

# HOSTING

## Rapid City Area Hospitality Association News

published monthly & online at [www.rchospitality.com](http://www.rchospitality.com) • February 2009

## NOTES FROM NANCY

Nancy Brady, Editor

### CONGRATULATIONS COMFORT INN I-90

Owners Diane and Ron Heinis can be proud of their most recent award given by Choice Hotels International, The Platinum Hospitality Award. Only 2 percent of properties in the Choice Hotels system are given this award. The hotel received high marks for cleanliness and property maintenance. The hotel also met or exceeded the Comfort Inn standards. This is high praise for the operators, Ron and Diane, and the Hospitality Association is proud to have them as members.



### HOSTING

is the official publication of the Rapid City Area Hospitality Association

PO Box 2731 • Rapid City, SD 57709

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### GOVERNOR'S TOURISM CONFERENCE 2009.

This year's conference was geared more to the tech side of advertising and promotion, offering more seminars and website building and advertising. This was the wish of attendees of the 2008 conference in their evaluations to the Dept. of Tourism. These seminars were very well attended and comments heard were positive. There were a few seminars totally about hospitality and they were also well attended, some because of the content and mostly by top speakers with hot topics. Below are statistics published by the Dept. of Tourism of interest to all of you in the industry.

#### ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR PENNINGTON COUNTY:

\$271, 593,559 (+0.7%)

#### IMPACT ON SOUTH DAKOTA'S ECONOMY:

2.42 Billion (+2.8%)

#### STATE SALES TAX FROM VISITOR SPENDING:

\$23,464,000 (-2.1%)

#### STATE GASOLINE TAX FROM VISITOR SPENDING:

\$22,299,200 (-8.5)

#### EMPLOYMENT CREATED BY VISITOR SPENDING:

33,720 (-2.6%)

#### IN-TARGET RESPONSES TO SURVEY:

- SD was the Final Destination : 61.9%
- Average size of travel party: 3.4
- Were satisfied with SD visit: 98.4%
- Average spending per day: \$224.41
- Largest Increase of travelers by age: 45-54
- Married status of travelers: 80%
- Household income \$50,000+: 64%

#### ANNUAL TRAVEL FORECAST:

- Business/Convention/Seminar – projected to be down 2.7% from 2008
- Leisure travel projected to be down 1.3%

*These figures were not given by SD Tourism officials but by TIA's Travel Forecast Model, BLS, Dept. of Labor, OTTI, BEA, Dept. of Commerce.*

## President's Message

Conrad Rupert

So, who can relate to an \$800 billion "Stimulus Plan"? I'm sure that amount would certainly "stimulate" any of us! Plus another +/- trillion dollars (how many zeros is that ! ?) in "TARP" funds!

Quiz: Who knows what T A R P stands for? Much to be financed in notes sold to other countries that don't even like us—can you say "China"? I'm feeling a great amount of frustration that we just instantly doubled our national debt, due to bad decisions and corruption from folks on both sides of the political aisle and in prominent

business positions, over the last 10 -15 years. I might feel better if any of the folks in DC had ever run a successful business and had to meet payroll—but the vast majority only know how to spend other people's money, yours & mine! There are two basic types in our nation—producers and consumers. How long can we continue the shift to the consumer side and survive? In the interest of full disclosure, I have been a duly registered Independent for decades. More & more, I believe in the motto "Re-elect No One!"

On a brighter note, we just fin-

ished a great stock show & rodeo. Official count was 302,000, up 15% from last year. The balmy weather (for SD in Feb) was a blessing and great contributor. Ranchers (producers) didn't have to stay home or leave early to save their stock from a raging blizzard! All reports from the lodging and food providers were very positive. Most vendors were also happy with the heavy foot traffic even though a few were short on dollars compared to last year. And from the looks of the "Cowboy Cadillacs" and stock trailers, the

(continued on page 3)

## OUR ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

When you have a need or your guests ask for recommendations or suggestions, think of our friends and associate members first. They support us—

### LET'S SHOW OUR APPRECIATION.

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BH Power & Light  
BH Chemicals  
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Central States Fair  
Certified Folder Display Service  
Chexcel  
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Coca-Cola Bottling Co.  
Computers, ETC  
D & R Service, Inc.  
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Dakota Business Center  
Ecolab  
Epic Outdoor Advertising  
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FTC Laundromat & Dry Cleaners  
Gillette Dairy of the Black Hills  
Golden West Tele Tech, Inc.  
Gold Pages Publishing, Inc.

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Hospitality Central, LLC  
HRS Foodservice  
Lakeside Dairy  
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### **Election of VIA Board, 2009**

At the annual meeting of the Visitor Industry Alliance in Pierre, SD, in January 2009, the board of directors voted to add the South Dakota Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus to their board composition. Consequently, the SD Association of CVBs voted to elect Michelle Lintz, Executive Director of the Rapid City Convention & Visitors Bureau as their representative.

