



**2012 Annual Conference**  
Recap • “*Selling Your Destination*”  
Best Idea Awards

**PG-2**



**2013 Tech Summit  
& Vendor Showcase**  
April 17-19 • Mesa, Arizona

**PG-6**



**WACVB Foundation News**  
Visitor Guide User Study Invitation,  
New Board, Scholarships and Thanks

**PG-8 & 9**

**WACVB**

Published by the Western Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus

For Member Bureaus ~ December 2012

# newsnotes

## New Board Leaders

At the September Annual Conference in Eugene, Oregon, Lorene Palmer, then-president & CEO of the Juneau CVB, was elected President of the WACVB Board of Directors. In early November, Palmer resigned as Board President to take a new position as division director for economic development with the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development

As such, previously elected President-elect Jennifer Wesselhoff, CDME, president & CEO of the Sedona Chamber of Commerce Tourism Bureau, became Board President during the November 6, 2012, Board meeting. Previously elected Secretary/Treasurer Bill Malone, president & CEO of the Park City Chamber/Bureau, was appointed President-elect. The Board of Directors appointed Director Wes Rhea, executive director of the Stockton CVB, as Secretary-Treasurer for the coming year. At a future date, the Board will appoint a new Director to complete Rhea's unexpired Director's term.

Kathy Smits, vice president-international tourism at the Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board, is serving as Past President.

The following Directors were elected to two-year terms: Anne Jenkins, senior vice president, Travel Medford, and Aaron McCreight, CEO, Casper Area CVB. Jim Kissinger, vice president-convention sales at the Anaheim/Orange County VCB, was elected to a one-year Director term on the Board to complete an unexpired term.

Board members continuing their terms as Board Directors include Tracy Farhad, executive director, Solvang CVB; John Reyes, CMP, executive vice president & chief customer officer, San Francisco Travel Association; and Sara Toliver, president & CEO, Ogden/Weber CVB.



*WACVB Board President  
Jennifer Wesselhoff, CDME,  
President & CEO of the Sedona  
Chamber of Commerce  
Tourism Bureau*

# 2012 Annual Conference Recap

## adventures..... in **SELLING** your destination

This year's Annual Conference, "Adventures in Selling Your Destination," highlighted 'selling' as the platform for all bureau departments. At the September conference in Eugene, Oregon, speakers focused on a DMO's unique selling proposition as well how a DMO showcases its value.

In today's ultracompetitive selling environment, Michele Joseph, from Master Connection Associates, noted that it is more important than ever to focus on our customers and stakeholders. Delegates were encouraged to maximize selling moments and concentrate on building and reinforcing relationships, client engagement and showing DMO value.

Workshop panelists discussed the types of marketing communications that appeal to meeting planners. And, highlighted the electronic services planners are requesting from DMOs.

A panel of experts from Travel Portland, the Greater Newport Chamber, Travel Oregon, the Solvang CVB and Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board shared their strategies for selling leisure travel directly to the consumer and through the international and domestic travel trade.

Delegates also learned how some bureaus are blazing new trails to maintain membership or create new partnership models, increasing revenues by making sponsor connections and continuing to show value to these stakeholders at a workshop with Sally McAleer from Travel Lane County and Nancy Truszkowski from Travel Portland.

Accolades were on the menu at the Best Idea Program awards luncheon sponsored by PCMA/*Convene*. Destination promotion ideas from Laguna Beach, Salt Lake, Monterey County and Yakima Valley were shared during the luncheon. Congratulations to the Best Idea Program achievement award winners. (See Best Idea article this issue.)

Popular presenter Marla Johnson Norris from Aristotle presented the session "Before You Buy that Corvette, Deal with the DMO Midlife Crisis," which centered on what is a DMO supposed to be these days and what is a DMO's unique selling proposition.

A workshop with hotel directors of sales focused on the changing dynamics of selling and how to work with one's local hotels. The candid panel discussion lent perspective on the hotel side of the selling process, and addressed ways for DMOs to communicate more effectively on key issues with hotel partners.

*Kathy Smits (left), 2011-12 WACVB Board President and Vice President of International Tourism at the Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board, thanks Karyn Gruenberg, Director of Partner Development for Brand USA, for presenting an overview of Brand USA initiatives focusing on DMO involvement.*

In an information-filled general session, Karyn Gruenberg, director of partner development for Brand USA, shared a multitude of strategies for involvement by DMOs in Brand USA initiatives (regardless of bureau budget). Gruenberg reported that Brand USA is seeking destination content from DMOs. So, if you haven't been in contact with Brand USA staff, contact them today with your information and get engaged in this powerful marketing platform. ([www.thebrandusa.com](http://www.thebrandusa.com))

With the explosive growth of technology, destination management professionals are increasingly challenged to keep up with the latest tools to do their jobs more effectively and to increase business. A fast-paced and entertaining session with Corbin Ball covered the latest tech trends for sales, collaboration and productivity.

While sports events are not recession-proof, they are certainly resistant to economic downturns, and even small markets can bolster tourism success by hosting sports events. A panel of sports commission experts discussed selling to the sports market and event evaluation.

The popular CEO and Staff Specialty Roundtables featured an open-discussion format with conversation led by a peer facilitator. Thanks to our peer facilitators: Charlene Christensen (Utah Valley), John Reyes (San Francisco), Wes Rhea (Stockton), Kathy Smits (Los Angeles) and Eric Thompson (Salt Lake).

*[Editor's Note: Several speakers provided their session presentations for posting to WACVB's website ([www.wacvb.com](http://www.wacvb.com)); scroll down the home page to locate the link for the 2012 Annual Conference presentation downloads.]*

The Vendor Showcase featured trade publications, technology/information firms, publishing companies, research firms and more. The showcase provided an interactive business environment for attendees to meet with vendors to discuss opportunities, services and products. (See listing of vendors in this issue.)

Away from the general sessions and workshops, attendees renewed industry



**Annual Conference**  
Continued from page 2

friendships and met new peers at the opening welcome reception at the innovative Eugene, Cascades & Coast Adventure Center (visitor center).

Thursday evening, Travel Lane County and simpleview, inc., in partnership with Ninkasi Brewing Company, Iris Vineyards and MTR Western, hosted a reception and charming farm-to-table dinner. It was a delightful event featuring a fabulous menu of locally sourced foods served family style in an old, restored church in Creswell (a small town outside of Eugene).

The Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board sponsored the Friday morning breakfast as the host for the 2013 WACVB Annual Conference, scheduled for September 18-20 at Sheraton Universal.

The conference concluded on a delightfully humorous note with presenter Leigh Anne Jasheway addressing the subject of humor as a useful tool in the business environment. Studies show that organizations that learn to use humor in a positive way can improve client communications, boost employee and manager productivity, enhance creativity, build stronger teams, and increase employee retention. It was fun learning how humor can be used productively in the selling environment!

Thanks to Sara Toliver (Ogden/Weber), Kari Westlund and Janis Ross (Lane County), Tracy Farhad (Solvang), and Wes Rhea (Stockton) for serving on the Annual Conference Planning Committee. We also salute the staff at Travel Lane County for their warm welcome and generosity in hosting the conference.

## Thank You!

WACVB thanks a terrific group of vendors and sponsors for their involvement at the 2012 Annual Conference. Members—please look to these preferred vendors for opportunities and services.

