

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
JUNE 4, 1996

PRESIDING: Karen Berryman, Vice Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Kleinschnitz, Dan Sharp, Doug Gust, Ken Smith, Fay Timmerman, Lon Carpenter, Bill Mears

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brad Higginbotham, Ron Maupin

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Irene Carlow, Judy Shormann, Erin Chapman

GUESTS: Linda Hall, Viola Sis, Paul Davies, Martha Berry, Judy Beasley

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

MINUTES OF MAY 14, 1996: ay Timmerman moved the minutes be approved as written, Doug Gust seconded; approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events – Over 100 artists representing 25 tribes attended the Grand River Indian Artists Gathering, with 6,242 paid admissions to the event. The artists gave positive feedback; all but two said they would return next year. The Peachtree Inn reported 25% of the weekend's occupancy was attributable to the Gathering. The Senior Theater Production of Front Page Follies was very successful; over 2,000 people attended. The organizers did a very good job of promoting the event out-of-town; bus groups came from the Front Range and picked up additional passengers in some communities along the way. The final report, submitted before the 60-day deadline, was accepted by the Board.

A report on Moonlight Madness will be given at the July meeting.

JUCO Advertising: A staff member was on duty both nights the games were televised; a total of 23 calls have been received. Occupancy at the Peachtree was down on weekdays of the tournament; the Ramada's occupancy (excluding team rooms) was down vs 1995. It was noted that the VCB's "Welcome to Grand Junction" banner was not displayed at the field and the VCB's television sponsorship was not mentioned at the games. The Board was reminded that JUCO sponsorship was not budgeted for 1996 or 1997 (1996 sponsorship funds were carried forward from 1995). Any budget revisions would be made in August as part of the City-wide budget process.

TASHIRO MARKETING: The Board viewed the TV commercials: JUCO/Prime Sports Network; KCNC cash and promotional spots (May-June will promote JUCO and the Art & Jazz Festival; August-September will promote the Winefest and Fruita Fall Festival).

Terry Marle has refined the formulas that will be used in calculating the VCB's return on investment; figures from the 1996 Conversion Study will be used as the basis of the formulas. The study will use separate calculations for overnight visitors staying in hotels; overnight visitors not staying in hotels; and day-trippers. We still lack economic indicators, but will attempt to obtain research from Mesa State College, the Bureau of Economic Research and Ft. Lewis College.

Internet: A link from the VCB's website to tourism partners can be created at a cost of \$150. The linking website's homepage must have the VCB's stone icon allowing the consumer to return to Grand Junction's homepage.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Lodging tax revenues are up for the month and are now even with 1995. Occupancy rates are down, but the ADR is up. Phone calls were up for the month, reflecting Front Range TV and newspaper ads. Brochure mailings are still down, attributable to the media schedule changes made for 1996 (2 publications were dropped, 1 went out of business; Ladies Home Journal responses are down dramatically). Tom asked if a lesser number of responses that are more qualified leads would be better than an ever-increasing number of responses that are not as qualified? Linda stated we would need to do an annual conversion study to determine the specific return on media changes. Staff will prepare a state-by-state breakdown of responses for the July Board meeting.

Group Sales: The Colorado Cattlemen's Association will bring 300 people to Grand Junction in 1997. This booking is the result of 5 years' efforts by the sales staff. We have also closed on the Colorado Parks & Recreation Association for October 1998; we have worked with this group for 4 years. Other groups in process include the Woolgrowers Association and the 1997 VFW convention.

Other sales activities include:

- \* site inspection in late June – national meeting planner; lead came from Successful Meetings
- \* AMTRAK fam – hosted 12 travel agents that book AMTRAK tours
- \* AARP show in Denver – participated in National Tour Association's booth
- \* Pow Wow – June 8-12, Los Angeles; Delta Airlines will sponsor airfare for GJ delegation

Visitor Center: Displays are being "freshened" for the summer season: the Wine Industry Development Board display is in place; the Art Center will have a full panel as well as wall space. Staff continues to work with the Museum to set up a display representing the three facilities. Traffic in the Center has picked up. We have instituted summer hours (8:30 am – 8:00 pm). Six new volunteers have been recruited recently.

