

Wealden Tourism Strategy – Business Stakeholder Workshop

15th December 2009 - registration 9.30am, workshop 10.00am to 14.00pm

Can you spare half a day to help us with our thinking about visitors and the local visitor economy? We are updating the Wealden Tourism Strategy and would like you to play a part in shaping the next important phase in the future of tourism in Wealden.

On Tuesday 15th December 2009, we are holding a workshop at Pilgrims Hall, near Halland - when a range of interested businesses and organisations will have the opportunity to explore the future of tourism in Wealden. We are keen to have as many different perspectives and views as possible and would be delighted if you, as a local business serving the area with an interest in tourism issues could attend.

The morning will begin with refreshments from 9.30am, the workshop will start promptly at 10.00am and will

finish by 2.00pm. A sandwich lunch will be provided during the workshop.



The aim of the event is to help Wealden District Council set its priorities and actions around tourism development, visitor management and marketing partnerships over the next five years. We want to make sure that that our investment offers the best possible outcome for all the visitors, businesses and the residents we serve.

This is not an ordinary meeting, it is an interactive workshop to make sure that we gather as much input as possible in a short time. Consultants Blue Sail will run the workshop and facilitate discussions with council officers also attending.

Please confirm your attendance by either email to claire.moran@wealden.gov.uk or telephone (01892) 602887 by the 4th December 2009.

Tourism provides 4,600 jobs in Wealden

Economic impact figures released in October 2009 by Tourism South East indicate that during 2008 tourism activity in Wealden generated just over £261 million of income for local businesses, a small increase of 0.5% compared to 2005.

The study entitled - 'The Economic Impact of Tourism - Wealden 2008' highlights a number of key headline figures for the year. These key headline figures have been compiled from using 'The Cambridge Model', a well utilised tourism industry measurement tool, and for the purpose of assessing the economic impact of tourism in a given area. It produces estimates from existing national and local information (eg: accommodation stocks, inbound trips) on the level of tourism activity within a given local area.

For Wealden, the results are as follows:

- 452,000 staying trips, of which 377,000 were domestic overnight trips (83%) and 75,000 were inbound trips (17%). Compared to 2005, these figures represent a 6.2% drop in the volume of domestic overnight trips and a 1.4% increase in the volume of inbound trips.
- £63,529,000 spent by staying visitors on their trip, an increase in nominal terms of 4.3% since 2005.

- 5,310,000 tourism day trips, a small drop of 1.6% in volume compared to 2005.
- £156,627,000 spent by tourism day visitors on their trip, a reduction in expenditure of 1.6%.
- In total £220,157,000 spent by all visitors on their trip in 2008, almost the same as in 2005.
- Of this expenditure, £202,211,000 directly benefits local business in terms of direct business turnover.
- In addition, expenditure by friends and relatives on visitors, and visitors spend on second homes (i.e. maintenance) generates a further £13,372,000.
- A further £45,462,000 of business turnover is generated through indirect and induced spending
- In total, tourism activity generated £261,045,000 worth of income for local businesses, a small increase of 0.5% compared to 2005.
- This income supported 4,298 FTE jobs and 6,036 actual jobs.
- The Office of National Statistics employment figures drawn from the Annual Business Inquiry shows that an estimated 4,600 jobs in Wealden are in tourism and tourism-related businesses, representing 10.2% of all employee jobs in the District.

Tourism South-East training courses: E-marketing

Search Engine Optimisation – half day

12th January 2010 - Eastbourne

Target the 33% of people who use search engines for holiday ideas. Learn the fundamentals of search marketing, optimise your website to achieve higher search engine rankings and analyse, write and prepare your website to perform better.

The Essential Guide to Social Media for Tourism Businesses – half day

9th January 2010 - Reading

9th March 2010 - Guildford

Connect with new customers through effective use of social networking sites, forums, blogs and user-generated content such as Tripadvisor. Integrate social media into your marketing, engaging with people online - and avoiding the common pitfalls.

