



CARBONDALE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2008 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 Chamber Board Retreat which was held in November 2007, we outlined the following goals for 2008. Our committees structured their efforts and we compared our performance to these goals throughout the year.

Chamber Goals for 2008

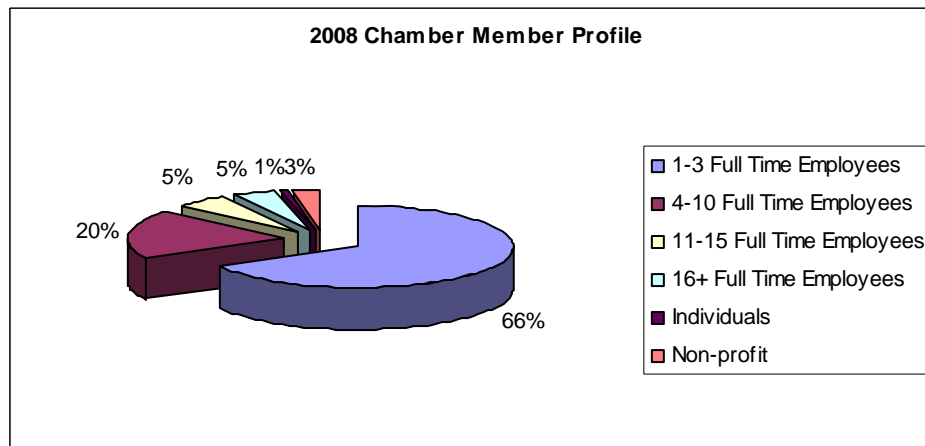
1. Involve more members in committees and increase attendance at Chamber events
2. Continue to develop relationships and collaborate with schools in the Roaring Fork School District and Colorado Mountain College, and with downtown business groups
3. Increase non-dues revenue opportunities, i.e., sponsorship of the monthly newsletter
4. Increase networking opportunities for members
5. Redefine "membership education"
6. Educate members and the community about the Chamber benefits and services; create and implement a marketing plan for the Chamber
7. Revisit the Chamber's role in economic and community development/direction in Carbondale, as appropriate
8. Tourism Council of Carbondale: continue to develop and implement a marketing plan to attract visitors to the Town of Carbondale

In short, we focused on increasing: 1) membership, 2) member involvement in the Chamber and the community, and 3) member benefits, services, and education in an effort to become the "*Chamber of Choice*" in the Roaring Fork Valley.

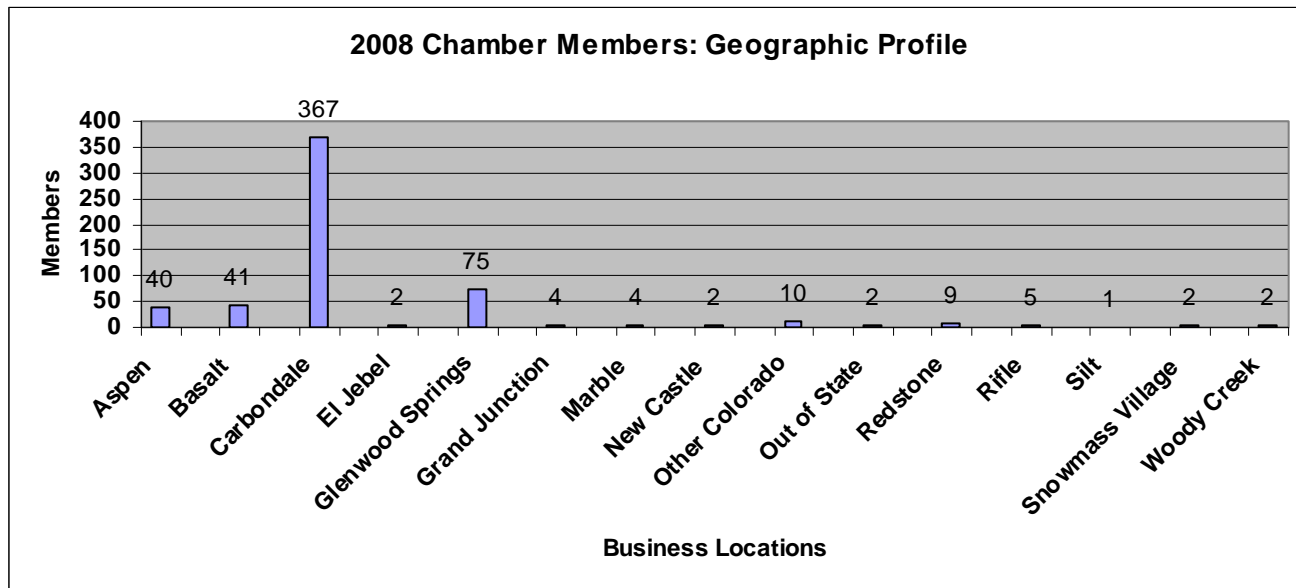
OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MEMBERSHIP PROFILE:

As displayed in the following chart, more than 66% 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 3% 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...



MARKETING: **build. grow. succeed!**

The Chamber's new marketing message ["build. grow. succeed!"] provided us with an excellent springboard for building a marketing campaign, for creating strategies for generating greater awareness of the benefits and services of Chamber Membership, and for spreading the word. We developed a marketing campaign to support the Carbondale Chamber's efforts to retain membership, recruit new members, and generate awareness of the Chamber's programs and services in the business community. The Chamber offers its members a wide variety of opportunities to promote their businesses — from networking to marketing and advertising. Now we need to communicate those opportunities more effectively to our members and prospective members. Our challenge has been to create awareness and encourage utilization of those benefits and services among existing members, potential members, and the area business community. Remember, all the benefits and opportunities of Chamber membership can be found on our website at www.carbondale.com.

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 2008. It was held on Saturday, April 5 from 5:00-9:00pm at Destination Holdings at RVR. The evening began with wine & beer tastings and delightful appetizers, continued with a silent auction, and concluded, of course, with dinner and the "chef of your choice". A great evening for all!

ANNUAL BUSINESS CONFERENCE: "Turning the Future into Revenue: What Businesses Need to Know to Shape their Futures" Our 2008 Annual Business Conference was scheduled to be held at the Carbondale & Rural Fire Protection Training Center on Tuesday, September 23. Glen Hiemstra, founder & owner of Futurist.com and author of *Turning the Future Into Revenue*, planned to explore the drivers of future change. According to Glen, surprising demographic shifts, energy shortages, new technologies, environmental changes, and issues of race and religion change the way we live. They also lead to new and exciting business opportunities, but only those who foresee those opportunities will be in position to take advantage of them. With an equal emphasis on future trends, processes, skills, and models for thinking about and shaping the future, he was preparing to show us how to approach future planning with an effective long-range view, while harnessing the potential of the possibilities in front of us right now.

Following his keynote address, Glen had planned to guide interactive small group discussions as we tackled those ever-present and usually overwhelming issues of workforce, housing and transportation. Then, platinum, gold and silver sponsors were invited to have lunch with him after the morning discussions.