**Apps by Open Places (Trazzler, Inc.)**  
<http://openplac.es>

**Aristotle, Inc.**  
[www.aristotle.design.com](http://www.aristotle.design.com)

**Collinson Media and Events**  
[www.collinsonmedia.com](http://www.collinsonmedia.com)

**Drozian Webworks**  
[www.drozianwebworks.com](http://www.drozianwebworks.com)

**Endless Vacation**  
[www.endlessvacation.com](http://www.endlessvacation.com)

**The Group Travel Leader, Inc.**  
[www.grouptravellerleader.com](http://www.grouptravellerleader.com)

**iDSS - Internet Destination Sales System, Inc.**  
[www.idss.com](http://www.idss.com)

**Iris Vineyards**  
[www.irisvineyards.com](http://www.irisvineyards.com)

**JackRabbit Systems, Inc.**  
[www.jackrabbitsystems.com](http://www.jackrabbitsystems.com)

**Travel Lane County**  
[www.travellanecounty.org](http://www.travellanecounty.org)  
[www.eugene-cascades-coast.org](http://www.eugene-cascades-coast.org)

**Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board**  
[www.discoverlosangeles.com](http://www.discoverlosangeles.com)

**Madden Media**  
[www.maddenmedia.com](http://www.maddenmedia.com)

**Meetings Focus West**  
[www.meetingsfocus.com](http://www.meetingsfocus.com)

**mobiManage**  
[www.mobimanager.com](http://www.mobimanager.com)

**MPI**  
[www.mpiweb.org](http://www.mpiweb.org)

**MTR Western**  
[www.mtrwestern.com](http://www.mtrwestern.com)

**MyGeoTrex, Inc.**  
[www.mygeotrex.com](http://www.mygeotrex.com)

**Ninkasi Brewing Company**  
[www.ninkasibrewing.com](http://www.ninkasibrewing.com)

**Passkey International, Inc.**  
[www.passkey.com](http://www.passkey.com)

**PCMA/Convence**  
[www.pcma.org](http://www.pcma.org)

**Preservation Magazine**  
[www.preservationnation.org/magazine/](http://www.preservationnation.org/magazine/)

**Regatta Travel Solutions**  
[www.regattatravelsolutions.com](http://www.regattatravelsolutions.com)

**SagaCity Media**  
[www.sagacitymedia.com](http://www.sagacitymedia.com)

**Schneider Publishing**  
[www.schneiderpublishing.com](http://www.schneiderpublishing.com)

**simpleview, inc.**  
[www.simpleviewinc.com](http://www.simpleviewinc.com)

**Smart Meetings**  
[www.smartmeetings.com](http://www.smartmeetings.com)

**STR (Smith Travel Research, Inc.)**  
[www.str.com](http://www.str.com)

**Strategic Marketing Group**  
[www.smgonline.net](http://www.smgonline.net)



# Best Idea Program Achievement Awards

Four convention and visitors bureaus received achievement awards in a competition with their colleagues from the West. The annual WACVB Best Idea Program showcases innovative projects and creative marketing strategies submitted by WACVB members.

This year's Best Idea Program awards were presented during the September 2012 WACVB Annual Conference in Eugene, Oregon.

Following receipt of the entry forms, a Board-appointed Task Force reviewed the submissions and selected several ideas for presentation. Representatives presented their best ideas during the conference.

WACVB congratulates the following member bureaus for receiving outstanding achievement awards for their organizations in the 2012 Best Idea Program. Bureau representatives presented their best ideas during the Annual Conference awards luncheon hosted by PCMA/*Convvene*.

The 2012 Best Idea Program booklet—featuring all entries—is available in WACVB's online Resource Library.

## Laguna Beach VCB

### **Project Title: Laguna Beach Travel Info App**

The Laguna Beach Travel Info mobile app is the first of its kind for a destination. Launched July 6, 2012, it introduces a 'Come to Life' augmented-reality function in partnership with Hewlett Packard. The Bureau embedded powerful recognition software into the app allowing users the ability to scan photos within the Laguna Beach Visitors Guide, and watch them 'come to life' through the use of video. A GPS-driven map provides clues (auras) to other places throughout town where the 'Come to Life' function is used in conjunction with points of interest. Another first is the "Trolley Tracker" that

provides an up-to-the-minute GPS locator for the Laguna Beach transit system based on the app user's position. Current weather, tide tables, maps, events and hotel, restaurant, shopping and activities can also be found. The Bureau created a tutorial video on how to use the 'come to life' function that can be found on Visit Laguna Beach's YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UBPL19LMkw&feature=plcp>.

## Monterey County CVB

### **Project Title: The Adventures of the Travelocity Gnome in Monterey County**

In April 2012 the Monterey County CVB hosted the Travelocity Gnome

and his social media team to experience Monterey County for three days. The goal of the social media campaign was to showcase Monterey County and its theme of "So Much to Discover" to

Travelocity's 200,000 Facebook fans and 24,000 Twitter followers. The Gnome's itinerary included everything from scuba diving in the Kelp Forest at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, motorcycle racing around the world-famous Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca to a "gnomance" with a female gnome in a romantic restaurant in Carmel-by-the-Sea. Photos and updates were given in real-time throughout Travelocity and SeeMonterey's social media networks.

## Park City Chamber/Bureau

### **Project Title: It's Snowing Campaign (January 4 to February 4, 2012)**

After a slow start to the 2011/12 snow season, it was critical to support January skiing, Park City's largest booking month. It required executing a full campaign in less than a week to take advantage of anticipated snowstorms by getting an "It's Snowing" message out to key ski market target audiences. A Quick START vacation message about free skiing the day of arrival added tremendous value to the campaign. Broadcast, digital, social media and PR were integrated to reach as many skiers/boarders as quickly as possible. At the core of the campaign was an engaging "Powder Fame" Facebook contest to access user-generated HD video shot during a snow storm on January 21-22. The video



*The Travelocity Gnome accepted the Best Idea Program award on behalf of the Monterey County CVB staff.*



Best Idea Program awards were accepted on behalf of their organizations by the following WACVB-member bureau representatives (left to right)—John Cooper, President & CEO, Yakima Valley VCB; Stephen Lane, Tourism Marketing Manager, Park City Chamber/Bureau; and Ashley Johnson, Marketing Director, Laguna Beach CVB. WACVB Board Director Sara Toliver (far right) presented the Monterey County CVB entry and the Best Idea Program awards.

*Continued on page 11*

# Salary/Benefit and Budget Surveys

## Notes from Annual Conference Delegates, Exhibitors and Speakers

*"I just wanted to thank you for planning and executing a wonderful conference! I am so glad I attended and got a lot out of it. I also heard great things from others!"*

Ashley Johnson,  
Marketing Director, Laguna Beach VCB

*"I wanted to say thank you so much for a wonderful show. We look forward to working with you and supporting the WACVB mission!"*

Drozian Webworks

*"You did a wonderful job with the Annual Conference. I walked away with something from each breakout session I attended. And of course, the after-hours events were great as well."*

Monica Slingerman,  
Sales Manager, Stockton CVB

*"Thank you for the nice note about speaking at the conference. I really enjoyed the experience and the great people I was able to meet while there. I loved it so much that I would like to attend in the future."*

Carole Astley, CMP,  
Industry & Visitor Services Senior Manager,  
Travel Oregon/Oregon Tourism Commission



## Archived online results available to participating member bureaus

### CEOs: Have you completed the 2012 editions of the two surveys?

If yes, your WACVB peers thank you. If not, please plan to complete the online surveys as soon as possible. The same log-in and password is used to access both surveys.

