

The Bureau Bulletin

A publication of the Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau

Winter 2017

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Tourism generates \$98 million to Mat-Su Borough economy

Out-of-state visitors directly spent \$98 million in the Mat-Su Valley in 2016, which lead to a total economic output of \$133 million, according to a recently completed Mat-Su Borough Tourism Economic Impact Analysis released by the Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The analysis, performed by The McDowell Group, also found that the tourism industry provides employment to 1,350 people in the borough, accounting for \$34 million in labor revenue.

“Tourism is a vital part of the overall economy in the Mat-Su Borough. Tourism is one of the few industries in Alaska that has been growing, and the impact it has on our local economy cannot be

“Tourism is a vital part of the overall economy in the Mat-Su Borough. Tourism is one of the few industries in Alaska that has been growing, and the impact it has on our local economy cannot be understated.”

- Bonnie Quill, Mat-Su CVB

understated,” said Mat-Su CVB Executive Director Bonnie Quill. “Tourism provides employment opportunities, generates

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‘Stars of the Industry’ honored

The Mat-Su CVB honored several individuals, businesses and organizations at the November Stars of the Industry Awards Luncheon, held in conjunction with the annual business meeting.

Alaska Farm Tours earned the Cheechako Award, which is given to a young business that has not only survived, but thrived during the early years.

Owner Margaret Adsit also won the Chuck West Award, with a \$5,000 cash prize, at the Alaska Travel Industry Association convention in Kodiak in early October.

Hatcher Alpine Xperience, the nonprofit organization working to bring a ski lift to Hatcher Pass, was awarded the Spirit of Tourism. The group has been actively working to develop a downhill ski facility in Hatcher Pass, and recently was awarded a \$500,000 grant by the Mat-Su Health Foundation to purchase a lift. Louisa Branchflower from Hatcher Alpine



Nancy Dryden of the Alpine Historical Society accepts the Northern Lights Award from Jessica Winestaffer during the Nov. 9 Stars of the Industry awards luncheon.

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Mat-Su CVB
Board of Directors**

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From the president's desk

Board of Directors bringing by-law changes to the membership

As we get ready to head into 2018, the Mat-Su CVB Board of Directors is excited about the projects the organizations has completed in 2017, and about the future moving forward. In 2017 we implemented a far-reaching multimedia in-state campaign in partnership with the Alaska Grown organization, hosted a successful Tourism Summit and completed an economic impact study that shows just how important our industry is to the local economy.

Moving into 2018, we are asking the membership to consider some proposed by-law amendments, which will be voted on at the Feb. 16 membership luncheon at Evangelo's. These proposals come after thoughtful dialogue and discussion with our By-Laws Committee.

One proposed amendment came from the membership and recommends term limits for members of the board of directors. At a committee meeting, the issue was discussed at length. The consensus was to put before the membership for voting a proposed change that directors may serve three three-year terms consecutively, then they must step away for at least one full calendar year. Also, there is a provision in the proposed amendment that only two directors can term out at the same time, to keep board continuity strong.

A second proposed amendment would change the title of Bonnie Quill from Executive Director currently to

Chief Executive Officer. This change keeps the organization in line with others in the industry and better describes the professional responsibilities of this position.

The final proposal simply adds language to permit electronic voting, in order to stay in accordance with evolving technologies.

Members will have the opportunity to vote on these proposed changes at the very beginning of the Feb. 16 luncheon. We will open a special meeting to discuss the changes and vote on them, before starting our regularly scheduled luncheon. Please plan on attending this important meeting.

The board is also preparing for its annual planning retreat, which is set for Jan. 3-4 in Talkeetna. We will be discussing the priorities of the organization and coming up with an executable strategic plan to further the tourism industry and our members in 2018. As a board, we value your input. I encourage you to contact one of the board members and give any feedback you'd like to have discussed at the retreat.

Happy holidays to you and yours, and I wish you a safe start to 2018.

Cheryl Metiva (cheryl.metiva@akgrandview.com) is the executive manager of the Grand View Inn & Suites and the president of the Mat-Su CVB Board of Directors.



