

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MAY 14, 1996

PRESIDING: Brad Higginbotham, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Kleinschnitz, Dan Sharp, Doug, Gust, Ken Smith, Fay Timmerman, Ron Maupin, Lon Carpenter, Karen Berryman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bill Miears

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Irene Carlow, Judy Shormann

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Lyle Baldwin, Linda Bowman, Terry Mueller, Viola Sis, Jim Newcombe, Rick Adleman, Mike Perry, Ruby Hindman, Jim Kirkland, Martha Berry

MINUTES OF APRIL 9, 1996: Fay Timmerman moved the minutes be approved as written, Dan Sharp seconded, approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events – Over 90 artists will attend the Grand River Indian Artists Gathering: the event has been well-publicized and the Museum looks forward to a good turnout. Over 150 runners from several states and Canada were entered in the Colorado West Duathlon. The Ramada reported a 20% increase for the event over 1995.

Doug Gust reported on the Colorado Travel & Tourism Authority (CTTA) Board meeting held in Durango. The CTTA has salespersons actively soliciting new members which will, in turn, raise additional funds. Initially, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) were not eligible to join CTTA. Membership categories have been expanded to allow VCBs to join with annual dues based on budget levels. The GJVCB's dues would be \$300 per year which would have to be paid out of contingency. The CTTA will benefit from DMO membership through expanded communications and discussions. DMO members will have access to the CTTA's database (phone inquiries to the 800-COLORADO line) which might be utilized for other marketing efforts.

A business reply card insert will be created in response to a request from the Campground Association and Dude Ranch Association. Staff's concern is that these inserts would be made in the middle of the publication season. As an advertiser, the effectiveness of our ad may be diluted if this type of insert advertising is allowed, parameters should be set when ads are being solicited for the coming year. The consensus of the Board is not to participate in the insert program.

Lon Carpenter moved the VCB join CTTA and that the \$300 membership dues be transferred from contingency; Doug Gust seconded; passed unanimously.

Air 21 representatives canceled their presentation to the Board.

TASHIRO MARKETING & ADVERTISING: Linda Hill displayed copies of the full junior page, 4-color ad that will run in the Denver Post and Rocky Mountain News, the VCB will also have a presence in the Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph. An ad was also placed in Total Petroleum's pull-out

section which will be distributed at all Total gas stations throughout Colorado. The ads position Grand Junction as the center of western slope activities.

TV ads ran in Colorado Springs in advance of the Air 21 sales mission. A total of 80 cash and 100 promotional spots will be run on DCNC (Denver). The first ads are promoting JUCO and the Art & Jazz Festival; the second set in August/September will promote the Colorado Mountain Winefest and the Fruita Fall & Bluegrass Festival.

A correction to the recently-completed Conversion Study was noted: The total expenditures per party was \$354, an increase of \$100 over the amount reported in the 1992 study. The conversion percentage was consistent with 1992 results. A total of 800 surveys were mailed with a response rate of 62%.

Terry Marle, who conducted the Conversion Study, would also be willing to prepare a report of the economic impact of the VCB's advertising. She prepared formulas using figures from the 1996 Conversion Study.

Public Relations: Kathleen Brown arranged a fam for 5 travel writers from Denver, Las Vegas and Los Angeles. An article is scheduled for the Denver Post's Empire magazine in late May.

Internet: \$7,000 is budgeted for 1996 updates; we can keep up the calendar of events and do some enhancements. The 1997 budget should allow funds to "freshen" the website. The original rate schedule included an insertion fee, 50% of which would be rebated to the VCB to offset costs; there has been resistance to these fees. (The CTTA is reportedly disappointed in the results they've seen, also.) Many Chambers list their members for free but charge for advertising costs, an option that is not available to the VCB. Board discussion included restructuring website costs for expanded listings; reciprocal links; link to Website from toll-free Internet directory; the importance of making our Website user-friendly (users don't like dead-ends); if the nature of the Internet is free information, perhaps we shouldn't charge.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: All VCB statistics are showing decreases versus 1995. The Director and Linda Hill will meet next week to discuss options for additional marketing opportunities in an effort to offset the decreases we have seen. The Chamber reports relocation requests are down 28% and tourist inquiries down 30%; the Fruita Welcome Center's visitation is down 24%; Cortez and Mesa Verde are both flat. At the May 10 meeting of the Colorado Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (CADMO), other cities reported increases:

Denver – 1st quarter occupancy is down 2% but revenues are strong; the CVB has turned down 240,000 roomnights because they couldn't accommodate the groups

