

Survey Shows Businesses Have Felt Economy's Impact

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STEAMBOAT SPRINGS CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION

The Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association's 2009 Membership Survey Results conclusively tell two stories. It is evident that Chamber member businesses have felt an impact from the current economic climate and are turning to the Chamber more for networking, marketing and governmental advocacy. Also standing out from this year's survey is that some of the important issues members are facing have changed.

"The most important part about the membership survey is that the Chamber is able to receive honest, anonymous feedback about whether we are meeting member needs," said Eric Friese, membership sales manager at the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association. "This survey is the best tool for us to understand our members' desires, wishes and concerns. We look forward to using these comments as a compass in 2010 as we build partnerships and continue advocacy efforts."

This year's Chamber Membership Survey had a nearly 20 percent response rate from members, up from 15 percent in 2008. Businesses "gave their two cents" about issues that affect local businesses, helped to identify issues that are most important and gave honest comments about what benefits are most valuable to more than 850 local member businesses.

From the survey results, it is clear that 2009 was a difficult year for business. Sixty-four percent of businesses who responded said business declined. However, 36 percent said that business improved or remained the same.

Join the Chamber

Are you utilizing your Chamber Member benefits?

Interested in joining the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association? Contact Membership Sales Manager Eric Friese for more information at eric@steamboat-chamber.com or 875-7004.

"When I reviewed the survey results for 2009, the membership confirmed that, not surprisingly, it was a tough year for business," said Bob Larson, manager at Sundance at Fishcreek and 2009-10 Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association Board president. "However, when it comes to the Chamber and what it does for our membership and the community at large, our members see a lot of value in the professionalism and knowledge of the staff and the opportunities they create for businesses in our community."

Here is a brief overview of what was compiled from this year's survey.

Most important issues

One of the most valuable and interactive questions in the 2009 Membership Survey is, "What are the most important issues that you feel the Chamber should address over the next five years?" There were changes in this top five list from the list generated in 2008, seeing a greater focus on tourism.

■ Top five most important issues for 2009

1. Winter air service — Continuing flights into YVRA
2. Summer events — Year-round tourism creating events
3. Summer marketing — Continued support of summer marketing programs
4. Transportation solutions — parking, U.S. Highway 40, regional transit, etc.
5. Triple Crown Sports/

tournament events — Bringing groups into Steamboat

■ Top five most important issues for 2008

1. Winter air service
2. Summer events
3. Health insurance
4. Affordable housing
5. Economic diversification

What is notable from these lists is that community issues such as affordable housing, health insurance and economic diversification are not present in the top five issues for 2009. What has taken their place on this list are issues such as summer marketing, transportation and group sports tourism. What these results show is that businesses are looking more at their bottom-line and economic influences.

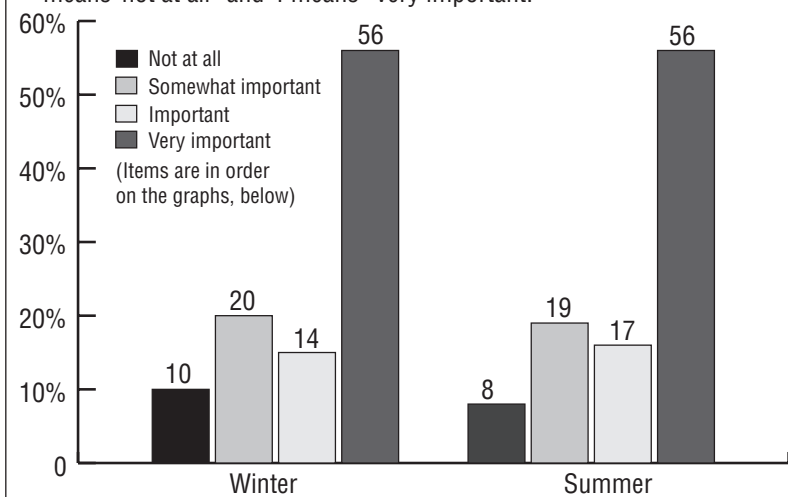
Top member benefits

"The membership survey is a critical tool that will help our membership department plan for 2010 programming," said Meagan Coates, community development manager at the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association. "This survey gives us the opportunity to listen to our businesses and evaluate what we are doing."

An overwhelming portion of Chamber members feel that government advocacy is the top benefit they received from the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association. Seventy-six percent of businesses surveyed noted that this community advocacy was valuable.

The Steamboat Chamber Web site, www.steamboat-chamber.com, proved to be a valuable member benefit, too. Sixty-seven percent of respondents found that business listings on www.steamboat-chamber.com were important to their business.

How important is tourism to your business? Please rate this importance for the winter and summer seasons. Use a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 means "not at all" and 4 means "very important."



■ Top 10 member benefit for 2009

1. Government advocacy (Triple Crown, air services, marketing and special events, economic development)
2. Business listing on www.steamboat-chamber.com
3. Lodging barometer/Boatnotes
4. Business referrals
5. Steamboat Visitors' Guide
6. Pinnacol Workers' Comp Insurance
7. Expos (Winter Activity, Wedding Expo, etc.)
8. Educational forums (Business Outlook Breakfasts, etc.)
9. Chamber gift certificates
10. Event committees or sponsorships

Tourism and events

What may come as no surprise is that Chamber members find value in summer tourism and summer events. Seventy-one percent of respondents said that tourism is important or very important to their business. In fact, 79 percent of respondents selected summer events as one of the most

important issues the Chamber should address.

Events such as Cowboys' Roundup Days (Fourth of July, etc), Triple Crown Sports and Hot Air Balloon Rodeo drive tourism and are favorable for business.

"The survey showed me that our members are very pleased with the quality of our new networking programs and the success of our summer and winter events," Larson said. "What also came through loud and clear to me is the fact that our members want the Chamber to be a leader in facilitating a productive relationship with our local government so that we may work together on the important issues that face all of us; like summer marketing, air service and transportation solutions. Overall, the survey indicated to me that the Chamber is in a strong position going into 2010."

If you have any questions about the 2009 Membership Survey or about Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association membership, contact Eric.Friese@steamboat-chamber.com or call 970-875-7004.



Upcoming Events

October 30

Annual Meeting & Navigator Awards

Celebrate and honor the business person of the year, business of the year, sustainable business of the year and young professional of the year at this luncheon style event. \$25 per person. Presented by The Steamboat Pilot & Today and The Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association.

Please RSVP at steamboat-chamber.com or 875-7000.

11:30 a.m. at Ghost Ranch Saloon

November 10

Corks & Connections

A wine tasting and networking event. Join professionals for a wine tasting with an expert sommelier and exciting business tips from an area professional. Meet new people in a fun after-hours setting. Space is limited! \$10 per person.

Please RSVP at steamboat-chamber.com or 875-7000.

5:30-7:00 p.m. at Cellar Liquors

November 19

Young Professionals Network Event

Join the Young Professionals Network for their monthly event featuring a guest speaker with food and drink specials. Free for YPN members, \$10 for guests. Please RSVP to marion@steamboat-chamber.com or 875-7008.

5:30-7:30 p.m. at Chaps at The Steamboat Grand



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