Cheryl Metiva

Happy holidays! The Mat-Su CVB office will be closed Dec. 25-Jan. 1 for the Christmas break, and Jan. 3-4 for the board retreat. We will reopen with regular hours on Friday, Jan. 5.

From the executive director

The power of travel promotion for destinations

Nearly every destination, whether a country, state, region or community, has a travel promotion budget that supports at a minimum a website and advertising. Tourism has become one of the biggest players in the world economy as rising income is boosting spending on travel and outpacing other sectors. And, destinations are using tourism marketing efforts to gain a share of the economic impact of these visitors. A recent updated U.S. Travel study, "The Power of Travel Promotion" highlights case studies and the significant return on investment in travel promotion. At the same time, examples of cutting travel promotion carries serious risks and consequences of losing market share to competing destinations.

This is the scenario the state of Alaska tourism promotion is facing with a reduction in state funding from \$16 million in FY2014 to just \$1.5 million in FY2017, a 90 percent decrease in just



Bonnie Quill

three years. The Alaska Legislature then mandated that the tourism industry develop a sustainable funding plan to reduce the reliance on state general funds.

The Alaska Travel Industry Association board and its members have worked to introduce legislation that would create the framework to initiate an Alaska Tourism Improvement District.

A TID is a voluntary program, established by state statute that allows businesses to vote to assess themselves for a specific purpose—such as tourism marketing. Benefits of a TID go to the payers or those businesses that are being assessed. SB110, the Travel Alaska Act has been introduced that would create the framework to initiate a TID. ATIA is working with legislators to have a similar bill introduced in the House. Once the bill passes, industry will have to vote to approve the assessment before it can be initiated.

ATIA has scheduled monthly TID

Question and Answer sessions that you can participate online or by phone to answer your questions and listen to your feedback about the proposed SB 110 Travel Alaska Act legislation. These sessions will be held monthly on each second Friday at 11 a.m. The next session is January 12. You can also review more information at the ATIA web site www.alaskatia.org

Mat-Su CVB and our members rely on a strong statewide tourism marketing program to create awareness of Alaska as a world-class visitor destination. Our new study on the Economic Impact of the Visitor Industry in the Mat-Su Borough (see page 1) details the direct and indirect spending of out-of-state visitors and the total employment and labor income impact.

The visitor industry plays a vital role in our borough economy, and numerous research studies confirm tourism marketing and the power of promotion is an investment in a highly competitive destination marketplace.

Bonnie Quill is the executive director of the Mat-Su CVB.

STARS: Local businesses honored at annual luncheon

Continued from Page 1

Xperience was on hand to accept the award.

The Tourism Angel Award was given to Travis Taylor of Premier Alaska Tours. Taylor served on the Mat-Su CVB Board of Directors in the past, and has long been a champion for Mat-Su tourism. At Premier Alaska Tours, he helps design tours that use Mat-Su businesses, and has been an advocate for the Mat-Su CVB, as well as participating on several committees.

The "It Happens" award, given tongue in cheek, was given to Karen Harris of Alaska Garden Gate B&B, after a series of unfortunate events this summer at her property. She never gave up, and still delivered amazing experiences to her guests.

The Northern Lights Award, given to a community or organization for their efforts in tourism promotion, was given to the Alpine Historical Society, for their work in showcasing the cultural and industrial histories of the Sutton area at the Alpine Historical Park.



Denise Hardy of the Reindeer Farm accepts the Gold Star Award from Dan McDonough.

The final award – the Gold Star Award – was given to the Reindeer Farm, for their overall contributions to the tourism industry.

The farm is celebrating its 30th season in Palmer, and owner Denise Hardy and her family have continually hosted events that benefit the community.



Gregg Talley of DestinationNEXT facilitates the Mat-Su Tourism Summit on Nov. 1 at Government Peak Chalet.

Tourism Summit provides road map for the future

The Mat-Su CVB hosted a Tourism Summit on Nov. 1 at Government Peak Chalet, bringing together more than 40 members, elected officials and community leaders to strategize and build a foundation for the future of tourism in the borough.

