

OPERATION OF A LOCAL VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

Submitted by: Apache Junction Chamber of Commerce





Proudly Serving the Superstition Mountain Area

Mayor, Council and Committee Members,

Should the Apache Junction City Council choose to revise the service agreement back to a 3-year term, The Apache Junction Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center will also implement the following upgrades to the facility within the first 18 months of the agreement.

The addition of permanent tables and benches on the patio area for the visitors to enjoy.

The addition of a pet friendly area including signage and waste bag dispenser.

The addition of a hitching post to reflect our equine friendly community.

The first a three phase Apache Trail Diorama we will create to appeal to encourage visitors to spend more time in our community and explore our area attractions.

The first phase of a two phase planting project to include native trees and cacti surrounding the visitor center.

The importance of the multi-year agreement is assuring we will have funding to see these projects through to fruition and the ability to budget accordingly. Rest assured, we will not stop once these projects are completed. We will also be reaching out to staff and council for their input identifying areas of priority prior to beginning these projects or identifying others that they deem more important.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We have a long history of proudly serving Apache Junction and it is our intent to not only fulfill our commitments but to exceed expectations.

Kind regards,

Larry Johnson

President & CEO

Apache Junction Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center

Office (480)982.3141 Fax (480)982.3234



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1. Location

The Apache Junction Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center (hereafter identified as A.J. Chamber) is located at 567 W. Apache Trail. The facilities include two restrooms; a reception area with multiple phone lines, a handicap accessibility including a phone at ADA approved height, a water cooler, and a community information table and ample display area for local information. We have recently added a kiosk with a new computer that allows visitors to access "Reference USA". (See "4. Information"). The office manager and volunteer coordinators will manage the visitor center. A team of up to three volunteers will handle daily tasks associated with the running of the visitor center. The center will be open six days per a week during our peak season, January through March and no less than five days and forty hours per week during the summer months. Volunteers will greet visitors, answer questions about the area, its activities, and events, and distribute fliers and brochures in accordance with A.O.T. guidelines as the A.O.T. designated visitor center for Apache Junction.

2. Experience

The A.J. Chamber and Visitor Center have shared a facility for approximately 50 years and are currently operating at 567 W. Apache Trail in what has recently been identified as the "Core Downtown Zone" by G&G Consulting, LLC. Based on operational guidelines established by the AOT, we have Achieved a perfect score during the evaluation of our visitor center for 10 years consecutively and received high praise on July 30 from Loretta Belonio who manages the "Local Visitor Information Center" program for A.O.T. stating, "We are very happy with our partnership with Apache Junction Chamber of Commerce". A.J. Chamber personnel that would be directly involved in managing and supporting the center's operations are Jessica Teas Office Manager & Larry Johnson President/CEO. Resumes attached.

3. References

Three Individuals that will attest the firm's ability to deliver center services are:

Peter Heck
Brookdale Senior Living
2080 S. Ironwood
Apache Junction, AZ 85120
Phone Number: (480) 983-5047

Brian Kabat
Frontier Ace Hardware
725 W. Apache Trail Suite# 3B
Apache Junction, AZ 85120
Phone Number: (480) 983-9223

Bob Lenz
Thrive Christian Community Church
1518 W. Roosevelt
Apache Junction, AZ 85120
Phone number: (480) 982-2348

4. Information

The "Reference USA" database will be used as the primary search engine in the newly created "Shop Local" kiosk. This database includes the most accurate and current information of any source we have identified. The kiosk will be accessible during all business hours. Note taking materials will be provided within the kiosk.

5. Shop Local/Shop AJ

The A.J. Chamber developed the Shop Local Program. This year we will expand the opportunities to non-chamber member businesses within the community. We have secured an agreement with Lawton Publications to develop our "Shop Local App". The goal is to attract a broader demographic and increase accessibility and visibility to the "end user/consumer". The average smart phone users can download the application to receive discounts during the time of year when many businesses struggle, the summer months.



Proudly Serving the Superstition Mountain Area

6. Marketing Tools

We have initiated several social media outlets including Facebook, which now has almost 1400 followers, www.ajchamber.com received 143,723 views in February 2016, and Twitter to promote local businesses and keep the community informed of local events in the area of Apache Junction. We have updated our website to be more mobile/user friendly and encouraged use of our online calendar to promote all local events free of charge. Our new application is in the development phase for "Shop Local" for launch in May 2016. We have established relationships with local schools to announce/promote family friendly activities in the community. "Shop Local" banners have been distributed throughout our community. We alone are responsible for circulating approximately 4,685 of the "Apache Trail Treasure Maps-Apache Junction, AZ" to over 30 cities. We distribute 18,000 "Official Guide to Apache Junction" directories including circulation to Mesa Gateway Airport. With the help of our stakeholders, we will be updating our "Tourism/Attractions, Business/Economy, and Lifestyle videos". This will be accessible through our website and "YouTube". We will create at least videos in shorter segments in 2016 to assure we maintain the attention of the viewers. Our current video is being utilized by Pinal County for Economic Development services. A "Welcome Home Packet" has been created and is being distributed to area realtors, RV & Manufactured home community's sales offices. The packet includes city logo, letter from the Mayor, visitors guide, library brochure, and city street map.

