

# NewsNotes

MAY 2008



THE IACCA  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## IACCA Benchmarking Study

### *Are these familiar questions?*

- \* You note that costs for personnel have risen sharply – now over 58% of your total cost. Is this “normal”? Are you being as efficient as you can be? What is a meaningful point of comparison?
- \* You proudly report to your board that your occupancy level in guest days is 52%. A board member says that’s too low – that a hotel requires at least 70% occupancy in order to be financially viable. How does a hotel occupancy level compare to your conference center with rooms with multiple beds?
- \* Your chef is proud of his new menu and guests love it. But the cost has gone up significantly. How much is too much? Can you use restaurant formulas for judging cost and price?

As an industry, conference centers are unique – a combination of lodging, food service, meeting accommodations and leisure activities. So where do we get meaningful data to use for comparison and targets for our management decisions? The membership survey in the fall, 2007, indicated a high level of interest in having benchmarks to guide management decisions in conference centers. As a result, the Board authorized a Benchmarking Study, sponsored by the Membership Services Committee, to focus on two areas –

1. Refining the collection of data from conference centers to determine what is “typical” of centers who relate to IACCA; and

2. Identifying benchmarks that indicate best practices relevant to the non-profit conference center industry.

The study is being conducted by Kathy Trotter and the KALEIDOSCOPE, inc. associates. In addition to researching benchmarks that may be relevant from other service areas, they have conducted a survey of IACCA members to determine what common ground we can build on to develop data that is meaningful to members. The spring survey drew 71 respondents from a wide range of centers. However, many of the questions were answered by only 50 – 60 respondents. Following are some highlights from the survey –

- Only 2/3 of the respondents had participated in the previous data surveys, with the greatest reason for not participating being that they were not aware of it.
  - 88% (a total of 45 respondents) indicated that they would share data for an annual summary of statistics in the future.
  - Respondents are willing to commit between ½ hour and 2 hours to providing the data.
  - The primary values to the respondents are to compare the center’s performance to others; to justify changing rates and to provide information to the Board.
- The collection of meaningful data will be challenging because there are definitely a variety of formats for keeping data –

## NewsNotes Contents

- IACCA Benchmarking Study
- Member Center Initiative
- Membership News and Notes
- IACCA New Member Travel Benefit Program
- President’s Message
- New Resource Book – Whyman
- Gammon and Grange Newsletter Note

## Calendar

- KCW’s Human Resources October 25-26
- Business Administration October 26-27
- 2008 Annual Conference October 27-31
- KCW’s Finance March 9-10, 2009
- KCW’s Marketing March 10-11, 2009
- Capstone / Re-Certification Seminar March 12-16, 2009

- 70% of respondents count capacity as number of beds. The other 30% count capacity by rooms, “pillows” or are day use facilities.
- 85% track use as guest days, and about half of these consider a guest day as one overnight and three meals. The other half use a variety of measures for a guest day.

## IACCA Benchmarking Study – *Continued*

- About ¾ of the conference centers also have a camp operation, and campers are tracked in different ways in different centers.
  - 95% of centers have different rates based on levels of room privacy, food service, membership in the organization, children and length of stay.
  - 84% have rooms with more than 3 beds. 78% have hotel-style rooms. Half have rooms with shared bath in the hall.
  - While 2/3 of the centers have self-contained budgets, the other 1/3 have some costs that are included in the extended organization and not reflected in their own financial statements.
  - Nearly all budgets do reflect complete costs for direct expenses. There are variables related to program costs, capital and depreciation.
- The areas of highest interest for collecting data were meal cost, staffing levels and compensation, percent of revenue generated by fees and occupancy levels.
  - Respondents feel the survey will be of value IF –
    - A majority of centers participate so that there is a critical mass of data.
    - The data is analyzed in some meaningful way.
    - Centers agree on common definitions and formulas.
- The study will continue with the formulation of a draft data collection process and identifying benchmarks from other industries relevant to the IACCA membership. Please send any comments and insights to [kalkathy@aol.com](mailto:kalkathy@aol.com), and look for results in late summer.

## Overwhelming Response to Member Center Initiative

Sixty members and counting... That's the last total for the number of IACCA members who have converted their membership to the new class of membership called Member Center. This represents about 35 centers across the country that recognizes the value in continuing and expanding their IACCA member benefits. To date, IACCA has increased its membership by 23 members through this Member Center initiative.

