

The Arizona Governor's  
Conference on Tourism

THE **U** IN TOURISM

## 2007 GCOT WRAP-UP

The 27th annual Governor's Conference on Tourism, held July 11-13 at the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa in Phoenix, was an exciting and successful event. This year 622 attendees gathered together to recognize the importance of "The 'U' in Tourism," celebrating the diverse community of individuals that keep Arizona's tourism industry moving forward. The Governor's Conference featured presentations by nationally renowned speakers, celebrations honoring industry leaders, outstanding Arizona cuisine, and unbeatable networking opportunities. Conference partners—the Arizona Tourism Alliance, the Arizona Office of Tourism, the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association and the Arizona Restaurant & Hospitality Association—put together a substantive conference program jam-packed with events. The showcased events of the Conference were:

### Sessions

The Conference brought with it the chance to attend an array of informative and compelling presentations. It was kicked off in a highly informative "State of the Industry" speech by Director of the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT), Margie Emmermann. Emmermann reported 2006 year end information, including a record-setting increase in overnight visitors (33.7 million) as well as increases in visitor spending (\$18.6 billion) and jobs generated by Arizona's tourism industry (173,000). She also highlighted the important role sporting event partnerships have had in providing statewide benefit year after year and the vital role tourism plays in stabilizing Arizona's economy.

Conference attendees also had the opportunity to attend two additional general session presentations – one by female marketing expert extraordinaire Diane Ridgway-Cross, Managing Partner of *Frank About Women*; the other by New York Times bestselling author and world-renowned speaker Harvey Mackay, Chairman of MackayMitchell Envelope Company. Breakout session speakers also received rave reviews, educating attendees on topics anywhere from GLBT tourism to International markets.

### Arizona STAR Gala

Sponsored by the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association and the Arizona Restaurant & Hospitality Association, the Arizona STAR Gala was an opportunity to honor leaders of the hotel and restaurant industries with the Special Tribute And Recognition (S.T.A.R.) Awards. Over 400 attendees gathered together the evening of July 11 for the New York, New York themed STAR Gala Awards Dinner. Kaley O'Kelley of news Channel 15 (KNXV-TV) presented the award nominees and the 2006 STAR award-winners distributed the awards to the 2007 winners. This year's award-winners are on the following page:

- ARHA Rising Star of the Year – Derek Gurney of Outback Steakhouse
- AzHLA Hotelier of the Year – Bruce Lange of Westin Kierland Resort & Spa
- ARHA Associate Member of the Year – Larry McManus of Farwest Development and Construction
- AzHLA Allied Member of the Year – Linda Zamora of Salt River Project
- ARHA Volunteer of the Year – Joe Palmisano of The Peddler’s Son Produce
- AzHLA Volunteer of the Year – Todd Wilson of Doubletree Guest Suites Phoenix
- ARHA Hall of Fame Inductee – Suzanne Elefante of Mama Louisa’s
- AzHLA Hall of Fame Inductee – Ken McKenzie of Tempe Mission Palms

## Governor’s Tourism Awards Luncheon

Sponsored by the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT), the Governor’s Tourism Awards Luncheon brought together more than 600 people to recognize notable achievements made by tourism industry organizations and professionals. Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon also made an appearance at the luncheon and addressed attendees, reiterating the importance of tourism to the city of Phoenix and the value of Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport as a gateway to the rest of the state. The presence of Mayor Gordon and other of Arizona’s honored elected officials magnified the important role tourism holds in Arizona.

The Governor’s Tourism Awards literally came to life this year, as models put on a fashion show in designs depicting the unique contributions to tourism that each award spotlights. The award nominees were announced by AOT’s Director, Margie Emmermann, and Deputy Director, Kelly Paisley. Emmermann distributed awards to this year’s winners. They include:

- Cooperative Marketing – Southeastern Arizona Birding Trail, Birding Trail Committee
- Arizona Preservation – Digging In: Bisbee's Mineral Heritage Exhibition, Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum
- Innovative Promotions – Alliance for Audience
- Special Urban Event – **TIE** – Arizona State Parks 50th Anniversary Celebration, Arizona State Parks AND Fiesta Bowl Festival of College Football, Fiesta Bowl
- Special Rural Event – Douglas “Border to Border” Air Show, Gadsden Hotel
- Tourism Champion of the Year – Bruce Lange, The Westin Kierland Resort & Spa
- Tourism Hall of Fame Inductee – Win Holden, Arizona Highways
- Spirit of Service – Khalik Hussein, Loews Ventana Canyon Resort
- Lifetime Achievement Award – Marshall Trimble, Arizona’s State Historian

## Taste of Arizona Cuisine Reception

The Arizona Restaurant & Hospitality Association and the Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association whipped up an eclectic and delicious sampling of appetizers and desserts for their ever-popular Taste of Arizona Cuisine Reception. Thirteen hotels and restaurants were represented this year, serving everything from rich lobster bisque to fluffy mini cupcakes. This annual reception proves that Arizona cuisine is as unique as it is memorable.

## Sponsors & Exhibitors

The Governor's Conference would not be able to offer such high caliber speakers or put on such standout events without the generous contributions of its conference sponsors and exhibitors. Thank you to this year's conference sponsors and exhibitors for helping to educate, unite and strengthen Arizona's already thriving tourism industry.

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Arizona Office of Tourism

### **Platinum**

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### **Gold**

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Phoenix Convention Center  
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Sedona Chamber of Commerce  
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