### Bureau Budget Survey

Interested to know how your budget stacks up to others in your competitive set? Curious about changing budget allocations in today's environment? Members use the survey information when creating budgets, researching funding sources and planning bureau expenditures.

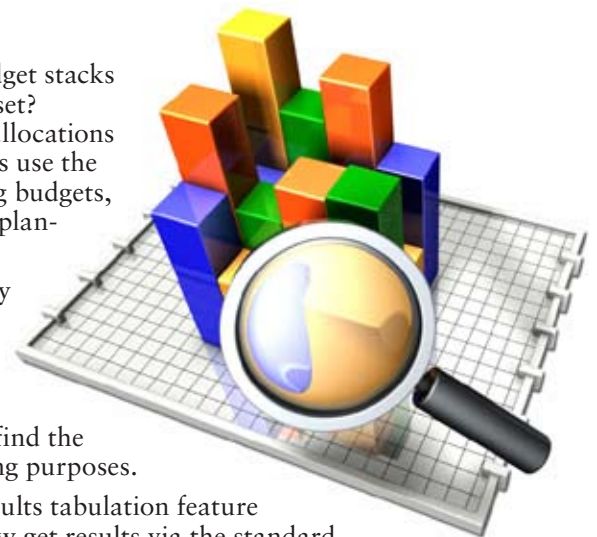
The annual Bureau Budget Survey is designed to determine member budget classifications and to provide a focus on those items having an impact on a bureau's budget. Participating CEOs will find the bureau profiles useful for planning purposes.

**New this year:** We've added a results tabulation feature to the Bureau Budget Survey. Now get results via the standard bureau 'profile' or download the tabulated version.

### Salary & Benefits Survey

The survey includes a bureau background data section as well as chief executive officer and staff sections focusing on salaries and benefits. Participating CEOs may download individual survey summary reports based on operating budgets.

Remember, more participation means more relevant data.



# 2013 TECHSUMMIT

## DESTINATION MARKETING

APRIL 17-19, 2013 • MESA, ARIZONA

The 8th annual edition of this popular conference is set for April 17-19, 2013, in Mesa, Arizona. The Tech Summit and Vendor Showcase will be at the Phoenix Marriott Mesa Hotel and Mesa Convention Center.

Please to join your DMO industry peers for sessions about clarifying complex technology choices and understanding how consumers and clients use technology to gather information and make travel and meeting decisions.

The Tech Summit includes two consecutive labs on the afternoon of April 17, with general sessions and workshops and the vendor showcase on April 18 and 19.

The Tech Summit Planning Committee is focusing sessions on a range of destination marketing technology issues.

Some of the session topics under consideration by the Planning Committee include determining ROI on social media, developing an integrated marketing strategy, tailoring content to your visitor, creating more exposure to mobile sites and apps, understanding and enhancing the user experience on DMO websites and effective email marketing/campaigns. Additional topics include social media for meetings and case studies focusing on success by DMOs in relevant digital marketing vehicles such as Pinterest, Facebook, mobile and videos. Ideas for the two labs on April 17 include an SEO lab and a combo lab featuring advanced Facebook and Instagram/Pinterest.

Technology companies have been invited to participate in the Tech Summit Vendor Showcase to demonstrate their products and services for delegates.

Our hosts at Visit Mesa look forward to welcoming WACVB members to their city. There's a welcome reception on Wednesday, April 17, and an offsite event on Thursday evening, April 18.

Watch your email and WACVB's website for more information and registration materials for the 2013 Tech Summit in Mesa, Arizona.

Thanks to the Tech Summit Planning Committee members for their work in developing the curriculum for the conference.

**Amy Griglak**  
Digital Marketing Manager  
Tempe Tourism Office

**Ashley Johnson**  
Marketing Director  
Laguna Beach VCB

**Ralph Johnson**  
Social Media/Web Administrator  
Davis Area (UT) CVB

**Bill Karz**  
Director, Online Marketing  
Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board

**John Reyes, CMP**  
Executive Vice President  
& Chief Customer Officer  
San Francisco Travel Association

**Nina Simmons**  
Online Marketing Manager  
Greater Phoenix CVB

**Sara Toliver**  
President & CEO  
Ogden/Weber CVB

**Pam Williams**  
National Sales Manager  
Visit Mesa

**Jenny Zink**  
Marketing Director  
Redding CVB

**Bobby Taylor (Honorary Member)**  
Web Developer  
Miles Partnership



## Destination: Mesa, Arizona

[www.visitmesa.com](http://www.visitmesa.com)

Mesa includes the beauty of the amazing Sonoran Desert and the comfort and culture of a metropolitan city. Mesa offers a variety of enjoyable things to do, from exploring the legacy of Native American culture and the pioneer history of the Old West to Broadway musicals and state-of-the-art interactive museums. And, there are diverse restaurants and dining options.

Mesa's beautiful climate—with more than 300 days of sunshine each year—make it an ideal place for meetings and visits.

Both upscale and urban, Downtown Mesa is a thriving hub of business, government, culture, arts, recreation and entertainment with the retail shops providing an appealing charm and character exclusive to Mesa.

Quaint districts are reminiscent of decades past featuring original brick buildings and renovated storefronts. Boutiques are the big draw here where bargains are aplenty for fashions and unique, must-have décor items. Rounding out the mix are coffee houses and antique shops.

Getting to Mesa is easy! Mesa is served by two major airports—the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

Allegiant Air offers passenger service to and from Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, and serves a variety of cities.

# Travel Industry Update

## U.S. Travel Industry to Add Nearly 100,000 Jobs By 2013

### Domestic Leisure Travel to Increase to Record High for 2013

On November 1, 2012, the U.S. Travel Association projected increases in leisure, business and international inbound travel next year will enable the industry to add 98,800 American jobs by the end of 2013. Leisure travel is expected to rise 1.2 percent, business travel is projected to increase nearly one percent and international inbound travel will increase four percent. These job gains will increase direct travel industry employment to more than 7.6 million jobs next year.

#### Domestic Travel Overview

Domestic leisure travel is expected to increase 1.2 percent in 2013, a new record high, but the growth will be at a slower pace than during the past few years. While business travel volume will slow significantly next year to less than one percent, the number of business trips has grown steadily since the downturn in 2009 and is expected to see more positive growth in 2014. Total domestic travel spending, including leisure and business travel, will increase three percent.

“While the growth rate is more moderate than in previous years, leisure travel remains at an all-time high and is an indicator of rising consumer confidence,” said David Huether, senior vice president of research and economics for the U.S. Travel Association. “Businesses continue to have a heightened focus on the value and bottom-line benefits of travel. We feel the slight increase in business travel next year continues to reflect demand for face-to-face meetings that drive growth and productivity.”

#### International Inbound Travel

Total international inbound travel will increase four percent in 2013 while spending will grow 7.1 percent. The importance of global travel to the American economy continues to increase with international travelers now accounting for 15.1 percent of total travel spending in the U.S., up from 14.3 percent in 2011.

Overseas travel to the U.S. (excluding Canada and Mexico) will grow 4.3 percent, a slight decrease from last year’s growth of 4.8 percent. While the numbers continue to trend upward, any slowdown in travel growth is of concern because overseas travelers contribute significantly more to the U.S. economy, spending an average of \$4,300 per trip.

