

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF MEETING
APRIL 9, 1996

PRESIDING: Brad Higginbotham

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Kleinschnitz, Lon Carpenter, R.T. Mantlo, Bill Miears, Fay Timmerman, Doug Gust, Karen Berryman, Dan Sharp.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ken Smith

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Erin Chapman, Judy Shormann and Barbara Bowman.

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Jann Ertl, Stephanie Schmid, Barbara Creasman

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 pm.

MINUTES OF MARCH 12, 1996: Doug Gust moved the minutes be approved as written; Karen Berryman seconded; passed unanimously.

Brad introduced Barbara Creasman of the Downtown Development Authority. Ms Creasman gave the Board an overview of some of DDA's planned improvements.

Brad told Barbara the Board would like the opportunity to discuss the visitor information objective of the DDA and future visitor services for downtown. Debbie asked if a meeting could be planned between the DDA, Chamber, VCB Board and a City Council member to discuss the DDA's strategy for directing the visitor. Should there be a kiosk or more signage? Would a survey of downtown merchants that analyses visitor needs be appropriate? Barbara indicated there was still approximately \$50,000 left in their visitor information budget. Barbara will contact Debbie to set up a brainstorming meeting. R.T. volunteered to be the City Council attendee.

BOARD BUSINESS: The Air 21/Colorado Springs sales mission will be April 10, 11 & 12th. Ten Tourism partners are participating and will make stops at 67 travel agencies. The travel agencies received an information postcard, a reminder fax prior to the office visit and a profile sheet will be completed on each. Television advertising in the amount of \$2,000 was placed in the Springs area. The comments regarding the ads have been very positive. The team will also attend the Colorado Springs Chamber "Business Expo" tradeshow on Thursday afternoon.

Debbie indicated that travel agents want "package deals." Jane Prinster of the Holiday was working on locating an agent locally with an 800 number, so Debbie will check on her progress.

Air 21: Air 21 would like to meet with the Board as soon as possible to discuss how their organization can work more with the VCB. It was decided to have Air 21 put on the May meeting agenda.

BLM Walker Field Lease: Brad and Debbie attended a meeting called by the Chamber Board to discuss the progress of the BLM's lease negotiations with the Airport. It was suggested that letters be sent supporting the lease renewal. Brad drafted and sent a letter on behalf of the Board to the

Council and the Commissioners. The next Airport Board meeting will be April 23rd and the BLM is scheduled on their agenda.

Tashiro: Linda Hill handed out the Front Range newspaper schedule. This schedule will also be sent to hotels and attractions. The Rocky Mountain News has been cut back and the Denver Post schedule has been increased (due to the latest ratings of the two papers).

The strategy for advertising this year will be building up the image that there are “many other things to do in Grand Junction.”

In May, four color ads will run in the Denver Post (Summertime West), Colorado Springs Gazette and Total Colorado Vacation Guide. The remainder of the ads will be in June, July, August and September and October. If Colorado Springs proves fruitful, advertising dollars will be pulled from other areas for this market. Brad asked for statistics on the Colorado Springs market. Linda indicated that Irene could obtain these numbers from the 800 data base between 1995 and 1996.

1996 television advertising will start the week of May 6th. Tashiro has again recommended Channel 4. Television ads have already been running in the Springs for the Air 21 Sales Blitz.

The budget that was targeted for ad production has been shifted toward updating the 8-minute Grand Junction video.

Each Board member received a copy of the 1996 conversion study. Linda explained that 800 random individuals from the 800 number data base were mailed a cover letter, questionnaire and a dollar bill. Two weeks later, they were mailed a reminder card. The interesting discoveries from the study were that individuals were not calling the 800 number for general Colorado info (due to the demise of the CTB); they specifically needed GJ info; length of stay has increased and the amount spent per day has declined. The compilers felt that this was due to memory recall differences. Tashiro will look into taking another sampling of reservation cards from the various properties to analyze the length of stay.

Tashiro will be working on developing the formula for calculating the return on investment of our advertising dollars. Linda will have Terry Marle contact Dave Coulson of the Research Bureau to discover what type of information he gathers statistics on.

