

Visit Grand Junction  
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting  
March 12, 2024, 3 pm – 5 pm

The meeting was held at The Hotel Maverick, 840 Kennedy Ave, Grand Junction, CO.

**Presiding:** Brenda Greene, Chair

**Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present:** Pat Nichols-Perrin, Joe Burtard, Tammy Anderson, Manon Derosiers, Elizabeth Fortushniak, Mikhail Blosser

**Absent:** Kelsey Coleman, Theresa Horvat

**City Council Members Present:** Mayor Anna Stout

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

**Guests:** Angela Padalecki, Executive Director, Grand Junction Regional Airport

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Board Chair Brenda Greene.

Minutes from the February 13, 2024, meeting: Pat Nichols-Perrin motioned to approve the minutes as written; Elizabeth Fortushniak seconded. Motion passed.

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

Angela Padalecki, Executive Director of the Grand Junction Regional Airport, provided an update on air service, passenger, and fare data, along with information on the airport's performance and future plans. She highlighted activities in 2023 and strategies for 2024, including significant construction progress and efforts to establish long-term lease agreements with airline partners. Specific attention was given to United and American Airlines' service adjustments and the introduction of Breeze Airways. Angela also covered passenger leakage trends, noting changes in passenger behavior and their preferences for using Grand Junction Regional Airport and other airports. She addressed the exit of Delta Airlines and expressed optimism about the potential return of service, though likely not in the current year. She shared updates regarding ongoing construction projects, particularly the runway expansion, along with significant grant funding received for those initiatives.

### **Visit Grand Junction Updates**

Elizabeth shared an update on Grand Junction's lodging tax collections and hotel metrics for January 2024's business activity. For January 2024's business, lodging tax collections were estimated to be 14.5% above January 2023.

For January 2024's hotel metrics, Grand Junction's occupancy was 43.8%, ADR was \$82.69, and RevPAR was \$36.25. For January 2024, Grand Junction's occupancy was 16.2% lower than Colorado when including ski towns, 12.9% lower than Colorado when excluding ski towns, and 15.5% lower than the U.S. occupancy.

Other updates include:

- Community and Industry Meetings, Conferences, and Events that Elizabeth attended recently include the City of Grand Junction Department Supervisors Leadership Training; Grand Junction Train Depot meeting; CTO Tourism Marketing Committee meeting; meeting with Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) Director Tim Wolfe; Banff Film Festival; Visit Grand Junction Website Extranet Training for Stakeholders; Grand Junction Economic Partnership meeting; Community Recreation Center Special Announcement Event; Destination Learning Lab with the CTO; Western Colorado Art Center Board meeting; Visit Grand Junction New Advisory Board Member Orientation; Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce Banquet; and Destination Think! X Innovations meetings.
- Visit Grand Junction's Snapshot of 2023 Projects, Accomplishments, Partnerships, Data, and Outreach was included in the January 2024 Stakeholder eNewsletter. Elizabeth shared a few of the major highlights and commended staff achievements.
- The winter campaign video and rich media landing pages on VisitGrandJunction.com were shared.
- Recent media coverage of Grand Junction included The Denver Post ("Cozy New Colorado Retreats Great for a Winter Getaway" and "9 New Colorado Hotels Great for a Winter Getaway"); Women's Health UK ("Your American Wild West Adventure Awaits in Colorado"); Tiny Beans ("Spring Break Packages That Families Will Love"); Wine Enthusiast

(“The Best Colorado Wineries to Visit Right Now”); Fodor’s Travel (“I Used to Work for an Airline. This is How I Handle Flight Delays and Cancellations”); Conde’ Nast Traveler (“The 20 Best Hikes in Colorado. Through Alpine Meadows and Otherworldly Rock Formations”); and Pride Journeys (“A Two Helmet Day in Grand Junction, Colorado”).

- Travel expert and media personality Jeanenne Tornatore appeared on several large market television stations, including Fox 19 Cincinnati and Fox 6 Milwaukee, highlighting Grand Junction as a dual-climate, less-crowded, and affordable destination to consider for Spring Break. Jeanenne featured canyoneering, biking, golfing, dining, skiing, Grand Junction Regional Airport, and the Colorado National Monument in the segments. Visit GJ contracted over 16 TV news spots in total.
- Data insights from the year-long DMA West Website User & Conversion Study were shared.
- Examples and benefits of AI-assisted technologies in destination marketing were shared, along with how Visit Grand Junction has taken a forward-thinking approach to artificial intelligence with human oversight in operations and marketing strategies. Ultimately, AI is being used as an assistive tool by staff.

Mayor Anna Stout shared a City Council update.

There being no further business, Joe Burtard motioned to adjourn; Elizabeth Fortushniak seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.