7. Top Three Services

Our volunteers will provide individual service and ensure all visitors questions are addressed in a timely fashion. We provide detailed street maps of Apache Junction, visitor guides, and brochures on local events, attractions, and businesses. They will always try to respond to any questions they are asked in a friendly and efficient manner. Our volunteers are trained to greet all visitors to assure a positive first impression of our community.

Our volunteers are instructed to refer all visitors to the best of their ability. We will not exclude referring to a business out of the area if the product or service is not offered in Apache Junction as to address the need of the consumer and assure a positive experience.

We have worked with A.O.T. as well as Visit Mesa to secure Apache Junction presence in the promotional efforts to develop tourism. We have also developed a Facebook page for the Apache Trail, partnered on development and design of the "Treasure Map". This map now includes "Apache Junction, AZ" and The A.J. Chamber/Visitor Center on the map as participating advertiser, 150,000 of these maps are circulated annually. Samples Included. We have also helped developed the website www.apachetrailattractions.com to promote traffic into our community.

8. Reports

The A.J. Chamber will deliver Annual performance reports to the Mayor and City Council. If more frequent reporting is desired. The A.J. Chamber will offer an updated report to City Council or staff at any time with two weeks advanced notice.

9. Professional Service Agreement

Signed agreement attached, no exceptions listed at this time.

Hi Larry,

Thank you for your patience. I've put together a quick snippet of my visit last month. Let me know if you need any further detail.

Happy Holidays to everyone over at the AJ Chamber!

I visited the Apache Chamber of Commerce for the first time on November 21st. The reason for my visit was not to evaluate the Chamber, but rather to become familiar with the people who run the visitor center portion of the Chamber. I recently accepted to take on the Visitor Services (VS) responsibilities at AOT, and what better way to get to know the staff than visit with them face to face. I also know that a visit from a representative at AOT to the AJ Chamber was long overdue. So with the permission from my director, I set up a date to visit.

During my visit Gordon was gracious enough to show me how the brochure organization system worked and how each section of the brochures is separated by region and by relevance. He also explained the process in which the volunteers become certified. It was all quiet impressive and I actually plan on using a couple of the "tests" to test our call center operators.

On another note, while I was visiting, I was able to see just how the volunteers interact with the visitors. It seemed like the center always had one or two visitors looking for information during my two hour visit. One visitor in particular, appreciated that the AJ chamber staff was so hospitable and helpful compared to another center they had visited that day.

Overall, I really enjoyed my visit. Thanks to Gordon I have a better understanding of the ins and outs of how a upstanding visitor center is run.

Gordon runs a tight ship, and we are very happy for that!

Thank you!




visitarizona.com
tourism.az.gov



Loretta Belonio

Fulfillment Manager
Arizona Office of Tourism
P: (602) 364-3725 | F: (602) 364-3702
1110 W. Washington Street, Suite 155
Phoenix AZ 85007

12/18/2014

Jessica Teas

8843 E. Plata Ave Mesa, Arizona 85212

(480) 740-1723

Email: Jessicateas@yahoo.com

Summary of Qualifications:

- * Motivated self-starter who consistently goes beyond the job requirements to Meet objectives & goals.
- * Solid reputation for a strong work ethic and managing trusting relationships with Public, clients, and co-workers.
- * Abilities to prioritize and complete task accurately and on time in a dead-line.
- * Capacities in Excel, Lotus 1-2-3, Word Perfect, Quick Books, Microsoft Word & Opera.
- * Ability to work on multiple projects under pressure and meet strict deadlines, budget Requirements under detail and accuracy

Professional Experience:

Apache Junction Chamber of Commerce

Apache Junction, AZ

Position: Office Manager

- Provide administrative and business support to the CEO and support other members of the executive team.
- Handle accounts payable and receivable, prepared bank deposits, controlled inventory, and maintained equipment and technology.
- Coordinated and set up high-level conference calls, board and management meetings, special events
- Assisted with presentations and board meeting
- Prepared and maintained budgets

