CHARR Staff Preparing for Kodiak Convention

Wednesday, 10 July 2013

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

The executive director of Alaska CHARR and some of his staff are in Kodiak this week making arrangements for the organization’s annual convention, which will be held here at the end of September. Dale Foxx expects about 100 representatives from the restaurant, hotel, bar and liquor store industry to attend.

He’s here this week talking with Kodiak CHARR organizers and getting ready for the event.

“We’re booking our rooms for the actually meetings, we’re making sure we’ve got our set-ups and got the caterers and all of the things it takes to put on an event for three days,” he said. “You have to get everything lined up and squared away.”

Foxx said the annual gathering gives its members a chance to network and discuss aspects of the ever-changing industry.

“We talk about a lot of different things. Everything from industry trends, new trends that are happening, educational events, where we bring in speakers on customer service. We do talk about legislation as well. So there are lots of different things that are going on during a three-day convention,” Foxx said. “One of the things that goes on, is we get out and see the beautiful community you guys have, so that’s part of it too.”

There’s every chance that just a week after the CHARR convention, Kodiak voters will be addressing a smoking ban question on the municipal election ballot. The industry most affected by such bans in communities where they’ve been implemented, like Anchorage, have been bars – a major component of CHARR’s membership. Foxx says the organization’s stance is that choice is good.

“We believe in freedom of choice. Freedom of choice is really an important concept. There are smoking establishments and non-smoking establishments, and everybody gets to choose which ones they go to. We think that’s the ultimate way to make that decision. And as more and more of the marketplace is non-smokers, there’ll be more and more places that go non-smoking,” he said. “We think that’s the right way for it to happen instead of by a government edict.”

Foxx says he recognizes that a growing portion of the populace does not smoke, and thinks there are business opportunities in serving both smokers and non-smokers.

“Well, nationwide, three-quarters of the people do not smoke, so it’s a good business decision to have both smoking and non-smoking establishments to serve your customers,” he said. “So the way business runs is you always look to serve a niche of your marketplace.”

The CHARR convention starts on September 30th, and goes through October 2nd. The last time CHARR met in Kodiak was 2005.