Price - £120. Subsidised price - £50 per person for tourism/leisure/hospitality businesses

For further information please contact the Training Team: T. 0203 8062 5533 E. train@tourismse.com W. tourismtrainingsoutheast.com

Tourism South-East: Marketing Plan 2010-2011

New for 2010 - 2011, Tourism South East (TSE) will be introducing a regional umbrella brand 'The Beautiful South', and refreshing its branding for consumer promotions, replacing the 'South East England . . .

We know just the place' with 'The Beautiful South . . . Closer than you think'.

TSE will be focusing on:

- Stronger segmentation, and introducing a new segment - Discoverers;
 - Thematic promotions will be developed, eg: coast/seaside, family outdoors, gardens, vineyards, and cultural festivals;
 - Enhancing promotion to Londoners to include the affluent suburbs;
 - Introduction of a Cultural Festivals campaign following the successful bid to Interreg IVa;
 - Strengthening partnerships with other regions as well as VisitEngland;
 - Rationalising international activity to concentrate on Germany, including a consumer campaign, and Asia Pacific;
- www.industry.visitsoutheastengland.com



New look walks leaflet: Pooh walks from Gills Lap

The Conservators of the Ashdown Forest have produced a re-worked leaflet of the ever popular Pooh Walk from Gills Lap which promotes exploration of the Ashdown Forest on foot. The new look leaflet highlights two walks to take you to some of the sites of Pooh's great adventures.

The shorter walk (0.6miles/ 1km) takes in The Enchanted Place and the Sandy Pit and is suitable for younger children. A longer walk (2 miles/ 3.25kms) descends to the North Pole and Eeyore's Sad and Gloomy Place.

Copies of the leaflet are available from the Ashdown Forest Centre.
T. 01342 823583 W. www.ashdownforest.org

Coincidentally, the new look leaflet was released in October. You may or may not know that the new Pooh book 'Return to the Hundred Acre Wood' was released on 5th October 2009. The Conservators of the Ashdown Forest will be reviewing what this publication means to the Forest in its next issue of Ashdown Forest Life.



Who's who in tourism?

Visit Britain – Visit Britain is the national body for tourism with the main responsibility for marketing Britain as a whole overseas and marketing England overseas and domestically. Scotland and Wales have their own domestic tourist boards. www.visitbritain.com



Tourism South East (TSE) (formerly Southern & South East England Tourist Board)- The Regional Tourist Board for Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Buckinghamshire,

Berkshire and Oxfordshire. TSE is responsible for regional market research, marketing and tourism development and is based in Eastleigh, Hampshire. Tel: 023 8062 5400. www.visitsoutheastengland.com
www.tourismsoutheast.com

Quality in Tourism (formerly Area Accommodation Unit) – Organisation under contract from VisitBritain to undertake accommodation inspections and gradings on behalf of all the regional tourist boards.

Sussex Tourism Partnership (formerly Tourism East Sussex & West Sussex Visitor Economy Forum) – The local arm of Tourism South East, responsible for strategic co-ordination of Sussex-wide tourism programmes. www.tourismes.co.uk

Enjoy Sussex – Enjoy Sussex is the name given to the tourism partnership and associated marketing activities of the Wealden, Horsham, Lewes and Mid Sussex District Councils. The main objective of the partnership is to promote tourism throughout rural Sussex by pooling resources and forming a larger and more recognisable destination, thus creating a stronger and more competitive brand. The partnership produces the annual Enjoy Sussex Visitor Guide, featuring quality assessed accommodation and attractions. The visitor guide is supported by a national media campaign and acts as a marketing tool to encourage new and repeat visitors to the Enjoy Sussex destination. The Visitor Guide is complimented by a website to promote Enjoy Sussex: www.enjoysussex.info Tel: 01892 602886/7.

1066 Country – A marketing partnership steered by representatives from Hastings Borough Council, Rother District Council, Wealden District Council, East Sussex County Council and Tourism South East. 1066 Country covers the south-eastern part of Wealden, stretching from Pevensey in the West to Camber in the East and Northwards to Bodiam. Tel: 01424 787838.

Wealden District Council (Economic Development & Tourism) – Responsible for the development and promotion of Economic Development, Market Towns Regeneration & Tourism Development activities across the Wealden district. Tel: 01892 602886/7.

