

PRESS RELEASE

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STANISLAUS COUNTY REGIONAL TOURISM ROUNDTABLE TO HOST WINTER TOURISM FORUM: DESTINATION STANISLAUS

Tourism is a very clean, export industry that contributes significantly to our local and regional economies. Since 1999 local tourism revenues in Stanislaus County have increased by over 41%, representing over \$424 million dollars annually. Tourism is a significant economic development driver.

The Regional Tourism Roundtable is a public/private consortium formed in 1999 dedicated to the promotion of tourism and tourism related activities in Stanislaus County. From inception the Tourism Roundtable has focused on the primary goals of marketing and identity building for our communities with a very strategic, initiative based approach. Currently, the Roundtable is committed to nine (9) primary tourism initiatives.

One of those initiatives is the Tourism Winter Forum. The Winter Forum provides an opportunity each year to celebrate tourism within Stanislaus County and to focus on where the sector is heading into the future. The Winter Forum also provides and solicits information regarding travel and tourism best practices while promoting a regional dialogue by and between policy makers, tourism advocates, public and private sector leaders, and various media representatives.

The 2009 Winter Forum will be held March 5, 2009 at the Oakdale Community Center. The event begins at 11 AM and starts with an opportunity to network with local policy makers and tourism leaders. Vendors will be on hand to highlight the many facets of the tourism industry thriving in Stanislaus County. As always, a recap of the Roundtable's successes and next steps will be presented.

This year's keynote speaker is renowned Destination Management consultant Bill Geist. Bill will present two presentations. The first will be on trends in tourism, both at the national and local level. The second session will focus on customer service and how local businesses can improve the visitors experience and the positive impact that service can have on the region's bottom line. Bill is both informative and exciting and attendees will be sure to come away with more than a few fresh ideas.

In celebration of the Tourism Roundtable's 10th anniversary, the day has been expanded to feature panels on Eco-tourism and Culinary tourism, as well as a food sampling of local products grown or produced in our communities.

For more information:

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