Source: U.S. Travel Association [www.ustravel.org](http://www.ustravel.org)



## 2013 Western Destinations Guide

WACVB and PCMA Convene® Present the 15th Annual “Western Destinations Guide”—the ultimate opportunity for WACVB members to showcase western destinations to the meetings market.

### Matching Editorial!

Available exclusively to WACVB members to showcase western destinations, the WACVB guide will be a special section in the March 2013 issue of *Convene* and mailed to more than 30,000 meeting professionals.

All advertisers purchasing ¼ page or larger will receive FREE matching editorial, written by *Convene* staff to describe your destination’s many assets, and WACVB will receive up to six pages of editorial to promote the West as a meetings/conventions destination.

### Reserve Your Space Now!

Contact PCMA account executives with your questions and to reserve space.

Albert Pereira  
(312) 423-7277  
[apereira@pcma.org](mailto:apereira@pcma.org)

Wendy Krizmanic  
(312) 423-7248  
[wkrizmanic@pcma.org](mailto:wkrizmanic@pcma.org)

Let’s promote the West together! Take advantage of WACVB’s partnership with *Convene*!

Thanks to these bureaus that advertised in the 2012 Guide: Davis County, Irvine, Pasadena, Santa Monica, Seattle, Sonoma County, Tacoma/Pierce County, Tucson and Utah Bureaus/Meet in Utah and Utah Valley.

# Foundation News

## New Foundation Board Leaders

New officers for the WACVB Education and Research Foundation Board of Trustees include:

President: Bill Malone, president & CEO, Park City Chamber/Bureau

Vice President: Jennifer Wesselhoff, CDME, president & CEO, Sedona Chamber of Commerce Tourism Bureau

Secretary-Treasurer: Wes Rhea, executive director, Stockton Convention & Visitors Bureau

Past President: Kathy Smits, vice president of international tourism, Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board

Trustees: Dale Lockett, president & CEO of the Albuquerque CVB, was recently appointed to a three-year term as a Foundation Trustee. Trustees with continuing terms include John Reyes, CMP, executive vice president & chief customer officer, San Francisco Travel Association, and Brad Burlingame, president & CEO, Visit West Hollywood.

## Thanks to Foundation Contributors

Thanks to the many WACVB-member bureaus that made a voluntary contribution to the Foundation when they remitted their 2012-13 Association membership dues (list as of November 9, 2012).

Anchorage, Aspen, Berkeley, Beverly Hills, Boulder, Breckenridge, Corvallis, Costa Mesa, Davis Area, Elko, Folsom, Haines, Huntington Beach, Juneau, Lake Tahoe Incline Village Crystal Bay, Lane County, Las Cruces, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Manteca, Marina del Rey, Mat-Su, Mesa, Monterey County, Montrose, Napa, Oakland, Oceanside, Ogden/Weber, Ontario, Phoenix, Prescott, Riverside, Salt Lake, San Francisco, San Juan Islands, San Mateo County, Santa Clarita Valley, Santa Cruz County, Santa Monica, Santa Rosa, Seattle, Sedona, Sonoma County, Spokane Regional, St. George, Stockton, Tempe, Tri-Valley, Tucson, Tuolumne County, Unalaska/Port of Dutch Harbor, Utah Valley, West Hollywood, Wrangell, Yakima Valley, Yolo County and Yosemite/Mariposa County.

## DMO Visitor Guide User and Conversion Study

### New Research Project Invitation

The WACVB Education & Research Foundation has partnered with Destination Analysts, Inc. to assist DMOs in developing a profile of travelers who use DMO-published official Visitor Guides and estimate the Return on Investment these official Visitor Guides bring to their respective communities. Discover how your bureau can get involved in this research project.

Destination Analysts, on behalf of the WACVB Education & Research Foundation and participating DMO partners, is slated to conduct a DMO Visitor Guide User and Conversion Study. This research will use an online survey methodology to develop a profile of travelers who use DMO-sponsored official Visitor Guides and estimate the Return on Investment these guides bring to their respective communities. For the purposes of this project, we will be surveying requestors of the 2013 editions of participating DMO visitor guides, and thus this research will be conducted throughout calendar year 2013.

The WACVB Education and Research Foundation Board of Directors has earmarked a specific amount to support this industry research project in conjunction with discounted fees to be paid by selected DMOs for the core study group of six (6). The availability of the Foundation funds is based on selection criteria developed by the Foundation Board of Directors to ensure that the core group of six bureaus for this study is a representative group of western DMOs.

Beyond the core group of six western DMOs, participation in the DMO Visitor Guide User and Conversion Study is **available to an unlimited number of western DMOs**.

A cumulative request level of 5,000 guides in a year is expected of participating study DMOs, in order to attain a minimum sample size of 400 completed surveys. Both domestic and international visitors (in English) will be surveyed.

Destination Analysts, Inc. will provide DMO partners with the following at the conclusion of the study:

- Comprehensive Report of Findings (specific to the DMO's visitor guide, including custom questions)
- Conversion Analysis and ROI Estimates

An overview of the study and an application for interested western DMOs will be distributed, via email, to organizations belonging to WACVB.

# 2012-13

## Calendar of Events

### Destination Marketing Tech Summit & Vendor Showcase

April 17-19, 2013 • Mesa, Arizona  
Phoenix Marriott Mesa Hotel & Mesa Convention Center

### CEO Forum

August 8-10, 2013 • Park City, Utah  
Stein Eriksen Lodge

### Annual Conference & Vendor Showcase

September 18-20, 2013 • Los Angeles/Universal City, California  
Sheraton Universal



## Scholarships Available

The WACVB Education and Research Foundation administers several scholarship programs to fund educational opportunities for CVB CEOs and staff. Scholarship applications are available at [www.wacvb.com](http://www.wacvb.com) – click on the Foundation/Scholarships link on the home page.

### Destination Marketing Tech Summit Scholarships

The upcoming Tech Summit is April 17-19, 2013, in Mesa, Arizona. Scholarship recipients will be eligible to receive complimentary registration, travel and lodging at the Tech Summit.

### Executive Training Scholarships (CEOs and Senior-level Executives)

Rosalind Williams Memorial Scholarship Program

The WACVB Foundation offers an exciting opportunity for convention and visitor bureau CEOs and senior staff executives to earn scholarships to attend executive training programs (e.g., human resources seminar on employee law, university programs, industry conferences, etc.). The executive training programs must be presented by professional organizations or accredited institutions.

### WACVB Annual Conference Scholarships

The WACVB Foundation grants scholarships for bureau CEOs and staff members to attend WACVB's Annual Conference. Scholarship grants include complimentary conference registration, travel, and lodging at the conference. The 2013 conference is September 18-20, 2013, in the Los Angeles area (Universal City).

*"Thank you for providing me the opportunity to attend the 2012 Annual Conference by offering the scholarships. I came home with many new insights and contacts. I look forward to attending more events in the future."*

Courtney Winters, Pismo Beach CVB



## New York City Trip Raffle

This year's Foundation winning raffle ticket belonged to Nanci Sikes, executive director at the Tuolumne County Visitor Bureau. Thanks to everyone who purchased tickets this year to support Foundation scholarships and programs.

The trip package includes:

- A four-night stay for two in New York City sponsored by [simpleview, inc.](http://simpleview.com)
- Roundtrip airfare (coach) for two to/from New York City sponsored by [Madden Media](http://MaddenMedia.com)
- Dinner and a show for two while in New York City

Since 2003, the WACVB Foundation has awarded more than 90 industry-education scholarships to CVB personnel and issued more than \$14,000 in research project grants.

