



2007 Annual Report

Mission: "The Chamber is committed to working together with business and the community to provide leadership, education, and support for its members in order to make the Carbondale area a more vital and dynamic place to live, work, and visit."

At the Board Retreat in November 2006, we outlined the following three-year strategic goals. Throughout 2007, our committees structured their efforts and we compared our performance to these goals.

Leadership

- The Chamber provides leadership for the business community and in economic development and membership education.

Membership

- The Chamber will grow its membership to include small and large businesses that encompass a wide geographic base.
- The Chamber supports its members.
- Members are engaged.
- Chamber events are well-attended.

Partnerships

- The Chamber has clearly defined partnerships with the education and business communities as well as the Town of Carbondale.

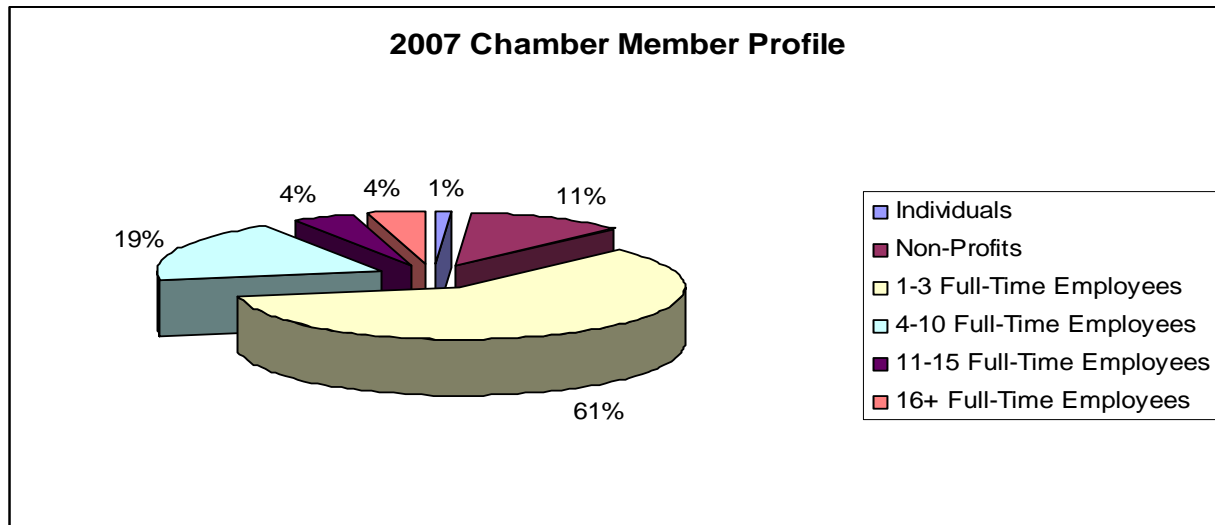
Infrastructure

- The Chamber has fully-engaged members of the Board of Directors.
- Staff capacity supports operations effectively.
- There are competitive staff benefits.
- Committees have clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- There is a succession plan to ensure continued strong leadership.