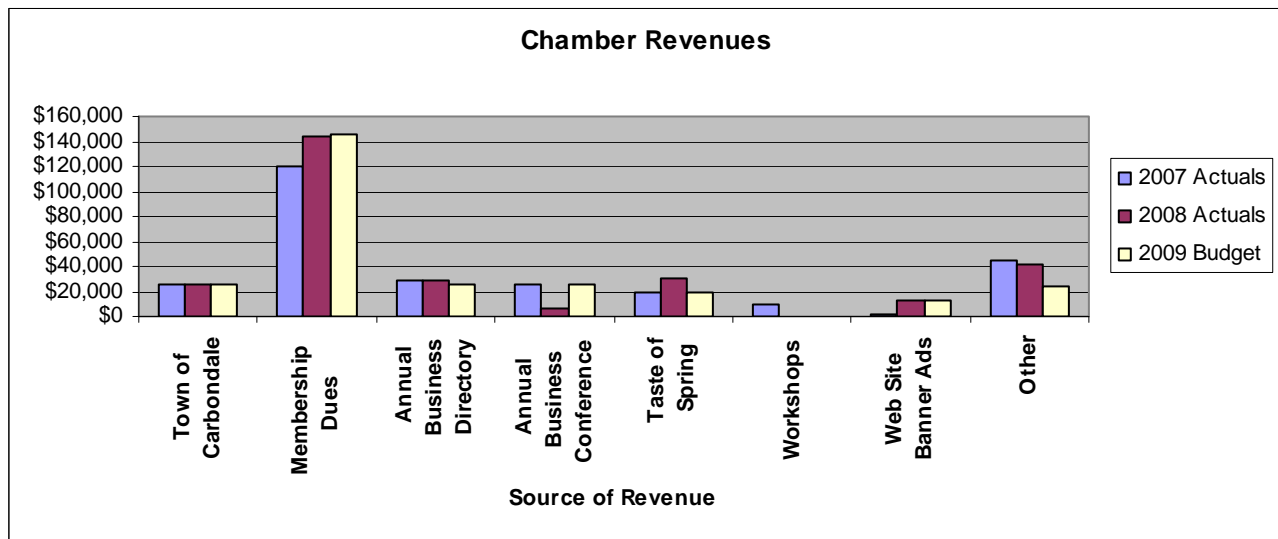
However, a man who speaks about the future and has a website dedicated to disseminating information about the future could not have predicted his medical emergency that caused the cancellation of the Annual Business Conference. Thanks again to all the sponsors, ticket holders, and volunteers who supported the effort!

MONTHLY BUSINESS AFTER HOURS (BAH): Our Posse did a great job organizing the monthly Business After Hours (third Wednesday of the month) and the Quarterly Luncheons. By encouraging multiple hosts, attendance at BAH has continued to grow, and the “buzz” about these networking events continues to increase.

QUARTERLY LUNCHEONS: Topics at the Quarterly Luncheons were varied. In February, the Chamber held its annual meeting and members heard about new Chamber initiatives and committee efforts. In May, Judy Haptonstall, Superintendent of the Roaring Fork School District, talked about work the district and the state is doing to help students prepare for the opportunities they will have following high school. She also included an update on the district’s progress with future planning through their Accountability Plan. In August, several Chamber members shared updates about their community projects. And, the Town of Carbondale provided an economic update and a preview of the 2009 budget in November. In addition, JR Baker Architects and Sunsense, Inc. received the Chamber Business of the Year awards. The spirit of the award is to recognize the member(s) that has a history of outstanding business practices in the Carbondale area. This honor is awarded to acknowledge entrepreneurship, sustainability, productivity, and effort. *Again, congratulations!*

PUBLICATIONS: We produced regular weekly, monthly, and quarterly communications to remind our members of events and to promote business news in the Carbondale area. In addition, we generated Public Service Announcements to get the word out about businesses and events in and around 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 local marketing opportunities for our members.

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.



CHAMBERMASTER: This is not some kind of Chamber guru but rather a web-based, member management software program, exclusively designed for Chambers of Commerce. We implemented *ChamberMaster* and upgraded our database software and sections of the website during the summer to help streamline data entry and also enable our members to update their contact information directly. Website improvements and added member benefits accompanied the upgrade.

Using *ChamberMaster* means reduced errors as the information is entered into one database instead of multiple sources and, as a result, more staff time is available to support our members. For businesses with multiple employees, multiple contacts can be added to the member record, so everyone can stay informed about the news and events within the Chamber community.