Cigna Medical

Gilbert, AZ

Position: Medical Administrative Assistant

- Coordinate schedules, make appointments and prepare agendas for doctors and staff
- Read and route incoming mail and reply to relevant ones
- Order supplies and accurately process invoices
- Update and monitor attendance systems
- Prepare correspondence on behalf of staff, doctors and facility
- Organize work load to manage priorities

Country Inn & Suites Hotel

Mesa, AZ

Position: Front Desk Agent

- Front Desk & Night Audit
- Bookkeeping
- Billing & Payroll
- Accounts Payable & Receivable
- Reservations, Guest Relations, and Cashiering
- Multi-Phone Lines, Sales

Banner Gateway Hospital

Gilbert, AZ

Position: Labor & Delivery Sterilizing

- Customer service in assisting patients' needs
- Conduct daily housekeeping duties
- Assisted in maintaining a free environment of infection control
- Addressing patients concerns to ensure service satisfaction

Education: Arizona Institute of Business & Technology/ Medical Insurance Billing

LARRY JOHNSON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Extensive chamber experience and team management
- Passionate about quality customer satisfaction and chamber goals
- Record of improving efficiency, productivity, and profitability through enhanced membership programs, sponsorships, web/media visibility, and events
- Outstanding interpersonal, motivational, and presentation skills
- Analytical, articulate, and diligent
- Proven success leading business development efforts, expanding customer base, and increasing revenue potential within the organization

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

PRESIDENT/ CEO

Apache Junction Chamber of Commerce

Apache Junction, AZ

2009- Present

- Stabilized the organization by analyzing and eliminating inefficient methods of operation
- Negotiated terms of loans and leased equipment to reduce expenses
- Produced annual business directory and visitors guide "In house" to increase revenue
- Introduced new programs, built partnerships and established new events to achieve the mission of the Chamber

WESTERN AREA MANAGER

Lawton Publications

Spokane, WA

2007-2009

- Increased sales to over 5 million in 2007
- Improved sales team performance and volume to all time highs during an economic downturn
- Developed new business and increased total company revenue by 8%

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Lawton Publications

Spokane, WA

2001-2007

- Implemented strategies and increased sales 100% over a 5 year period
- Encouraged evolving new products and services to accommodate client needs while increasing revenue
- Built relationships with new and sustained relationships with existing clients to enhance retention

WESTERN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Community Link

Pinckneyville, IL

1999-2000

- Initiated first mobile business development campaign
- Generated new clients in over 3 states
- Utilized conferences and events to network within a specific client base

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Institute of Management (2000 & 2010) University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona
- Western Area Chamber Executives Conference (2000) Auburn, California
- Arizona Chamber Executives (2007) Wickenburg, Arizona
- Liability Insurance Certification Course (2008) Mesa, Arizona
- Certified Firefighter I & II (1994-1995) Eastern Arizona College Globe, Arizona
- *Volunteer work:* Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors (2010) Friends of Lost Dutchman State Park Board of Directors (2011) ASU Polytechnic Board of Directors (2010) Angel Tree Program (2009), United Food Bank Christmas in July (2009-2010)

REFERENCES

- Larry Osborn (Retired Carson City Chamber of Commerce CEO) Carson City, Nevada * (775) 219-9991
- Deanna Kupcik (Buckeye Valley Chamber of Commerce President) Buckeye, Arizona * (480) 540-5919
- Dan Henderson (City of Gilbert Director of Economic Development) Gilbert, Arizona * (480) 720-8779
- Brad DeVar (Professional Licensed Counselor) Gilbert, Arizona * (602) 525-6998

Lawton Publishing

Mobile App Development Proposal

Project Description

Lawton Publishing will create and publish an app for the **Apache Junction Chamber of Commerce's Shop Local Business Partners** program.

The app will do the following:

- Open with an Apache Junction branded home screen and buttons for the different features
- View a list of all participating businesses, their logo, a short description and their discount
- View a map of all participating businesses
- Allow users to enter a valid email address to "unlock" their member card to show to participating businesses
- Provide informational links to other documents and websites related to the project
- Display a weekly "featured" business which will be promoted at the top of the business listing pages

The app will be connected to the Lawton Chamber Admin Area where AJ Staff can do the following:

- Update the participating business list in real time (name, address, logo, description and discount)
- View stats on the number of times the entire listing and each participating business listing has been viewed
- Email participating members and users who signed up with their email address
- Update resources available within the apps "resource" section

The app will be available for all major devices including iOS, Android, Blackberry and Windows.

Statistics will be maintained for the number of times the app is downloaded and the number of times

Development Timeline

Once the project receives approval, the app will be available for download in less than 8 weeks.

Costs

Development, setup and first 12 months of publishing on major app stores	\$2500
Each additional year of publishing on app stores	\$500