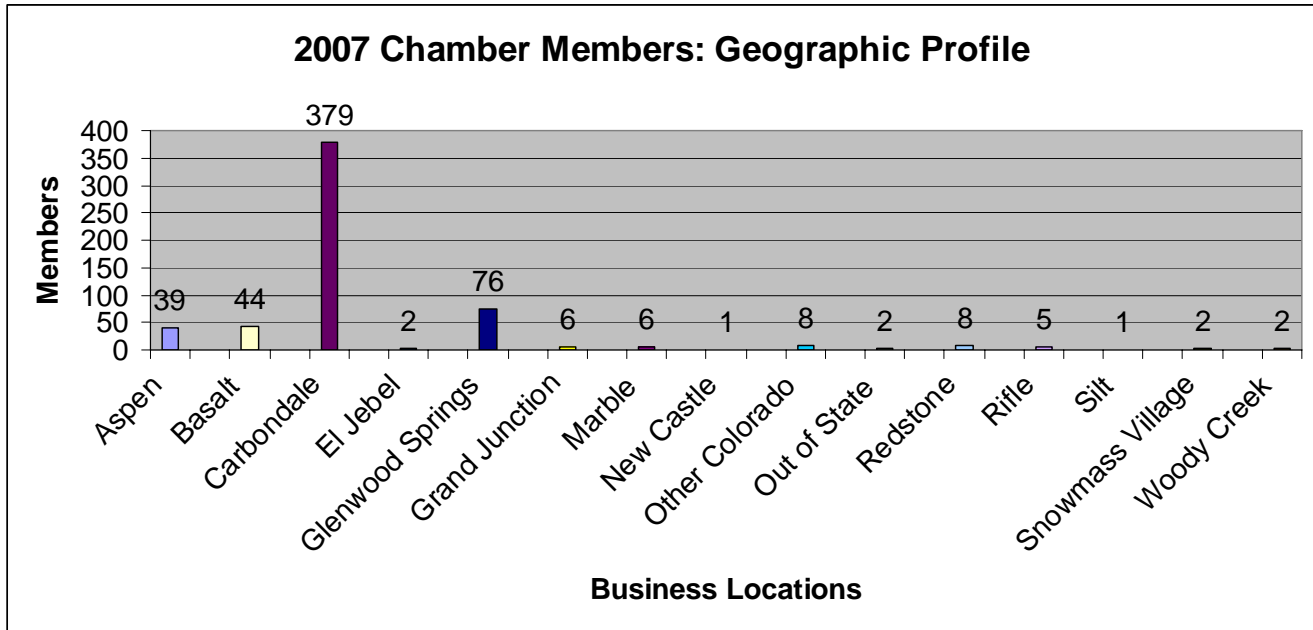
OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

The Chamber's membership increased from 508 members in December 2006 to 580 members in December 2007. As displayed in the following chart, more than 60% of our members are small businesses with one to three full-time employees. In an effort to encourage non-profits to join the Chamber, we discount our membership dues and, as a result, they represent more than 10% of our membership.



While most Chamber member businesses are located in the Carbondale area, Chamber members are found from Grand Junction to Aspen and beyond...



MEMBERSHIP

In May, we asked our members to participate in a simple and confidential online membership survey. 9g Enterprises, a consulting firm, worked with the American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) to create the survey. 9g Enterprises compiled the results and provided us with the actual responses. Members from more than 300 Chambers in 40 states participated in the survey and provided a base-line for the results. Feedback was provided in 10 critical areas: business leadership, advocacy, business assistance, leadership, larger business community, community in general, management, personnel and volunteers, infrastructure and top down approach. In all of the areas, our results were within 2/10 of the mean responses of all Chambers.

- What are the top three issues facing the Carbondale Chamber? 1) attracting and retaining members 37%; 2) economic development 37%; and 3) advocacy (7%).
- What are the three most valuable programs provided by the Chamber? 1) networking 55%; 2) programming 31%; and 3) member support 10%.

The responses have had a real influence on our efforts as we strive to make Carbondale the “Chamber of Choice” in the Roaring Fork Valley.

BUSINESS WORKSHOP SERIES: With the Board’s continued emphasis on education and on the promotion of local partnerships and alliances, the fourth Mid-Valley Business Workshop Series was launched in March in collaboration with Colorado Mountain College (CMC). Lawyers and CPA’s attending the March workshop received professional continuing education credit.

Since our workshops were not as well-attended as in past years, we conducted a survey of our members to determine whether cost, time of day, and/or topics affected the attendance. It appears that the reasons for lack of attendance are as varied as the membership; therefore, we are re-evaluating our philosophy of education.