High Weald AONB – cultural landscape project

The High Weald was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) by the Government in 1983, to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. At the heart of the South East of England, the area covers 1461 square kilometres (564 square miles) across parts of East Sussex, Kent, Surrey, and West Sussex. The High Weald's natural beauty stems from its character; which was largely established by the 14th century and has survived to the present day. As a result, the High Weald is considered to be one of the best surviving, intact medieval landscapes in Northern Europe.

Through the Weald Forest Ridge Landscape Partnership Scheme, High Weald residents owning land greater than 1 acre can benefit from free advisory visits from Matt Pitts, Cultural Landscape Adviser.

The visit will give you the chance to:

- explore maps showing historical development of your property
- learn more about its special landscape, archaeology and wildlife features
- understand its contribution to the beauty of the High Weald
- find out more about specialists that can assist you with land management: undertaking surveys, producing management plans, sourcing grants and finding contractors.

Following the visit you will be offered free digital images of the historical maps for your property and contact details of specialists.

To book your visit from Matt Pitts contact

E: m.pitts@highweald.org or T. 01580 879500 W. www.highweald.org



FOCUS ON... The South Downs becomes a National Park

Central Government announced on 31st March 2009 that it intended to establish a South Downs National Park which will be the 9th such Park to be created in the UK.

On Thursday 12th November 2009, the South Downs was officially confirmed a national park more than 60 years after the area was first earmarked for protected status.

Environment Secretary Hilary Benn signed the order to create the park, stretching from Beachy Head in Sussex to the edge of Winchester in Hampshire.

Southern parts of Mid Sussex District, including the villages of Newtimber, Pyecombe, Clayton, Poynings and Fulking fall within the new National Park. The National Park is expected to be set up by April 2010 and fully operational by 2011.

The designation of the South Downs National Park will ensure that the characteristic natural beauty of the landscape is protected and enhanced and will provide visitors with greater access to facilities that enhance public enjoyment and understanding of the special qualities of the area.



National Park status will attract new visitors to the South Downs and bring investment into the local area. According to Tourism South East, tourism was worth £261 million to Wealden in 2008 and this is likely to increase further with the creation of the National Park. The South Downs already records 39 million visitor days every year, and this is more than any existing National Park. However, the majority of visitors are local people using the area on a regular basis for walking and other activities. Whilst some increase in visitor numbers maybe expected, the South Downs Joint Committee (SDJC) is working to encourage people to leave their cars at home. Two examples are the popular 'Breeze' buses which run from Brighton up on to the Downs, and 'Trails by Rails' which encourage visitors to take the train.

The designation means that the National Park will have the highest level of protection under the planning system, and that public bodies and others will be required to take account of National Park purposes when making decisions. A National Park Authority will be established in April 2011 to carry out the functions associated with the Park and this will include representatives from County, District and Parish Councils.

The National Park Authority will become the Local Planning Authority for the area. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is currently

consulting the local authorities on the structure and how some of the functions of the National Park Authority will be delivered. The local authorities are requesting that the Planning Development Control Function should be delegated to the local, democratically elected Planning Authorities bearing in mind the large population within the National Park and therefore the number of planning applications that would be submitted.

What about the impact on local businesses?

Local businesses are likely to benefit from the interest in the South Downs National Park.

The SDJC is a partner in the 'Collabor8' project which has secured just over 1 million to help develop sustainable tourism and business partnerships in the region. The 'Collabor8' project taps into funding available from the EU's Interreg 4B programme and is set to benefit the landscape a great deal.

The funding available aims to support clusters of local entrepreneurs who wish to make their businesses more sustainable and make the most of the local distinctiveness of the area.

For more information visit:
www.southdownsonline.org

National Park Authority Establishment Team begins its work

From a small office in Midhurst, the South Downs National Park Authority Establishment Team, led by Dr Richard Shaw, has begun its work. The team will pave the way for the National Park Authority to sit in April 2010 and take up its full powers in April 2011.

The Establishment Team is focusing on organisational set-up, project management, communications and planning. The Team has recently produced its first newsletter which is available online. You can download your own copy from www.southdownsonline.org

You'll find information in the newsletter about subscribing to a regular Establishment Team update.