The WACVB Foundation offers several opportunities for convention and visitor bureau personnel to earn scholarships to attend industry programs. Information and applications for each of the Foundation's scholarship programs is at [www.wacvb.com](http://www.wacvb.com) – click on Foundation/Scholarships.

simpleview

madden  
media  
connecting people to places

## Resource Library

### 2012 Best Idea Program Booklet

Are you seeking an RFP template for a rebranding project or a website redesign? Looking for industry materials, reports and samples? Check out the newest materials in WACVB's online Resource Library. Go to [www.wacvb.com](http://www.wacvb.com) and click on the Resource Library button. This popular member service has a collection of member-contributed materials ranging from marketing plans to job descriptions. The materials are available to Association members (password protected) 24-hours a day.

### In the Best Idea Program section:

WACVB: 2012 Best Idea Program Booklet

*(Note: Previous editions of the Best Ideas are also available in the library.)*

### Call for Materials

WACVB members are invited to submit materials for inclusion in the electronic/online Resource Library. Please send documents (PDF or Word) to [info@wacvb.com](mailto:info@wacvb.com)—show 'WACVB Library' in the subject line of your message.

Sample material suggestions include:

- annual reports
- board policy manuals
- bureau contracts with city/county
- job descriptions
- employee evaluation forms
- cooperative marketing opportunities
- marketing plans
- sales and marketing reports
- tracking reports
- RFP templates (ad agency, PR firm)

## Position Announcement Service

Seeking to fill a position or looking for a new employment opportunity? If so, see the position announcements listed on WACVB's website [www.wacvb.com](http://www.wacvb.com). The service is available to both WACVB member and nonmember organizations seeking to fill CEO and staff vacancies.

# Awards and Kudos

## Mat-Su CVB Director Honored

Bonnie Quill, executive director of the Mat-Su CVB, was honored with the Denali Award from the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA). The award was presented at the ATIA annual convention in Anchorage in October. The Denali Award honors an individual for their outstanding leadership, professional excellence and personal contribution to the Alaska travel industry. It is considered one of the top awards in the travel industry in Alaska. Quill has spent 28 years in the tourism industry, including the last 13 as the Mat-Su CVB's CEO. She has worked for MarkAir, the Alaska Visitors Association, Princess Tours and was the public relations account manager for the Alaska Tourism Marketing Council while she worked for Bradley/Reid, prior to coming to the Mat-Su CVB. She has also served on the board of directors for ATIA for seven years, helping shape the vision for statewide marketing efforts in that role. Quill has also served on the board of directors for the Alaska State Fair, was the president of the board of directors for the Glenn Highway Scenic Byway Association and has worked on several Mat-Su Borough committees to promote the economic impact tourism has in the Valley.

## Anaheim/Orange County VCB Marketing Manager Recognized as an Industry Standout

Tessa Kranz, marketing manager for the Anaheim/Orange County VCB was recognized as an industry leader by *Rejuvenate* magazine's "40 under 40" feature in the August/September issue. The recognition came from peers, industry leaders and several others in the faith-based meeting-planning world. "These individuals represent not only the present and future of our industry, but also the commitment of peers and predecessors who trained and mentored them," said Chris

Collinson, chief strategist and publisher of Collinson Media and Events. "They were selected by their peers, reinforcing their status as industry influencers." For the past two years Kranz has been involved in the tourism and hospitality industry. Prior to joining the Anaheim/Orange County Bureau in 2011, Kranz was an events intern at the Anaheim Convention Center and an event coordinator at California State University Fullerton.

## Antonson Writes New Book

Rick Antonson, president & CEO of Tourism Vancouver, has been working on a new book over the past few years and it hit the bookstores in the U.S. in September. The new book, *Route 66 Still Kicks; Driving America's Main Street*, was published by New York's Skyhorse Publishing.

This is the publisher's description of the 384-page book:

*"You'll never understand America until you've driven Route 66—that's old Route 66—all the way," a truck driver in California once said to author Rick Antonson. "It's the most famous highway in the world."*

*With some determination, grit, and a good sense of direction, one can still find and drive on 90 percent of the original Route 66 today. This travelogue follows Rick and his travel companion Peter along 2,400 miles through eight states from Chicago to Los Angeles as they discover the old Route 66.*

*With surprising and obscure stories about Route 66 personalities like Woody Guthrie, John Steinbeck, Al Capone, Salvador Dali, Dorothea Lange, Cyrus Avery (the Father of*



*Route 66), the Harvey Girls, Mickey Mantle, and Bobby Troup (songwriter of "(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66"), Antonson's fresh perspective reads like an easy drive down a forgotten road: winding, stopping now and then to mingle with the locals and reminisce about times gone by, and then getting stuck in the mud, sucked into its charms. Rick mixes hilarious anecdotes of happenstance travel with the route's difficult history, its rise and fall in popularity, and above all, its place in legend.*

*The author has committed part of his book's proceeds to the preservation work of the National Historic Route 66 Federation."*

## TripAdvisor Names Top Wine Destinations in U.S.

### Travelers' reviews, opinions determine award

Sonoma County was named the top wine destination in the U.S. by TripAdvisor's Travelers' Choice Awards. According to TripAdvisor, award winners were determined based on their popularity as wine destinations, taking into account travelers' reviews and opinions for local wineries, restaurants, attractions and accommodations. Rounding out the top 10 were Napa Valley, Calif.; Willamette Valley, Ore.; Finger Lakes, NY; Long Island, NY; Paso Robles, Calif.; Temecula Valley, Calif.; Walla Walla, Wash.; Palisade, Colo.; and Plymouth, Calif.

## Vancouver Named the World's Most Reputable City

Vancouver, British Columbia, has been named the world's most reputable city, according to an international poll conducted by the Reputation Institute. Every year, the Copenhagen-based organization surveys more than 18,700 people in 15 countries on the reputations of 100 cities that are selected according to population, gross domestic product and volume of tourism. The findings are then analyzed and published in an annual report called the City RepTrak. This year, Vancouver beat out world cities like Vienna and Sydney to earn top spot on the prestigious list. The destination scored highest in reputation drivers that include effective administration; adequate infrastructure of transportation, communications and public institutes; adherence to progressive

*Continued on page 11*

**Awards and Kudos**  
Continued from page 10

social, economic and environmental policies; and best overall destination in which to live and work. “We are extremely flattered to be part of such a distinguished group of cities,” said Rick Antonson, president and CEO of Tourism Vancouver. “Tourism Vancouver is proud to be a brand steward for the destination and we will continue to invite the world to visit us and experience the diversity, social and environmental initiatives, and community spirit that has helped to build our reputation.” Last year’s City RepTrak named London the world’s most reputable city, while Vancouver placed 14th.

**Best Idea Program**  
Continued from page 4

was used to create two new TV spots that aired for nine days in six new markets, along with their existing TV buys in Los Angeles and New York. Updated paid search ads, banner ads, SEO-enhanced landing page and publicity supported the campaign. A “Snow Report” application was launched on Park City’s Facebook page and website takeovers went live on CBS homepages in New York and Los Angeles.