ANNUAL BUSINESS CONFERENCE: The annual business conference was held on Tuesday, September 25 at the Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection Training Center when we again presented the “*Trends Affecting Your Business*”. The speakers did a great job in providing information and emphasizing the need for businesses to become a part of the solution to the looming housing crisis. The presentations were designed as a “call to action” to help business owners identify the current business and economic trends affecting their organizations and to address the Workforce, Housing and Transportation challenges facing Carbondale and the Roaring Fork Valley. Much of the conversation focused on the lack of affordable and attainable housing in the valley.

Again, congratulations to American National Bank -- the 2007 Chamber Business of the Year!

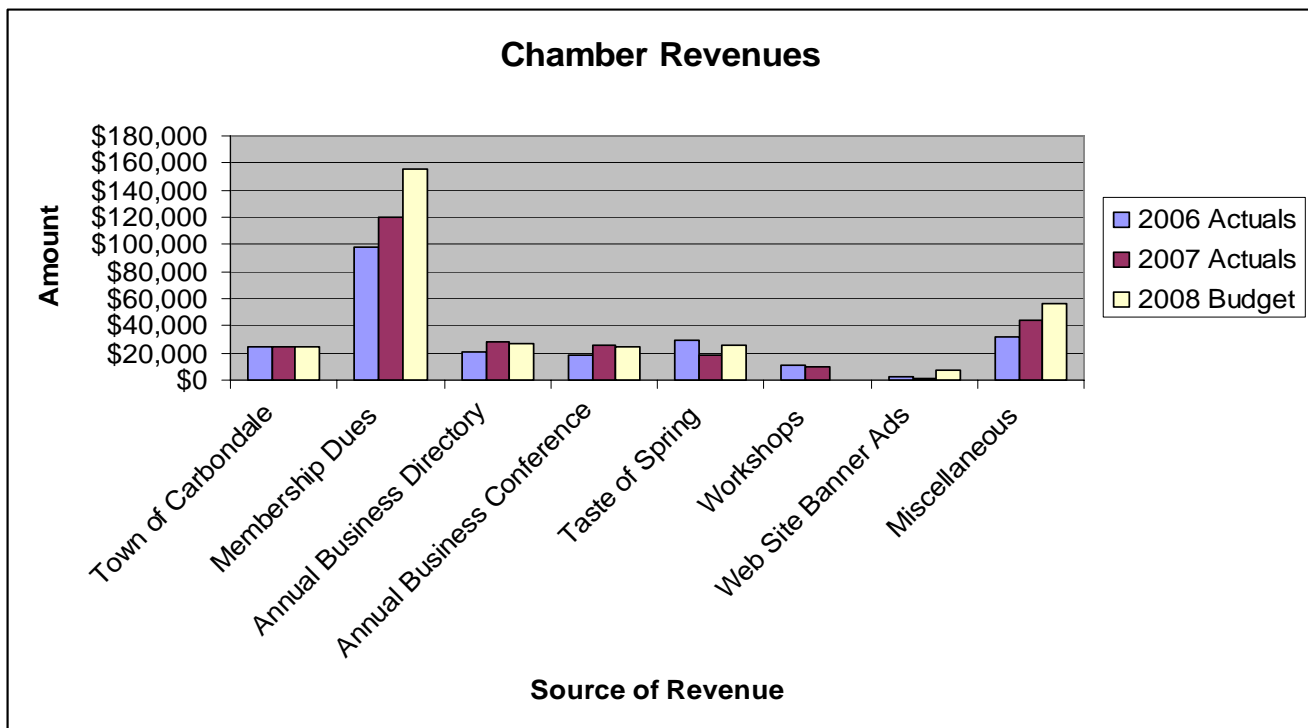
MONTHLY BUSINESS AFTER HOURS (BAH) and QUARTERLY LUNCHEONS: Our Posse did a great job organizing Business After Hours (third Wednesday of the month) and Quarterly Luncheons. By encouraging multiple hosts, attendance at BAH has continued to grow.