For further information about the designation of the South Downs National Park visit
www.southdowns.gov.uk/news or the DEFRA website
www.defra.gov.uk/wildlifecountryside/protected-areas/nationalparks/south-downs/index.htm

Countryside 2010 – A Breath of Fresh Air: 29th May to 13th June 2010



A new boost for the countryside ... COUNTRYSIDE 2010 is a pioneering campaign that puts new audiences in touch with the wide range of recreational activities and events which take place in the countryside of South East England.

The campaign offers a unique opportunity for organisers in Kent, East & West Sussex, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Surrey, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire to promote their country-based activities - free of charge.

COUNTRYSIDE 2010 comes from the Rural Ways Partnership which is co-ordinated by the Regional Tourist Board, Tourism South East. The project is funded via SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) and Ordnance Survey is on board as a campaign sponsor.

COUNTRYSIDE 2010 will invite the public to enjoy a two-week showcase of events and activities which illustrate the many different ways in which we can enjoy the countryside. The fortnight runs from 29th May to 13th June, which includes the schools' half-term holiday.

The COUNTRYSIDE 2010 programme presents events and activities drawn from the calendars of all sorts of organisers, including local authorities, the National Trust, AONBs, National Trails, visitor attractions, wildlife trusts, special interest clubs and societies – and many more.



The programme also provides a publicity platform for independent rural businesses, individual landowners and rural communities to promote their regular activities - or to try something new.

Calling all organisers...

The COUNTRYSIDE 2010 programme brings together activities from organisers great and small.

For the first time ever, it offers everyone the opportunity to be part of a free, high-profile promotion which shows new audiences who they are and what they do.

Everyone who meets the criteria set for the campaign is invited to contribute an event or activity to the COUNTRYSIDE 2010 programme and to take advantage of the pre-publicity provided by the website and media activities.

Register your interest...

If you are interested in contributing an event or activity to the COUNTRYSIDE

2010 programme, please register your interest online now.

This will enable The Rural Ways Partnership to keep you up to date with all new developments and opportunities offered by the campaign.

Please spread the word about COUNTRYSIDE 2010, and help celebrate our great outdoors!

See www.countryside2010.org.uk/

Update from Enjoy Sussex

Online booking and reservations with Enjoy Sussex

The first accommodation businesses to sign up to the online reservation & booking service on www.enjoysussex.info are reaping the rewards.

After just two months, bookings or reservations to the value of over **£3,000** have been made online via our website to those businesses who have signed up – including a number of overseas bookings.

Benefits of online booking via Enjoy Sussex include a priority listing on www.enjoysussex.info as part of your Enjoy Sussex advertisement fee and no commission is payable – you get the full value of the booking!

If you would like to sign up to online booking or reservations – free of charge, no commission

payable – contact Economic Development & Tourism
T. 01892 602884 or
E. tourism@wealden.gov.uk



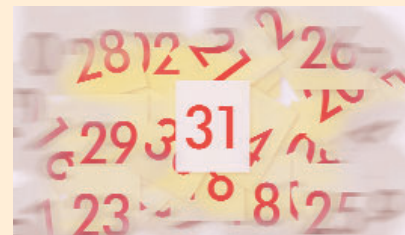
Enjoy Sussex photography competition 2009 winner

This year, the competition winner was a Wealden resident - David Brooker from Crowborough. David won £250 of photography equipment vouchers, and here he is pictured being presented with his prize by Serena Costello on behalf of The Enjoy Sussex Partnership.
www.enjoysussex.info



Wealden Online Events Calendar

Find out about events held in & around Wealden. The Wealden Online Events Calendar continues to grow in popularity as more local businesses and community groups and organisations advertise their events for local people and visitors to the area to enjoy.



Add your own event, for FREE, to the event listings. You can submit your event details online to Wealden District Council anytime of day, and your details should go live within 24 hours.

To add your event online today visit www.wealden.gov.uk/events

Christmas events for December 2009

Ashdown Forest – Wide Horizons

Friday 11th September 2009 to Friday 1st January 2010

An exciting new exhibition showcasing work, in two very different styles, by artists William de Wilde and Michael Gage.

