



Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau FY2017 Annual Report



Letter from the President of the Board

It's been my pleasure to serve as the president of the Mat-Su CVB Board of Directors for a second year. Our staff and board has worked diligently this past year to continue the CVB's mission to "Grow Tourism."

Tourism continues to be a bright spot in both the state and the borough's economies. This is important to recognize, because as Alaska has suffered through a fiscal crisis, tourism has still been a leading contributor to economic development.

The importance of an efficient and effective destination marketing organization is more important today than ever before. With competition high among destinations everywhere to attract visitors, it's vital that we are out there talking about why the Mat-Su Valley is a premier visitor destination.

Our marketing plan is comprehensive and highly targeted. We've continued to make the web site our top

investment, and last year we reached more than 80,000 potential visitors through it. We've also invested in marketing to tour operators and travel agents, international visitors, travel media and meeting planners. In FY2017, we also launched an all-new in-state campaign in partnership with the Alaska Grown organization to reach Alaskans and highlight the Mat-Su Valley as a great place to play in their own backyard. These programs maximize our return on investment and allow us to tell our story to our target markets in a meaningful way.

Your support as members in our mission to "Grow Tourism" is important. We are cultivating a vibrant tourism industry in the Mat-Su Borough, and that's through the hard work of the Mat-Su CVB, our partners and our communities. Together, we can continue to make tourism a leading industry for the Mat-Su Borough and all of Alaska.



**Cheryl Metiva,
Mat-Su CVB
Board President**

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Grand View Inn & Suites

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Explore Tours

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Israel Mahay,
Mahay's Jet Boat Adventures

Board Members

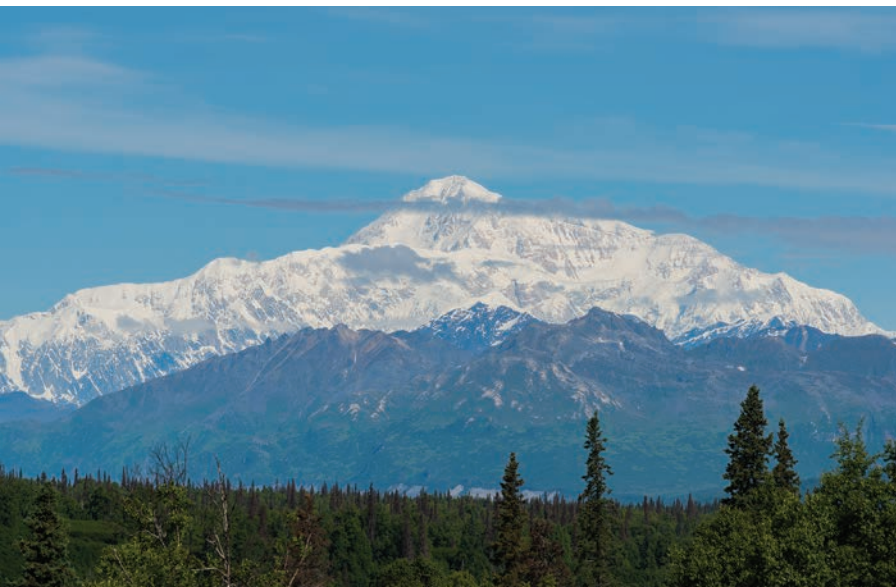
Cole Chambers,
Rust's Flying Service/K2 Aviation

Collette Hand,
Alaska's Harvest B&B

Karen Harris,
Alaska Garden Gate B&B

Fernando Salvador,
Alaska Collection by Pursuit

Craig Saunders,
Iditarod Trailside Lodging



Creating jobs, industry advocates, driving economic development

Tourism is a vital part of the Mat-Su Valley's economy, and in FY2017, the Mat-Su Borough collected an all-time high of \$1.206 million in bed taxes, which was a slight increase from FY2016. Since 2010, the Mat-Su Borough bed tax collection has increased by 28 percent. Those are dollars that help fund tourism infrastructure projects and further market the Mat-Su Valley as a premier destination, leading to job creation, tax revenue for our communities, payroll and much more.



