

Big Sur Chamber of Commerce

February 26, 2009

Dear Big Sur Chamber of Commerce membership,

Happy New Year! Let me start out by thanking you for your participation throughout 2008, a very dynamic year for the community. We're looking forward to your continued support and your participation in what looks like is going to be a challenging year for tourism. I'm hopping on the hope bandwagon and I hope you will too!

Here's a couple important statistics. In 2007 our membership grew 20% to a total of sixty-five members, sixteen of which were new members. 2008 our membership grew by 1.5%, to 66 members, indicating that we are very close to having maximum participation from the available business community. That's good and it also clarifies the challenges we face in trying to rally the resources to market our lovely destination. In the near future we will be announcing a spring Chamber of Commerce mixer so that we can get together and lift our community sail into the springtime wind. We are encouraging and inviting your participation and any marketing ideas are always welcome.

What Remains The Same?

We will continue serving the Big Sur community with consistent telephone coverage and by keeping the website updated and on the air 24/7. Many of you have sent notes of appreciation for keeping up with community affairs and notifications via e-mail. This seems to be the most effective way to distribute information into the community. In the event of immediate emergencies, we activate the emergency phone tree in addition to sending out e-mail notifications. All these methods together appear to be working and were clearly tested to the extreme this last summer, shored up by the timely addition of surfire2008 – now surcats.org. Our community pulled together in the face of some very challenging conditions, and faired quite well, all things considered. Collectively, we have a lot to be proud of.

Expanded Services

The Wedding Planner and Real Estate sections continue to expand. These pages have continued growing and especially in the last couple years the wedding page is supporting a budding cottage industry of putting on weddings in Big Sur. The wedding page gives a special emphasis for our customers who want to come to Big Sur for their nuptials because they see the infrastructure is in place. When they see the professional quality of wedding planners, caterers, photographers and locations that are available, I can only believe they feel that much more at ease and therefore, that much more likely to stage a wedding in Big Sur. We're really proud of the people who have worked to build this industry into the local economy. Lets hope Cupid has a full quiver of arrows this year.

Big Sur Guide

As usual, we produced and distributed 147,000 copies of the Big Sur Guide. In addition to the print version, the electronic version is available online for download in PDF format. This is a very popular method to distribute the Big Sur Guide, greatly expanding our distribution. We will print the hard copy for distribution in late April or early May, depending upon our stock on hand, so please get your changes in early. Final date to update your listing in the Big Sur Guide is March 31, 2009. Please let me know if you have a real problem with this as I will be updating the guide in early April.

Website

Traffic on our website continues to be steady. 2007 gave us 17% growth in unique visitors. Last year we achieved 8% growth. Given the conditions endured by the community last summer, conjoined with the prevailing economic climate, anything above flat-lining gives me hope. In 2007 we had just under three million page viewings (2,991,772), averaging 8,183 per day. 2008 we had 2,904,568 page views, averaging 7,936 each day. Website traffic has almost tripled over the last three years but early indicators are that we will not maintain that trajectory this year. Our return to normal growth patterns will be directly proportional to the economic situation which overshadows the opening our local state parks and many

other complex variables. We will continue expanding the website to better serve the local businesses and our tourist customers, enticing them to visit Big Sur for vacations, weddings, honeymoons, concerts, holidays, lodging, camping, and to explore the diverse ecology of Big Sur.

To view website statistics going back to January 2001 visit www.bigsurcalifornia.org/2002webstats.html.

To be listed on the website you must be a Big Sur Chamber of Commerce member in good standing.

Upon paying your membership dues please make all updates for the website and the Big Sur Guide by March 31, 2009. We will be printing the 2009/2010 Big Sur Guide in early spring so we need your updates ASAP.

INVOICE

Membership Dues Structure

Gross Income:	Membership Dues:
\$1.00 - \$50,000	\$100.00
\$50,001 - \$100,000.00	\$150.00
\$100,001.00 - \$200,000.00	\$250.00
\$200,001.00 -	\$400.00

If you are a business that can afford to contribute more, feel free to contribute at a level that is comfortable for you. Please forward your membership dues to the address at the bottom of this page. Make checks payable to the Big Sur Chamber of Commerce. Clearly note if you are paying for the expanded services on the website.

Expanded Services Fees

To be included on the *Wedding Planner* or the *Big Sur Real Estate Guide* web page you must be a Big Sur Chamber of Commerce member in good standing and pay an additional \$200.00.

Thank you for your continued support and may the 2009 season be the best yet for all of us.

Warm regards,



Stan Russell, Executive Director

IMPORTANT REMINDER: This is your opportunity to update your listing on the website and in the 2009 Big Sur Guide. If you have any changes, please send them in with your payment. Please include your E-mail address if you wish to be on the E-mail notification list.

E-mail:
Name:
Business:
Membership Dues: \$100 \$150 \$250 \$400 Circle applicable fee(s) and enclose check
Expanded Services: \$ 200 Wedding, \$ 200 Real Estate
Total: \$
Please supply any changes in text for the Big Sur Guide or the website here or attach your printed copy.