The Ashdown Forest Centre, Wych Cross, Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5JP T. 01342 823583
www.ashdownforest.org

British Food Week

2nd-6th December 2009

A chance to enjoy all that is best in British food, with a choice of dishes from across the British Isles using local produce. Guest speakers on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Booking essential.

Bateman's, Burwash, Etchingham, East Sussex TN19 7DS T. 01435 882302
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-batemans

Spa Valley Railway Wine & Dine Special

Saturday 5th December 2009

Enjoy a traditional 3 course Christmas dinner with coffee and mince pies served at your seat. Spa Valley Railway Christmas Dinner, West Station, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5QY T. 01892 537715
www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk

Groombridge Dramatic Society Autumn Production

Wednesday 2nd December 2009 to Saturday 5th December 2009

Dion Boucicault's farcical brew of outlandish characters, mistaken identities and foiled intrigues . . .
Groombridge Village Hall, Station Road, Groombridge nr Tunbridge Wells, East Sussex T. 01892 860493
www.gromarts.org.uk

Comforts and Joys Christmas Celebration – Alfriston

Saturday 5th & 6th December 2009

Events range from the grown-up delights of Pudding Paradise (featuring more than 800 desserts!) to a showing of the 1947 Miracle on 34th Street to Santa's

Grotto - not to mention the Snow Queen accepting special wishes written on gold stars and hung on the village Christmas tree. Many events are free; some support local charities or community groups.
Various sites in Alfriston, BN26 5SZ T. 01323 871222
www.alfriston.org

Alfriston Clergy House at Christmas

Saturday 5th to Sunday 20th December 2009

Come and see Alfriston Clergy House, a 600 year old medieval Hall House, decorated for Christmas. See the festive foliage and 14ft Christmas tree.
Alfriston Clergy House - The National Trust, The Tye, Alfriston, BN26 5TL T. 01323 870001
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Geminids Meteor Shower Open Evening

11th December 2009

Because viewing is subject to weather conditions please phone the centre in advance to check. If the weather does not permit viewing and there are no visitors in the centre before 8pm, open evenings will be cancelled.
The Observatory Science Centre, Herstmonceux, East Sussex BN27 1RN T. 01323 832731
www.the-observatory.org

Observatory – Christmas Weekend

Saturday 12th & Sunday 13th December 2009

Spectacular science shows to entertain the whole family and an opportunity to shop for stocking fillers and Christmas gifts in our fantastic shop. One child admitted free of charge with every paying adult.
The Observatory Science Centre, Herstmonceux, East Sussex BN27 1RN T. 01323 832731
www.the-observatory.org

Hailsham Christmas Magic

Saturday 12th & Sunday 13th December 2009

This magical weekend in Hailsham brings Ice Rink, Santa's Sleigh, Christmas Stalls.
Hailsham, East Sussex
T. 01323 432180 www.stwhospice.org

Uckfield Bonfire Carol Service

Sunday 13th December

The Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society Christmas Carol Concert. Come and join members of the Uckfield FM team and local community at Holy Cross Church. Holy Cross Church, Uckfield T. 01825 890150 www.uckfieldcarnival.co.uk

Christmas Lecture – What is Christmas?

Thursday 17th December 2009

Get into the festive mood with an entertaining talk about the folklore of Christmas in readings, verse and song. Booking essential.

Bateman's, Burwash, Etchingham, East Sussex TN19 7DS T. 01435 882302 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-batemans

Bateman's – Mid-winter Walk

Monday 21st December 2009

Come and explore the Bateman's estate on the shortest day of the year and hear a tale or two about the Solstice. Walk 1 ? - 2 hrs. Please wear walking boots/shoes or wellies & suitable clothing. Booking essential.

Bateman's, Burwash, Etchingham. East Sussex TN19 7DS. T. 01435 882302. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-batemans

Lavender Line Railway

Sunday 29th November to

Tuesday 22nd December 2009

Santa Specials running every Saturday & Sunday in December 2009. Also Monday 21st & Tuesday 22nd December. From 11am til 5pm

Lavender Line Railway, Isfield Station, Isfield, East Sussex TN22 5XB T. 01903 761455 www.lavender-line.co.uk

Voices Live Opera Evening

Tuesday 22nd December 2009

Voices Live are opera singers who collectively form one of the worlds greatest vocal groups in their field.