Mat-Su CVB advocates on tourism-related issues and provides cooperative marketing opportunities to more than 200 members. Throughout the year, we hosted several membership events including a Mat-Su Borough Candidate Forum, a DestinationNEXT workshop and luncheons that featured tourism topics. The staff of the Mat-Su CVB also served on the board of directors for the Palmer Chamber of Commerce, the Talkeetna Chamber of Commerce, the Alaska Travel Industry Association, the Alaska Tourism Marketing Board and Destination Marketing Association of the West.



Telling the Mat-Su

... to the world

Research has shown that international visitors stay longer and spend more per day than their domestic counterparts, so reaching them is important. The Mat-Su CVB attended two international travel events in FY2017 - ITB in Berlin (the world's largest travel trade event), and the International Pow Wow in Washington D.C. At these two international events, the Mat-Su CVB met with more than 100 international tour operators and travel journalists, providing them with information about the Mat-Su Valley.



... to Alaskans

In-state Alaskans, and their visiting friends and relatives, is one of the Mat-Su Valley's prime markets. In FY2017, we reached them through promotion on television, radio, in print and online. We also attended the PFD Fair in October in Anchorage, outdoor shows in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Wasilla, as well as the Summer Showcase in Anchorage, distributing more than 2,000 visitor guides, as well as offering co-op brochure distribution to our members. In the spring of 2017, the Mat-Su CVB launched an all-new in-state marketing campaign through a partnership with Alaska Grown. The four-week campaign included more than 2 million impressions online, more than 40,000 YouTube views on destination videos and an increase in traffic to the web site by 89 percent over the same time period in 2016.



Mat-Su Valley's story ...

... online



Having a strong web site - and a strong digital marketing strategy - is vitally important in marketing our destination. In FY2017, we had 82,747 sessions on www.alaskavisit.com. That's a 17.3 percent increase from FY2016. There were 179,434 page views, where people found member listings, suggested itineraries, events and much more. Investing in the web site remains the CVB's top priority. Throughout the year, the CVB conducted a highly-targeted pay-per-click campaign that maximizes a return on investment, as well as a search engine optimization campaign that continually keeps our site at the top of search rankings. In FY17, the Mat-Su CVB also invested in an all-new e-mail marketing program that allows us to remarket to site visitors through monthly newsletters that highlight our communities, attractions, activities and events.

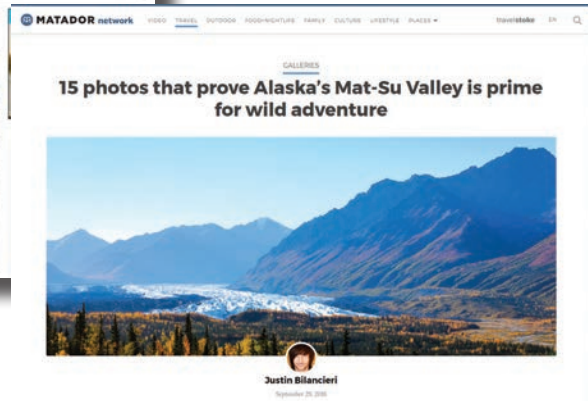
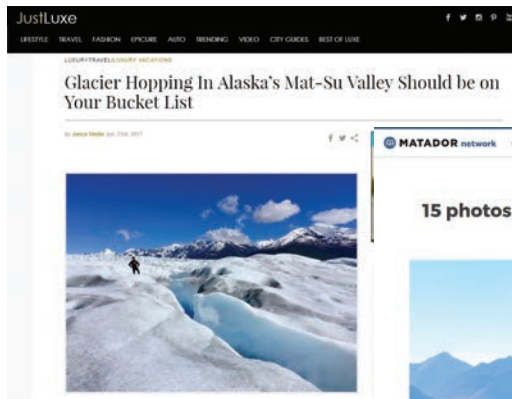
... in print

Even in today's technological world, the importance of a printed visitor guide can't be underestimated. The Mat-Su CVB printed 100,000 copies of its visitor guide in FY2017, featuring all-new photography and design. These were distributed to high-potential visitors, through direct fulfillment, at consumer and industry events and at high traffic areas such as visitor centers around the state. In addition to our printed visitor guide, the Mat-Su CVB also placed advertising in visitor guides for Fairbanks, Anchorage and Talkeetna, as well as in Alaska Magazine, the Alaska Dispatch News, the Alaska Dispatch News' visitor guide and winter guides, Alaska Business Monthly and the Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman. These complement our digital, radio and television advertising efforts.