Some of the additions to member benefits included the ability to post and advertise hot deals, such as e-coupons, special offers and discounts online – viewable by other members and the general public. There is also

a job posting module so members can advertise current vacancies, and, as mentioned, we added the ability for members to update their own listings online – at their convenience. Each business member appears in the new business directory in two categories on www.carbondale.com. Member email addresses are not listed on the site to cut down on spam mail, but the website user will be able to email your business directly from your listing. Also, we now have the ability to better track referrals and requests for information online, and the referrals are automatically generated and sent to our members. In fact, visitors from outside of Carbondale can request specific brochures to be sent to them to tailor their vacation planning. Lodging members are able to update their listings and specify their room types and activities offered so their properties are better represented.

WEBSITE UPDATE: In addition to the new Job Postings, Job Search, and HOT DEALS on our website at www.carbondale.com, we also added a section where you can find a wealth of practical BUSINESS RESOURCES. You will find links to articles, websites, books, and other sources of business information on how to: 1) Plan Your Business; 2) Start Your Business; 3) Manage Your Business; 4) Get Out of Your Business; and 5) Other Business Resources. We will continue to update the content as we find helpful and informative material to share, and **Chamber members are encouraged to submit their favorite resources and write articles to be included.** As always, website banner ads are available on any of the new or existing pages, and we hope Chamber members will take advantage of these cost-effective advertising/marketing opportunities.

GIFT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM: More than 150 Chamber businesses participate in our *SHOP LOCALLY* program. We encourage our members, residents, and guests to visit the Chamber office to purchase our gift certificates for employees, friends, and relatives.

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.

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

And last but not least, we thank all the members of the Board and Staff for contributing their energy and effort to make 2008 another successful year!

2008 BOARD of DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

Vicki Peterson, **Ace Hardware Carbondale** (President)
Bob Pazik, **Roaring Fork Family Physicians** (Vice President and Tourism Council Liaison)
Anne Bickley (Secretary), Farrah Roberts, **Alpine Bank** (Secretary effective December 08)
Bill Hofto, **William J. Hofto, CPA, PC** (Treasurer)

Patrick Curry, **Blue Tent Marketing** (*Marketing Committee Co-Chair*); Judy Haptonstall, **Roaring Fork School District** (*Public/Private Education Committee*); Steve Martin, **Steve Martin Insurance/New York Life** (*Membership Committee Co-chair*); Andrea Porter, **Glenwood Springs Post Independent** (*Membership Education*); Steve Walters, **Peak Party Rentals** (*Membership Committee Co-Chair*); Rosie Wettstein, **Main Street Spirits** (*Taste of Spring Co-Chair and Downtown Liaison*); and John Foulkrod, **C'dale LLC** (*Town Council Liaison*)

Staff: Randi Lowenthal, Executive Director; Mary Bos, Communications & Operations; Andrea Stewart, Marketing & Tourism; and Charla Combest, Membership.



TOURISM COUNCIL of CARBONDALE (TCC) 2008 Annual Report

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 sales of advertising space at the scenic overlook on Highway 82 are added sources of revenue which contribute to the effort to market the Town of Carbondale.

In addition to outdoor recreation, dining, 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 continued to work 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 within the State of Colorado 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 Colorado, advertising may be placed with local resources in those target areas as appropriate.

2008 Tourism Council of Carbondale (TCC)

Richard Fuller, **Alpine Bank**, (*Chair*); Bruce Stolbach, **Alpine Angling**; Matt Hamilton, **Aspen Skiing Co. Environmental Board**; John Miernicki, **Days Inn**; Bob Fullerton, **Desert Sky Catering**; Amy Kimberly, **KDNK Public Radio**; Tom Kenyon, **Kenyon Designs**; Ed Perregeax, **Roaring Fork Conservancy**; Trevor Cannon, **Umbrella Roofing Incorporated**; Nancy Barnett, **Town of Carbondale**, Finance Director (*Town Liaison*); and Bob Pazik, **Roaring Fork Family Physicians** (*Chamber Board Liaison*)

Staff: Randi Lowenthal, Executive Director, and Andrea Stewart, Marketing & Tourism, **Carbondale Chamber**.

www.carbondale.com

The Tourism Council continued to focus 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 an updated and ever-popular Events Calendar.

