



**Sedona Chamber of Commerce Tourism Bureau
Report to City of Sedona
November 2009**

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The following results represent January – September 2009.

The Tourism Bureau measures success by the following indicators:

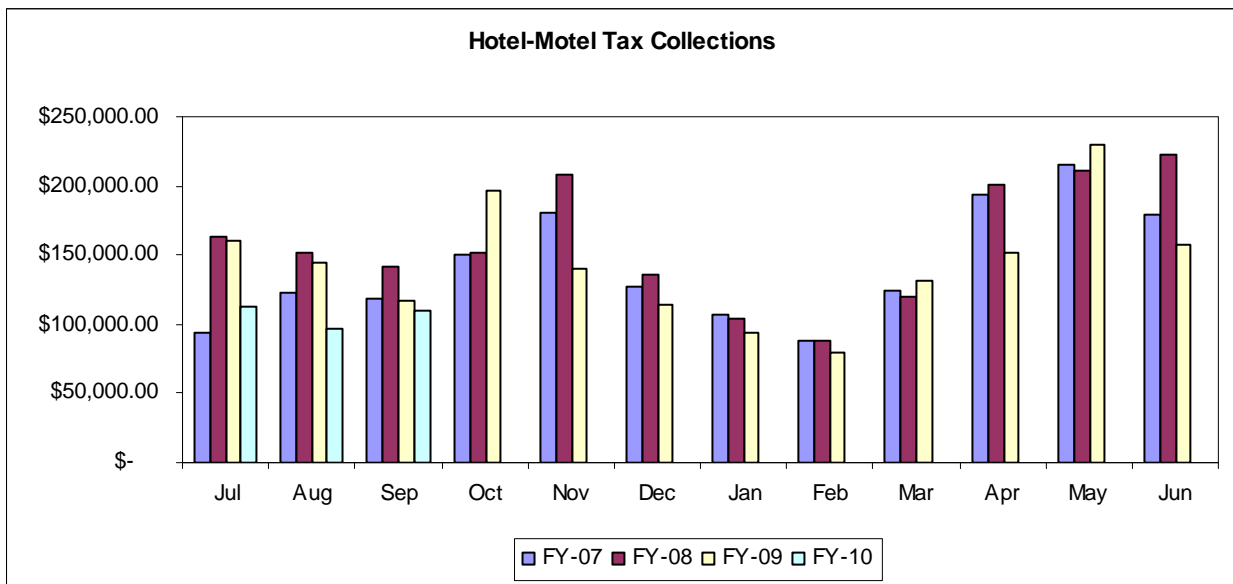
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Please note: All figures represent data through September 2009 unless otherwise indicated.

I. External Performance Indicators YTD - September 2009

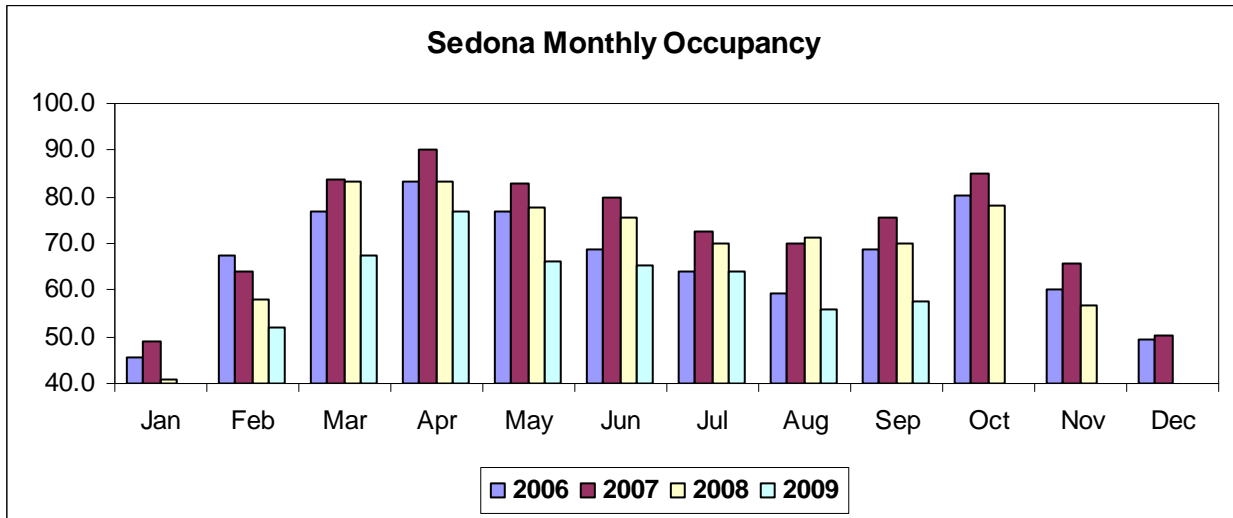
A. Hotel Occupancy Tax Revenue Collections