Colorado Springs – 1st quarter revenues up 17%; Western Pacific Airlines is having a significant impact, and is adding more planes

Breckenridge – inquiries up 39%; central reservations booked \$8.7 million

Snowmass – April up 43%; summer groups up 56%

Durango – inquiries are up significantly, mainly in response to a TV blitz in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona

Linda Hill noted adjustments made to the media selection for 1996: Country Home and Country America were canceled. Discovery magazine went out of business (combined, those three generated 3,500 – 4,000 responses); Ladies Home Journal gave us two ads for the price of one in 1995, but we have only one in 1996; Outside magazine was added; budgetary constraints precluded running ads in Home & Away and Family Fun.

Discussion of factors that may be affecting VCB statistics included:

Are consumers using the Internet in lieu of calling for a Visitor Guide?

Is the price of gas having more effect than we realize?

Are low-cost air fares from Colorado Springs/Denver taking away in-state visitors?

Dan Sharp stated that 1st quarter group business is down; he will contact other hotels on Horizon Drive to see how their business has been.

The Director reported that Group Sales is doing well; the number of sales leads issued to date is at 45% of our goal for the year.

The Southwest Travel Region has requested the VCB re-join that group at an estimated cost of \$2,000 per year; this is not budgeted and funds would have to come from contingency. The Board took no action on the request.

DINOSAUR DIAMOND: In April, Dinamation and the City of Fruita hosted a meeting of land and resource management agencies, municipalities, attractions and tourism promotional agencies in western Colorado and eastern Utah. The purpose was to discuss the possibility of launching a new co-operative effort to increase visitation to paleontological resources in the region. Karen Berryman reported on the VCB's participation in this effort:

At the April meeting, Mike Perry gave a brief history of previous promotions of the region described as the "Dinosaur Triangle" and began the discussion of expanding the area to the "Dinosaur Diamond." Participants were enthusiastic about this new promotional opportunity and two committees (Structure & Organization and Marketing) were established to carry the idea forward. The next meeting was scheduled for May 10 in Moab, at which time a mock-up of a rack card would be presented along with cost estimates and timeframe for production.

VCB staff worked with Pyramid Printing, and presented a mock-up to the group on May 10. The design concept was very well received and the Marketing Committee reached consensus on the layout as well as the information that would be included on the rack card. The Committee agreed that Nancy Ellyson, of the Museum of Western Colorado, and Irene Carlow would continue working with Pyramid through production and printing, if the Structure & Organization Committee reached consensus on the ability to fund the project. Funding commitments were received from Fruita (\$1,000), Moab (\$1,000), Vernal (\$1,000), Price (\$1,000), Dinosaur (\$250), and Rangely (\$750); \$1,000 contribution was requested of the VCB. (VCB funds would have to be taken from contingency.) The total \$6,000 would cover design and printing of 150,000 rack cards that each contributing entity would distribute. The next meeting is scheduled for July 26 in Rangely, for the purpose of formalizing the organization, formulating a mission statement and developing long-term strategies.

Board discussion: This is an opportunity to create goodwill, especially across state lines. If all the involved communities have the same piece and the same quantity, is it redundant? Tracking the

effectiveness of the rack card is nearly impossible. If a family visits a dinosaur museum, are they likely to go to another similar facility in the same region on the same vacation?

Tom Kleinschnitz moved the VCB contribute \$1,000 to production of the Dinosaur Diamond rack card promotion; Fay Timmerman seconded; passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS: Martha Berry reported on the success of the Fruita Fat Tire Festival. There were over 300 registrations; \$10,000 was raised; two film crews and a reporter from Bike Magazine covered the event.

Viola Sis discussed passage of Fruita's lodging tax (collections begin 6/13), formation of the Fruita Tourism Advisory Council and the Council's efforts.

The Chair reported on discussions with World Travel Partners, which represents over 4,000 travel agencies, to bring ski charters from Florida to Walker Field instead of to DIA. Flights would be every Saturday from mid-December through mid-April. If this business is confirmed, the VCB would need to provide marketing support to promote Grand Junction's image. This would include staff attending ski trade shows in early fall, as well as magazine ads to promote the ski packages. Staff will report to the Board when a response is received from World Travel Partners.

The June Board meeting is rescheduled to Tuesday, June 4. Dan Sharp will arrange a location and notify staff.

Ken Smith moved the meeting adjourn, Doug Gust seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.