

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

June 18, 2013

Allen Unique Autos  
2285 River Road  
Grand Junction, CO

PRESIDING: Lon Carpenter, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lon Carpenter, Brad Taylor, John Williams, Daren Cole, Mike Bell, Per Nilsson, Sharon Woelfe, Glen Gallegos

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kate Graham

STAFF PRESENT: Barbara Bowman, Debbie Kovalik, Erin Chapman, Kristin Lynch, Kim Machado, Kristin Winn

VISITORS: Mayor Pro Tem, Marty Chazen; Lisa Eckert, Superintendent – Colorado National Monument; Katie Stevens, Grand Junction Field Manager – Bureau of Land Management; Colin Ewing, Planning and Environmental Coordinator – Bureau of Land Management

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m.

Minutes from the May 14, 2013 Board Meeting: Daren Cole moved to approve the minutes as written; John Williams seconded; motion approved.

Host Comments: Lon Carpenter thanked Traci Wakefield from Allen Unique Autos for the use of their venue for this month's board meeting. Traci reported that business is good this year and that several events have been scheduled at Allen's. They have seen visitors from all over, including international. They rotate their autos so people will keep coming back. They are the sponsor for Rascal Flatts at this year's Country Jam and is the sole sponsor of Rock Jam. Future plans include a remodel of the patio which will be completed next year and will be used for events. John Williams expressed appreciation to Allen Unique Autos as an outstanding corporate citizen for Grand Junction.

Lon asked each person in attendance to mention one personal or professional aspect that they feel is positive to share with the group. Highlights include:

- Mayor Pro Tem, Marty Chazen, said that his wife attended the Embroiders Guild of America event at the DoubleTree hotel and that it was well attended. Per Nilsson agreed and said it was a good event.
- Daren Cole shared that skiing was up 4% over last year and that some resorts reported that March was the busiest ever. Also, Gene Taylor's Sporting Goods has moved to Fruita and is opening their store on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Sharon Woelfle mentioned that revenue and occupancy is up year to date at her property. She encouraged the board to go see the band String Dusters at the Riverfront Series in August. The concert is free and their music is excellent.
- Others in attendance mentioned graduation of their children and spending time with grandchildren.

#### Employee Introduction – Kristin Winn, Visitor Services Coordinator

Barbara Bowman introduced Kristin Winn to the board as the new Visitor Services Coordinator at the VCB. Kristin is a 17-year employee of the City of Grand Junction. Kristin shared her background, which includes public relations in the tourism industry, and said she is excited to use that experience at the VCB. She praised the volunteers who are great ambassadors for Grand Junction. Barbara informed the board that Kristin will be working Wednesdays through Sundays during the high season to provide support to the volunteers on the weekends. The board welcomed Kristin and individually introduced themselves to her.

#### Board Member Participation in VCB Activities

Sharon Woelfle reported that she participated in breakfast on the Colorado National Monument with the German FAM. She enjoyed the setting and said that Two Rivers Convention Center did a wonderful job with the catering. Barbara Bowman shared a photo of the FAM with the board and said that the breakfast on the Colorado National Monument was the highlight of the tour.

Sharon further mentioned that she attended the Colorado Urban Winefest at Infinity Park in Denver with Mistalynn Meyeraan. They gave away brochures about Grand Junction and the upcoming Colorado Mountain Winefest. Because their booth was near the restrooms, they were able to speak with about 70% of the attendees.

Sharon also attended the Palisade Bluegrass Festival. She talked with people from Salt Lake City who heard an advertisement on the radio there about the festival and decided to come to Grand Junction to attend. The ad was paid for by the VCB.

Brad Taylor commented that he also attended the breakfast on the Colorado National Monument with the German FAM. He also attended the dinner with the group that evening.

Barbara said that there are no FAMs scheduled until this fall.

#### Special Events Funding Update

Mike Bell provided an update from the Special Events Committee meeting held on June 17, 2013. Currently there is \$3,000 remaining in the budget. The following Special Event Funding applications were reviewed at the meeting:

- *Fuoco Motor Company Downtown Car Show - \$1,500 requested.* This event will be held downtown on Main Street on September 28<sup>th</sup>. 200 out-of-town visitors are expected to attend and zip codes will be collected. This event has been funded previously in the past. The committee recommends funding \$1,500.

- *Western Colorado Writers' Forum Conference - \$2,000 requested.* This event will be held on October 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The committee recommends not approving this request due to only 38 out-of-town visitors that are expected to attend.

This will leave \$1,500 remaining to fund with one application pending submittal. Mike Bell made a motion to approve the committee's recommendations. Per Nilsson seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

## BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS

### Review Board's Goals from 2013 Board Retreat

Lon mentioned that one of the goals from the Board Retreat was what the board can do to outreach to the public to promote tourism. Barbara added that some examples include breakfast with Council and participation in FAMs, which is happening now.

John said that getting Council together with the Chamber of Commerce for a lunch is a good idea. He suggested that Karin Mast, from Miles Media, provide a workshop with city government that includes data from other cities to create more interest in tourism here.

Per said that the recent article on tourism in the Daily Sentinel was negative and did not accurately reflect the overall dollars that come into the valley. The DoubleTree is having the best year ever and business this summer is looking great. He suggested getting the media involved with talking to the right people before they publish an article. Debbie Kovalik said she was interviewed for the article, provided data to the reporter and commented that we hope to sustain foreign independent travelers, groups, and conventions. Comments made at a Chamber IDI Board meeting drew the Sentinel's attention. They didn't publish that information nor did they include upcoming events. Barbara said that the article did not tell the whole story. She will work with Mistalynn Meyeraan to publish a positive article.

