

Visit Grand Junction  
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting  
July 11, 2023, 3 pm – 5 pm

The meeting was held at the Courtyard by Marriott Grand Junction, 765 Horizon Dr., Grand Junction, CO

**Presiding:** Brenda Greene, Vice Chair

**Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present:** Paul Petersen, Joe Burtard, Paula Skrzypczak, Pat Nichols-Perrin, Elizabeth Fortushniak

**Absent:** Kelsey Coleman, Tammy Anderson, Mikhail Blosser

**City of Grand Junction Staff Present:** Elizabeth Fogarty, Director; Kim Machado, Administrative Specialist

**Guests:** Curtis Englehart, Executive Director, Grand Junction Economic Partnership

The meeting was called to order at 3:04 p.m. by Board Vice Chair Brenda Greene.

Minutes from June 13, 2023, meeting: Joe Burtard motioned to approve the minutes as written; Paul Petersen seconded. Motion passed.

### **Community Updates and Q&A**

Curtis Englehart, Executive Director of the Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP), provided an update on GJEP's programs, initiatives, and activities. He also shared the latest Mesa County industry wage and employment data, along with information regarding GEJP's Rural Jump Start efforts and the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, which is federal legislation designed to boost domestic research and manufacturing of semiconductors in the United States.

Elizabeth Fogarty thanked Curtis for the update and asked what Visit GJ could improve upon or assist GJEP with. Curtis commended Visit GJ for their "incredible" work in marketing and branding the Grand Junction area and said that Visit GJ can best support GJEP by keeping up the great work.

### **Visit Grand Junction Updates**

Lodging tax collections for May 2023's business activity were not available to report by the time of this meeting.

Elizabeth Fogarty provided an update on Grand Junction hotel metrics for May 2023. Of the Grand Junction lodging properties that reported their metrics to STR, LLC., occupancy for May 2023 was 76.8%, ADR was \$127.28, and RevPAR was \$97.72. A comparison of Grand Junction's May 2023 and year-to-date metrics to Colorado and the U.S. was also shared.

Other updates include:

- Community Meetings and Events that Elizabeth attended recently include the Care for Colorado Coalition meeting; City Council Strategic Planning Retreat; Colorado Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (CADMO) Annual Meeting; The Art Center of Western Colorado Board Meeting; Grand Junction Regional Air Service Alliance meeting; and a meeting with Jessica Burford, Palisade Chamber of Commerce President and CEO.
- Speakers from the CADMO Annual Meeting included Don Welsh, President & CEO of Destinations International, and Time Wolfe, Director of the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO). During the meeting, Tim Wolfe reported that many destinations in Colorado are down in business. He also shared positive Grand Junction data and inquired with Elizabeth about what was working in the Grand Junction destination.
- Elizabeth will be attending the Destinations International Annual Convention during the week of July 17. She received exclusive, by invitation only, invitations to two premier small group meetings during the convention. A special dinner discussion hosted by Simpleview and Future Tourism Group will gather thirteen destination innovators from around the world, including Canada, Ireland, and South Korea, along with other U.S. destination organizations, including Visit Grand Junction. The other meeting was an exclusive Think Tank on the "Destination Organization of the Future" hosted by Miles Partnership, which will bring together 15 DMO leaders from around the world. Topics will include issues relating to how destination organizations, their mission, structures, and skills must evolve. Grand Junction was invited to share its innovative strategies, process, and results-orientated approach. Inclusion with these selective small groups speaks to the cutting-edge work the Visit GJ team is engaging in and how Visit GJ continues to be recognized as a leader in the industry.

- Copies of the Explore Colorado 2023 Official State Travel Guide and the 4-page Grand Junction insert were distributed to the board members. Grand Junction is mentioned 70 times within the Colorado guide. The exclusive 4-page Grand Junction insert is mailed worldwide with every state travel guide requested, which is over 350,000 annually. Visit GJ has secured exclusive rights to the 4-page guide Grand Junction insert for the fifth year in a row.
- Visit GJ has applied to participate in the CTO's Destination Blueprint Program. Up to 10 destination organizations will be selected to participate. Each selected organization will be paired with a tourism consultant to provide 100 hours of project-based consulting, resulting in an action plan to assist in advancing Visit GJ's industry priorities for tourism in Grand Junction. Awarded destinations will be notified on July 21, 2023.
- Recent media coverage of Grand Junction included a live television segment from travel journalist Jennifer Broome ("Visiting Colorado National Monument with Travel Journalist Jennifer Broome"); a print and online article from the Business Times ("Sunny Forecast: Tourism Director Expects Busy Season"); 5280 Magazine ("7 Western Destinations Where You Can Glamp This Summer" and "Running Wild: Camping with Colorado's Wild Horses"); Out Front Magazine ("Good Judy's: Western Colorado's Queer Nightclub is Born"); and Travel + Leisure ("The Best Places to Visit in Colorado – national parks, Small Towns, and Hot Springs Included").

There being no further business, Joe Burtard motioned to adjourn; Pat Nichols-Perrin seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.