## **Yakima Valley VCB**

### **Project Title: WineDoggies.com**

With the growing number of visitors traveling with their dogs, the popularity of winery dogs and the many dog-inclusive Yakima Valley activities, the Yakima Valley Visitors & Convention Bureau developed [www.winedoggies.com](http://www.winedoggies.com). The website is designed to assist travelers and their dogs with their visit to the Yakima Valley wine country, providing a resource for pet-friendly businesses and must-see stops in the region. It is both a factual and fun site that includes additional highlights, such as a ‘Doggie Bloggie’ hosted by a local canine, an interactive map of dog-friendly businesses with open-pet policies, plus a section where dog-friendly businesses and guests can add pictures and stories of their dogs enjoying Washington wine country. The site was officially launched in February 2012.

# People On the Move

The Ventura VCB named **Marlyss Auster** as its new executive director. Auster was selected after several months of recruiting and interviewing candidates following long-time Executive Director Jim Luttjohann’s departure mid-July to lead the Santa Fe CVB. Auster previously served as assistant executive director of the Arizona State Fair, where she managed events drawing more than a million guests and generating \$8.5 million in annual revenue, as well as increasing sponsorship revenue to the highest level in Arizona State Fair History. Before that, she managed convention sales for divisions of the Hyatt and Renaissance Hotels. Auster began her hospitality career at the Doubletree in Ventura.



As of September, **Alison Best, CDME**, is the new president & CEO at Visit Oakland. Best comes to Visit Oakland with more than five years of experience in executive positions at the Santa Monica CVB. Prior to this, Best, who is a Canadian native, held executive management positions with Tourism Whistler and Uniglobe Advance Travel. In addition to her experience in the travel and tourism industry, Best serves on the DMAI Foundation Board and the DMAI Advocacy Committee.



The Stockton CVB has announced the hiring of **Heather Duffett** to manage the bureau’s marketing and graphic design functions. Duffett previously worked as a graphic designer for Never Boring Design in Modesto. She obtained a BA in graphic design from the prestigious Savannah College of Art & Design in 2011. Duffett joined the Stockton CVB team in mid-September.



The Mesa CVB announced the addition of vice president of sales & marketing **Kimberly Freer**. This is a new position the Bureau. Freer comes to Mesa from the Greater Phoenix CVB where she directed all domestic and international leisure sales and marketing activities for the past five years. In the position, Freer will oversee the brand development of the Mesa CVB. She will direct Mesa CVB’s program of work for sales, marketing and communications, and facilitate the organization’s brand audit efforts currently underway with Mesa’s key stakeholders. Freer has spent more than 10 years marketing the Arizona destination experience and held sales management positions for luxury-brand destination resorts in Scottsdale, Phoenix and Orlando. Previously held positions include stints with Florida Vacation Stores, Universal Studios Hollywood and corporate Tiburon Hospitality.



**Michael Krouse** has been named president and CEO of the Ontario (California) CVB. Krouse has more than 20 years of experience in the destination marketing industry. He most recently served as the senior vice-president of sales and client services for the Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board.



The Sacramento CVB has promoted **Nick Leonti** to director of tourism. Leonti is responsible for overseeing all group travel sales functions, including the internal sales team working the domestic (adult, senior and student) and international travel markets, including FIT (foreign independent



Continued on page 15

# Bureau News

## Bureau Identity

■ The Mesa CVB has officially changed its name to **Visit Mesa**. The announcement is part of the destination's re-branding efforts and follows a national trend by other DMOs across the country. The organization's national advertisements and marketing campaigns have long been identified with Visit Mesa. Mesa is setting a fast pace as a leading travel destination with continued growth taking place at Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, new entertainment and nightlife developments within the city's downtown core, and signature projects under construction including the Metro light rail expansion and the multi-million dollar Chicago Cubs stadium development expected in early 2014.

■ The West Hollywood Marketing & Visitors Bureau has announced its new name: **Visit West Hollywood**.



Simple and to-the-point, the new name better reflects the organization's mission, and serves as a call-to-action for travelers around the world. The new Visit West Hollywood name is accompanied by a revised logo, which maintains the signature "bubble" shape and color but transitions from using "WH" to the more widely recognized abbreviation for the city, "WeHo." Visit West Hollywood will also continue to market itself with the tagline, "Living Forward," which encompasses the city's progressive values and trendsetting visitor experiences.

■ The Napa Valley Destination Council, the official marketing organization for local tourism, has officially changed its name to **Visit Napa Valley**. The new name is much more intuitive, and therefore easier for visitors to understand,



said Clay Gregory, CEO of Visit Napa Valley. Along with the new name, Visit Napa Valley has a new Web address: [www.visitnapavalley.com](http://www.visitnapavalley.com).

## Bureau Operations

■ The **Central Oregon Visitors Association (COVA)** will be co-locating office space with Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO) in a move planned for year end. The two regional nonprofit organizations are charged with destination tourism promotion and economic development, respectively. The office will be located at Mill Point, 750 NW Bonnett Way, Suite 1000. EDCO and COVA will continue independent operations, but will share common area space, conference room and reception areas. At the new Mill Point site, COVA will also operate the Central Oregon Welcome Center, providing visitor information about the region and COVA's tourism partners statewide. COVA serves an average of 2,100 visitors monthly in its Visitor Center.

## Convention Centers

■ The **Albuquerque Convention Center** is slated to undergo a \$20 million face-lift, scheduled to begin in March 2013 and wrap up by the end of 2014. Plans call for a new Southwestern design that will incorporate some of the region's unique architectural elements, a complete remodel of its ballroom, the addition of a new entertainment deck, as well as upgrades to the lower-level food court and café. The center currently offers event space for up to 2,500 people. In addition to the \$20 million being invested in the Albuquerque Convention Center, the city offers more than \$200 million in recent hospitality investments and planned developments including hotels, off-site facilities and area attractions.

## Culinary

■ At a press conference on October 31, the **Sacramento CVB**, along with many prominent, local restaurateurs, announced a plan to brand Sacramento as America's Farm-to-Fork Capital. It was noted that regional farms and purveyors are providing new culinary gold for the area with sustainable beef, lamb, poultry and seafood; fruits and veggies; boutique cheeses; wines, ciders and microbrews. It was noted that Sacramento's proximity to the agricultural bounty of the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada foothills provides an opportunity to be on the cutting edge of the farm-to-table upsurge. Local restaurateurs and cooking personalities have embraced the "buy local, buy fresh" credo, and the dining public is savoring every bite.



## Hospitality Industry Training

■ **Sonoma County Tourism** launched the Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) program to train front-line employees and volunteers in the hospitality industry. The goal is to improve visitation by inspiring front-line hospitality employees and volunteers to work together to turn every visitor encounter into a positive experience. Program attendees earn a CTA designation by participating in an interactive four-hour class followed by a one-hour open book test.

## Partnerships/Collaborations

■ In August, the **Yakima Valley VCB**, **Tri-Cities VCB**, Tourism Walla Walla and Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance announced the launch of a new collaborative effort with Alaska Airlines and Enterprise Rent-A-Car to promote Washington Wine Country. Launched in September 2012, Washington Wine Country Taste and Tote makes it easier and more affordable to taste and travel the Yakima Valley, Tri-Cities and Walla Walla Valley wine regions. As part of this new partnership, Alaska Airlines is expanding its existing wine check-in program Taste

Continued on page 13

and Tote to the Yakima and Pasco/Tri-Cities airports. Originating in the Walla Walla Valley in late 2011, this program allows outbound passengers to check their first case of wine free on their return flight. In addition, Enterprise Rent-A-Car will waive car drop-off fees for visitors flying on Alaska Airlines into Yakima, Pasco or Walla Walla regional airports who wish to fly out of one of the other two airports. Other features of the new program

allow travelers to sample wines at participating wineries and pay no tasting fees when they show a

current Alaska Airlines boarding pass from one of the three airports. Additional details on the Taste and Tote promotion are available at [www.tasteandtote.com](http://www.tasteandtote.com).