Listed below are the names of the centers that have converted to the new membership class. If your center's name is not listed and you have indicated that you wish to become a member center, please contact the IACCA office and Janet Begley will be glad to assist you. If you'd like more information about the special benefits available to Member Centers, she will be pleased to provide that as well.

- Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center – Greenfield, New Hampshire
- Bon Secours Spiritual Center – Marriotsville, Maryland
- Camp Alexander Mack – Milford, Indiana
- Camp Pecometh – Centreville, Maryland
- Camp Piankatank – Hartfield, Virginia
- Caraway Camp and Conference Center – Asheboro, North Carolina
- C.A. Vines 4-H Center – Little Rock, Arkansas
- Christmount Assembly – Black Mountain, North Carolina
- Epworth-by-the-Sea – St. Simons Island, Georgia
- Geneva Point Camp and Conference Center – Moultonborough, New Hampshire
- Hollywood Retreat and Conference Center – Camous, Maryland
- Heifer Ranch – Perryville, Arkansas
- Kettunen Center – Tustin, Michigan
- LaForet Conference and Retreat Center – Colorado Springs, Colorado
- Lake Huron Retreat Center – Lakeport, Michigan
- Lake Junaluska – Lake Junaluska, North Carolina
- Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center – Leesburg, Florida
- Life Enrichment Center – Leesburg, Florida
- Marywood Retreat Center – Jacksonville, Florida
- Mt. Asbury Conference Center – Newville, Pennsylvania
- Mt. Eagle Christian Center – Clinton, Arkansas
- Mt. Olivet Conference and Retreat Center – Farmington, Minnesota
- Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries – Ashland, Nebraska
- Pearlstone Conference and Retreat Center – Reisterstown, Maryland
- Pilgrim Pines Camp and Conference Center – Yucaipa, California
- Sandy Cove Conference Center – North East, Maryland
- Seabeck Conference Center – Seabeck, Washington
- Short Journey Retreat Center – Smithfield, North Carolina
- The Bishop's Ranch – Healdsburg, California
- The Duncan Center – Oveida, Florida
- The Mountain Retreat and Learning Centers – Highlands, North Carolina
- The Smithfield Center – Smithfield, Virginia
- Vanderkamp Center – Cleveland, New York
- Wallowa Lake Conference Center – Joseph, Oregon
- YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly – Black Mountain, North Carolina
- Zephyr Point – Zephyr Cove, Nevada

## Membership News and Notes...

*Several IACCA members have assumed new leadership positions at conference centers across the country. They include:*

- **Tom Vargo** is now the Manager of Conference Services for **Texas Tech University**.
- **Dave Coker** is now the Executive Director of **Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries**. Dave is replacing longtime director Roger Sasse, who has retired. Congratulations to both Dave and Roger.
- **Chuck Kraining** is now the Executive Director of **Seabeck Christian Conference Center**. Chuck succeeds **Larry Hill** who retired, and Interim Executive Director, **Dr. Charles Wallace**, who is now serving as Interim Director at the **Dayspring Episcopal Center**.
- **Jess Schload** is now the Executive Director of the **Life Enrichment Center** in Leesburg, Florida. Jess was formerly the director at the **Geneva Point Conference Center**.
- **John Chilton** will now serve as Interim Executive Director at **Geneva Point**.

- **Mark Fisher** is now the President of **Sandy Cove Ministries** in North East, Maryland.

*Congratulations to the following retirees:*

- **Dorman and Janet Leader** have now retired from **Zephyr Point Conference Center**.
- **Debi Paterson** has retired from the **Bishop Booth Conference Center**.
- **Alice Bishop-Foley** has retired from the **San Pedro Conference and Retreat Center**.
- **Rosemary Benoit** has retired from the **Dayspring Episcopal Center**.

*New family additions are expected this fall for:*

- **Steve and Niki Gourley** from **Camp Piankatank** are expecting their first child in October.
- **Daphne Orr** from the **Mt. Asbury Conference Center** is expecting her third child in October.

If you would like to include some good personal news about yourself or one of your colleagues in future issues of *IACCA NewsNotes*, please send information to Janet Begley at [iaccaoffice@aol.com](mailto:iaccaoffice@aol.com).

## Members Can't Wait to Travel with New Benefit Program

In the last newsletter, the Board announced its exciting new program for discounted travel for members to other IACCA members' sites. Since then, centers in Maryland, Nebraska, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Florida have signed on to the program, providing IACCA members with a way to visit other centers for both professional development and personal renewal at a discounted rate.

