

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FEBRUARY 13, 1996

PRESIDING: Brad Higginbotham, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lon Carpenter, Tom Kleinschnitz, Karen Berryman, Ken Smith, Dan Sharp, Bill Miers, Doug Gust

MEMBERS ABSENT: Fay Timmerman, R.T. Mantlo

STAFF PRESENT: Barbara Bowman, Judy Shormann, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Char Shofner, Linda Hill, Jenny Gold, Jann Ertl, Cherrie Neuendorf, George Douglas, George Robinson, Brian Chipman

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

MINUTES OF JANUARY 9, 1996: Brad Higginbotham moved the minutes be approved, Karen Berryman seconded; approved unanimously.

TASHIRO MARKETING & ADVERTISING: Linda Hill distributed copies of the 1996 Marketing Plan and gave a brief overview of the Plan. She also discussed results of the 1995 Occupancy/Average Daily Rate (ADR) survey. Occupancy has increased dramatically for the survey period 1991-1995, although properties have experienced "dips" in certain months. Similar trends have been reported by other Colorado destinations, ADR has increased for each month except October, and December has remained constant.

The VCB and Tashiro received two awards from Hospitality Sales & Marketing International: Silver for the billboard and a Bronze for Visitor Center displays. Over 1,500 entries were received; Grand Junction's competition included San Diego and Baltimore.

Denver TV stations have been asked to submit proposals for rates and schedules. Channel 4 is the strongest possibility at this time; Channel 9 is not negotiating promotions this year.

Outside Magazine gave us the wrong dimensions for our Spring ad. The magazine will run a make-good ad in the May issue; this is a \$4,000 value.

BOARD BUSINESS: The Chair reported that jet service will return to Walker Field with Air 21's inaugural flight on March 4. Representatives of Air 21 are looking for partners in promotions and packages; they would also be willing to provide tickets for fairs. The Board was pleased to hear about the possibility of offering packages. Dan Sharp would encourage the hotels to be aggressive in taking advantage of this opportunity.

Colorado Reservations Service (CRS) – In December 1995, the Director met with representatives of CRS to discuss possible fulfillment services for the VCB. CRS prepared a proposal which was forwarded to the Board in early February. The Director requested CRS address the Board to discuss details of their proposal.

George Robinson gave a brief history of CRS: The company began answering the 800-COLORADO number when funding for the CTB ended. CRS now contracts with the CTTA for fulfillment services; their clients also include the Denver Metro CVB (2 years), Colorado Springs CVB (10 mos), and Bed & Breakfast Innkeepers of Colorado (new client). CRS has subsidiaries in Utah, Illinois and Georgia.

Some destinations do have central reservations services, but CRS is the only private company in Colorado providing this service. There are two answering centers: Colorado Springs has 24 agent capability (10 – 12 are used) and handles mostly reservations; Hotchkiss has 50 agent capability (3 or 4 specifically for tourism) and handles most of the fulfillment. The service provides 24 hour coverage.

Calls would come into the VCB's 800 line. The VCB would decide on the list of options ("telephone tree" selections), e.g., request a vacation guide, lodging reservations, etc. If the reservation option is selected, the call transfers to a CRS agent, the call is released from the VCB's 800 line and subsequent telephone charges accrue to CRS.

Agents prompt callers (asking dates of travel/amenities needed/activities/interests, etc.) to identify the type of lodging desired. Individual properties provide details about their facilities to CRS, and that is the information available in the database as an agent talks with a potential visitor. When the traveler's needs are identified, the caller is then given names of three lodging properties as options; the database system automatically rotates the list of properties based on the parameters defined by the caller. When a caller wants to make a reservation, the agent puts the customer on hold, calls the property to confirm availability and rate, then gives the customer the hotel's confirmation number. A written confirmation is faxed to the hotel. Properties would pay CRS 10% commission on each booking.

The Board is concerned about handling 800 calls that should be referred to the sales staff. CRS responded that the VCB can set a limit on the number of rooms in a single booking; any reservations request over that number would automatically be referred to the VCB office. CRS is not able to "bridge" calls to the VCB, so agents would be instructed to contact the VCB office immediately with the information. CRS can provide a number of different reports, including: by property, number of days booked before travel, city, state, advertising source.

The Board had numerous questions about the type of equipment CRS uses, and that information will be provided to the Board. The Board also had questions about commissions; referrals from a participating property; how to treat properties equally; the type and level of service potential visitors will receive regarding strictly fulfillment requests; call blockage; average wait time. The Board thanked Mr. Robinson and Mr. Chipman for their presentation. The Board will continue discussion of this proposal, and the fiscal impact of the service at a future meeting. Doug suggests we explore hosting a fam for CRS agents, even if the VCB doesn't contract for the service.

Special Events: Members agreed to serve as event liaison as follows:

- Colorado West Duathlon & Desert Sun Half Iron – Lon Carpenter
- Grand River Indian Artists Gathering – Doug Gust
- Moonlight Madness – Dan Sharp
- Magic, Mystery & Ritual – Karen Berryman
- AOTC Art & Jazz Festival – Doug Gust
- Norwest Bicycle Classic – Karen Berryman and Fay Timmerman
- Dinosaur Days – Bill Miears

Kokopelli Marathon/Half Marathon – Brad Higginbotham

Board Retreat: The 1996 Retreat will be Wednesday, March 27 from 8:30 am – 5:00 pm; the preferred location is Bookcliff Country Club. Staff will make the necessary arrangements. The Chair requests each member prepare a list of priorities for the VCB along with his/her vision for the VCB and how we can reach that vision. Staff will provide members with a copy of the action plans that resulted from the 1995 Retreat.

Sport, Boat & RV Show: Doug and Tom are committed to attending as suppliers. Lon would like to attend and will contact staff concerning his schedule. To date, there has been very little booth participation on the part of tour operators. Tom and Doug will bring this up at the Tourism Council meeting later this week.

Karen Berryman moved the meeting adjourn, Dan Sharp seconded; there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10.