

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FEBRUARY 11, 1997

PRESIDING: Karen Berryman, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Miears, Ken Smith, Lon Carpenter, Doug Gust, Dan Sharp, Brad Higginbotham, James Simons, Sabrina Bebb-Jones

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ron Maupin

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

GUESTS: Linda Hill

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 pm.

MINUTES OF JANUARY 14, 1997: Lon Carpenter moved the minutes be approved as written. Bill Miears seconded; approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: The retreat in Moab has been rescheduled to March 12-13 to avoid conflicting with the City Council meeting. Notes from the 1996 retreat were distributed. Suggested topics for discussion include: air service; competition; other funding sources; cooperative advertising; convention center; special events; economic research; 1998-99 budget; Council relations. Four or five Moab community leaders will be invited to have dinner with the Board, with an evening discussion opened to Moab tourism businesses.

The terms of the Visitor Center land lease require exercising the option to purchase in December 1997. If the Board wishes to exercise this option, a letter of intent to purchase must be sent no later than November 1. The \$125,000 purchase price is budgeted for 1997. Brad moved that the Visitor Center land be purchased in 1997 as provided in the existing lease; Dan Sharp seconded; passed unanimously.

TASHIRO MARKETING & ADVERTISING: The 1997 Marketing Plan has been finalized; copies will be bound and sent to all Board members in advance of the retreat. Delays in receiving 4th quarter Occupancy/ADR information put the Marketing Plan behind schedule.

Economic Research: Tucker Hart Adams submitted a proposal to perform an analysis of the economic impact of tourism in Mesa County; the cost will be \$8,000. Dr. Adams recommends that changing conditions be monitored and the study be updated every 2 – 3 years. Dr. Adams will be in Grand Junction March 10-11; Debbie Kovalik will schedule a meeting with Dr. Gallagher of Mesa State to discuss the possibility of using students/interns to gather the data and conduct intercept studies. Jamee Simons will also attend the meeting with Dr. Gallagher.

Official State Vacation Guide: Dramatic changes were made in the format and the publication has become very controversial. Grand Junction, Ft. Collins and Durango are not mentioned at all. Lodging properties are in a separate publication which is inserted in the Guide. It has changed from a vacation planning tool to magazine-style articles; there are no articles about Grand Junction or activities in our area. The Guide looks like the Ski Country magazine and was, in fact, put together by the same person

who does Ski Country's. The VCB has been very supportive of the OSVG and has invested significant advertising dollars in each year's edition. The consensus of the Board is to send a letter to Bob Foster, Chair of the CTTA, stating the VCB's dissatisfaction with the format and content. Copies of the letter are to be sent to Eileen Kamsler; the publisher; and selected CVB's in the state.

The State House of Representatives is reviewing a proposal to return a portion of the Vendor's fee (collected by tourism businesses) to the state for marketing purposes. An estimated \$6 – 14 million would be generated.

Media: All the national ads have been placed and will begin running soon; work has begun on the spring/summer/fall schedules for Front Range advertising. Mountain bike ads will run in Rocky Mountain sports, resort area papers and possibly the Denver Post. Specific bike events will be included in the copy. A copy of the Denver Business Journal ad was distributed. The primary focus will be on Maverick Airways service, rate and accessibility. The ad will promote a spring site inspection. In addition, a direct mail campaign is being developed to mirror the ad. The piece will be sent to Denver Business Journal subscribers in selected zip codes and industries.

Website: We will have a 500 word listing on the National Tour Association's website, which will link to the VCB's site. KJCT has requested the VCB point to their weather information and they want to point to us from their Community Calendar. Linda asked for clarification if the Board would charge KJCT for this link. The Board felt this information would be beneficial to visitors; the previously-stated policy does require a fee of \$150/year to link to a commercial business. Linda report that the VCB's type face has been copied by many other sites (including Fruita and Kanab, Utah). The VCB's site will likely change in the future as the creative campaign is re-directed.

Television: Proposals will be solicited from all three Denver network affiliates; Channel 9 does not negotiate nor offer any promos. We will also explore TV advertising in Colorado Springs.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: January lodging tax receipts were up 7.5% reflecting the success of December's Christmas shopping package. The monthly statistical report now includes visitors assisted at hospitality tables. This figure reflects visitors assisted at the airport (Signature Tours flights) and will include hospitality tables at meetings, conventions and special events.

The Colorado National Monument has new policies for film crews; staff will request an expanded interpretation. Statements made by the Superintendent of the Monument have raised concerns that community use of the Monument may be restricted. George Orbanek has called a meeting involving the Superintendent of the Monument, VCB, congressional aides and Rim Rock Run organizers. The meeting will be Wednesday, February 19th at the Sentinel; Karen Berryman and Brad Higginbotham will accompany the Director at this meeting.

Group Sales: Ride the Rockies has selected Grand Junction as the launch city. Barb Bowman has worked with the Denver Post for 3 years to bring this prestigious event to our area. VCB staff and the Ramada attended the Rocky Mountain Symposium in Colorado Springs; over 40 appointments were scheduled. We discovered that Grand Junction is on 3 tour itineraries we were not previously aware of. Staff will also attend the Pacific Rim Symposium in Denver.

The VCB and members of the Colorado West Tourism Council will attend both the RV, Sport, Boat & Travel Show and the Denver Travel Festival in early March.

Visitor Center: Harold Harvey of Grand Mesa Resort hosted a volunteer training fam. The group also toured the USFS Visitor Center and met with representatives of the Scenic Byway Committee and Powderhorn Resort.

Lon Carpenter moved the meeting adjourn, Brad Higginbotham seconded; there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.