Gregg Talley, an international facilitator with DestinationNEXT, presented and led the discussion. DestinationNEXT also executed an industry survey in late 2016, and used those findings in the 2017 Summit.

“By bringing together all of our stakeholders – members, communities, government and nonprofit organizations, we realize that we all have a common goal of growing tourism,” said Mat-Su

CVB Executive Director Bonnie Quill. “We all have different priorities in how to accomplish that, and the summit was a great way to bring everyone together and hear from one another to learn and share dialogue.”

After presenting findings from the 2016 survey and showing how they compare to other destinations, Talley broke the attendees up into small groups.

Each group was tasked with identifying priorities and goals that ultimately would help grow the tourism industry in the Mat-Su Valley.

Infrastructure development, trails, community events and sustainable funding were all popular topics addressed by the

groups.

DestinationNEXT is a program administered by Destinations International that assesses destinations using a complex system of metrics and identifiable trends, and gives recommendations on how destinations can thrive and grow. They have performed destination analysis for more than 300 destinations in 18 countries.

“We are going to take the information from DestinationNEXT and the summit and incorporate them into our strategic plan,” Quill said.

For more information about the DestinationNEXT program, e-mail bonnie@alaskavisit.com.

Incumbents win re-election to board of directors

The membership of the Mat-Su CVB re-elected three incumbents to the board of directors in the October election.

Israel Mahay of Mahay’s Jet Boat Adventures, Roberta Warner of Explore Tours and Cole Chambers of Rust’s/K2 Aviation all were re-elected to serve their second three-year terms.

“Israel, Cole and Roberta have all made great contributions to the board, and we’re looking forward to having them back,” Mat-Su CVB Board President Cheryl Metiva said. “We had a great slate of

candidates, and I’d like to thank everyone who ran.”

Joining the three recently elected directors on the board are Cheryl Metiva of the Grand View Inn & Suites, Mark Fleenor of Sheep Mountain Lodge, Mark Austin of the Musk Ox Farm, Karen Harris of Alaska Garden Gate B&B, Collette Hand of Alaska’s Harvest B&B, Fernando Salvador of the Alaska Collection by Pursuit/Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge and Craig Saunders of Iditarod Trailside Lodging.

At the Nov. 9 organizational board meeting prior to the annual meeting, the officers were selected.

Metiva will continue as president for another year, Fleenor will continue as vice president, Austin will serve as treasurer and Warner will serve as secretary. Mahay was appointed as an at-large member of the executive committee.

The board of directors will hold its annual planning retreat Jan. 3-4 in the Talkeetna area. They will discuss priorities and strategies for the upcoming year.

2018 Mat-Su Visitor Guide available for members

The 2018 Mat-Su Visitor Guide was unveiled during the Nov. 9 annual meeting, and a copy was mailed to every member in late November.

This year's cover features two hikers on the Reed Lakes Trail in Hatcher Pass, as well as new photography throughout the guide.

"Even in today's digital world, there's still a place for a printed visitor guide," said Mat-Su CVB's Casey Ressler. "The 2018 guide looks great, and we're excited to get it in the hands of our visitors."

The Mat-Su CVB printed 100,000 copies of the guide. More than 50,000 guides are distributed to high potential

visitors identified through the state of Alaska and Alaska Travel Industry Association efforts. Copies are also distributed via direct requests to the CVB through the web site, as well as high traffic visitor centers around Alaska.

All members receive a free listing in the guide, and the opportunity to purchase display advertising at one of the lowest rates in Alaska.

"The visitor guide is a great value for members," Ressler said. "We get these guides in the hands of visitors who are planning their Alaska vacation. Having your business right in front of these visitors is a great opportunity."