	FY-07	FY-08	Monthly % change 07 vs 08	FY-09	Monthly % change 08 vs 09	FY-10	Monthly % change 09 vs 10
Jul	\$ 94,650.90	\$ 163,160.88	72.4%	\$ 161,091.87	-1.3%	\$ 112,888.02	-29.9%
Aug	\$ 122,283.00	\$ 152,134.89	24.4%	\$ 144,475.33	-5.0%	\$ 96,164.69	-33.4%
Sep	\$ 119,166.84	\$ 141,835.00	19.0%	\$ 117,739.50	-17.0%	\$ 110,387.38	-6.2%
Oct	\$ 150,950.86	\$ 152,308.10	0.9%	\$ 196,878.27	29.3%		
Nov	\$ 180,805.40	\$ 208,043.90	15.1%	\$ 140,391.95	-32.5%		
Dec	\$ 126,480.79	\$ 136,371.88	7.8%	\$ 114,128.64	-16.3%		
Jan	\$ 107,550.93	\$ 103,361.48	-3.9%	\$ 93,594.61	-9.4%		
Feb	\$ 88,817.19	\$ 88,676.95	-0.2%	\$ 79,273.82	-10.6%		
Mar	\$ 123,906.55	\$ 119,818.85	-3.3%	\$ 131,245.67	9.5%		
Apr	\$ 194,141.72	\$ 201,339.18	3.7%	\$ 151,590.85	-24.7%		
May	\$ 215,565.95	\$ 210,327.28	-2.4%	\$ 229,699.07	9.2%		
Jun	\$ 178,827.06	\$ 222,060.73	24.2%	\$ 156,947.55	-29.3%		
YTD	\$ 336,100.74	\$ 457,130.77	36.0%	\$ 423,306.70	-7.4%	\$ 319,440.09	-24.5%
Total 06-07	\$1,703,147.19	\$ 1,899,439.12	11.5%	\$ 1,717,057.13	-9.6%		



Analysis – Hotel occupancy tax revenue is down 25% YTD for FY10 (July - Sept) vs. FY09. Please also note that September 2008 (FY09) & April 2009 (FY09) tax collections were under-reported; therefore October 2008 (FY09) & May 2009 (FY09) are over-reported as anticipated. *Please note that the above collections represent the previous month's performance.*

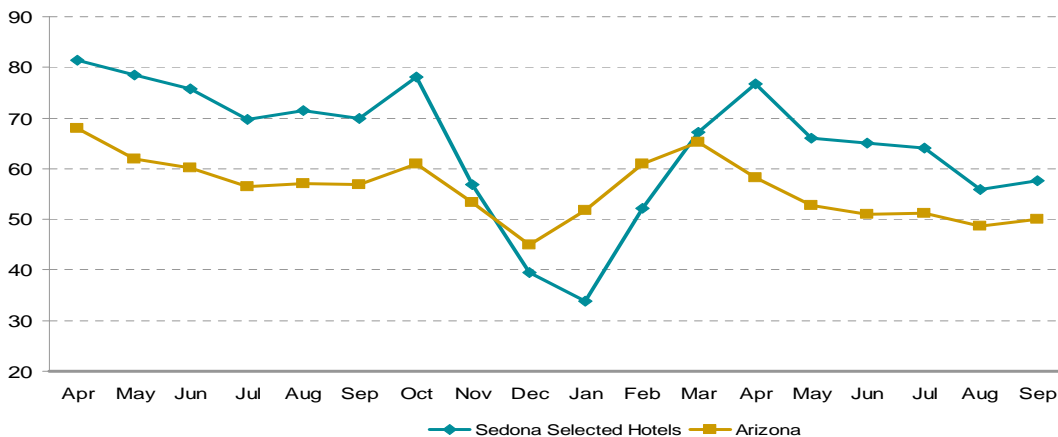
B. Smith Travel Research: *A monthly report that is standard throughout the tourism industry to provide a snapshot of the hotel industry.* The Tourism Bureau uses this report to gauge the occupancy percentages and average daily rate (ADR) on a monthly basis. This report reflects 10 average-sized properties within the '86336' zip code and represents properties that report to Smith Travel Research.



Comparative Cities – Occupancy YTD (January - September 08 vs 09)