Convention Servicing: Activities have increased. Staff has been contacting groups that have held meetings here in the past; hotels are referring groups to the VCB; and word-of-mouth referrals are up.

Public Relations: Staff will take 50 press packets to Pow Wow. Jordan Simon, a freelance writer we have hosted in the past, will be here on assignment for Destinations magazine to do a story on dinosaur digs.

Welcome Channel/In-Room Videos: Staff contacted the company that prepared a proposal 3-4 years ago. They will forward a letter outlining the service and product so they can gauge the level of interest in the lodging community. Costs will be based on the number of participating properties.

DINOSAUR DIAMOND: Rack cards were distributed. Our local brochure distributor has indicated a willingness to stock the card in his racks if there is an empty slot. He understands there are no funds to pay for distribution, and will do this for the VCB at no charge when there is space available. Judy Beasley said she will arrange for distribution at the Parachute Visitor Center.

NEW BUSINESS: The July meeting will be held in Palisade; location to be determined later. The Town of Palisade and Palisade Chamber of Commerce will be our hosts.

Air 21: Ed Barth, President of Air 21, met with the Air Service Task Force, local travel agents and VCB Board and staff about the airline's future in Grand Junction. Travel agents will book Air 21 on request, but travelers must make payment in advance.

Staff received assurance of comp tickets for give-aways; a possible sales mission to Fresno was discussed. Air 21 would like to see packages to promote travel to this area;; staff advised Mr. Barth to work with the lodging community to put packages together.

Board members who attended the Air 21 luncheon were concerned that Air 21 is not marketing Grand Junction; the airline should work to get other cities they serve to reciprocate the VCB's sales mission efforts. Air 21 acknowledged they are focusing their efforts on Las Vegas and Los Angeles. Ed Barth wants to start moving forward on other marketing opportunities and is concerned the Board will adopt a "wait and see" approach. If Air 21 doesn't see continued/additional support from the VCB, they may be short term. The consensus of the Board is to proceed with caution.

Tom Kleinshnitz discussed the recent letter to the Editor in which the writer complained about not receiving a Visitor Guide requested from the VCB. The information the writer received was a co-op mailing from the Colorado West Tourism Council. The CWTC purchases labels from the VCB's database and mails a packet containing information about participating members. The CWTC views this mailing program as a supplement to the VCB's efforts to promote the area. Tom believes these are very qualified leads and is disappointed more CWTC members don't participate. The Director restated brochure mailing procedures. All reader service inquiries are mailed bulk. Callers to the 800 line are asked when they plan to visit Grand Junction. If coming in less than 4 weeks, the Visitor Guide is mailed first class; all others are mailed bulk rate. The person who wrote to the Editor indicated she would be visiting in September; therefore the Visitor Guide was mailed bulk. The Director did respond directly to the writer with a letter and a full packet of information. Staff is directed to prepare cost estimate of responding to all 800 inquiries via first class mail.

Judy Beasley (Parachute and Monument Trading Posts) applauded the VCB's programs and expressed appreciation for staff's efforts to include the Monument Trading Post in those programs. In looking for ways to increase their leisure market traffic, Judy would like to have the Monument Trading Post brochure included in Convention Servicing litter bags. She is aware of the current policy that includes only businesses that contribute to the Vendor's Fee. However, she also owns the Gold Mine (in Mesa Mall) that does pay the Vendor's Fee and requests she be allowed to "piggy back" the Trading Post on that basis. The Vice Chair noted that the possibility of including vendors outside the City limits was discussed at the 1996 Board Retreat as an extension of the "Expand the Tent" policy. We do currently include, when available, brochures from Mesa Mall, Downtown and the Wine Board. The Board understands Judy's desire to take advantage of the busy summer season, but the VCB needs to be fair to all vendors. This issue will need to be scheduled on a future agenda to discuss possible policy revisions.

Dan Sharp moved the meeting adjourn, Bill Miers seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.