Guide distributed to national travel agents

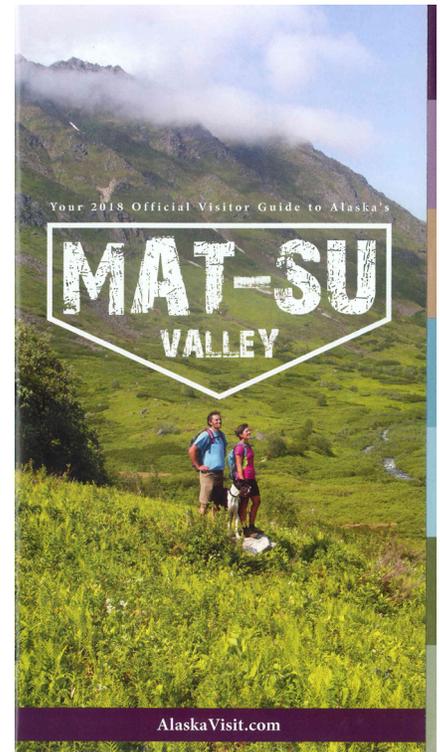
The Mat-Su CVB is participating in the Alaska Travel Industry Association's travel agent mailing program, meaning members will have their information in front of the 3,000 high producing travel agents this planning season.

The program offers distribution of the Mat-Su Visitor Guide in a coordinated mailing to 3,000 travel agents around the country.

"It's a good opportunity to reach a

targeted audience of agents," explained Mat-Su CVB's Casey Ressler. "Agents use the Alaska mailing as a reference when working with clients while planning."

Typically, destination marketing organizations, hotels, lodges and tour operators participate in the program. All of the collateral from participating organizations is compiled into one Alaska package that is distributed to the agents through a mail house in Arizona.



The Mat-Su Visitor Guide was designed by Brilliant Media Strategies in Anchorage. The Mat-Su CVB is participating in an ATIA program to distribute 3,000 guides to national travel agents.

Co-op marketing offered at upcoming consumer shows

The Mat-Su CVB is offering brochure distribution at four in-state consumer shows this spring, as well as the opportunity to have your collateral distributed at the nation's largest travel show in Los Angeles.

Brochure distribution is affordable – just \$25 per show – and a great way to reach a large audience. The Mat-Su CVB is offering a special of \$100 that includes all five shows.

The Mat-Su CVB will have a booth at the Los Angeles Travel and Adventure Show in late February. If you'd like to be in the Mat-Su CVB booth, there's an opportunity for up to three members to participate for \$250. In order to share the booth, your product or tour must take place in the Mat-Su Valley.

"This is the largest consumer travel show in the country, so our members' brochures will reach a highly qualified national audience" Mat-Su CVB's Casey Ressler said. "These are motivated travelers."

In addition to the Los Angeles show, the Mat-Su CVB will have a booth at the Mat-Su Outdoorsman Show, the Great Alaska Sportsman Show, the Fairbanks Outdoors Show and the Alaska Summer Showcase (in Anchorage).

Giveaways are also needed at the four Alaska shows. If you'd like to donate a tour or a gift certificate, the Mat-Su CVB will distribute your rack card for free at that show, and your name and logo will appear on a table-top display.

Members can download the cooperative marketing sign-up by clicking <http://bit.ly/2BFUJGh>.

Co-op marketing opportunities

Los Angeles Travel & Adventure Show
Feb. 23-25, Los Angeles Convention Center
\$250 booth share available

Mat-Su Outdoorsman Show
March 23-25, Menard Center

Alaska Summer Showcase
Actual date TBA, Alaska Native Heritage Center

Great Alaska Sportsman Show
April 5-8, Sullivan Arena

Fairbanks Outdoors Show
April 20-22, Carlson Center

Brochure distribution is available at all consumer shows in 2018 for \$25 each, or \$100 for all five.

New 'Extranet' a great tool for Mat-Su CVB members

The new Mat-Su CVB Extranet gives members the power to update their listings, see their membership benefits in action, post messages to other members and access reports, giving them more power than ever before.

The extranet is the member log-in portal and can be accessed at <https://mat-su.extranet.simpleviewcrm.com/login>. If you don't have a username or password, members can contact Justin Saunders at justin@alaskavisit.com to gain access.