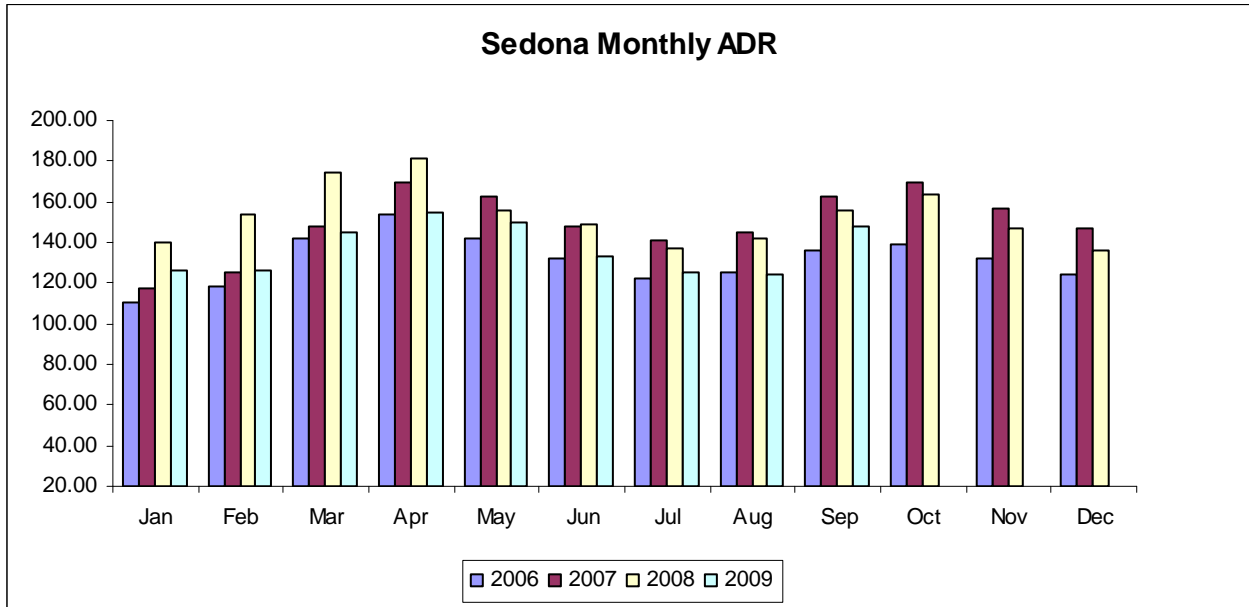
	% 2008	% 2009	% Change
Santa Fe, NM	64.3	58.3	-9.3
Summit County, UT (Park City)	56.3	46.8	-16.9
Santa Barbara Co., CA	71.6	66.4	-7.3
Teton County, WY (Jackson Hole)	67.1	59.6	-11.3
Scottsdale, AZ	63.9	56.2	-12.0
Sonoma County, CA	64.0	57.1	-10.7
Napa County, CA	66.2	55.6	-16.1
Monterey County, CA	65.7	59.5	-9.4
Yavapai County, AZ	65.7	53.5	-18.5
Coconino County, AZ	68.9	66.1	-4.1
Sedona, AZ	69.8	60.0	-14.1
State of AZ	63.0	54.4	-13.7

Occupancy Comparison



Analysis – Sedona hotel occupancy is down 14% Sept YTD 2008 vs 2009. The state is also experiencing a decrease of 13.7%. Coconino County continues to see the least amount of decline in occupancy at a decrease of 4.1%. Many comparative cities continue to experience deeper decreases in occupancy (Park City; Napa.) *Occupancy figures are comparisons of YTD percentages January – September 2008 vs. 2009.*

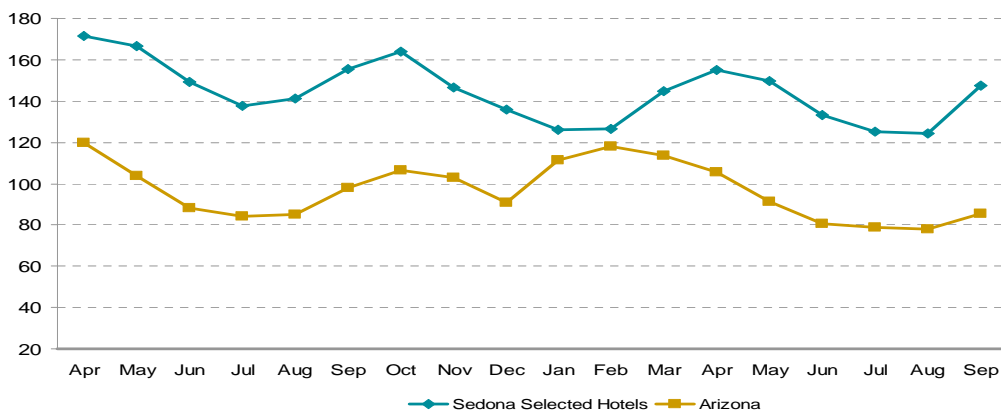
Sedona Average Daily Rate (ADR)



Comparative Cities – ADR YTD September 08 vs 09

	2008	2009	% Change
Santa Fe, NM	\$114.81	\$108.28	-5.7
Summit County, UT (Park City)	\$228.08	\$209.01	-8.4
Santa Barbara Co., CA	\$150.87	\$138.50	-8.2
Teton County, WY (Jackson Hole)	\$196.42	\$173.67	-11.6
Scottsdale, AZ	\$180.43	\$147.95	-18.0
Sonoma County, CA	\$126.19	\$112.39	-10.9
Napa County, CA	\$196.36	\$173.75	-11.5
Monterey County, CA	\$170.74	\$152.05	-11.0
Yavapai County, AZ	\$122.38	\$113.13	-7.6
Coconino County, AZ	\$89.26	\$86.04	-3.6
Sedona	\$153.10	\$138.50	-9.5
State of AZ	\$109.99	\$96.72	-12.1

ADR Comparison



Analysis - The Average Daily Rate (ADR) in Sedona has declined during these difficult economic times. The ADR decreased from \$153.10 YTD 2008 to \$138.50 YTD 2009, a 9.5% change. The state also saw an overall decrease in ADR of 12.1%. The hotel market continues to react to our economic challenges. Comparatively speaking, Sedona maintains a moderate position. Scottsdale, as well as Jackson Hole, and the cities in California are cutting ADR more drastically.

