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CHALLENGE

THERE'S A LOT OF NEW IN MOUNTAIN TOWNS





Rallying an Industry

Colorado's Vicky Nash is organizing U.S. hot springs for marketing, lobbying and connecting as a unified force.

BY BETH BUEHLER

» VICKY NASH SPECIALIZES in geothermal tourism management and marketing, and recently was recruited to serve as executive director of the new Hot Springs Association. Exactly how does someone enter this field and end up creating the Hot Springs Connection conference in 2018 and launching the Hot Springs of America website in 2019? It started off with moving to a hot springs town in the mountains and establishing a tourism communications firm, Resort Trends Inc., two decades ago.

Nash's work in the hot springs arena has led to a much broader reach as well. She has experienced some of the very best places to soak and serves as a member of the Global Wellness Institute's Hot Springs Initiative, a network of owners and operators worldwide.

Why do you like working with hot springs?

Living in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, for 26 years has given me a strong affiliation with geothermal mineral water resorts. In 2015, I started visiting other facilities around the state, which led to the creation of the Colorado Historic Hot Springs Loop for marketing purposes. Then I thought, "Why don't hot springs properties from all over the country work together in some way?"

Why are hot springs a good place for groups to gather?

Geothermal water doesn't bubble up just anywhere. The conditions have to be just right. These are special locations in beautiful areas. Meetings during the day and soaks at night; you can only do that at a hot springs resort!

The hot springs conference has been held in various destinations. How has that worked?

A big part of Hot Springs Connection is experiencing new hot springs resorts. Each property is truly unique. Attendees appreciate the opportunity to get a back-of-the-house tour to see how things operate. Approximately 80% of U.S. hot springs facilities are located in the Mountain West.

What are a few trends in the hot springs industry?

Currently, there is strong consumer interest in wellness-oriented activities. In the past two years, forward-thinking proprietors used their lockdown time very productively by implementing major improvements. Restoration and revitalization of historic properties is the most prominent activity. Providing more private spaces also is gaining popularity with the addition of individual soaking tubs, cold plunges, tents, domes, yurts and tiny homes. ▲

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