### Tourism Improvement Districts/Tourism Marketing Districts

■ In June, the Portland City Council approved the Tourism Improvement District (TID) proposed by Portland hoteliers. TID fund collections began October 1, 2012. Funds gathered by the 2% assessment on guest room nights will be allocated to **Travel Portland** to build on its existing plan of work. With wide support from impacted hotels, the TID places a city-approved assessment of 2% per night on guest room revenues for all city of Portland hotels with more than 50 rooms (91 hotels with a total of more than 13,000 rooms). The TID enables incremental support of all of Travel Portland's efforts, with funding to increase an estimated \$6.6 million. Within the first few years of TID implementation, Travel Portland expects to see tourism-related job growth and an increase of hundreds of millions of dollars in annual visitor spending.

■ Sacramento hotel owners in the City and unincorporated area of Sacramento County have agreed to spend more on marketing the region to meeting, convention and event and tourists. An 11-year-old tourism business improvement district was replaced July 1, 2012, with the new Sacramento Tourism Marketing District (STMD). Hotels in the district will add an assessment to guest bills that is expected to raise about \$5.2 million annually—twice the sum raised under the original district format. The assessments vary by four geographic areas:

3% downtown, 2.5% in the Point West area, 2% in Natomas area and 1% elsewhere in the unincorporated area of Sacramento County.

The funds flow to the

**Sacramento CVB**, with oversight by a Tourism District Committee of hoteliers, appointed by the Sacramento Hotel Association, who also serve as members of the Sacramento CVB Board of Directors.

■ In September 2012 the Berkeley City Council voted unanimously to establish a new citywide business district, which they hope will increase tourism and stimulate the local economy. The Berkeley Tourism Business Improvement District, or BTBID, will place a 1% assessment on the revenue received by the hotels and motels in Berkeley through room rentals. In turn, the city will allocate the funds to certain projects aimed at promoting tourism in Berkeley. The district's boundary includes 24 hotels. The improvement district proposal has been underway since the fall of 2011, when the development was initiated by hotel directors in collaboration with Barbara Hillman, executive director of Visit Berkeley. **Visit Berkeley** will manage the program and utilize the funds collected by the city. The assessment collections began November 1, 2012.

### Virtual Meeting/Event Planning Tool

■ In October, the **Anaheim/Orange County VCB** unveiled Grand PlazaVille, a new online application that allows meeting planners to seamlessly visualize their event in the Anaheim Convention Center's newest outdoor space, the Grand Plaza. The Grand Plaza, set to open in January 2013, will be a 100,000-square-foot outdoor multi-use special event space conveniently located outside of the convention center's front entrance. It will feature a pedestrian-friendly campus with lush landscaping, expansive walkways, dramatic water fountains, ample seating areas and infrastructure necessary to support a multitude of special events. Grand PlazaVille showcases the Grand Plaza's flexibility as a meeting and event site and enables users to simply "drag and drop" an array of event elements such as food stations, tents or tables onto the Grand Plaza grounds and immediately see the results. Event planners create their own virtual setup, by using an existing template or choose from other configurations created by other users. Once complete, the customized configuration can be printed or saved.

Continued on page 15



# 16 Key Insights About the American Traveler

By Patrick Mayock, Editor in Chief, Hotel News Now

This article originally appeared on [HotelNewsNow.com](http://HotelNewsNow.com). Article edited by WACVB staff due to newsletter space constraints.

The American traveling public is a fickle bunch, prone to shifts in sentiment and selling habits. But in those adjustments and adaptations comes opportunities for the savvy hotel marketer.

The key, said Peter Yesawich, vice chairman of MMGY Global, is keeping one's finger on the pulse of those changes to best take advantage.

During a panel titled "Spectator trends: Challenges and opportunities" during the International Society of Hospitality Consultants' 2012 Annual Conference, he shared 16 of their most compelling findings.

(Note: MMGY's findings are limited to the approximately 50% of American households that travel. Of those 50%, the group only examines households with an annual income of more than \$50,000, which Yesawich said drive the majority of shifts in travel.)

## 1. Incidence of travel largely unchanged

During 2010 and 2011, 91% of Americans said they went on an overnight trip; this year that number was 90%.

## 2. Leisure demand is dominating

Roughly eight of 10, however, took at least one leisure trip during the year. The average American took 3.8 leisure trips during the past 12 months, he added.

## 3. Affluent driving demand

Thirty-two percent of households with more than \$250,000 annual income plan to take more leisure trips this year than last, while only 5% said they plan to take less. This compares to the national average of 19% and 13%, respectively.

## 4. Aging demographics brings new opportunities

More than 20% of active travelers are grandparents. Of those, 40% have taken a trip with a grandchild during the past year. And eight out of 10 times that a grandchild comes along, so does a parent. The cruise industry has been taking advantage of this multigenerational travel trend for the past decade by offering second, third and fourth cabin rates, Yesawich said. The hotel industry would be wise to do the same.

## 5. Traveler sentiment is strong—and looks to stay that way

MMGY Global polls 2,300 households across the country every six months to ask about travel intentions. The resulting Traveler Sentiment Index, which was set at 100 during 2007, measures six factors, such as availability of money to travel and the perceived affordability of travel. During February 2012, the index was at 93.6, Yesawich said. By way of comparison, the index's lowest reading of 78.2 came during October 2008. "We don't see any potholes potentially on the horizon for 2013 from the consumer's point of view."

## 6. Vacation is still viewed as a birthright

Three-fourths of Americans agree that taking a vacation is one event they look forward to most each year. The most important thing on Americans' "to do" list for 2012 was to get healthier (58%). Next on the list was to become more financially stable (45%), followed by seeing more of the world (37%).

## 7. Millennials: A whole new breed

Millennials are proving a fickle group, Yesawich said. They show up to a hotel, give solid ratings in all aspects when such feedback is deserved, "and in the next breath say, 'We're not coming back,'" he said. That's not to diminish the role of service but rather

to introduce the idea that this next generation of travelers want to try and experience new things, he said. "Smart money in marketing today is no longer in trying to repatriate the existing guest," Yesawich said; it's to cultivate the sense of "wanderlust" that's percolating in the next generation.

## 8. Frugality conveys status

While status often is conveyed by one's material possessions, Yesawich said his firm's research revealed a slightly incongruous finding: It's not the possession so much as the price to obtain that possession. In other words, "Status was conferred on the people who got the best deal," he said. The emergence of so many new "toys" or tools to shop rates and bargains is evidence of the trend, he said.

## 9. Value is still king

Despite the prevailing emphasis on frugality, value is still king, Yesawich said. Not only did travelers say that "value for price" was the most important criteria in choosing a hotel, but they are willing to pay full price if they're assured of the value inherent in that price.

## 10. Not all vacations are created equal

Seven out of ten Americans have gone on a "celebration vacation," or those that are tied to specific life events, during the past year, Yesawich said. The two most popular events are milestone birthdays and anniversaries. These trips are typically longer and generate higher spend than an average trip, he added.

## 11. More people are taking last-minute trips

"More and more people are taking these last-minute trips," Yesawich said. Approximately 30% of Americans have taken one during the past 12 months. The average advance booking period for last-minute trips was 6.2 days. The incidence of those taking advantage of flash sales, however, was down from 20% during 2011 to 14% this year. MMGY defines a "flash sale" as "the basting of time-sensitive offers or discounts to targeted prospects via email."