C. Ad Value Editorial Generated

Ad-Value Editorial = represents what the true value of media exposure would cost through paid advertising. Ad-value is measured by a national clipping service which reports circulation, number of impressions, ad-value (without a multiplier) and general publication information. Ad-value editorial is the most effective way to measure the Return on Investment (ROI) on media relations expenditures.

From January 1, 2009 – September 30, 2009, the Sedona Chamber of Commerce has generated the following:

	Print	Online/Blog/TV
Ad Value	\$233,386	\$9,055,343
Total Circulation	19,631,635	85,457,858

Social media and online media positioning has completely changed the way public relations is achieved and valued. The Sedona Chamber of Commerce actively markets via Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, and You Tube.

Please see attached Ad-Value Editorial Generated log – Exhibit A

II. Internal Performance Indicators

A. Leads Generated and Distributed

Leads generated = The number of qualified referrals distributed to member businesses. One measurement of success for the Tourism Bureau is leads generated. Leads are broken out into three sectors of the tourism industry: Media Leads; Travel Leads; Meeting/Group Leads.

The following results are based on YTD (January – September 2009).

Media Leads

	2009	2008
Media Hosted	48	25
Media Assisted	271	182
Media Leads Sent	56	29
Press Releases Produced	27	19
Press Release Impressions	22,965	22,161

Travel/ Meeting/ Group Leads

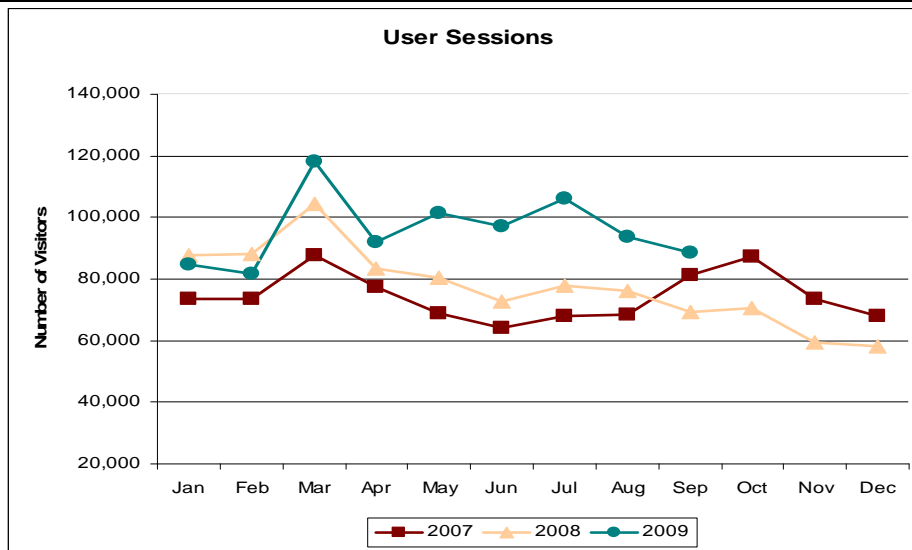
	2009	2008
Tradeshows/Sales Missions Attended	5	5
Hotel & Non-Hotel Leads (Trade)	90	56
Hotel & Non-Hotel Leads (Group)	31	51
Travel Professionals Receiving Services	316	297
Meeting/Event Planners Receiving Services	100	118

Examples of Group Leads and Planners Assisted Include:

Navajo Nation/ OSERS Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation
Museum Association of Arizona
Supreme Esteem, Inc.
YPO Twin Cities
International Society of Beverage Technologists
Lennox Hearth Products
Zicam
RW Distributors
Carnegie Observatories

B. Internet Statistics: Internet Statistics are measured by user sessions and page views. User Session = The number of visitors to the website. Page Views = The number of pages that the visitor viewed.

VisitSedona.com Webstats									
Total User Sessions					Total Page Views				
	2007	2008	2009	% change 08 vs. 09		2007	2008	2009	% change 08 vs. 09
Jan	73,459	87,753	84,730	-3.4%	Jan	575,449	609,198	466,132	-23.5%
Feb	73,488	88,028	81,708	-7.2%	Feb	569,085	612,425	434,196	-29.1%
Mar	87,765	104,470	118,000	13.0%	Mar	682,612	712,048	586,344	-17.7%
Apr	77,416	83,351	92,068	10.5%	Apr	557,316	571,551	494,495	-13.5%
May	68,818	80,273	101,585	26.5%	May	502,304	546,944	479,561	-12.3%
Jun	64,123	72,911	97,282	33.4%	Jun	461,784	491,566	465,441	-5.3%
Jul	68,208	78,010	105,966	35.8%	Jul	479,563	525,811	497,944	-5.3%
Aug	68,458	76,019	93,712	23.3%	Aug	482,278	518,027	453,817	-12.4%
Sep	81,368	69,486	88,652	27.6%	Sep	444,796	457,123	418,850	-8.4%
Oct	87,277	70,418			Oct	479,559	445,258		
Nov	73,483	59,353			Nov	398,550	361,311		
Dec	67,841	58,153			Dec	365,497	343,108		
YTD	663,103	740,301	863,703	16.7%	YTD	4,755,187	5,044,693	4,296,780	-14.8%
Totals	891,704	928,225	863,703		Totals	5,998,793	6,194,370	4,296,780	



Analysis - The website continues to be an important way for visitors to get information about a destination. **User Sessions are up by 16.7%**, compared to YTD 2008. Page Views are down by 14.8%. This indicates that our branding and marketing continues to positively impact the number of visitors to the website. Plus, it is estimated that our Page Views will improve with continual website content enhancements. Also, many of our marketing efforts direct visitors to contest pages which may mean that some visitors are going to the site to simply sign-up to enter the contest. Contests often result in an immediate spike in traffic to the website for this reason. Page views typically increase during the research phase of trip-planning which often occurs later.