Topics at the Quarterly Luncheons were about community issues. In February, Mick Ireland presented “How tax changes, wealth creation, and Baby Boomer retirees combine to reshape local communities in unexpected, sometimes counter-intuitive ways”. In May, Judy Haptonstall presented “Strengthening Schools through Community Collaborations”. And, the Town of Carbondale and the Sustainability Center of the Rockies provided an update on the Carbondale Elementary School project in November.

PUBLICATIONS: We produced regular weekly and monthly communications to remind our members of events and business news in the Carbondale area. In addition, we generated Public Service Announcements to get the word out about businesses and events in Carbondale. Quarterly special sections in *The Valley Journal* focused on local business and community issues and on state and federal legislation affecting businesses. Discounted advertising rates in the quarterly publications provided both a value-added membership benefit and cost-effective marketing opportunities for our members.

LEADS NETWORKING GROUPS: Chamber members who are serious about networking have the opportunity to join a Leads Group. Each member of the group is required to be a business member of the Carbondale Chamber and will represent a different industry or profession. Regular attendance is strongly encouraged.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT: As reflected in the following chart, a variety of revenue sources support the growth of the Chamber. In addition to membership dues, the Taste of Spring, the Annual Business Conference, and the Town of Carbondale investment are significant sources of revenue.



GIFT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM: More than 140 Chamber businesses participated in our *SHOP LOCALLY* program. We encourage everyone to purchase gift certificates at the Chamber Office.

TASTE OF SPRING: In spite of the winter-like weather, the Carbondale Chamber's biggest fundraiser of the year was even bigger and better in 2007. It was held on Saturday, May 5 and Sunday, May 6 at the Aspen Glen Club. We offered a Wine & Beer Tasting with hors d'oeuvres instead of a silent auction, and again, dinner was prepared by “the chef of your choice”.

ROARING FORK VALLEY COMMUNITY HEALTH PLAN (RFVCHP): The Carbondale Chamber and other Chambers in the valley teamed with the RFVCHP, Aetna, and Ben-e-lect to “create and promote community-oriented health care plans focusing on competitive pricing, accessibility, and quality outcomes.” Chamber members see discounts right away. For information about the plans, members were encouraged to visit www.rfchp.com or contact their local insurance agent.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE EDUCATION: The Roaring Fork School District (RFSD) and Roaring Fork High School worked with the Carbondale Chamber and Colorado Mountain College (CMC) to create an internship program, designed to connect local businesses with schools and expose students to new and valuable life experiences. Students participating in the internship enrolled in the “Introduction to Business” class at CMC starting in September, and they earned credit from both the high school and CMC for the course. During the course, students were also matched with a local business and earned high school credit for the internship. 12 students completed the program. In addition to providing “real life” experience with professionals, businesses engaged students in day-to-day business decisions. All of this was part of helping the students build a strong work ethic and preparing them for the world of work. On the business side, the program helped employers improve the quality of the future workforce, and it was an investment in the kids to get them prepared for the future. It was also an opportunity for businesses to train students to be potential summer or part-time employees.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Chamber formed an Economic Development/Direction Task Force in January. In April, the Chamber Board presented its results to the Carbondale Board of Trustees (BOT). We recommended that an Economic Direction Council (EDC) be created and structured similar to the Tourism Council of Carbondale (TCC), under the supervision of the Chamber Board and initially funded by the Town of Carbondale. Its primary responsibilities would include:

1. Inform: compile and provide demographic and other economic information about the Carbondale area, including an update of “Doing Business in Carbondale”; address inquiries/needs with a “Rapid Response Team”, as appropriate; and create a network of local resources
2. Identify, encourage and/or support projects, including a grant application process
3. Oversee the Town of Carbondale Revolving Loan Fund: assist the Town of Carbondale Finance Director to administer the Fund and work from Initial Revolving Loan Fund guidelines and procedures

The Carbondale Trustees declined to move forward at that time.

And last but not least, we thank members of the Board and Staff for contributing their energy and effort!