Members are encouraged to log in to the extranet and explore the new offerings. Through the portal, members can add their amenities, add images for their member listing pages, provide descriptions and other options that make listings stand out. There are also sections where members can access past Mat-Su CVB documents, links to industry research and more.

"The extranet is a powerful tool for members, and I encourage everyone to get on there and take a look," Saunders said. "We're developing training videos for the extranet as well. I'd love to sit down with members and give them a hand in putting these tools to work for them."

One feature members can utilize is access to Mat-Su CVB leads. When someone requests a visitor guide on the

Mat-Su CVB website, it creates a lead. On the new extranet, all of those leads are collected and available for download in one easy step.

"These are visitors who are engaged and want more information from our members," Saunders said. "With one click, you have access to all of their contact

information and what they are interested in. It's a very powerful benefit, and it's absolutely free with membership. I highly encourage everyone to take advantage of the leads program."

For more information on the extranet, contact Saunders at 746-5032 or justin@alaskavisit.com.

Save the date!

Circle your calendars, because it's almost time for the Mat-Su CVB Wine/Beer Tasting Travel Auction ExTRAVELganza.

The popular event will take place April 13 at Evangelo's, and the planning stages are just beginning. Donation request forms and sponsorship opportunities have already been mailed, and stay tuned for and ticket options.

The auction is the largest fund-raiser of the year for the Mat-Su CVB, and a good time to boot. Donations range from cruises to coffee cards, and just about everything in between. Typically, tourism businesses from around Alaska have donated tours, overnights and activities to the auction.

"There are some great deals on great activities," said Mat-Su CVB's Justin Saunders.

The MTA/Alaska Airlines Luggage Tag raffle is back once again. For \$20, people get a luggage tag and an entry into the raffle for two round-trip Alaska Airlines tickets. You don't have to be present to win the luggage tag raffle. Tickets for the raffle are already available.

For more information about the travel auction or if you are interested in donating or sponsoring, interested members can contact Saunders at 746-5032 or justin@alaskavisit.com.

Member events include ATIA workshop, TID update

Mat-Su CVB members are invited to attend a special interactive workshop featuring the Alaska Travel Industry Association as part of the January membership luncheon.

ATIA's Tanya Carlson, Director of Partnerships and Travel Trade, will be presenting an interactive workshop about the power of packaging – how it works, why it's beneficial and how your business can grow by working with others.

"We offer a marketing workshop through ATIA to our members every year, and it's very beneficial," said Justin Saunders, Mat-Su CVB's membership manager. "These are designed to learn about opportunities for small businesses to grow and succeed."

The workshop is set for Jan. 19 at noon at Turkey Red in downtown Palmer.

February's luncheon, set for Feb. 16 at Evangelo's in Wasilla, will be an update from Sarah Leonard of ATIA about implementing a Tourism Improvement District (TID) to fund state tourism marketing. Prior to the meeting, a special business session will be called to vote on proposed by-law amendments (see Page 2).

There is no cost to attend the workshop or the luncheon. Meals can be purchased directly from the restaurants however. To RSVP, contact Saunders at justin@alaskavisit.com.

Travel trade targeted at NTA, ABA

The Mat-Su CVB is attending two travel trade conventions that include appointments with domestic tour operators who offer Alaska product.

In mid-December, the Mat-Su CVB attended the National Tour Associations' Travel Exchange event in San Antonio, and in late January will be attending the American Bus Association Marketplace event in Charlotte, N.C.

At both events, Mat-Su CVB's Casey Ressler has prescheduled appointments with tour operators.

"It's a great opportunity to reach a lot of operators at once, with one-on-one meetings," Ressler said. "When you

think that each operator has potentially hundreds of clients, you really are reaching a wide audience in one spot."

All of the meetings are highly qualified, since the computer scheduling system allows attendees to research operators before requesting an appointment.

"Attending the NTA and ABA conventions are highly efficient ways to get a good return on investment in the travel trade segment," Ressler said. "It helps build relationships with buyers who want to grow their Alaska product."