C. Fulfillment

Mail Fulfillment = The number of Experience Sedona Guides (ESGs) mailed to consumers requesting information about Sedona. They can request information via our website, toll-free phone number, and reader service cards (reader service cards are included with paid advertising in travel publications.)

	2007	2008	2009	% Change 08v09
Jan	9,404	7,652	9,365	22.0%
Feb	10,462	8,484	4,474	-47.0%
March	8,350	6,356	6,604	4.0%
April	6,663	7,489	3,659	-51.0%
May	6,232	6,412	2,157	-66.4%
June	5,361	3,516	2,946	-16.2%
July	3,829	5,040	5,088	1.0%
Aug	3,441	3,949	3,188	-19.3%
Sep	4,530	3,063	1,415	-53.8%
Oct	3,926	4,206		
Nov	4,477	2,696		
Dec	2,859	3,169		
YTD	58,272	51,961	33,808	-34.9%
Total	69,534	62,032	33,808	

Fulfillment – Other

Information is also distributed at various locations in the Valley such as hotels/resorts, car rental agencies, as well as both Sky Harbor airport and the Tucson airport.

ESG Distribution	2008 YTD	2009 YTD	% Change 08v09
Online ESG	6,113	6,689	9.4%
ESGs to various locations	101,086	124,552	23.2%

Analysis

We fulfill requests for information by mailing/distributing hardcopies of the Experience Sedona Guide, or by providing an option to view the guide online. Our hardcopy fulfillment has decreased, while **our online distribution is up by 9.4%**. This indicates a strong preference for online communication from our consumer. Providing an online ESG option, versus mailed fulfillment, also significantly reduces postage and mail fulfillment costs.

We're also seeing a significant increase in the number of guides distributed "to various locations." This is due largely to an increase in our Uptown Visitor Center traffic, as well as increased demand at the PHX Sky Harbor Airport.

The top 5 countries viewing the online guide are the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Japan.

D. Inquiries by City

The top cities report illustrates the importance of Sedona's target markets. In 2009, the Sedona Tourism Bureau targets the following markets:

Phoenix

Las Vegas

Southern California

Items in **orange** indicate the months and markets in which Arizona Office of Tourism implemented target cities marketing campaigns. Items in **green** indicate the months where the Sedona Chamber of Commerce Tourism Bureau implemented aggressive marketing campaigns.

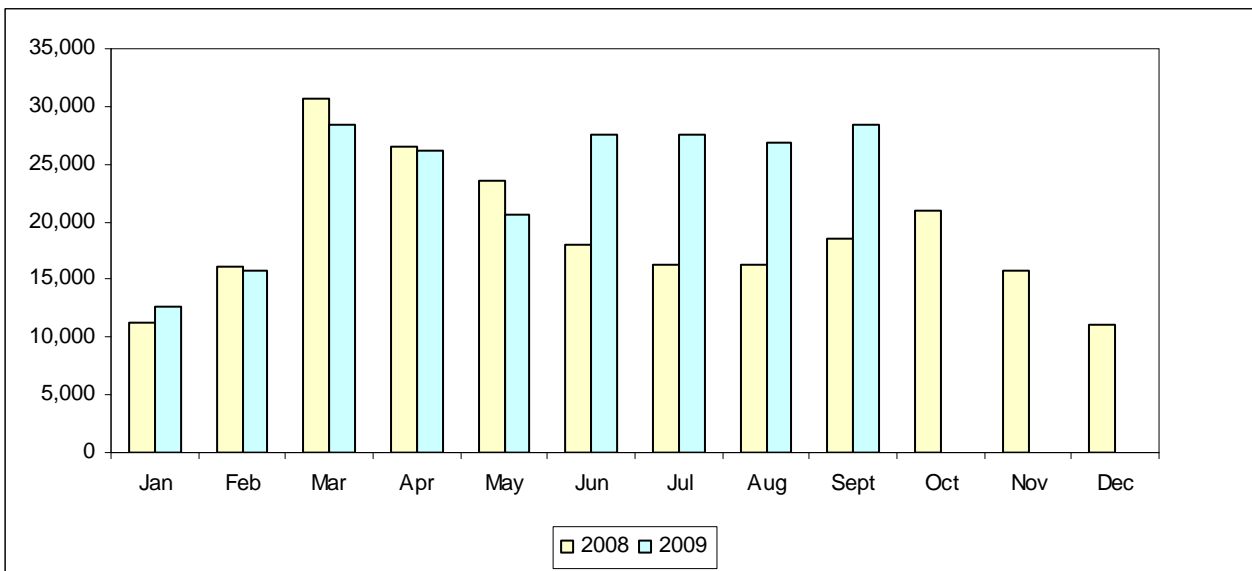
2008 Top Five Cities - Inquiries Fulfilled					
January	Chicago	Houston	Phoenix	San Diego	San Antonio
February	Las Vegas	Phoenix	San Diego	Albuquerque	Tucson
March	Las Vegas	Tucson	Phoenix	Chicago	San Diego
April	Las Vegas	Chicago	Phoenix	Tucson	Houston
May	Phoenix	Tucson	Scottsdale	Las Vegas	Mesa
June	Tucson	Phoenix	Las Vegas	Mesa	San Diego
July	Phoenix/Valley	Tucson	Las Vegas	San Diego	Houston
August	Phoenix/Valley	Tucson	Las Vegas	San Diego	Houston
September	Tucson	Phoenix/Valley	Las Vegas	San Diego	Chicago
October	Phoenix	San Diego	Chicago	Los Angeles	Las Vegas
November	Phoenix	Tucson	Houston	San Diego	Calgary-AB
December	Albuquerque	San Diego	Houston	Phoenix	Tucson