Performing classical arias as well as more popular songs they always deliver a truly remarkable performance. Tickets now on sale £65 per person including a three course dinner.

Trading Boundaries, Sheffield Green, Nr Fletching TN22 3RB www.tradingboundaries.com

The Bluebell Railway wins its share of the People's Millions

The Bluebell Railway is thrilled to announce that it has been awarded the sum of £49,500 from a competitive Lottery scheme entitled 'The People's Millions' that was run on Meridian East TV on their 6.p.m. news bulletins.

This means that the project to restore to its former glory the London, Chatham & Dover Railway coach, at the moment lying derelict at the Railway, can now go ahead. It will be adapted inside to carry six wheelchair users including their friends and family, who will then be able to travel in Victorian comfort. Carriage No 51 was originally built in 1889 but last used as a domestic dwelling.

The cheque for £49,500 was presented by Meridian's Fred Dinenege, and accepted by a group of volunteers at the Bluebell Railway and Rowan Millard, who is in charge of the Carriage and Wagon Department that will be responsible for the conversion and complete restoration of this carriage.

It is hoped the project will be completed within the next year enabling the coach to be used in the Santa Specials and Victorian Christmas trains which are such a large part of the Bluebell's Annual Festive programme.

Roy Watts, Chairman of the Bluebell Railway said "I am absolutely thrilled at this award. People in wheelchairs



have never been able to board our Victorian trains as they were never designed to accommodate them but we now have this great opportunity for these people to just get into a carriage in comfort, and experience the way that their great, great grandparents used to travel, not just for now but for many years to come. What a great difference to be able to look out of a Victorian carriage window and enjoy the Sussex Countryside. This award means so much not just to the Bluebell Railway but to many others as well."

Caroline Collins, the Bluebell Railway's Customer Service Manager said "The Victorian Carriages are always so very popular with our customers as they really invoke the spirit of a bygone era. Sadly as up until now we have been unable to accommodate wheelchairs on these trains we have had to turn down many prospective customers. We anticipate being able to accommodate another 1,500 passengers per year because of this award."

The Bluebell railway would like to thank absolutely everybody who has taken the trouble to vote for them in this project.

For further details please go to the web-site www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

Wealden Familiarisation Visits 2010

Wealden District Councillor and B&B owner Sylvia Martin of Laurel Cottage B&B of Chelwood Gate recently attended the FAM Visit to the Lavender Line at Isfield.

This is what Sylvia Martin had to say about the Lavender Line:

“It is a lovely small, family line and they have a nice buffet and the staff, who are all volunteers, are very friendly. The line is short and goes into the countryside and back again – all on one line.

They have an electric engine and a steam engine. One of the highlights is a miniature railway (which all the boys love) housed in a special small shed with lots of miniature trains pouring around the track. They have a little gift shop which sells postcards and small railway items such as books, etc. Our trip up the line, the miniature railway, the shop and coffee was all completed in an hour, and was very enjoyable”.

Looking now to 2010, the first FAM Trip planned for the new year is to visit Stone Cross Windmill on **Tuesday 16th March 2010.**

Stone Cross is one of the finest

working Windmills in England built in 1875. It is kept in working order by volunteers. On the tour you will have a chance to sample cakes made using flour from the Mill!

Location: Stone Cross T. 05601 603298

W. www.stonecrosswindmill.org.uk

To book your place or receive more information about the visits, please contact the Economic Development and Tourism Team.

T. 01892 602884/6/7 or E. tourism@wealden.gov.uk



For all Economic Development / Market Towns / Tourism enquiries contact:

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T. 01892 602884/6/7 F. 01892 602888
E. tourism@wealden.gov.uk
W. wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk
W. wealden.gov.uk W. enjoysussex.info

Tourism Update is published four times a year. If you would like to feature an article, please submit details by **Monday 1st March 2010.**

Tourism Update is usually only available in electronic format or to download at **W. wealden.gov.uk**

To ensure you are on the mailing list, please email details to **E. tourism@wealden.gov.uk**

Portfolio Holder for Community:
Councillor Ron Cussons

If you have any questions about this newsletter or comments on our service, please contact us.