Leads from both the NTA and ABA conventions will be available to members in early February.

FROM DOWN UNDER TO TALKEETNA



The Mat-Su CVB hosted four travel agents and tour operators from New Zealand and Australia in Talkeetna in mid-October as part of a statewide trip that included Visit Anchorage and Explore Fairbanks. After eight days in Alaska, Kelly Millard of Hello World Travel in Australia e-mailed that it was "the most amazing trip I've ever experienced" and that the experience is "literally changing my life with this trip." Familiarization trips such as this one are a great way to give agents and operators the experience so they are inspired to sell the destination to their clients.



AK Magazine co-op advertising available

Mat-Su CVB members can take advantage of discounted advertising in Alaska Magazine in 2018 thanks to a cooperative marketing program.

Mat-Su CVB has committed to advertising in three issues, beginning with the March 28 issue, and in return Alaska Magazine is offering discounted rates to CVB members for the cooperative advertising pages. Ad rates on the co-op pages are discounted up to 25 percent for members.

"Many of Alaska Magazine's readers are high-potential visitors, and through the CVB's participation, we were able to secure affordable rates for our members," said Casey Ressler of the Mat-Su CVB.

According to Alaska Magazine, its readers spend more than \$4,000 on their Alaska vacations, and more than 60 percent of its readers plan to visit Alaska within the next three years. Ninety percent of their readers live in the Lower 48, including 36 percent in the West, which is one of Alaska's biggest markets.

All ad sales and ad design are being handled directly by Alaska Magazine's Melissa Bradley. Members interested in this cooperative advertising opportunity can contact her direct at (907) 317-1114 or via e-mail at Melissa.bradley@alaskamagazine.com. The deadline for the March 2018 issue is Dec. 29, 2017. The others are May and December.

News from the membership

For the second year in a row, the **Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge** will be open in March, coinciding with the start of the Iditarod. The lodge will be open March 2-19, 2018 for guests, with limited food and beverage options. Reservations can be made at www.talkeetnalodge.com.

Alaska Farm Tours was honored with the Chuck West Award at the Alaska Travel Industry Association state convention in Kodiak in October. The award honors new entrepreneurial pioneers in the tourism industry and comes with a \$5,000 cash award. Owner Margaret Adsit also appeared in the "Shark Tank" event at the convention, presenting her pitch for a new Taste of Talkeetna tour to tourism leaders who back new projects with capital. She was awarded \$2,000 in that event. To learn more about Alaska Farm Tours, visit www.alaskafarmtours.com.

Alaska Backcountry Adventure Tours is offering winter tours

in new heated side-by-side ATVs, in addition to their snowmobile tours. Snow conditions permitting, Alaska Backcountry Adventure Tours will offer their popular Knik Glacier ATV tour and the 3-hour Glacier View tour in the new heated side-by-sides. For more information, visit www.youralaskavacation.com.

Salmon Berry Tours is pleased to announce a new Mat-Su tour offering, "Mountains and Musk Ox." The five-hour tour starts with a visit to Independence Mine State Historical Park in Hatcher Pass. In summer, there will be a short walk through the old mining town. In fall and winter, there will be a short scenic walk in Hatcher Pass. The tour then continues to the Musk Ox Farm. A farm-to-table style meal is included at a locally owned and operated restaurant. On the drive back to Anchorage, guests enjoy complimentary snacks and bottled glacier wellness water as well as continued commentary by a local guide. For more information visit www.salmonberrytours.com.

Welcome these new members

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www.thrivelydigital.com
Kristen Lindsey

The Gathering Place
thegatheringplace2b@gmail.com
thegatheringplaceak.com
Sonja Stavenjord

Talkeetna Chalet
info@talkeetna chalet.net
talkeetna chalet.net
Dave Manning

Mat-Su CVB sponsoring Employer Expo in March

The Mat-Su CVB is proud to sponsor the 2018 Mat-Su Employer Expo, which is set for March 14.

