



Saint Louis Attractions Association

October/November 2011 Newsletter

President's Corner

Tara Creamer



"Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower." This quote by Albert Camus is one of my favorites. As summer comes to an end and all of the beautiful colors are upon us, I hope you take time to enjoy all that our region has to offer during this beautiful season.

One of my favorite activities during this time of year is the **SLAA Silent Auction!** This year we are excited that Union Station has been gracious enough to host us again. **Please join us on Wednesday, November 16, 2011 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.** Be sure to invite friends, co-workers, and family - all are welcome! Remember you can check everyone off of your Christmas list and support the Carole Moody Scholarship Fund while doing so.

Thank you all for participating in our "Meet, Mingle, Discuss & Learn" Roundtables on September 28th at the Fabulous Fox Theatre. I hope that you were able to learn from each other, form new partnerships, share ideas, and make new friends. Also a big thank you to the SLAA Board, and especially the Program Committee, you are all a huge help.

I would also like to thank Town Planner for their generous donation to the Carole Moody Scholarship Fund. It is with the support of Town Planner and so many of you that we are able to continue to award the Carole Moody Scholarship year after year.

Finally, in closing I would like to send my most sincere condolences to those of our members who are grieving the loss of fellow staff members and friends. My thoughts and prayers are with all of you during this difficult time.

Tara Creamer

Get Involved! Join a Committee!

Do you want to become more involved in SLAA? Do you need continuing education hours for your certification? You can become as involved as you choose, whether it is selling Trip Raffle tickets at monthly meetings, or working to set-up the Silent Auction. This is a great way to meet members outside of the membership meetings and an avenue to share your time and talent. Contact any of the chairs below to get started!

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SLAA Internship Program

The 2012 Saint Louis Attractions Association internship participation form is now available at www.stlattractions.org. This program is a successful way to promote your company's internship opportunities to qualified students. The booklet is forwarded via e-mail in mid-November to colleges within a 200-mile radius. Paid and unpaid internships for Winter/Spring 2012, Summer 2012 and Fall 2012 may be promoted. Please contact Jen Hollenkamp at (314) 992-0642 or jhollenkamp@explorestlouis.com if you have any questions.

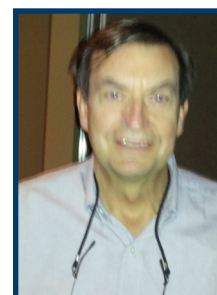
And the Winner Is...

Congratulations to **Jessica Ladd** with **Wild Flower Restaurant and Catering**, our September Trip Raffle Winner.



The Trip Raffle was a great get-away to discover Illinois South that included a one night stay at the Country Inn & Suites in O'Fallon, 4 tickets to a Gateway Grizzlies Game for the 2012 season and a meal for 4 at Eckert's Restaurant.

A special thank you to **The Tourism Bureau ILLINOISouth** for their generous donation. We are certain that Jessica will have a great time exploring Illinois South.



In addition, we would like to congratulate **Bill Iseminger** with **Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site** as the winner of the September 50/50 Raffle.

Thank you to all the members that bought raffle tickets at the September meeting. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. If your venue and/or business would like to donate to future trip raffles, please contact Julie Donnelly at (314) 880-8143 or Laurie Howard at (636) 458-2439.



Mark Your Calendar for the 2011 Silent Auction!

Fall is here, and it's time for the **2011 Saint Louis Attractions Association Silent Auction!** Invite your friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors to join the fun! Lunch will be a heavy appetizer buffet. And what would a silent auction be without fabulous items? This is the one event of the year open to the general public, so please feel free to bring guests, and come prepared to shop! This year's auction, which benefits the **Carole Moody Scholarship Fund**, will be held:

Wednesday, November 16, 2011
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
St. Louis Union Station

Our venue, St. Louis Union Station, is a national historic landmark of unsurpassed beauty and elegance, with amazing architecture, unique shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues that fill the train shed. Free museum and free tours, visit:

www.stlouisunionstation.com.

Proceeds from the auction benefit the scholarship fund awarded annually to a high school senior or an undergraduate college student majoring in a field that contributes to the tourism/hospitality industry.