*Here's how it works:*

1. IACCA members stay at other Member Centers and/or members' centers during non-peak periods for the cost of meals only. If no meal service is available, then lodging would be complimentary. In this way, we encourage our colleagues to take time for personal renewal.
2. IACCA members may take their staff/board to other Member Centers and/or members' centers during non-peak periods at cost plus 10%, as determined by the host center. This encourages members to focus

on increasing the professionalism of their center's staff and board.

This is the current list of participating Host Centers:

- **Camp Pecometh** – Centreville, Maryland
- **The Leadership Center** – Aurora, Nebraska
- **Kettunen Center** – Tustin, Michigan
- **Mt. Olivet Retreat & Conference Center** – Farmington, Minnesota
- **Mt. Morris Camp and Conference Center** – Wautoma, Wisconsin
- **Life Enrichment Center** – Leesburg, Florida

Want to add your center to the list? Contact Janet Begley, IACCA Executive Director, and she'll enroll your center in the *IACCA Member Travel Benefit Program*.



## President's Message

Right now, this year 2008, may be the most exciting time for IACCA ever! Our Board has been hard at work developing significant new member benefits, some of which you can read about elsewhere in this newsletter. As we look at adding new programs, our Board is keenly aware that as an organization we must be mission driven. In my experience, organizations falter when they do not operate with a clear sense of who they are, what their purpose is, where they are going, and when and how they are going to do it. We will not add benefits just to add them. New programs must enhance our ability to fulfill our mission.

Our IACCA strategic plan provides the road map we need. Everything we do as an organization is designed to grow our educational opportunities, promote professional excellence, and support our

membership in sharing knowledge and addressing common challenges. As an organization, we are committed to following this plan, and to examining our actions through the filter of our mission. Reactivating sections will allow us to provide educational opportunities on a local basis. Our new facility search web site for member centers and web ads will present a professional face to our constituencies. Sections and the member stay program will reinforce the supportive community that IACCA offers our members.

Please let me know if these new programs meet your needs as conference center professionals. This is our organization, and I welcome your feedback.

Blessings,

*Carol*

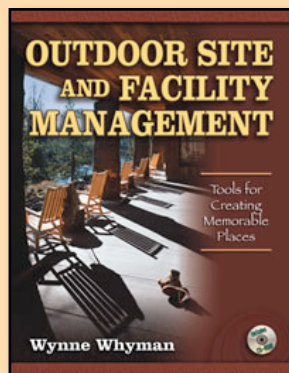
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### New Resource Book

#### Outdoor Site and Facility Management: Tools for Creating Memorable Places

is a comprehensive resource for staff, board members, management, and owners charged with the complex and challenging task of managing and maintaining properties. Rather than focus on the technical skills of facility maintenance or site development, this book offers a broad perspective of property management for a variety of organizations. You'll have creative strategies to manage day-to-day operations as well as a bound-in CD-ROM that contains 48 editable forms and checklists for the successful management of your property. 232 pp with CD-ROM. © 2008. \$44.00

To order, go to [www.callippe.com/book](http://www.callippe.com/book) for a link to the publisher's website.



### Members Still Eligible for... Gammon and Grange Non-Profit Alert Newsletter

Several members have inquired with the IACCA office as to the status of the Gammon and Grange **Nonprofit Alert® Newsletter**, a valuable publication that is available on a subscription basis as a benefit of membership.

Gammon & Grange publishes the **Nonprofit Alert® Newsletter** on a bi-monthly basis. This newsletter alerts busy conference center directors and board members to vital legislative, judicial, and administrative developments in the nonprofit world, which are selected and reported based on their impact on the daily operations of nonprofits.

In the past, the **Nonprofit Alert® Newsletter** was available either through e-mail or snail mail but that has now changed. All IACCA members who want to continue their subscription must have a current e-mail address on file with Gammon and Grange.

If you've changed your e-mail, recently joined as a member or have never subscribed to the **Nonprofit Alert® Newsletter** before, you can do so by following the link to:

[www.gg-law.com/CM/Publications/Nonprofit-alert-news.asp](http://www.gg-law.com/CM/Publications/Nonprofit-alert-news.asp). Simply supply your current e-mail address and you'll receive the newsletter directly in your e-mail. Unfortunately, Gammon and Grange has discontinued any mailing of their publications. Past issues of the **Nonprofit Alert® Newsletter** are also available on the Gammon and Grange website.



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