

HOT SPRINGS CONNECTION

First-ever US Hot Springs Conference a Sizzling Success for Geothermal Attractions Stakeholders & Industry Partners

The inaugural Hot Springs Connection - a precedent-setting conference designed to build relationships, share ideas and promote thermal mineral water attractions in the U.S. - unleashed a torrent of interest and enthusiasm resulting in next steps to form a national geothermal trade association and develop a comprehensive website representing every hot springs entity from coast to coast.



Glenwood Springs, Colo. (Nov. 15, 2018) - Hot springs are a hot topic, it turns out. The first-ever Hot Springs Connection recently concluded its 3-day conference in Glenwood Springs, Colo. - a town that is home to three hot springs amenities of its own. The inaugural event welcomed 95 attendees from 14 states and three different continents - North America, Europe and Australia. In total, 36 hot springs facilities were represented, with 12 vendors, suppliers and consultants also attending.

“It’s astounding to me that no one had organized a conference specifically for commercial geothermal attractions. All the feedback I received told me there was an interest in pooling knowledge and working together as a business community,” said Vicky Nash, CEO and owner of Resort Trends, Inc., a Glenwood Springs firm specializing in hot springs marketing and tourism industry communications. “Geothermal springs offer a unique and highly sought-after visitor experience; they also have a sector-specific set of challenges that need to be addressed. Getting the nation’s geothermal stakeholders in the same room and talking with one another proved to be an invaluable experience for everyone involved.”

Scott Whitaker, Director of Operations at Glen Ivy Hot Springs in Corona, Calif., concurred. “I wasn’t sure what to expect before coming to the conference, but I am so happy I attended,” Whitaker said. “The amount of collaboration was inspiring, and I believe it got us all reenergized to continue to push for excellence in our field. Meeting people who have the same challenges and growing pains as we do makes us remember that it is worth it and provides a network of support that is invaluable. The only thing I would change next year is increasing the amount of time we have together. I am looking forward to a continued network of symbiotic relationships.”

Creating a strong collaborative network started on opening day of the Hot Springs Connection with attendees getting a rare, up-close look at the Glenwood Hot Springs Pool in an unusual state: drained and empty. Devoid of its over-one-million gallons of water, conference guests learned about the pool’s intensive cleaning and maintenance processes. Afterward, at a mixer prior to dinner at the historic Hotel Colorado, guests were

invited to participate in a water tasting. Water sommelier Janet Abbot, of the Balneology Association of North America (BANA), guided tasters through a flight of waters sourced from the drinking springs in Manitou Springs, and one from a local spring. Throughout the afternoon, guests could also take tours of the Spa of the Rockies, an award-winning spa that incorporates geothermal water into many of its treatments and spa rituals.

Highlights from the first full day of the conference featured guest speakers from across the spectrum. Topics included hydrothermal spa and wellness standards, the challenges of building a new hot springs and remodeling older facilities, education about balneology and geothermal bathing practices, elevating guest experiences through new technologies, vital components of a vibrant destination resort, geothermal legal challenges, hot springs architectural and landscape design, water quality and sanitation practices, water rights and permitting issues, the Global Wellness Institute's Hot Springs Initiative and the success of the Colorado Historic Hot Springs Loop.

On the final day, attendees received access to exclusive, behind-the-scenes site tours of Glenwood Springs' three hot springs attractions. Hoping that others can learn from their experiences, co-owners of Iron Mountain Hot Springs Steve Beckley and Mogli Cooper shared what worked and what didn't as they built Colorado's newest hot spring destination from the ground up in 2015. At Glenwood Hot Springs Resort, the world's largest hot springs pool, facilities managers Brian Ammerman and Steve Matzl provided detailed information on a variety of topics, from ozonation to point-of-sale software. At the Yampah Spa & Vapor Caves, co-owner David Anselmo explained the property's history and its connection with Native American culture, while co-owner Patsy Steele and her staff provided tours of the underground geothermal steam baths and the spa facilities.

During a forum discussion, attendees overwhelmingly decided that they wanted to move forward with the formation of a trade association to share information and resources, as well as create an entity to represent this geothermal industry sector in the U.S. and abroad. Nash will work closely with an association management company to begin the process of establishing a board of directors and bylaws. Additionally, her firm will begin creating a website and map to list every commercial hot spring in North America. Nash also plans to continue coordinating the conference in the future and, based on the success of the inaugural Hot Springs Connection, expects the number of attendees to grow.

The 2019 Hot Springs Connection will likely take place again in November, though dates and locations have yet to be determined. For inquiries, information, speaking opportunities and sponsorships visit www.hotspringsconnection.com.

###

About Resort Trends, Inc.:

With vast tourism industry experience spanning 36 years and a passion for travel, Vicky Nash oversees the tourism communications firm Resort Trends, Inc. which specializes in project management, communications, public relations, content marketing, website copywriting and promotional material design for destination marketing organizations, convention and visitor bureaus, tourism associations, attractions, historic sites, resorts, hotels, hot springs and spas. Resort Trends implements an integrated approach to communicating specific messages to a variety of targeted audiences including visitors, members, partners and media outlets. The firm has played a vital role in creating award-winning campaigns, most recently including the Colorado Historic Hot Springs Loop.

Media Contact:

Vicky Nash, CEO
Resort Trends, Inc.
970.948.4923
vicky@resorttrends.com