Donations are being accepted now through Friday, October 28th. We strongly encourage all SLAA members to donate a product, service or special VIP experience as available. If you have a donation, please contact **Julie Donnelly** at (314) 880-8143 or **Laurie Howard** at (636) 458-2439 to arrange a pick-up or you may mail it directly to the SLAA office as indicated on the donation form.

Thanks and we look forward to seeing everyone in November!

[Click here to register or visit www.stlattractions.org.](http://www.stlattractions.org)

Hosted by:



Featured Attraction Eckert's Country Store & Farms

Eckert's Country Store & Farms is the largest family-owned and operated pick-your-own orchard in the United States. Established as a farm and simple roadside stand in Belleville,



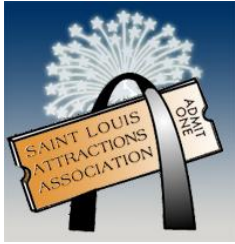
Illinois, Eckert's has served the bi-state region as a local source for pick-your-own strawberries, blackberries, peaches, apples, pumpkins and Christmas trees. Over time, the sixth and seventh generations of the Eckert family has expanded their offerings to include a full-service meat and deli counter, a wide selection of wine and cheeses, and a pleasing assortment of specialty grocery items. By doing so, the family converted a once seasonal operation to a year-round attraction.



This evolution continued even further in 2010. As the Eckert family celebrated 100 years in retail, they moved into a new, larger Country Store & Restaurant, allowing

them to further grow the experience of the families that have been visiting Eckert's for decades. Boasting more than just expanded retail, entertainment and dining space, this project also afforded an outdoor plaza for festivals and a cooking classroom for both children and adult cooking classes.

While still offering the freshest, sweetest fruit available for hand-picking and the festivals that generations have come to know and love, Eckert's is now always in season. Eckert's continues to place tremendous emphasis on the family and home by allowing for shopping, dining, cooking classes, wine tastings and special family events from one January to the next. For more information, please visit www.eckerts.com.



Saint Louis Attractions Association

1693 S. Hanley Road • St. Louis, MO 63144
Phone: (314) 416-2233 • Facsimile: (314) 845-1891
www.stlattractions.org

2011 Silent Auction With a portion of the proceeds benefiting the Carole Moody Scholarship Fund

Wednesday, November 16, 2011 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
St. Louis Union Station

If you would like to support the SLAA Silent Auction and Scholarship Fund with an auction item donation, please complete and return the following form via mail or fax to the SLAA business office. **All forms and donations must be received by Friday, October 28, 2011.**

Organization Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____

E-mail: _____

Website: _____

Item Description: _____

Value: \$ _____

Please check one: I will mail donation prior to Friday, October 28th.
 Donation enclosed.

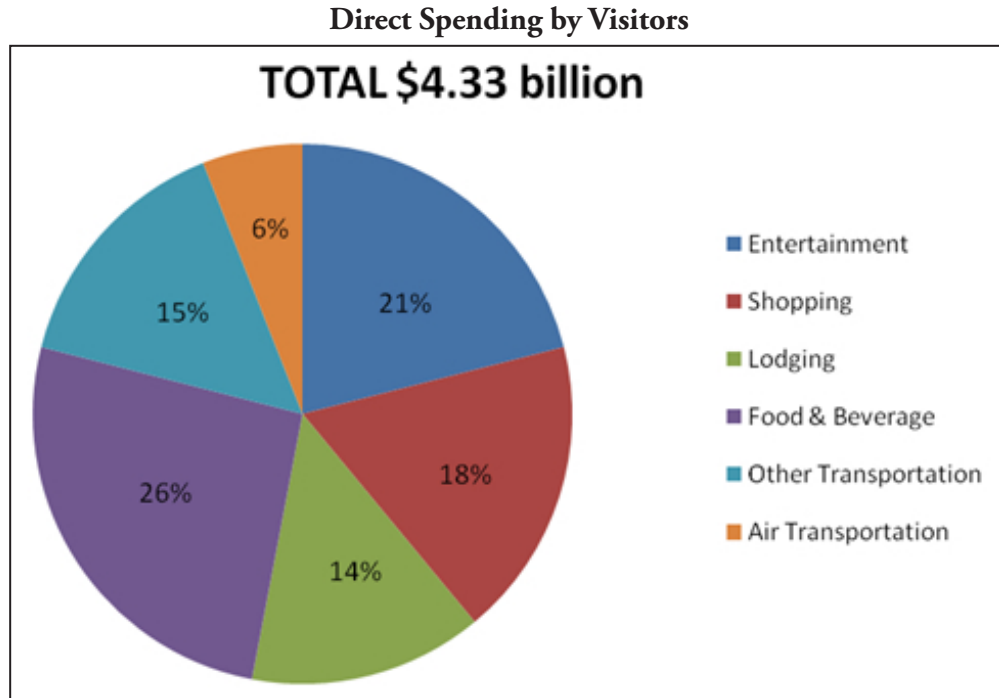
Donations may be sent to:

Saint Louis Attractions Association
Attn: Silent Auction
1693 S. Hanley Road
St. Louis, MO 63144
Phone: (314) 416-2233
Fax: (314) 845-1891

Questions? Call the SLAA office at (314) 416-2233. Thank you for your support!

Public Affairs Update

St. Louis welcomed 21.46 million travelers of all types accounting for \$4.33 billion in total spending in the calendar year 2010. So where did they spend their dollars? Take a look at the chart below:



Source: D.K. Shifflet Global Insight City Tourism Impact Study, 2011

While business travel has improved, the leisure segment returned to levels not seen since prior to the economic downturn and represented 63% of visitor spending in 2010.

At their annual meeting last month, the St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission reported many interesting figures - take a look:

- \$60 - ROI Generated for every \$1 invested in Leisure Communications
- 4.5 million - Website User Sessions recorded in FY11
- 387,000 - Approximate Number of Room Nights Booked During FY11
- 33 - Number of Journalists Hosted in FY11
- 130,000 - Number of Visitors Served at the six Visitors Centers operated by the St. Louis CVC

Sponsor a SLAA Meeting And get the word out about your business!

For only **\$150**, you could sponsor a SLAA Luncheon meeting and get the word out about your business. You would have the opportunity to greet incoming guests at the door, four minutes to speak at the meeting about your organization, a reserved table to distribute your organization's materials, and the opportunity to distribute your organization's material on each individual table (a community brochure table located at check-in is available to all members).

For more information, contact the SLAA office at info@stlattractions.org or (314) 416-2233 or visit www.stlattractions.org.

Meet, Mingle, Discuss & Learn

Thank you to the **Fox Theatre** for hosting our **September 28th** meeting and offering tours of the theatre following the program.

At the September meeting, we gave our members an opportunity to pick an industry friend's brain and that is exactly what you did! The meeting was a chance for you to discuss best practices on a range of topics affecting both our attractions and allied members.

The following are just a few key highlights of the various topics discussed.

Marketing in the Winter Months:

- Use the slow times for events that focus on locals (Holiday Magic).
- Promote shopping packages to smaller markets.
- Host a fundraiser; this is generally a good time to give back to the community.
- Network, network, network!

Challenges in Customer Service:

- Employees should listen and empathize with customers and try to accommodate them.
- Promote mandatory customer service training and development for all employees. Utilize the CVC hospitality training programs already developed.
- Utilize clear communication and set standards for the front line employees.

Marketing Materials:

- E-mail blasts recommended before direct contact.
- Embrace all social networks.
- Share information and research with members of SLAA to have better opportunities for cross promotion.

Partnership Marketing Opportunities:

- Have testimonials from other SLAA members to help sell your product.

As you can see there are some great ideas here, and we would like to thank all of those that participated in the discussion. The "roundtables with a twist" concept was based off the feedback we have received from you, our members. We hope you enjoyed the format of the meeting and found it to be beneficial. Please be sure to complete the post-meeting survey and let us know what you think so SLAA can make this format better in the future.