2009 Top Five Cities - Inquiries Fulfilled					
January	Las Vegas	Albuquerque	San Diego	Houston	Chicago
February	Las Vegas	Chicago	Tucson	Albuquerque	San Diego
March	Saint Louis	Tucson	Phoenix	Colorado Springs	New York
April	Las Vegas	Tucson	Phoenix	San Diego	Chicago
May	Tucson	Phoenix/Valley	Las Vegas	San Diego	Houston
June	Tucson	Phoenix/Valley	Las Vegas	Chicago	San Diego
July	Tucson	Phoenix/Valley	Las Vegas	Houston	Chicago
August	Tucson	Phoenix/Valley	Las Vegas	San Diego	Chicago
September	Phoenix/Valley	Las Vegas	Tucson	Houston	Chicago
October					
November					
December					

Analysis: Statistics indicate that our marketing efforts towards our drive markets have been effective. The numbers additionally show that consumers are considering destinations in closer proximity due to tough economic conditions.

E. Visitor Center Walk-Ins

	2008	2009	% Change 09 vs 08
Jan	11,257	12,614	12.1%
Feb	16,092	15,769	-2.0%
Mar	30,609	28,357	-7.4%
Apr	26,450	26,086	-1.4%
May	23,577	20,634	-12.5%
Jun	18,050	27,524	52.5%
Jul	16,323	27,506	68.5%
Aug	16,240	26,888	65.6%
Sept	18,606	28,382	52.5%
Oct	20,987		
Nov	15,717		
Dec	11,030		
YTD	177,204	213,760	20.6%
TOTALS	224,938	213,760	



Analysis:

1. Visitor Center walk-ins were up by 52.5% in September 2009 compared to September 2008.
2. Visitor Center walk-ins are up 20.6% for the year (January – September.)
3. The Sedona Visitor Center continues to be one of the busiest in the state.
4. The cost per visitor is approximately \$1.26.

III. Highlights of the Sedona Chamber of Commerce Tourism Division, July - Sept 2009

1. Brand Campaign: Continuation of our new brand campaign:

- a. Print: Traditional print advertising continues to be one of the mediums used in launching our new brand campaign. While the majority of our print placement is in consumer publications, there is some cross-over to the trade audience.
Please see Sedona's four brand print ads – Exhibit B
- b. Television: Our television ad campaign began in late May 2009 and continued through the middle of August. Commercials ran in our target markets: Las Vegas and Southern California and Phoenix. New commercials were developed to reflect the new brand image of Sedona. You can view these commercials at VisitSedona.com, About Sedona, Videos/Live Views/Webcam.

Results include:

- Increased brand exposure, and
- An 16.7% increase in visitation to VisitSedona.com (September YTD comparison)

2. Follow the Red Rock Road: The Chamber, along with the City of Sedona, and the Arizona Department of Transportation continue to work together in order to lessen impacts of the construction along a very important two mile business corridor of State Route 179. The Follow the Red Rock Road campaign was developed through extensive input from community partners, business owners, city officials and chamber members. This fun, inventive campaign is designed to help residents and visitors navigate through the construction zone with ease.

Campaign components include:

- Seven personalized Javelina Guide characters
- Brochure/map
- Scavenger hunt
- Consistent signage
- Shop local campaign – urging residents to support local business
- Fully integrated website promotion (www.followtheredrockroad.com)

Results include:

- 150 scavenger hunt forms have been completed
- 60 businesses are participating in the scavenger hunt
- 16 prizes have been awarded
- Partnership with Horizon Airlines, who have donated airline tickets as prize giveaways to our local residents who participate in the scavenger hunt
- 22 custom Business Access signs distributed
- Encouraging use of Road Runner Transit System

3. Direct Marketing: Direct marketing efforts provide an additional opportunity to speak to our audience, above-and-beyond our branding, with tactical messaging. Additionally, co-op advertising allows us to leverage our dollars. Following are a few examples:
- a. American Express Mailer: Delivered to 20,000 American Express Cardholders in Arizona with household incomes greater than \$100,000. Getaway Contests pushed all users to VisitSedona.com/Getaway to track responses. Three direct mail pieces were scheduled throughout 2009.
Please see September American Express Mailer – Exhibit C
 - b. Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) Email: Purchased acquisition lists from AOT. List contains qualified customers who have requested an Arizona travel packet, are residents of AZ, NV, and CA, with household incomes greater than \$75,000. Email lists were further appended by specific consumer interests, such as nature, art, and wellness/spas. Three email blasts were scheduled throughout 2009.