The South Dakota Visitor Industry Alliance (VIA) was created to unify tourism related industries in order to have a presence at the South Dakota Legislature. According to VIA's bylaws, the purpose of the group is to be the statewide advocate for the visitor industry and to provide a coordinating alliance for the visitor industry in South Dakota.

The VIA was incorporated in 1995. The VIA Board of Directors and members have been involved in a number of activities since that time. The organization continues its advocacy role for the South Dakota visitor industry, while continually seeking new methods to increase funding for promotional efforts.

### **News Tidbits – Innkeepers select new representatives**

The South Dakota Innkeepers Association elected officers and directors at its annual meeting in Pierre.

Officers include Bill Folkerts of Venerts Hotel Management in Watertown, president; Rick Murray of Ramkota Hotel in Pierre, vice president; and Jeff

Jackson of Wrangler Inn in Mobridge, treasurer.

Michelle Lamphere of Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn in Rapid City was elected to a three-year term on the board of directors and also appointed to the membership and Web site committees. Current board member Diane Heinis of Days Inn I-90 in Rapid City was appointed to the budget and membership committees.

### **Benchmark With Your Competition**

Find out what your competition is doing for their customers.

Then, do it better!

Benchmarking is a way of comparing yourself with your competition, but being as good as them is not good enough.

Figure out a way to be better.

Then find out what you do best and exploit it. Let the customer know why they have made the right decision to do business with you.

Here is an important tip. Make sure what you do best is also important to the customer. Just because you may be the best at something, does it really matter to the customer? Does it affect the quality of the product or their experience in doing business with you?

If you can answer yes (in a positive way), then show off. Let the customer know how good you are!

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*(President's letter . . . cont. from page 2)*

ranching folks appear to be in good financial health. That's good!

South Dakota, in general, has never suffered the radical downturns in the economy that the more populated areas on both coasts go through. Let's hope that we're seeing some improvement in the whole general economy by late spring/summer. It's encouraging to see the downtown folks forging ahead with plans to revitalize that core area. At exit 61 on I-90 two new hotels are going up. A huge new spec building is going up north of Rushmore Mall, Sonic is building a

second drive-in on the west side of town, Stony Creek continues to complete their apartment complex on Catron Blvd., several new banks are under construction or expanding, and housing developments continue to mushroom in all areas.

The Black Hills area still has the biggest bang for the buck when it comes to tourists and visitors. I think we'll see many more folks from a day's drive or so show up this season. Denver, Minneapolis, Omaha, North Texas, and Canada will likely cushion the blow

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Rapid City Area Hospitality Assoc.  
 PO Box 2731  
 Rapid City, SD 57709

RCAHA Mission Statement - *The Rapid City Area Hospitality Association is committed to provide its members with education, resources, and services in order that they can better serve their customers and guests, exceeding both member and guest expectations.*

## Upcoming Conventions/Events:

### February 2009

Feb 18-20	Soil & Water Conservation Society of America	125 ppl
Feb 18-20	Association of SD County Weed & Pest Boards	200 ppl
Feb 20-21	SDHSAA – “A” & “AA” Gymnastics	
Feb 21-22	Black Hills Power Shoot-Out Basketball Tourney	1400 participants
Feb 21-22	Rushmore Gymnastics Invitational Meet	250 participants
Feb 26-27	West Central Mosquito & Vector Control Assn.	150 ppl
Feb 26-28	Institute of Industrial Engineers – North Central	300 pp
Feb 27-28	SD Assn. of Plumbing, Heating & Cooling Contractors	100 ppl
Feb 27-Mar 1	Rushmore Hockey Association – Bantam B State Tournament	250 participants

### March 2009

March 6-7	American College of Emergency Physicians	200 ppl
March 6-7	Rushmore Soccer Club – Presidents’ Cup Tourney	1300 participants
March 12-14	SD Academy of Physician Assistants	125 ppl

*(President’s letter . . . cont. from page 3)*

that otherwise could be painful. Let’s make sure we’re ready to give them our best, so they’ll return when they have more time to spend and more money in their pockets!

On a closing note, we had a very pleasant open house this past Friday evening at Minervas. The celebration was for our Executive Director Nancy Brady for being presented the “Ben Black Elk Award” at the recent Governor’s Tourism Conference. Congrats again Nancy, you do us proud!

**MONTHLY DINNER MEETING  
 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24  
 GRAND GATEWAY HOTEL & SUITES  
 5:00-6:00PM Social • 6:00pm Dinner  
 6:30pm Meeting**

**Reservations required. Call Ann at  
 348-6907 before noon, February 23.  
 No Shows Will Be Billed**



Calendar information provided  
 by Rapid City CVB.