Brad Taylor asked what data or information do we give to Council? Debbie responded that readiness meetings are held once a year that includes department trends and what's happening. Council receives the minutes of our Board of Directors meetings every month. They also receive a copy of our marketing plan and this is a topic that will be discussed in a work session with Council in August. We are now presenting our performance dashboard during the quarterly budget meetings that is attended by some Council members.

Glen Gallegos asked if we can have a more concerted effort with the Chamber, Grand Junction Economic Partnership, and Horizon Drive Association. Barbara added that she, Debbie, and Mistalynn are in touch with the above mentioned organizations, and that perhaps they need to inform the board more of their involvement in them.

Lon asked Marty Chazen if he had any comments to add. Marty responded that he recognizes the importance of the VCB and that we need to do anything to generate revenue. We will have a receptive ear with Council if we bring to them anything that will bring tourism in. He asked if the VCB sends press releases to the newspaper. Barbara responded yes, and that it may be time for a press conference related to tourism as an economic driver. Glen asked Marty what percentage of the city's budget is from tourism. Marty responded that he doesn't know but that every dollar coming in is

important. Debbie added that Jodi Romero in Finance has a few financial models to estimate the impact.

#### Lisa Eckert – Colorado National Monument

Lon thanked Lisa Eckert for attending the meeting. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves to Lisa and she distributed the recent Colorado National Monument visitor guide and brochure. She reported that the Colorado National Monument (CNM) brings in \$23 million dollars annually to Grand Junction. Park entrance fees are \$10 and 80% of that goes to the CNM. Entrances fees alone bring in \$96,000 annually. Some of that revenue has been used to improve the railings. Due to budget cuts this year, the visitor center now closes one hour earlier and the CNM no longer has a presence at Farmer's Market.

Lisa stated that special use permitting, such as commercial guided activities, is an item that is being addressed nationwide and not just at the CNM. Public meetings, conducted by a third-party facilitator, will be held in mid-July for people to contribute ideas as to what activities are appropriate for the CNM. Per asked why the public is invited. Lisa responded that there are misunderstandings as to what activities are allowed and what are not. For example, the Coors Classic was allowed in the 1980's but now it is not. John asked if the CNM will now allow bike races. Lisa responded that the current director is not supportive of that because of law, policy and road issues. Glade Park residents need to have access back and forth to the community per the 1986 East Hill court case. Glen asked if the public thinks it is a good idea to have a bike race on the CNM, will it be possible or not. Lisa said it will be important to hear that because some people would like to have it. Glen further asked how the special use permits will be approved in the meantime. Lisa said each of them will be reviewed. Per said if the majority of the population is in favor of showcasing the Monument, it doesn't make sense to deny permits. He asked why the Monument does not like bike races. Lisa replied that when she arrived as the Superintendent of the CNM, she had heard that Superintendents did not listen to the public. She wants to get public input and also explain the mission of the National Park Service which is federal law. That federal law is to conserve and preserve for visitor enjoyment. When considering a permit for a bike race, they will ask whether or not it is reasonable to close the park to visitors. That is why she prefers open meetings so that everyone will learn the mission.

Barbara asked what the timeframe is for National Park legislation. Lisa responded that Senator Udall and Representative Tipton have recently established a 5-member panel but there is no timeline or due date for legislation.

Per asked the number one reason why a permit is denied. Lisa replied it is because of resource damage. John asked if Director Wessels is against a bike race. Lisa responded yes, and from there on up. It is a system-wide issue because bike races are viewed as inappropriate activities on the CNM.

#### Katie Stevens and Collin Ewing – Bureau of Land Management

Katie Stevens reported that the BLM is wrapping up the comment period for the draft resource management plan for Grand Junction. She then introduced Collin Ewing who provided a presentation on the draft resource management plan/environmental impact statement for the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area. Collin said that this is the first resource management plan for the area, which covers 218,393 acres and was designated in 2009. There are

14 purposes of national conservation some of which include geological, cultural, archaeological, paleontological, recreational, wilderness, wildlife, and water. There are 5 management scenarios for this area. The travel management plan will determine whether or not to keep open certain trails and for which uses, in addition to what will be the effects on wildlife, water, etc.

Lisa Eckert commented that this is similar to her situation. Under her management area a bike race is not appropriate.

Sharon Woelfle asked if clubs and organizations will have a say on what they want for the area and if that will impact the decision. Collin responded yes and that is why there is a comment period. Sharon further asked with all of the different opinions, if it is difficult to get the correct information to people. Collin replied yes, and that they have had discussions with clubs.

Katie said the extended comment period for Grand Junction is June 24<sup>th</sup>. They will then review the comments, make a proposal, and it will go out to the public for comment again. The comment period for the Dominguez-Escalante area will end on August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Sharon asked if the plan includes anticipated growth in the area and if they have considered an increase in tourism. Collin replied yes, however, some projections are hard to predict. Katie added that with the Grand Junction plan, there is an opportunity for the north desert. There is nothing marked out there which is good for locals but not for tourists. Debbie said that there is a difference between commercial use and individual use. For example, rafting, commercial companies are charged to raft on the river but individuals are not.

Glen asked if the BLM works with the City and County. Katie said they do work together. For example, with the Lunch Loop the city provided the parking lot and the BLM provided the trail.

Lon thanked Katie and Collin for the presentation and educating the board on this topic. Collin provided a CD version of the draft resource management plan.

There being no further business, Mike Bell motioned to end the meeting; Daren Cole seconded; motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.