2007 BOARD of DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

Vicki Peterson, **Ace Hardware Carbondale** (President)
Bob Pazik, **Roaring Fork Family Physicians** (Vice President)
Annie Bickley, **Land Title Guarantee Company** (Secretary)
Bill Hofto, **William J. Hofto, CPA, PC** (Treasurer)

Rona Fischer, **Carbondale Insurance Service, Inc.** (*Leads/Business Networking Co-chair*); Judy Haptonstall, **Roaring Fork School District** (*Public/Private Education Committee*); Leann Katchuk, **Peak Party Rentals, LLC** (*Taste of Spring Co-chair*); Steve Martin, **Steve Martin Insurance/New York Life** (*Membership Committee Co-chair*); John Stelzriede, **American National Bank** (*Business Conference Co-chair*); and John Foulkrod, **C'dale LLC** (*Town Council Liaison*)

Staff: Randi Lowenthal, Executive Director; Pamela Eppler, Communications & Operations; Milene Ribas, Marketing & Tourism; and Charla Combest, Membership.

TOURISM COUNCIL of CARBONDALE
(formerly Lodging Tax Committee)

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The Town of Carbondale passed a Lodging Tax Ordinance in November 2003 to create funds "to be used primarily for the promotion, development and marketing of tourism in Carbondale". The Carbondale Chamber administers those funds. In addition to the Town's 2% lodging tax, sales of website banner ads on www.carbondale.com and of advertising space at the scenic overlook on Highway 82 are added sources of revenue used to market the Town of Carbondale.

In addition to outdoor recreation, dining, shopping and the arts, the Tourism Council recognized the growing importance of renewable energy/resource efficiency in Carbondale and the Roaring Fork Valley. Not only is it the focus of local businesses and non-profits, but promoting renewable energy/resource efficiency is also consistent with the small town character and the quality of life the Tourism Council promotes in Carbondale.

Through direct mail and e-mail postcard campaigns, the Tourism Council worked to extend the summer season to include more visitors in April/May and September/October. Individuals and organizations continued to be identified within the Roaring Fork Valley and the surrounding 500-mile area to invite them to bring their events and meetings to town and/or to encourage them to take advantage of outdoor activities, patronize local restaurants, seek out local artists, and use Carbondale as a "base camp" to take day trips in the area. We also added research energy/resource efficiency businesses and organizations to the database for future mailings. As organizations are identified in larger cities within the 500-mile area, advertising may be placed with local resources in those target areas as appropriate.

2007 Tourism Council of Carbondale (TCC)

Richard Fuller, **Alpine Bank Carbondale** (Chair); Bruce Stolbach, **Alpine Angling**; Coral Dillon, **Carbondale Comfort Inn & Suites**; Tina Santacroce, **Crystal Glass Studio**; Bob Fullerton, **Desert Sky Catering**; Erin Rigney/Craig Wheeless, **Rainy Day Designs**; Nancy Barnett, Finance Director, **Town of Carbondale** (Town Liaison); Bob Pazik, **Roaring Fork Family Physicians** (Chamber Board Liaison); and Trevor Cannon, **Umbrella Incorporated**. Staff: Randi Lowenthal, Executive Director, and Milene Ribas, Marketing & Tourism, **Carbondale Chamber**.

www.carbondale.com

The Tourism Council focused on adding new content to the website. The site contains a wealth of information for visitors and residents about the Carbondale area, including daily local news feeds, local weather, a visual experience with contributions from professional and amateur photographers, information about the Chamber and a directory of its members, a link to the Town of Carbondale website, and a popular Events Calendar.

In order to capitalize on a quality website, we contracted with Blue Tent Marketing to help us enhance our search engine optimization (SEO) and ensure that potential visitors find our website when utilizing search engines such as Google and Yahoo. They helped us identify important search phrases to insure that our website will be within the top sites identified when a phrase is searched. We researched keywords, optimized metatags, evaluated and optimized the content on top level pages, and submitted www.carbondale.com to variety of relevant directories. We have seen some important results. In the first nine months with the SEO program, we gained two positions on the original ranking. In other words, when you search for the word "Carbondale", we appear before other websites.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL: An Outdoor Recreation brochure was produced in 2006, and an Arts & Dining brochure and a local Hiking & Biking Guide were released in 2007. The Hiking & Biking Guide became an instant hit and we will need to reprint the guide much sooner than anticipated.

