

Visit Grand Junction  
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting  
May 12, 2026, 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.

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

**Presiding:** Pat Nichols-Perrin, Chair

**Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Members Present:** Brenda Greene, Julie Shafer, Theresa Horvat, Dora Fang, Tevfik Demirciftci, Christina Schultz

**Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Members Absent:** Manon Desrosiers, Elizabeth Fortushniak

**Grand Junction City Council Present:** Laurel Lutz, Mayor

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

**Guests:** Darren Coltrinari, Tournament Chairman, Junior College World Series (JUCO); Jeff Stephens, Vice President, and Lizzy Depew, Treasurer, Mesa County Search and Rescue

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Chair Pat Nichols-Perrin.

Minutes from the April 14, 2026, advisory board meeting: Brenda Greene motioned to approve the minutes as written; Dora Fang seconded. Motion passed.

**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 2026 Alpine Bank JUCO World Series Tournament, scheduled for May 23 - May 29, 2026. He shared that preparations are on track and that the tournament continues to be strongly supported by hotels, volunteers, local businesses, service organizations, and community partners. The annual JUCO Banquet will take place on Friday, May 22, 2026, and will feature Karl “Gus” Gustavson, a retired Navy SEAL with SEAL Team 6 and Grand Junction High School graduate, as the keynote speaker. For the third consecutive year, all tournament games will be broadcast nationally on ESPN+.

Darren noted that the National Junior College Athletic Association voted to reduce the Division I baseball World Series from 10 teams to eight teams beginning in 2028. He explained that while this may reduce some team-related room nights and visitor spending, the change may also create a more competitive tournament format and increase exposure for the event. Grand Junction’s contract to host the tournament remains in place through 2044.

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.

**Community Updates and Q&A – Mesa County Search and Rescue**

Jeff Stephens, Vice President, and Lizzy Depew, Treasurer, of the Mesa County Search and Rescue (MCSAR) Board of Directors shared an overview of the organization’s mission, operations, and volunteer structure. MCSAR is a nonprofit organization that operates under a memorandum of understanding with the Mesa County Sheriff’s Office to respond to search and rescue calls throughout Mesa County. The team has approximately 55 members and responded to 84 missions in 2025, in addition to completing regular training throughout the year. Jeff and Lizzy also discussed the wide range of terrain and rescue situations the team responds to including trails, rivers, canyons, and deserts around Mesa County including the Colorado National Monument and the Grand Mesa. They also shared information about the team’s specialized training, technology, and response capabilities, including rope rescue, swift water rescue, mapping tools, drones, and coordination with other emergency response partners.

Questions and discussion topics from the advisory board members included outdoor safety education, rescue costs, donations, and volunteer recruitment. Elizabeth shared that Visit Grand Junction incorporates outdoor preparedness and safety messaging throughout its visitor and resident-facing content and included examples. She further asked if there were specific safety content that they would recommend Visit Grand Junction emphasize in future content. Jeff and Lizzy provided the top items, handed out safety cards, and expressed appreciation for the support in sharing important safety messages.

Elizabeth thanked Jeff and Lizzy for providing an MCSAR update to the Board and asked if they would be interested in coming back to provide annual updates. They responded positively.

### **Visit Grand Junction Updates**

Elizabeth shared an update on Grand Junction's lodging tax collections and key hotel performance metrics for March 2026's business activity.

For March 2026's business, Grand Junction's lodging tax collections were 13.8% above March 2025. Year-to-date lodging tax collections through March 2026's business are 8.1% above the same three-month period in 2025 using the same adjusted comparison. Hotel occupancy was 62.9%, average daily rate (ADR) was \$99.75, and revenue per available room (RevPAR) was \$62.72.

Notable hotel metrics include:

- March 2026 occupancy of 62.9% was 8.7% above March 2025, and outpaced Colorado (including and excluding ski towns) and the U.S. It was the highest recorded occupancy for any month of March in Grand Junction's history. This marks the eleventh consecutive month that Grand Junction has paced ahead of Colorado (including and excluding ski resorts) and the U.S. in occupancy.
- March 2026 ADR of \$99.75 was 9.2% above March 2025, and outpaced Colorado (including and excluding ski towns) and the U.S. It was the highest recorded ADR for any month of March in Grand Junction's history. This marks the eighth month that Grand Junction has paced ahead of Colorado (including and excluding ski resorts) and the U.S. in ADR.
- March 2026 RevPAR of \$62.72 was 18.7% above March 2025, and outpaced Colorado (including and excluding ski towns) and the U.S. It was the highest recorded RevPAR for any month of March in Grand Junction's history. This marks the eleventh consecutive month that Grand Junction has paced ahead of Colorado (including and excluding ski resorts) and the U.S. in RevPAR.

Other updates included:

- The draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Grand Junction, the Grand Junction Regional Air Service Alliance, and the Grand Junction Sports Commission is complete. The MOU will be considered for adoption by City Council at the May 20, 2026, regular meeting.
- A snapshot of recent community meetings and events that Elizabeth has attended include: Corridor Management Plan; Western Colorado Economic Summit; EMS Academy Badge Pinning Ceremony; City of Grand Junction Boards & Commissions Appreciation Dinner; Destination Think Collective – AI Marketing Disruption; The Art Center of Western Colorado board meeting; The Business Times of Western Colorado interview; City of Grand Junction Utilities Director Retirement Celebration; The Art Center of Western Colorado Gala Benefit; City of Grand Junction Spring Food Truck Employee Appreciation events; meeting with Dalida Sassoon Bollig, Executive Director of the Business Incubator Center; Colorado Tourism Office Horizon Discovery website meeting; Do Colorado Right Coalition meeting; Deputy Fire Chief Candidates Meet and Greet; and City of Grand Junction Spring Town Hall, where a resident provided positive feedback about Visit Grand Junction's successful destination management strategy, including the Outdoor Adventure Pass and the department's efforts to disperse trail traffic throughout the area.

There was a short discussion about Aspen Airport closing in 2027 and ways to court guests flying into GJT so that they experience the Grand Junction area prior to departing for Aspen. Continued discussions will continue, along with marketing campaigns managed by the staff.

There being no further business, Dora Fang motioned to adjourn; Theresa Horvat seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.