The Internet received 1400 hits for the month of March.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Char Shoffner has resigned to take a position with School District 51 as the Public Relations Director. A search has begun to replace her.

Statistics: 800# inquiries were down from last year, due to publication dates being several weeks later, which also affected receipt dates of reader service labels and brochure mailings.

Visitor Center: Visits to the Visitor Center were down 20% this month from last year. Reasons were thought to be the fact that there are more brochure racks, not only in the hotel/motels, but throughout the area, that the front desk employees are assisting their visitor better and that brochures mailed had increased last year. Dan Sharp made the comment that we experienced such large growth in such a short amount of time, that we are just now leveling out like other areas of our size.

Several pieces of general information were announced:

- Travelers Lodge being built in Fruita
- Federal per diem has been raised to \$52

Debbie reminded the Board that our budget is based on projections and, if the lodging tax continues below projections, the VCB may be faced with budget reorganizing in June and July.

JUCO is in line and in process. As a broadcast sponsor, we will receive:

- A complimentary ad in program
- Tickets (for Board & Staff)
- 2 banquet seats (Brad & Debbie)
- Ability to provide a hospitality table
- Banner at the game
- List of top 20 team names to send direct mail

Prime Sports is going to possibly expand into the foreign market.

City Council: City Council would like to have dinner with our Board after April election of new mayor. This will be discussed further at the May meeting to confirm date and time.

May Board meeting will be held at Devils Canyon Science & Learning Center. Fruita tourism partners will be invited to attend and make a presentation as Barbara Creasman did today.

Visitor Center: Judy gave an update on the new visitor center exhibits that have recently been added or are in process. They are:

- Wine Board
- Colorado National Monument Association
- Museum of Western Colorado
- New calling card machine
- Art on the Corner (possibly expanding to Horizon Drive)
- Plant identification

Debbie passed around the visitor guide produced by the CTTA and American Express. At Tashiro's advice, the VCB did not participate, at a cost of \$32,000.

Group Sales: Barbara reported on the Sports RV Show. Many of the co-op partners have already booked business from the show.

Barbara explained to the Board that the format for the group sales report has been changed. Sales leads and convention rates continue to remain even with last year.

The Colorado Group Steering Committee is sponsoring a reception at the Spring NTA and have received 92 reservations out of 132 invited, which is a wonderful response.

Brad welcomed and introduced Stephanie Schmid from the audience. Steph offered her property, Orchard House, as a location for our September board meeting. Steph thanked the Board for the Go Colorado letter of support. She also requested a letter of support for the Legacy Project (valley wide trail habitat). Tom Kleinschnitz moved that the Board write a letter of support and Fay Timmerman seconded.

Board Concerns: Fay Timmerman briefly talked to Ron Maupin about joining other Chambers of Commerce. R.T. suggested the Board discuss it with City Council when the two entities meet.

Fay also mentioned that Front Page Follies, a special event funding recipient, was held on March 29 & 30th. Fay said that one night was completely sold out and that the money funded was well spent on advertising the event.

Bill Mears requested clarification on the status of in-room hotel videos. Debbie & Barb will make contact with the video company that developed the original proposal to produce in-room videos. Dan and Doug indicated that many hotels would now be interested in such a program.

Lon Carpenter inquired about the Downtown hotel/convention center meeting. Debbie said it was a workshop between Council and DDA and was probably inappropriate that the VCB attend. Debbie will be briefed at a later date and will then report to the Board. Debbie informed the group that Staff is working with Two Rivers on developing a focus group study on the Center. Tashiro will make a proposal to Two Rivers to conduct such a study.

Dan Sharp expressed his concern that the 5th Street project needs to be north AND south. R.T. said that both are being worked on.

Karen Berryman and VCB staff will attend Fruita's meeting on the Dinosaur Diamond regional promotion effort. They will report back to the Board at the May meeting.

Doug Gust spoke as president of the Colorado West Tourism Council. He needs information on the web site page costs. Terry Mueller has been hired to sell pages for the VCB and he will be in touch with the group and provide the rate sheet.

Brad Higginbotham moved the meeting adjourn, Doug Gust seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.