E-POSTCARDS

An e-marketing program was launched in January 2007. Each month subscribers receive an ePostcard with helpful outdoor recreation, arts & dining, or green tips about the Carbondale area to help them plan an exciting day trip in the area or their dream vacation. We increased our original email database from 164 at the end of 2006 to over 3,000 current subscribers. Our next step will be to add coupons with special deals from local businesses.

DIRECT MARKETING

The TCC launched a direct mail marketing campaign in March to promote Carbondale. Over 800 contacts received our three promotional brochures. The idea was to reach not only potential visitors but also associations and media. We received feedback and the most significant response came from the Ride the Rockies, a cycling event that attracts about 3,000-3,500 people for a five-day race. As a result of discussions with our office about their route, they decided to make Sopris Park in Carbondale one of their Aid Station stops.

ADVERTISING

Since we established a partnership with www.coloradovacation.com in January 2007, our number of tourism requests increased from 19 to about a 100 a month. The Colorado Vacation is a group of five Colorado vacation-oriented websites where visitors can request specific tourism information that is automatically forwarded to us.

We won a 20,000 impressions banner ad on the State of Colorado's website at www.colorado.com when we attended the 2006 Annual State of Colorado Tourism Conference in Keystone. Our banner is displayed on some of their most popular pages, including Stay & Do Arts, Stay & Do Dining, and Vacation Ideas Outdoors. We had a total of 2,498 impressions since the beginning of March. An impression means how many times a browser hits the page where the banner ad is displayed.

When researching the cost and scope of a local and/or regional advertising campaign, a full page ad was discussed with Colorado Mountain Express (CME) Destination West magazine. We became an advertiser in the magazine, and the publisher created a new section in the 2007 fall edition which promotes Carbondale as a destination. Their magazine reaches over 200,000 travelers annually, and approximately 50,000 of those readers travel to the Roaring Fork Valley, Glenwood Springs and Aspen, each year. 40% of those visitors rent a car for at least one day, and we hope they will take a day trip to Carbondale.

An effort is being made to research the cost and scope of a local and/or regional advertising campaign for future implementation. Other advertising outside the electronic arena, including print, radio and television have been identified but will continue to be deferred until additional sources of revenue can be identified.

BROCHURE DISTRIBUTION

Feedback from tourism surveys shows that visitors use brochures when traveling two times more than any other form of advertising available. Therefore, we distributed over 16,000 brochures in hotels, restaurants and other facilities in the Denver corridor from Summit County to Denver metro; in the Carbondale circle from Glenwood Springs to Delta to Grand Junction; and in Aspen/Snowmass.

SPECIAL EVENT/PROJECT FUNDING for non-profits: Awards were granted according to the following criteria: 1) promotion of off-season tourism; 2) quality of the event; 3) amount of additional sponsorship; 4) long-range potential; 5) media appeal; 6) funding that will make a difference; and 7) enhancement of Carbondale's Town image. The Tourism Council granted awards to the following applicants: Carbondale Clay Center's Cajun Clay Night; Dandelion Day; KDNK Blues Brew & BBQ; Light Up Carbondale, Mid-Valley Green Map, Pumpkin Festival, Roaring Fork Studio Tour, and the Town of Carbondale's OktoberFest/Celtic Fest. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis and are reviewed within sixty days.

SCENIC OVERLOOK: The Tourism Council continued to explore the installation of solar energy sources at the scenic overlook to help promote Carbondale as a center for green and renewable resources. Not only could it be an example of energy and resource efficiency, but the scenic overlook could also be a source of information reflecting the growing interest and commitment in the area.