Results include:
 - 3% response rate for April Campaign
 - 7% response rate for June Campaign
 - 4% response rate for September Campaign
 - c. Arizona Republic Wrap: Custom newspaper wrap delivered to 7,000 to 7,500 Arizona Republic non-subscribers in targeted Phoenix zipcodes (85045, 85085, 85086, 85253, 85255, 85262, 85284, 85297, 85310, 85331, 85383.) Wrap pushes all users to VisitSedona.com/Deals to track responses. Scheduled monthly for 12 months.

Results include:
 - 7% response rate for March
 - 20% response rate for April
 - 5% response rate for June
 - 4.5% response rate for July
 - 5% response rate for August
 - 5% response rate for September
 - d. Las Vegas Cox Cable Bill Inserts: Bill Insert program delivered to 176,000 high-income Las Vegas residents late June – late July. Insert included Sedona Getaway contest component, driving users to VisitSedona.com/Cox for entry into contest and to view all member ads.
4. Internet Marketing: Trends and statistics continue to indicate that consumers do their research largely online before taking a trip. As our consumer is responding more and more to online communications, we enhanced our internet marketing presence in 2009.
- a. Grand Canyon Pay Per Click: Targeted key words chosen for those searching for Grand Canyon trip information online. The consumer message for our Grand Canyon landing page informed travelers of the many amenities Sedona offers, and positioned Sedona as the hub (or overnight destination) and the Grand Canyon as the daytrip. Member packages were highlighted under a special Grand Canyon section of our Deals & Discount Packages page. Members added their banners to our landing page. The campaign ran March - August.

- b. Go-Arizona.com advertising
 - c. Search engine optimization on VisitSedona.com
 - d. Consumer e-Newsletter distributed monthly to 50,000 VisitSedona.com subscribers
 - e. New on VisitSedona.com:
 - a. The most popular pages on VisitSedona.com are currently What to Do, Where to Stay, Deals & Discounts, and Sample Itineraries.
 - b. The most popular categories within our Deals & Discounts section are currently Accommodations + (usually lodging and tour packages), and Spa/Spiritual/Personal Enrichment indicating that these members are utilizing this free marketing opportunity.
 - c. We've recently begun creating events-related categories within Deals & Discounts for events such as Sedona Arts Festival and Red Rock Fantasy. Members tailor an offer around the event, and can then submit their offer into this category providing another avenue of marketing.
5. Arizona Office of Tourism Grant: We had applied for three different grants through the Arizona Office of Tourism for fiscal year 2010. We've been awarded \$105,845, allowing us to implement \$211,690 worth of marketing programs.
6. Regional Marketing: The Chambers of Commerce of Camp Verde, Clarkdale, Cottonwood, Jerome and Sedona continue to work under the Sedona Verde Valley Tourism Council (SVVTC). SVVTC has developed a collection of current tourism promotions aimed at:
 - Senior residents of the Greater Phoenix metro area
 - SedonaVerdeValley.org website enhancements
 - Meeting attendees of conferences in the Greater Phoenix metro area
 All targets for the proposed projects are segments of the Leisure Travel Market and represent a healthy mix of viable sources to prospect for increased tourism revenue. The ultimate goal is to create more awareness resulting in higher visitation of the region in order to boost economic impact.
7. Concierge: Continuing efforts to reach our primary concierge audience in Phoenix and Tucson include the following:
 - a. Monthly e-newsletter to 200 Valley-wide concierge contacts
 - b. KEY Magazine Concierge Tradeshow – tentatively scheduled for January 2010.
 - c. FAM Tours in conjunction with Key Magazine, resulting in approximately 40 concierge agents who visited Sedona in 2009.
8. Public Relations: Ongoing public relations continue to promote Sedona, and include:
 - a. First week of the month: Media Newsletter- themed newsletter.
 - b. Use of Social Media Tools
 - Twitter- We currently have over 1,200 followers, examples of followers: LA Times, National Geographic Travel Writer, Chicago Sun Times, Fodor's Food & Wine Editor, TravelingMamas- voted in top 99 travel blogs in the world
 - Facebook- We currently have over 1,200 Facebook fans. This site allows us to post photos, video testimonials, links to events, and event listings, fans can post comments about Sedona and we follow up
 - YouTube- Videos posted, currently over 1,000 video views
 - Flickr- Post photos of Sedona, also allows fans to post their own Sedona photos

9. Shop in Sedona: The Sedona Chamber of Commerce, the Sedona Main Street Program and the City of Sedona are creating a Shop Sedona local promotion to encourage residents to shop locally.

a. Business participation

We are encouraging all area businesses to participate with an *incentive* program for local residents. A Shop Sedona window sticker/decal identifies participating businesses, and these businesses are currently featured on www.ShopInSedona.com. There are nearly 200 deals currently posted on this site.

b. Residential Marketing Promotion

Promoting the Shop Sedona program to local residents is imperative to the success of the campaign. Each Sedona area resident (including VOC and Oak Creek Canyon) received a postcard with a VIP Loyal Sedona Shopper Card. This "VIP card" identifies each carrier as a local resident who is eligible for the incentive.