Last year, the expo drew 675 job seekers and matched them with almost 100 Mat-Su employers from all sectors of the economy, including tourism. Members recruiting for employees are also encouraged to attend the free expo.

The Mat-Su Employer Expo is hosted by the Mat-Su Job Center and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. There is no cost for employers to have a booth at the expo, and last year, several Mat-Su CVB members took advantage and had a booth.

For more information, contact Joseph Knowles at 352-2505.

Join a committee

Are you interested in making a difference and help guide the local tourism industry? We invite you to join one of the Mat-Su CVB committees.

The Internet Committee focuses on the website and development projects; the Marketing Committee makes recommendations about marketing programs; and the Membership Committee helps with luncheon topics, member programs and more.

Committees typically meet a few times a year. If you are interested in serving, please contact Casey Ressler at casey@alaskavisit.com or Justin Saunders at justin@alaskavisit.com.

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"yhoomatsu"
Channel



Instagram
matsuvallyak

Important upcoming dates

Dec. 13-18	National Tour Association Travel Exchange Mat-Su CVB will attend and take appointments	San Antonio
Dec. 25-Jan. 1	Mat-Su CVB office closed for the holidays	
Jan. 3-4	Mat-Su CVB Board Retreat	Denali Overlook Inn
Jan. 19	Mat-Su CVB Marketing Workshop with ATIA Tanya Carlson of ATIA will be presenting a workshop on packaging opportunities.	Turkey Red, Noon
Jan. 26-31	American Bus Association Marketplace Mat-Su CVB will attend and take appointments	Charlotte, NC
Feb. 16	Mat-Su CVB February luncheon Tourism TID Update - Sarah Leonard, ATIA	Evangelos, Noon
Feb. 23-25	Los Angeles Travel & Adventure Show Mat-Su CVB will have a booth	Los Angeles
March 23-25	Mat-Su Outdoorsman Show Mat-Su CVB will have a booth	Wasilla
April 5-8	Great Alaska Sportsman Show Mat-Su CVB will have a booth	Anchorage
April 13	Mat-Su CVB Travel Auction and Wine Tasting ExTRAVELganza	Evangelos, 6 p.m.
April 20-22	Fairbanks Outdoors Show Mat-Su CVB will have a booth	Fairbanks

IMPACT: \$98 million

Continued from Page 1

revenue for our communities and provides infrastructure that benefits residents.”

The analysis only studied out-of-state visitors to the Mat-Su Borough. In the report, it is estimated the economic impact for all visitors, including Alaskans who visit the Mat-Su Valley, is closer to \$160 million. In 2016, 391,000 out-of-state travelers visited the Mat-Su Borough, and 89 percent of them came May-September.

The largest spending categories were food/beverage (\$27 million; 28 percent); lodging (\$23 million; 23 percent); and tours/activities (\$23 million; 23 percent).

Transportation expenses, which include rental cars and fuel purchases, represented \$17 million and 17 percent. Gifts, clothing and souvenirs represented \$8 million.

Visitor spending directly generated 1,350 full- and part-time jobs and \$34 million in labor income, according to the report. Food/beverage accounted for 33 percent of employment; lodging accounted for 31 percent; tours/activities accounted for 21 percent; transportation accounted for 10 percent; and gift and retail purchases accounted for 4 percent.

“Those dollars spent by visitors cycle throughout the Mat-Su Borough economy, creating a positive economic impact on our community that is felt across all sectors,” Quill said.

To download a complete copy of the report, click <http://bit.ly/2BUN1Lf> or go to www.alaskavisit.com and click on members, and then membership programs.

AlaskaVisit.com statistics

January 1 - Dec. 20, 2017

Total sessions

90,259

(36 percent increase over 2016)

Unique users

72,600

(35 percent increase over 2016)

Page views

183,573

(9 percent increase over 2016)

*From all of us at the Mat-Su CVB, we hope
you and yours have a safe and joyous
holiday season, and we look forward to a
prosperous new year!*

Bonnie Quill

Neil Campbell

Casey Ressler

[Signature]

YAHOO!
Mat-Su

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