Continued on page 15

## 16 Key Insights

Continued from page 14

### 12. Print is losing its impact

During 2011, 40% of travelers said they look for travel deals in the newspaper. Today that number has fallen to 29%, Yesawich said.

### 13. Mobile usage going up... and up ... and up!

During 2010 and 2011, 23% of Americans had a smartphone; today more than half do. Whereas 7% owned a tablet device during 2011, this year more than 27% do. Whereas smartphones are used more for on-the-go search, tablets are couchpotato companions used to research travel and shop online, he said. One out of five Americans own both devices, Yesawich added.

### 14. OTAs still top dogs, but meta-search engines are joining the pack

Expedia, Travelocity and Orbitz are the “big dogs” in the world of online travel search, Yesawich said. The incidence of travel to Expedia—that is, the percentage of respondents who search the site at least once—was 56% during 2010 and 52% this year and last. Brand.com, by comparison, drew 15% of respondents during 2010, 29% in 2011 and 31% this year. “The ones that you want to watch are the ones called the meta-search sites,” he said, highlighting Kayak in particular.

### 15. Brands are losing their power

Thanks in part to the efforts of sites such as Kayak, brands are losing their luster, Yesawich said. “From a consumer perspective, the importance of the brand in transactions for the past five years continues to decline,” he said. While value for price was cited by American as the most important factor when choosing a hotel, room rate came in a close second. To make matters worse for brands, the majority of consumers are still left with the impression OTAs and meta-search engines continue to house the best prices, Yesawich said.

### 16. Social media still a hard sell

Seventy-three percent of travelers surveyed said they had a Facebook page, up from 67% last year. Furthermore, 61% of travelers routinely check ratings on TripAdvisor before they conduct a transaction, he said. Increasingly more important is YouTube, Yesawich added. Today 32% of all travelers visit the video platform looking for customer reviews. That incidence number has doubled in 24 months, he added. But despite such usage, 7% of Americans said their travel decision was based primarily on research or feedback from social networking sites, down from 9% during 2011.

Source: *Hotel News Now*  
[www.hotelnewsnow.com](http://www.hotelnewsnow.com)

## People On the Move

Continued from page 11

travel) as well as the SCVB international representation agencies in the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia. Leonti joined the SCVB in 2005 as tourism coordinator and was promoted in 2008 to tourism sales manager. As tourism sales manager, Leonti worked in the international market and with larger domestic tour operators to successfully increase Sacramento’s visibility in the industry. Prior to joining the SCVB, Leonti worked at *The Sacramento Bee*. He has also worked as a freelance writer and is still an active blogger.

Patrick Sesty has been named digital content coordinator for the Tempe Tourism Office. Sesty will assist the communications and marketing teams in the management of social media content and campaigns, social reporting and communications projects. Sesty most recently served as digital specialist at Digital Air Strike in Scottsdale where he managed social media campaigns for auto dealerships nationwide.

The Farmington (NM) CVB has selected **Tonya Stinson** as the Bureau’s new executive director. Stinson has been employed by the Bureau for more than 12 years and has been serving as interim manager since January 2012.

The Greater Phoenix CVB has named **Lynn Whitehead** as director of national accounts. Prior to her appointment, she served as director of national accounts for the San Diego Convention Center, where she worked for the last 17 years.

## Bureau News

Continued from page 13

### Visitor Centers

■ In early October, the **Park City Chamber/Bureau** marked the grand opening celebration of the new visitor information center in Kimball Junction. The day-long occasion welcomed more than 400 guests into the center and offered food, drink, entertainment and prizes along with ‘show and tell’ tours by visitor services staff. The event also featured the section of the visitor center that will house sublet kiosks for member information and a coffee bar and gift store. The 4,000-square-foot facility boasts nine video screens that show visitors the many things to see and do in Park City and Summit County. One screen is connected to DirecTV for viewing news, weather, special sport presentations and more. The four-projector system in the south end of the visitor center will be showing local footage of activities. These images will project on the upper south and east facing walls and can be viewed after the sun sets each evening.

“We are very pleased to be opening a Visitor Information Center of this caliber in our community,” said Bill Malone, president & CEO of the Park City Chamber/Bureau. “The fact that we now have a first-class facility that provides both the personal concierge touch of a small town with the latest technology in visitor services makes this a welcome addition in showing the guest all that our community has to offer.”



# Welcome New Members

## *In Alaska...*

### **VALDEZ CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU**

P.O. Box 1603  
Valdez, AK 99686  
(907) 835-2984  
www.valdezalaska.org  
info@valdezalaska.org  
*(new Executive Director to be named)*

## *In Arizona...*

### **FLAGSTAFF CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU**

211 West Aspen Avenue  
Flagstaff, AZ  
(928) 213-2921  
www.flagstaffarizona.org  
hhansen@flagstaffaz.gov  
*Heidi Hansen, Director*

## *In Colorado...*

### **GLENWOOD SPRINGS CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION**

P.O. Box 1238  
Glenwood Springs, CO 81602  
(970) 945-1238  
www.visitglenwood.com  
marianne@glenwoodchamber.com  
*Marianne Virgili, President & CEO*  
lisa@glenwoodchamber.com  
*Lisa Langer, VP of Tourism Marketing*

## *In Nevada...*

### **CARSON VALLEY VISITORS AUTHORITY**

1477 US Highway 395 North, Suite A  
Gardnerville, NV 89460  
(775) 782-8145  
www.visitcarsonvalley.org  
aj@carsonvalleynv.org  
*A.J. Frels, Executive Director*

## **WACVB Board of Directors**

### **PRESIDENT**

**Jennifer Wesselhoff, CDME**  
President & CEO  
Sedona Chamber of Commerce Tourism  
Bureau

### **PRESIDENT-ELECT**

**Bill Malone**  
President & CEO  
Park City Chamber of Commerce and  
Convention & Visitors Bureau

### **SECRETARY-TREASURER**

**Wes Rhea**  
Executive Director  
Stockton Convention & Visitors Bureau

### **PAST PRESIDENT**

**Kathy Smits**  
Vice President, International Tourism  
Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board

### **DIRECTORS**

**Tracy Farhad**  
Executive Director  
Solvang Conference & Visitors Bureau

**Anne Jenkins**  
Senior Vice President  
Travel Medford

**Jim Kissinger**  
Vice President-Convention Sales  
Anaheim/Orange County Visitor & Convention  
Bureau

**Aaron McCreight**  
CEO  
Casper Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

**John Reyes, CMP**  
Executive Vice President & Chief Customer  
Officer  
San Francisco Travel Association

**Sara Toliver**  
President & CEO  
Ogden/Weber Convention & Visitors Bureau

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Teresa Stephenson**  
WACVB

*The Western Association of Convention  
& Visitors Bureaus serves more than  
135 member bureaus in the West.*

### **WACVB**

950 Glenn Drive, Suite 150  
Folsom, CA 95630  
(916) 443-9012  
(916) 932-2209 Fax  
[info@wacvb.com](mailto:info@wacvb.com)  
[www.wacvb.com](http://www.wacvb.com)  
[www.wacvb.travel](http://www.wacvb.travel)  
[www.thewest.travel](http://www.thewest.travel)  
[www.westerndestinations.travel](http://www.westerndestinations.travel)

