Looking forward to FY25 take a moment to congratulate yourself on the role you play in one of the borough’s largest economic engines. The visitor industry brings, almost exclusively, outside dollars largely to small businesses who then circulate that money within the borough, improving the economy for all. I am very excited about our future and couldn’t be more happy to be on this journey with you.

FY2024 Board of Directors

Chair
Mark Austin,
Musk Ox Farm

Vice Chair
Kierre Childers,
Revel Treks & Tours

Treasurer
Travis Taylor,
Premier Alaska Tours

Secretary
Mark Fleenor,
Sheep Mountain Lodge

At-large Executive Committee
Roberta Warner,
Alaska Tour & Travel

Heather Dudick,
Alaska Railroad

Sam Dinges,
Alaska Trails

Mandy Garcia,
Salmon Berry Travel & Tours

Jennifer Brandon-Hanks,
Alaska Glacier Lodge & Alaska Helicopter
Tours

Jeff Curtis,
Alaska State Fair



More than just a logo

Mat-Su CVB partnered with CivicBrand on a comprehensive project to develop a brand identity for the Mat-Su Valley. Beyond just logos, tag lines and color schemes, this project aims at unifying the communities of the Mat-Su Valley with an identity that grabs visitor attention, but more importantly, cultivates pride among Valley residents. CivicBrand’s research extends into FY25 with a rollout expected in early 2025.

Promoting our destination to a national audience

The Mat-Su CVB placed display advertisements in national publications including AARP (right), Travel+Leisure (left), Outside (below) and Alaska Magazines, in addition to the state vacation planner.



2,462

Visitor Guide requests directly from national ads

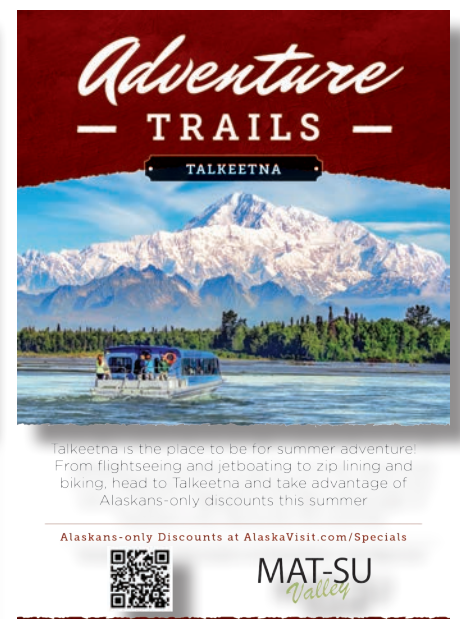
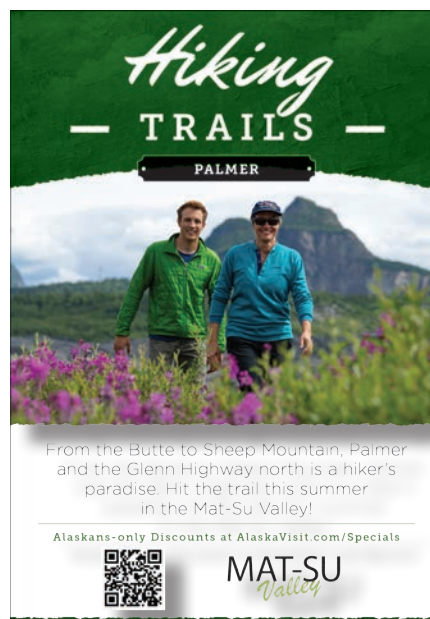
24%

