

# VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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## 2009 Annual Report

**Economy - Public Finance:** The financial status of the Town of Vail and other important factors were monitored. A series of key indicators, based upon Town financial reports and other sources, were developed by the Association and updated monthly. The resulting data was reviewed by the Association's economic advisors and published in its monthly newsletter. The Association in conjunction with other community groups used the data to advocate that the Town of Vail make budget and expenditure allocations in line with recession caused economic conditions. The principle recommendation was to urge the Town to avoid depleting its reserve fund and to make budget adjustments that would not reduce services. The data is also being used by Association advisors to recommend adjustments of other public policy matters that would affect the community's economic recovery. The primary concern is to prevent quality of life and other similar standards from being diminished in a manner that would lead to devaluation the Vail experience and community assets.

**Property Taxes Lowered:** The Vail Town Council, at the urging of the Association, symbolically adjusted the Town's total mill levy for the 2009 tax year by eliminating the abatement levy of .143 mills for a total mill levy of 4.690. The Association advocated that other taxing jurisdictions should also follow the Town's example. It noted that public sentiment was antagonized by the failure of local government to rebate major windfall gains in revenues resulting from unrealized increases in property values. It observed that voters have long-memories when they sense unjustified taxation and ill-advised spending. Local governments may find themselves in need of asking unsympathetic voters to approve tax increases to carry them through recession caused financial difficulties. The steep decline in sales tax revenues is responsible for Eagle County making a major cut in staffing levels in its 2010 budget.

**Economic Development:** There are several different groups in the community that are responsible for various elements of business development. Many of the groups are partially funded or managed by the Town of Vail. The Association monitored the productivity and agendas of these groups. Some economic recovery efforts appear to be capital intensive, non-immediate and directed at developing highly specialized niche markets. A continued decline in economic factors resulted in the Association detecting that organizational reform and expansive short-term initiatives may become necessary. Suggestions offered for consideration by the community leadership are:

- Consolidation of summer and winter marketing in a cohesive effort with an emphasis on increasing revenues during the winter season.
- A restructuring and redistribution of responsibilities of entities involved in the allocation of resources for the expansion of destination guest markets and associated amenity improvements.
- The adoption of best practices business standards for the evaluation and analysis of economic development expenditures and proposals.
- Increased support for the expansion of existing events and programs that have a demonstrated appeal to destination guests.
- The formation of new private sector business alliances to promote an expansive economic recovery agenda.
- The development of new Internet and social media formats that create an on-line virtual Vail, which attracts destination guests through personalized shared experiences reinforced by social networking.

- The creation of outwardly projected initiatives to draw in destination guests from expanded domestic and international markets.

**Town Council Election:** The Association was effective in working in conjunction with other community interests to shape the agenda for the Town Council election. Critical election issues were raised in an Association published whitepaper followed by the preparation of a Council candidate “in their own words” question and answer document distributed on the Internet and by email. The top five finishers took the time to give in-depth responses to the Association’s question and answer initiative. Efforts are underway to encourage the incoming Council to take up those issues raised by Association in its whitepaper.

**Public Participation and Government Transparency:** The Association is engaged with the incoming Council in its promised initiatives to bring greater transparency and public participation to the conduct of its affairs. Among other suggestions the Association has recommended that improvements be made to the Town’s public notice procedure for the Design Review Board. It has urged that the Design Review Board increase its sensitivity to better enforcement of neighborhood compatibility criteria.

**Development Issues:** Monitoring by the Association of the review process for the Ever Vail and Timber Ridge developments is occurring. Each of these major developments has significant impact upon community master planning, image and supporting public improvements. Previously approved developments are asking for renewal of their expiring Town approvals. These requests have public policy fairness and consistency concerns for the Association. Some members of the incoming Town Council have expressed interest in restricting zoning regulations adopted in the 1990’s as incentive for new development. Similar consideration is being given to adopting historic preservation guidelines for Vail Village. The Association advised that new impact fees and energy/green sustainability requirements be adopted in accordance with indicators tied to economic recovery goals.

**Master Planning, Transportation and Open Space Issues:** The Association evaluated and advocated a position urging that the expansion of parking in Ford Park be restricted to Park uses. Successful efforts, including revision to the Vail Village Master Plan, were made to protect landscaped open space berms on the Vail Village parking structure site from being developed into commercial and residential uses. The creation of public/private comprehensive parking and mass transportation terminal improvement strategies were advocated. Increased enforcement, accountability, and implementation of restrictive on-street truck loading and delivery regulations are being recommended by the Association as new loading and delivery terminals throughout Vail Village are being completed.

**Environmental Preservation:** The Association continues working on environmental preservation efforts to reduce I-70 road noise, the removal of road sand from the Gore Creek drainage, the reduction of threat from wildfire and the restoration of forested lands. The Association has been consulted on an extensive reforestation effort being considered for Vail Mountain. The Vail Mountain program may open the way for expanded forest health and restoration efforts across the wider Vail area.

**Membership and Financial:** Monthly newsletters and special advisories were distributed to Association members and constituents. The Association maintained its membership level during 2009 and will complete the year with a balanced budget.