

Mammoth Hospital Celebrates the Close of Mammography Campaign

By Greg Bissonette, Fund Development Coordinator, Mammoth Hospital

January 2007 brought the close of Mammoth Hospital's digital mammography campaign with a second donation from Vons for over \$20,000. In just a little more than a year, the Community Relations Department of Mammoth Hospital raised \$350,000 to bring digital mammography to the Eastern Sierra. This campaign was a true representation of local support as no health foundation in California or across the country chose to support this cause. We could not have done this without the donations that poured in from our different events and through inspired individual campaigns that residents and groups started on their own. Of course, we would not be anywhere close to closing this campaign without the support of our local Mammoth Hospital Auxiliary. Their dedication to Mammoth Hospital, since before its birth, can not go unnoticed. Their donation of \$100,000 towards this project was the single largest contribution by any group or individual.

But, let's start from the beginning. We first brought this to the community in November 2005 with a small luncheon for local women who would become our Mammography Angles spreading the word for the need of this vital service. At this luncheon, the Mammoth Lakes Noon Rotary Club stepped up with a challenge to other groups and individuals in town. They donated \$3,000 to our initiative and challenged others to commit that same amount, which would result in an additional \$2,000 donation from Rotary if anyone rose to that challenge. Needless to say, there were numerous people who stepped forward to this challenge and we were off and running. It was at this time that the Mammoth Hospital Auxiliary also made their first pledge of \$50,000.

We were then approached by a local Vons' employee, Lonnie Newbry, since Vons is a big supporter of the fight against breast cancer. The employees were very excited about our efforts and got fired up to do whatever they could to help fund this project. By holding mini-store fundraisers throughout the month of October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the store brought in \$5,000. After a very compelling letter was submitted to their corporate headquarters for the need of this project, Mammoth Hospital received a check for just over \$20,000 from Safeway Inc. the parent company of Vons.

Our 2005 Festival of Trees in December was the next big event and the official launch to the campaign. This was an extremely successful fundraiser bringing in over \$50,000 towards this initiative. At this time, a very influential supporter stepped forward and offered her help both personally and financially. Gayle Wilson, former First Lady of California agreed to speak at our reception, hosted by the Mammoth Lakes Ski Museum, as another way to help raise funds and awareness for this project. This small event exceeded all expectations, bringing in more than \$11,000. Gayle also made a discretionary grant award of \$10,000 from the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation where she is a board member.

As the snows began to melt, thoughts of a warmer climate spread throughout the office and it was perfect timing when breast cancer survivor Robin Stater approached us to do a joint fundraiser with Northern Inyo Hospital at her Servanti home in Bishop. The Servanti Home and Garden tour was born. This event helped raise awareness across a broad spectrum of residents, from both counties, on the needs of the two hospitals. This event brought in over \$11,000.

The fall brought substantial commitments from the community; the Mammoth Hospital Auxiliary made their second pledge of \$50,000, we started working with Vons again on their upcoming October fundraising efforts and we began planning the 2006 Festival of Trees, which would again support this campaign. During this time, the community lost one of its most beloved members and a memorial for Thelma Thompson generously included Mammoth Hospital's mammography initiative. This left us with only an \$80,000 gap to close going into the Festival of Trees. We had another rousing round of support from the community and we cleared \$55,000 for the night!! With a couple of larger donations received after the event, we were left with only \$20,000 more to close the campaign. Then the work done with Vons back in October paid off as they presented us with another donation of over \$20,000 bringing us full circle closing our mammography initiative.

We would like to thank the joint efforts of our community from private donations to collaborative fundraisers. Without you, we could not have brought mammography to Mammoth. Keep your calendar clear for our upcoming dedication in the fall.