Increase in e-newsletter subscriptions

Reaching Alaskans

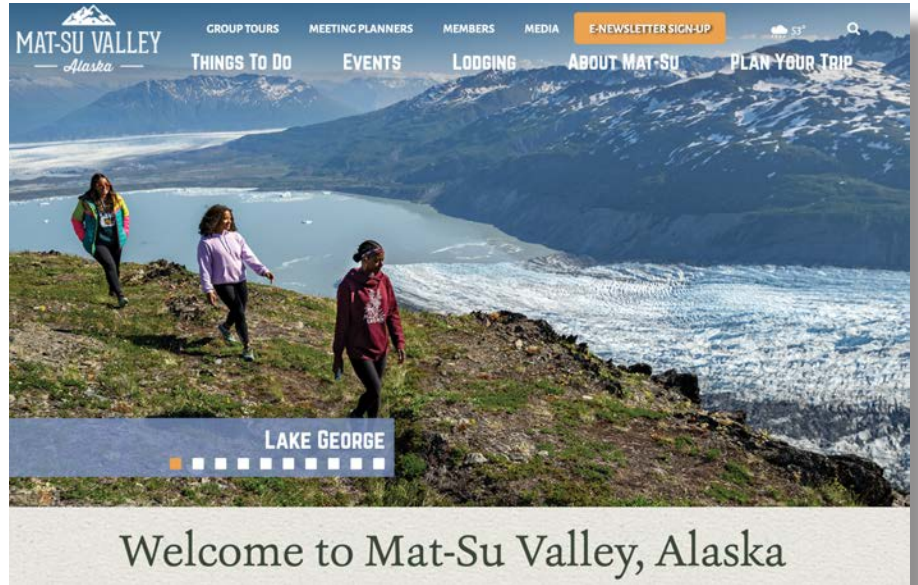
Alaskans and their visiting friends and relatives are an important market. Reaching them and influencing them to visit helps bring revenue to Mat-Su Valley communities.

The Mat-Su CVB reaches this market through geotargeted digital display ads, radio advertising in Southcentral, streaming television, geotargeted social media ad buys and at three in-state outdoor shows.



AlaskaVisit.com excels at engagement

AlaskaVisit.com continues to meet and exceed performance benchmarks. In FY24, site users averaged 1:13 spent on the site, higher than the industry average. This indicates engaging and useful content. The longer we keep user attention, the more exposure we generate for members. Mat-Su CVB invests in paid search engine marketing and search engine optimization with a focus on increasing the number of engaged sessions. In FY24, the engagement rate on AlaskaVisit.com rose to 69.4%.



69.4%

Engagement rate
(vs 67.5% in FY23)

226,706

Total unique
visitors

532,000

Page views

Reaching visitors through social media

1.5 million

Total reach across all
social platforms

47,500

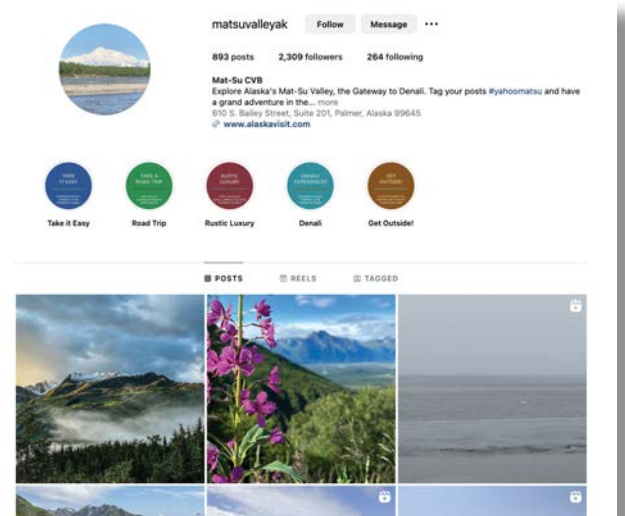
Interactions on
Facebook

11,300

Views on YouTube

People look to social media for travel inspiration, so having a strong presence is important. In FY24, Mat-Su CVB's social media reach was 1.5 million, with more than 47,500 engagements on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

A single ice cave image posted in March reached over 62,000 people!



Telling Mat-Su's story

Travel writers visiting our destination can inspire future visitors. In FY24, collaborations with national travel writers yielded coverage in publications like Travel Weekly and Hemispheres. Mat-Su CVB's work with David Amsden resulted in his Valley experience being published in Conde Nast Traveler with its 3.5 million readers. The piece even influenced the publication's choice to feature Matanuska Glacier right on the cover of that issue!

Numerous social media influencers have also highlighted our region. In FY24 we met with 25 leading national travel writers at Alaska Media Road Show, cultivating relationships with travel media.

We also promote activities and experiences to in-state readers through publications like the Frontiersman, Anchorage Daily News and the Alaska Travelgram.