The program, which includes a cash prize drawing, is creatively called the ***Shop Sedona Stimulus Package***. This will be an ongoing campaign which will be promoted through email newsletters, print advertising, radio, and through the Sedona Chamber, the Sedona Main Street Program and the City of Sedona's publications and events. Currently almost 500 residents have signed up for the contest.

10. Partnerships:

a. Event Sponsorships – Promotion assistance for Sedona Events, including

- Banner ad placement on SedonaChamber.com and VisitSedona.com
- Inclusions in weekly E-Flash and B-Flash
- Inclusions in monthly Consumer e-Newsletter and Concierge e-Newsletter
- Included in Social Media as warranted
- Sedona Events Alliance Flyer developed and distributed to members and through e-Newsletters
- Special categories created for VisitSedona.com Deals & Discounts section

b. Flagstaff & Sedona Partnership

- Held Alaska Airlines and Horizon Air Call Center Training in Phoenix and Seattle with Flagstaff Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Participated in Los Angeles Sales Mission with Flagstaff Convention & Visitors Bureau and Horizon Air Sales Team
- Managed Northwest Airlines, Horizon Air, Flagstaff & Sedona Japanese Tour Operator FAM

c. Scottsdale & Sedona Partnership – Short Drive, Sweet Diversions

- Site developed. www.scottsdale-sedona.com, includes Scottsdale & Sedona itineraries, calendar of events, links to each DMO's site
- Scottsdale and Sedona brochure developed and part of ongoing collateral distribution

11. Travel Trade:

- a. Travel/Trade Tour Operator FAM Tours YTD: 6 Domestic Tour Operator FAMs, 10 International Tour Operator FAMs, and 7 Receptive Operator FAMs. A total of 87 TB Businesses participated with over \$26,000 in-kind (as of September 2009)
- b. Tradeshow & Sales Mission Participation YTD: Go West Summit, NTA, PowWow, Canada, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Japan Sales Missions (including sales calls)
- c. Destination Info Distribution at events such as Mayflower Tour event and Luke Air Force Base Open House
- d. AOT Call Center Training held in Tucson
- e. Continual attention towards U.S. domestic tour operators and U.S. Receptive Incoming Operators
- f. International tour operators with focus on Canada, the UK, Germany and Japan

IV. Travel Outlook for 2009 & 2010

This year has proven to be challenging for the travel and tourism industry. Every destination has been affected by the poor job market, the H1N1 virus outbreak, and the negative perception of the meetings market. Belts have been tightened and a much more conservative view of spending has taken hold. It's true, however, that the consumer still wants to "get away". Perhaps now more than ever. Examples of "smarter" spending is seen over-and-over. For instance, the Uptown Sedona Visitor Center traffic is up 53% in September compared to September of 2008, however, our hotel occupancy is down. It's not surprising then that camp grounds during the Summer months were full and seeing 30% more traffic than in 2008. The numbers indicate that the consumer is here, but they're spending their dollar differently.

Our state partners, the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT), attended the U.S. Travel Association's 2009 Marketing Outlook Forum last month (October). One of the key considerations AOT took away from that Forum was the importance for tourism professionals to understand the "new normal" in tourism marketing programs. "During these economic times it has become increasingly important to be aware of how travelers are now selecting their vacation destinations. Social media techniques are growing in their effectiveness and becoming a key research component to how travelers learn about a destination." This falls in-line with our marketing that is already taking place, and will continue to be a focus into 2010.

Moving forward, it is anticipated that international travel to the U.S. will regain its footing by 2010 by a 3 percent rebound, followed by 5 percent annual increased through 2013. Canada and Mexico are forecasted to be the top two markets to generate U.S. visitation. European visitors are projected to contribute very small growth over the next three years. The amount of visitors from Asia will climb slightly from 4 percent to 7 percent over the next several years. Details at <http://www.tinetita.doc.gov>. (*Special to TA; Travel Advance, 10/28/09*) Most large travel companies are reporting modest, but positive profits. "In most cases, they topped analysts' earnings expectations. Many reported travel demand in September was stronger than had been projected." (*USA Today, 10/23/09*)

It's for all of these reasons that marketing is critical to keep Sedona "top-of-mind," for those consumers who are still traveling, as well as for those consumers who are temporarily postponing their travel. It is too difficult (and costly) to return to our position within the marketplace once the recession is over. We will approach branding more conservatively in 2010 to maintain our presence, and we will continue to market our Deals & Discounts page on VisitSedona.com; offer co-operative marketing opportunities for our businesses to communicate their incentives/discounted rates/special offers; and continue our focus on our drive markets of Phoenix, Southern California, and Las Vegas.