Website traffic from January to December 2008: Total sessions: 166,418 and Total page views: 730,084

A session is a unique visit to the website by a single individual. A visitor can view multiple pages in the website and it counts as only one session. A pageview is counted each time a web page is shown to a visitor. Every time an individual visits one page on the website it counts as one pageview. Most popular pages were the Homepage, Events Calendar, Lodging, new Business Directory, and new Job Posting section.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL: Much time and energy was spent in 2008 on a new brochure, including the concept of Carbondale as the base camp to numerous activities in the area. The brochure combined the existing Outdoor Recreation and Arts & Dining brochures and included more photos and suggestions of things to do. Of course, it is printed on recycled paper.

With the completion of the Rio Grande Trail, we now have 44 miles of continuous multi-use trail from Aspen to Glenwood Springs, completely protected from vehicular traffic, except at intersections. It quickly became a popular local attraction for dog walkers, bicyclists, and cross country skiers, and we were quite involved in the creation and distribution of RFTA's Rio Grande Trail map.

E-POSTCARDS: Each month subscribers receive an ePostcard with information about outdoor recreation in the Carbondale area, arts & dining, or green tips 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 encourage from local businesses to include coupons with special deals.

DIRECT MARKETING and PUBLIC RELATIONS: The Tourism Council conducted a direct mail marketing campaign to promote the Carbondale area. The concept was to reach not only potential visitors but also associations and media. We created a media database of newspapers and radio stations in Colorado so we can quickly and easily try to create a "buzz" about Carbondale. We received helpful feedback, and the most significant response came from the Colorado Relay Classic, a 174-mile team running relay that has 30 legs going from Georgetown to Carbondale. As a result of discussions with our office about their route, they moved their final stop to Sopris Park in Carbondale.

Carbondale was featured in articles in the following publications:

- *Sunset* magazine: "Dream Town. The mountain getaway that's got it all". February 2008
- Locals Tyler Stableford and David Clifford helped to promote Carbondale with their spectacular photography in the September 2008 issue of *National Geographic Adventure* magazine. Not only was Carbondale named as one of the "Top 12 Towns" in the "50 Next Great Places to Live and Play", but it was also listed in the Scouting Reports foldout in the magazine! Check out the Rockies section to find information regarding Carbondale's own Avalanche Ranch, North Face Skatepark and Eco-Goddess Edibles!
- *Encompass* magazine, the AAA Companion: "Colorado skateboard parks". September/October 2008
- *Sunset* magazine: "Eat well, play hard". December 2008

ADVERTISING: As we continued our partnership with www.coloradovacation.com, the number of online tourism requests increased substantially. 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.

When researching the cost and scope of a local and/or regional advertising, a full page ad was discussed with Colorado Mountain Express (CME) Destination West magazine. We continued to be an advertiser in the magazine, and the publisher maintained a Carbondale section which promotes Carbondale as a destination. Their magazine reaches over 200,000 travelers a year, 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.

New advertising programs were placed on 5280.com, and we sponsored the www.5280.com Restaurant section in September and December. We also placed an ad on homepage of the Grand Junction Free Press website.

BROCHURE DISTRIBUTION: Feedback from tourism surveys shows that visitors use websites to research their destination, and they rely on brochures when traveling two times more than any other form of advertising available. Therefore, we distributed brochures in hotels, restaurants and other facilities in the Denver corridor from Summit County to Denver metro and throughout the I-25 corridor; 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. In 2008, the Tourism Council granted awards to the following applicants: Spring Gulch Map; 5Point Film Festival; Cajun Clay Night; Colorado Relay; LobsterFest; and Oktoberfest.

SCENIC OVERLOOK: The Tourism Council continued to sell advertising at the scenic overlook and to promote Carbondale as a base camp for outdoor recreation, arts & dining and a center for green/renewable resources.

And last but not least, we thank all the members of the Tourism Council and Staff for contributing their energy and effort to make 2008 another successful year!