Travel trade matters to the Valley

Packaged group tours represent a large portion of visitors to the Mat-Su Valley each year. This is why networking with tour operators nationwide is always a focus of Mat-Su CVB.

In FY24, Mat-Su CVB met with 27 tour operators at the American Bus Association Marketplace in Nashville, Tennessee.

Additionally, we coordinated with Alaska Travel Industry Association's FTI Touristik FAM tour in the Valley, meeting with 17 agents of key European operatives like Lufthansa Group.

Maintaining these partnerships motivates tour operators to showcase the Valley in their itineraries, which translates to thousands of visitors each year.

Mat-Su welcomes the Arctic Winter Games



The Mat-Su Valley hosted the 2024 Arctic Winter Games in March, welcoming more than 2,000 athletes and 4,000 visitors to the borough. The Games were a resounding success and an opportunity to tell our destination's story to an international audience. Mat-Su CVB was an integral part of hosting the Games, from serving on the Board of Directors to promoting the destination to attendees and providing information about accommodations, activities and attractions in the area. During the week-long event, Mat-Su CVB President & CEO Casey Ressler coordinated media efforts, providing more than 150 media assists from outlets around the world, including the United States, Canada, France, Italy and Norway. Mat-Su CVB also hosted a travel writer for the Games and assisted five social media influencers as part of a statewide itinerary.

Membership is the backbone of Mat-Su CVB

Providing tools for members' success

The success of the Mat-Su CVB relies on the success of our members, and that's why we provide a toolbox of resources, including cooperative advertising options, educational workshops, marketing programs and affordable digital marketing programs. We encourage you to take advantage of these!



265

Active Mat-Su CVB members

35

New members

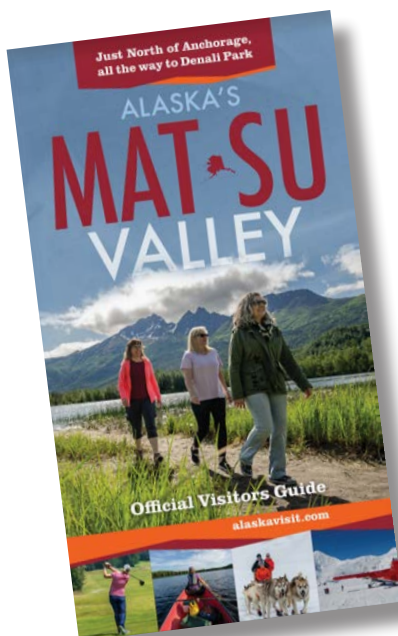
90%

Member retention rate

Networking events build partnerships

The Mat-Su CVB hosts several networking events throughout the year that lead to strong partnerships. In FY24, we hosted a Mat-Su Borough Candidate Forum, and member luncheons that covered topics such as the Alaska Long Trail and utilizing member benefits. Despite unexpected snow at the annual spring member barbecue, members gathered from every community for some productive networking ahead of the summer season.

Affordable marketing opportunities for members



The 2024 Mat-Su Visitor Guide is filled with trip planning information. This year, 75,000 copies were printed. Every Mat-Su CVB member received a complimentary listing. Display advertising in the guide is among the most affordable in Alaska! These guides are distributed throughout Alaska, to tour operators and travel agents, at consumer and trade shows and through direct requests. Additionally, advertising options on AlaskaVisit.com give members the opportunity to use Mat-Su CVB's investment in online marketing to broaden their reach and attract more web site visitors and customers.



Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Financial Position (as of June 30, 2024)

Assets

Current assets:	
Cash	\$198,693.42
Memberships and grants receivable	\$850
Prepaid expenses	<u>\$36,733.56</u>
Total current assets	\$236,276.98

Property and Equipment	
Furniture and equipment	\$77,144.79
Accumulated depreciation	<u>(\$74,096.80)</u>
Net property and equipment	<u>\$3,047.99</u>
Security Deposits	\$3,790.00
Total assets	\$243,114.97

Liabilities and net assets

Current liabilities:	
Accounts payable	\$37,049.36
Payroll liabilities, deferred revenue	<u>\$57,860.39</u>
Total current liabilities	\$94,909.75
Unrestricted net assets	<u>\$148,205.22</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	\$243,114.97

