

**GREATER WHITTIER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
MEETING, JULY 21, 2009, HELD AT INN AT WHITTIER**

Present: Matt Abbey, Director of Administration, City of Whittier, Lester Lunceford, Mayor, City of Whittier, Ed Barrett, Harbormaster, City of Whittier, Michael Randell, Dept of Public Safety, City of Whittier, Barrie Swanberg, Phillip's Cruises, Kelly Bender, Prince William Sound Glacier Cruises, Pete and Marilynn Heddell, Honey Charters, Rebecca & Alex Langton, Quigley's Ice Cream Parlor, Cheryl Delana, Pat Abney, Soundview Getaway B&B, John and Naree Norris, Alaska Offshore Hunter, Ron Maininger, Alaskan Gold Runner Charters, Sandy Bartles, Fee's Custom Seafoods, Dave Goldstein, PWS Eco-Charters, Gordon Burton, DOT, R.C. Collin, Harbor Store and Outpost

Meeting called to order at 12:05 pm.

No minutes available for the last meeting will be available next meeting.

President's Report: Pete Heddell drew attendee's attention to James Minton's summary of his June 24th meeting with Matt Abbey, Barrie Swanberg, R.C. Collin, Peter Denmark, Pete Heddell and Marilynn Heddell. The jest of his thoughts were ways the city and local businesses could work together to market Whittier as recreational destination for local Alaskan's as well as cruise passengers.

Treasurer's Report: The treasurer's report was accepted on a motion by Barrie Swanberg with a 2nd by R.C.Collin. No objection to presentation. It is noted that not all 2009 map advertisers have paid and that efforts to collect are being pursued. The chamber has the total of \$29627.35 in checking and savings.

Old Business: Under old business the Fourth of July was discussed with the success of the event taking over the discussion and a round applause for R.C. and his effort to make the event a success. Discussion was had with thoughts of expanding to a two day event ie. July 3rd Salmon Bake, fireworks, with July 4th parade and GWCC sponsored barbeque. Other ideas were for restaurants creating specialty dishes etc for July 3rd meals. Any and all ideas are welcomed with the goal of making this event the "thing for families to do" on the 4th of July.

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Chamber map committees will begin membership and advertising drive in August so that businesses difficult to contact in winter can participate. Discussion ensued over other communities advertising efforts. Input by next meeting regarding map changes is encouraged. Trail info to be added and the tunnel schedule will be kept. This is next years emphasis will be placed on membership and advertisement money paid in full in advance to be included on the map.

Walk to Whittier: Walk to Whittier was not discussed other than a reminder by Mayor Lunceford that 2010 will be the 10th Anniversary of the Whittier Tunnel being open to vehicular traffic. He expressed hope that this could be incorporated in advertising for the walk etc.

Much discussion centered on how to better advertise Whittier and its recreational opportunities. Out of the many ideas came the thought that with membership renewal businesses be solicited for what they would like to see emphasized on our website. Once compiled these pages could be created and posted by our webmaster to the chamber site. Barrie Swanberg noted that the web allows expansion of a site as well as rapid updating and changing as necessary. It was also recognized that the web is not the end all for recreational groups and that diversity of age groups dictates flexibility in reaching all groups.

Ruth Williams of Alaska Magazine will be at our next meeting discussing these very issues and her publication's offers regarding advertising Prince William Sound and in particular Whittier's offerings.

Derby: Under the derby discussion Sandy Fee noted 7 fish winners thus far, 4 in June and 3 to day in July. 120.7 lbs. is the biggest fish to date. John Norris of Alaska Offshore Hunter in discussing how to improve derby participation advised his company was willing to put up \$1000.00 and he thought other fishing companies would also, to create a \$10,000 derby prize to go to the biggest fish. He was thanked for his willingness to step up to the plate and asked to bring back commitments to our August meeting so that advertising for 2010 could begin.

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Kelly Bender made the motion seconded by R.C. Collin to give our advertising person 3-4 hours to pull together advertising exposure options and related dollar costs. Kelly made a 2nd motion seeking authority to fund attendance at the ATIA convention in Fairbanks October 5-8, 2009, suggested amount was \$2500.00. At this time R.C. Collin advised he would be in Fairbanks in October and would look at his schedule to see if he could man the booth for the chamber. This would save the chamber considerable money – no motion passed however final arrangements will be made at our August meeting as all supported the chamber's presence in Fairbanks at the ATIA Convention.

John Norris also requested a later meeting in the day so that he could rally the sport fish charter operators to attend. Sept. 9, 2009 was the date selected with 7:00 pm the meeting time. Meeting to be held at the Inn at Whittier. As soon as dollar cost for a dinner meeting is established the membership will be advised.

Marilynn Heddell had another suggestion for getting people into Whittier during the winter months. Have restaurants that are open offer a special breakfast and a buffet on the weekends for those who want to snowmachine and dive.

Other discussion brought the nomination form for the 2009 ATIA Industry Awards to the attendee's attention. Kelly passed out forms to all interested to submitting them by the August 28, 2009 deadline. All agreed that the ARRC should be nominated based on their superlative response to the rockslide that closed Whittier to the public for a month this spring.

Matt Abbey, Kelly Bender, Berrie Swanberg and R.C. Collin will meet regarding advertising efforts utilizing cruise ship passenger funds by identifying priorities and related costs to be brought forward next meeting in a resolution format.

Kelly Bender advised that Greg Vancil of Princess Tours advised her that in 2010 Whittier will go from 80 dockings in 2009 to 26 dockings in 2010.

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Additionally it is anticipated that 117,000 less cruise ship passengers will be in Alaska next year.

Lester Lunceford announced that the expended tunnel hours are a permanent state budget item and that 2009-2010 tunnel hours are from 7 am til 11 pm.

R.C. Collin is working to put together a motorcross event in Whittier on September 20, 2009 to help bolster our shoulder season,

Next meeting is August 18, 2009, noon at the Inn at Whittier.