Promoting the Mat-Su Valley

... to travel journalists



Working with travel journalists is an important way for the Mat-Su CVB to tell our destination's story and generate coverage online, in print and over the air. In FY2017, the Mat-Su CVB hosted two national journalists - from Matador Network and JustLuxe.com, on week-long escorted trips. In addition, we provided assistance to 20 other journalists working on stories about the Mat-Su Valley.



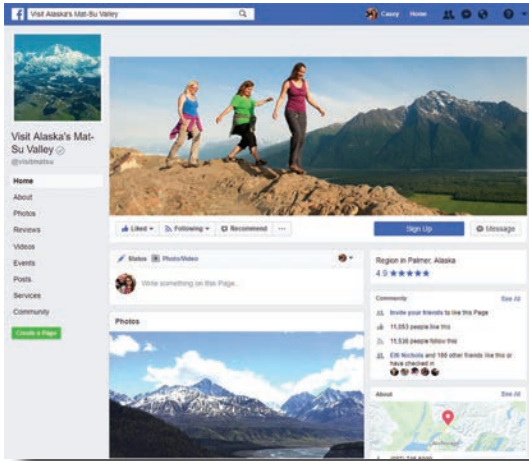
... to tour operators

Working with tour operators and travel agents is an important way to showcase the Mat-Su Valley to a large number of visitors. In FY2017, the Mat-Su CVB attended the American Bus Association Marketplace in Cleveland and the National Tour Association Travel Exchange in St. Louis, meeting with 50 different tour operators. During the Adventure World Travel Summit in Anchorage, we hosted a Mat-Su Day of Adventure for 12 tour operators. Throughout the year, we provided assistance to another 10 operators or agents, and also hosted a FAM trip dinner for eight travel agents in partnership with Visit Anchorage.



as a premier destination ...

... on social media channels



Social media channels such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter give the Mat-Su CVB platforms to reach potential visitors in real time. In FY2017, we continued to leverage these channels to promote events, draw attention to blog posts, showcase destination videos and much more.



▲ 119 percent
340 followers



▲ 6 percent
11,750 likes



▲ 18 percent
825 followers

... to meeting planners

The Mat-Su Valley is positioned to be an ideal meetings destination. In FY2017, the Mat-Su CVB hosted a meeting planner luncheon in Anchorage that included planners from 20 Southcentral Alaska organizations. Additionally, the CVB worked with meeting planners from NEA Alaska, Cook Inlet Tribal Council and The CIRI Foundation on meetings that had a combined attendance of more than 300 people.



Financial position

Statement of Financial Position (as of June 30, 2017)

<u>Assets</u>	
Current assets:	
Cash	\$24,982
Membership and grants receivable	\$9,340
Inventory	\$1,167
Prepaid expenses	<u>\$51,836</u>
Total current assets	\$87,235
Property and Equipment	
Furniture and equipment	\$73,715
Accumulated depreciation	<u>(\$42,379)</u>
Net property and equipment	<u>\$31,336</u>
Total assets	\$118,661

Liabilities and net assets

Current liabilities:	
Accounts payable	\$59,163
Payroll liabilities	\$17,380
Deferred revenue	<u>\$28,115</u>
Total current liabilities	\$104,658
Unrestricted net assets	<u>\$14,003</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	\$118,661

Per board policy, Mat-Su CVB's financial statements, accounting practices and reporting methods are audited every third year. The FY17 financial statements have not been audited.

FY17 Revenue Detail - \$835,923

Bed Tax Grant Revenue	\$708,147
Membership Dues	\$40,493
Advertising Sales & Marketing Programs	\$58,301
Special Events & Fundraisers	\$25,136
Gift shop	\$0
Interest	\$41
Other	\$3,815
In-kind contributions	\$0
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$835,923

FY17 Expenses by Division

Marketing	\$515,469	57%
Membership	\$138,117	15%
Operations	\$138,331	15%
Administration	\$114,701	13%