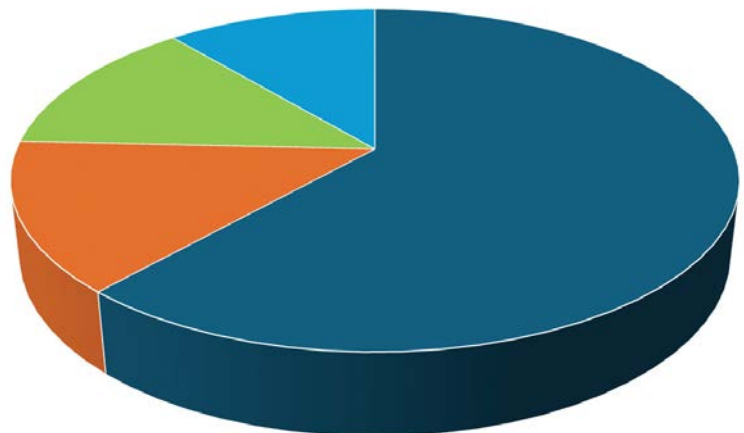
Per board policy, Mat-Su CVB's financial statements, accounting practices and reporting methods are audited every third year. The FY24 financial statements have been audited.

FY24 Revenue Detail - \$944,969.88

Mat-Su Borough Grant Revenue	\$800,000.00
Membership Dues	\$44,277.65
Advertising Sales & Marketing Programs	\$75,285.06
Special Events & Fund-raisers	\$25,101.37
Interest	\$305.80
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$944,969.88

FY24 Expenses by Division

Marketing	\$544,365.37	61%	■
Membership	\$128,887.58	14%	■
Operations	\$120,191.31	13%	■
Administration	\$99,096.74	11%	■



Contact us!

Casey Ressler, President & CEO

(907) 746-5037 casey@alaskavisit.com

Tasha Belka, Administrative Manager

(907) 746-5000 tasha@alaskavisit.com

Katie Reeves, Membership Manager

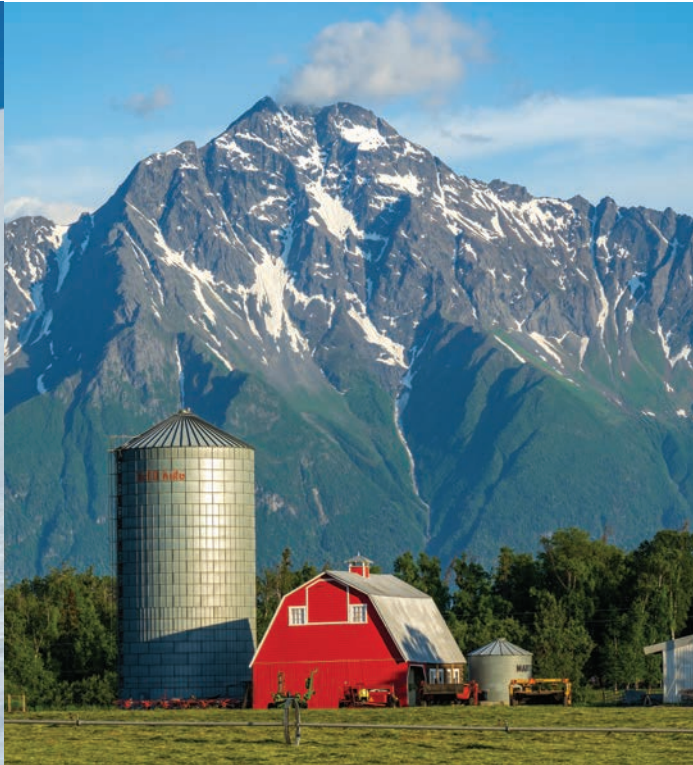
(907) 746-5001 katie@alaskavisit.com

Justin Saunders, Marketing &
Communications Mgr.

(907) 746-5032 justin@alaskavisit.com

Advocates for the tourism industry

The Mat-Su CVB staff serves on numerous boards of directors, both locally and statewide, advocating for the Mat-Su tourism industry and our valued members.



YAHOO!
Mat-Su

Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau
610 S. Bailey St., Suite 201
Palmer, AK 99645
(907) 746-5000

www.AlaskaVisit.com