St. Louis Update

Compiled by Jennifer Hollenkamp
jhollenkamp@explorestlouis.com

COGIC: With an expected attendance of 35,000, the COGIC Holy Convocation takes place October 31 - November 9 at America's Center. Back for a second year, attendees will be enjoying St. Louis' restaurants, attractions, hotels and shops. Please be sure to welcome our COGIC friends.

Holiday Magic Tradeshaw:

Back for its third year, Holiday Magic will take place December 3-4 at the Edward Jones Dome! The family-friendly show will feature a unique holiday shopping experience with a variety of vendors selling their merchandise. In addition to the shopping opportunities, the show will include entertainment options such as: live performances, full-scale carnival rides, a ski lodge-themed beer and wine garden, photos with Santa and much more! For more information on how your property can be a part of this holiday event, please contact Missy Slay at (314) 781-5233 or msslay@semacstl.com or visit www.stlholidaymagic.com.



Mark your calendar: The CVC's Annual Holiday Party will be held on Thursday, December 15th from 5 - 7 p.m. at America's Center.

We Want to Hear From You!

Do you appreciate the many benefits of belonging to the Saint Louis Attractions Association? If so, we would like to speak with you! Please contact Dan Krankeola at (618) 397-1488 ext. 104 or dkrankeola@thetourismbureau.org to share your SLAA experience, and your testimonial could be placed on the SLAA website!

St. Charles Update

Compiled by Pamela Schulz
gscvcb@historicstcharles.com

Discover the Historic Missouri Wine Country:

Travel the two-lane roads in the southwest corner of St. Charles County and you'll arrive at a place where history, nature and award-winning wine all come together to create the Historic Missouri Wine Country. Then add the fall colors and popular Katy Trail State Park, and you have a day filled with adventure and fun.

Capture in your mind the essence, that time in America when life was simpler, and Christmas was elegant and magical... Welcome to **Saint Charles Christmas Traditions** on Historic Main Street beginning November 25th through December 24th. Join in the festivities on Wednesday & Friday evenings from 6:30pm - 9pm, Saturday's 11am - 9pm and Sunday's 12 - 5pm. Over 25 characters wearing handcrafted clothing representing their heritage, distribute trading cards as a keepsake. Santa's from around the world greet visitors with a story to tell. Carolers stroll the streets and the smell of roasting chestnuts fills the air. On weekends, children can visit Santa and have a photo taken. On Saturday's and Sunday's at 1:30pm, enjoy the pageantry of a live parade. To create the perfect ambiance, thousands of white lights, fresh greenery and red velvet bows adorn the historic buildings.

For a complete listing of upcoming events and a downloadable Christmas Traditions 2011 Festival Guide, please visit www.historicstcharles.com.

In Memoriam

The Saint Louis Attractions Association extends its sincere sympathy to our fellow members at the City Museum on the passing of their colleague, Bob Cassilly, and at MAC Meetings & Events on the passing of Karen Giebel. Our thoughts are with you in this difficult time.

Illinois Update

Compiled by Dan Krankeola
dkrankeola@thetourismbureau.org



Comptroller Recognizes Agri-Tourism Stars! Our thanks to Illinois Comptroller, **Judy**

Baar Topinka, for choosing three ILLINOISouth businesses honored at the 2011 State Fair for Agriculture Day on August 16th. The Tourism Bureau submitted several agri-tourism businesses for consideration. Congratulations to **Marcoot Jersey Dairy & Creamery, Greenville; J-H Bison Ranch, Trenton; and Eckert's Country Store & Farms, Belleville** which were chosen for "exceptional dedication and success" in Agri-Tourism.

If you haven't already visited these award-winning places, we hope you'll go soon. For more information, reservations and directions:

Marcoot Jersey Dairy & Creamery - (618) 664-1110
J-H Bison Ranch - (618) 934-3029
Eckert's Country Store & Farms - (618) 233-0513

For additional information, call the Tourism Bureau ILLINOISouth at (618) 397-1488 or email info@thetourismbureau.org.

Area updates are compiled by liaisons to the SLAA Board. If you have information to include, please contact your representative directly via email.

DID YOU KNOW?

Food & Beverage, Entertainment and Shopping continue to rank as the top three tourism revenue generators in the St. Louis region.