

Visit Grand Junction
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting
May 13, 2025, 3 pm - 5 pm

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

Presiding: Elizabeth Fortushniak, Chair

Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present: Theresa Horvat, Julie Shafer, Manon Desrosiers, Brenda Greene, Pat Nichols-Perrin

Absent: Tevfik Demirciftci, Joe Burtard, Tammy Anderson

City Council Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem Laurel Cole

Visit Grand Junction Staff Present: Elizabeth Fogarty, Director; Kim Machado, Administrative Specialist

Guests: Darren Coltrinari, Tournament Director, Junior College World Series (JUCO); Stacey Colón, Grand Junction Field Office Manager, Bureau of Land Management; James Lovelace, McInnis Canyons and Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Areas Manager

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Board Chair Elizabeth Fortushniak.

Minutes from the April 8, 2025, advisory board meeting: Pat Nichols-Perrin motioned to approve the minutes as written; Manon Desrosiers seconded. Motion passed.

An error in the March 11, 2025, meeting minutes was identified by staff, which incorrectly stated that the MOU was between the City of Grand Junction and the Grand Junction Regional Airport. The correct organization is the Grand Junction Regional Air Service Alliance. The March 11, 2025, minutes will be corrected and redistributed to the Board. With no further changes, Manon Desrosiers motioned to approve the March 11, 2025, minutes with the corrected organization name; Brenda Greene seconded. Motion passed.

Visit Grand Junction Director Elizabeth Fogarty thanked Randall Reitz for his service as liaison to the Visit Grand Junction Board and also welcomed Mayor Pro Tem Laurel Cole as the new City Council liaison to the Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board. The advisory board members introduced themselves.

Community Updates and Q&A – Junior College World Series (JUCO)

Darren Coltrinari, Tournament Chairman of the Junior College World Series (JUCO), provided an update on the 2025 Alpine Bank JUCO World Series Tournament, scheduled for May 24 - May 31, 2025. For the second consecutive year, all 19 tournament games will be broadcast nationally on ESPN+. The annual JUCO Banquet will take place on Friday, May 23, 2025, and will feature Jenny Cavnar, the first woman to serve as the primary television play-by-play announcer for a Major League Baseball team, as the keynote speaker. A documentary highlighting JUCO was also presented.

Darren thanked the City of Grand Junction, the Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board and staff for their continued support of JUCO. Elizabeth Fogarty thanked Darren for sharing the updates with the Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board.

Community Updates and Q&A – Bureau of Land Management – Grand Junction Field Office

Stacy Colón, Grand Junction Field Office Manager for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and James Loveless, Manager of McInnis Canyons and Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Areas (NCAs), provided updates on local BLM activities, projects, and public land initiatives. The Mustang adoption event is scheduled for June 26 - 28, 2025, in conjunction with the Colorado Mustang Festival. Sixteen Mustangs are currently in foster care to prepare them for adoption. Additional updates covered trail, camping, and conservation efforts across both NCAs. In Dominguez-Escalante NCA, a long-anticipated land acquisition along Escalante Creek is in progress, though public access will remain restricted until finalized.

There was discussion about Rattlesnake Arches specifically and the need to share other trails in the area to help with disbursement. Elizabeth shared that although Visit Grand Junction cannot control the content published by others on social media and other organization websites, prior public land managers asked Visit Grand Junction to produce Arches content that clearly delineated the trails, trail closed dates, and the need for high-clearance. As part of this content Visit Grand Junction emphasized clear warnings across its website and the Official Grand Junction Adventure Guide about high-clearance vehicle

requirements, trail difficulty, closed dates, safety, taking the 13-mile Pollock Bench Trail to disperse trail use, and sustainable use. This educational approach has successfully led to shifts in visitor behavior toward the use of other public lands. She also mentioned how Visit Grand Junction's Outdoor Adventure app, which features over 100 trails spanning multiple activity types, uses gamification to encourage trail diversity and reduce congestion. A transition to a new application is in progress to collect time-on-trail data as requested by other public land managers. Elizabeth reinforced that Visit Grand Junction is happy to assist with further trail education and disbursement and also requested a list of alternative trail recommendations from James to promote through blog content, website, and paid digital campaigns. She further reiterated Visit Grand Junction's commitment to protecting natural resources while supporting a positive visitor experience.

Elizabeth also shared that Visit Grand Junction added Voluntourism to the Event Calendar on the Visit Grand Junction website to encourage area nonprofit outdoor recreation organizations to post trail work opportunities in order to encourage not only locals to attend trail clean-ups but also guests who are visiting the area.

Elizabeth thanked Stacy and James for the BLM/NCA updates and feedback, and asked if there was anything Visit Grand Junction could do further to provide better support. In response, Stacy and James expressed appreciation for the opportunity to collaborate and for Visit Grand Junction's public land education efforts. Elizabeth again encouraged Stacy and James to send a list of alternative trails for Visit Grand Junction to promote and looked forward to continued collaboration.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Elizabeth shared an update on Grand Junction's lodging tax collections and hotel performance metrics for March 2025's business activity.

For March 2025's business, Grand Junction's lodging tax collections were 2.6% below March 2024. March 2025 hotel occupancy was 57.9%, ADR was \$91.36, and RevPAR was \$52.86. Year-to-date lodging tax collections are 3.3% below through March 2025's business compared to the same three-month period in 2024. Notable hotel metrics include:

- March 2025's ADR of \$91.36 was the second highest recorded for the month of March, 1.4% above March 2024 ADR of \$90.14, and outpaced the U.S., and Colorado, both including and excluding ski towns.
- The YTD March 2025 ADR pace was 3.2% above YTD March 2024 ADR pace, and outpaced the U.S., and Colorado, both including and excluding ski towns.
- The YTD March 2025 RevPAR pace was 1.6% above YTD March 2024 RevPAR pace, and outpaced Colorado, both including and excluding ski towns.

Other updates include:

- Efforts to address the continued decline in lodging tax revenue due to the sales and lodging tax exemption from lodging stays of 30 days or more were shared. Staff continues to implement targeted messaging to shift lodging behaviors, length-of-stay marketing campaigns, enhanced SEO, and optimized organic content, particularly in light of current budget constraints limiting paid advertising. Misinformation was published in a recent *Daily Sentinel* opinion piece indicating that the issue can be rectified by a City Council majority decision and/or a ballot question to adjust the 30-day exemption in the Lodging Tax Ordinance. The City of Grand Junction submitted a correction to the newspaper clarifying the issue.
- A review of Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board member roles and ethical expectations was presented to reinforce Visit Grand Junction's commitment to integrity and transparency. Advisory board members are expected to provide high-level guidance and should advocate for Visit Grand Junction, support the advisory board's majority decisions publicly and privately, and act in the best interest of the organization and the City of Grand Junction. Compliance with ethical standards includes avoiding actual or perceived conflicts of interest, refraining from accepting gifts from individuals or entities doing business with the city, and maintaining confidentiality of proprietary information shared during meetings. Board business must not be discussed outside official meetings, including via electronic communications or social gatherings, to avoid being perceived as non-compliant with Colorado Sunshine Laws and the Open Records Act.
- Discussions on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Grand Junction Regional Air Service Alliance (GJRASA) are ongoing. Visit Grand Junction continues to share and update monthly the proprietary data worksheet to assist the GJRASA with their strategies.

There being no further business, Julie Shafer motioned to adjourn; Brenda Greene seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.