

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JUNE 10, 1997

PRESIDING: Karen Berryman, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jack Scott, Sabrina Bebb-Jones, Brad Higginbotham, Bill Mears

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lon Carpenter, Dan Sharp, Jamee Simons, Ken Smith

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Irene Carlow, Judy Shormann, Sharon Delay, Barbara Bowman, Erin Chapman, Rene Heinrich, Sophie Loczy

GUESTS: Linda Hall

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm

MINUTES OF MAY 13, 1997: Jack Scott moved the minutes be approved as written, Brad Higginbotham seconded; approved unanimously.

TASHIRO MARKETING & ADVERTISING: Linda Hill reviewed Front Range summer ad campaign; calendar of events ads are smaller than previous years' but will run more often; the new strip ad is designed to reinforce TV spots; the dinosaur ad will run in Colorado Parent magazine July issue which focuses on dinosaurs; we will take advantage of a special offer in the AAA Colorado magazine; late August-mid September ads will promote the Winefest and Fruita Fall Festival.

The ADR/Occupancy study for the first quarter 1997 was distributed. February saw the largest rate increase (\$36 to \$48) as well as the largest occupancy increase (53.1% to 59.2%). These increases are attributed to additional convention bookings by the Group Sales Division. Brad noted that figures for the winter months are fairly constant. Staff responded that winter business is primarily corporate/government and also pointed to the continued success of the Christmas shopping promotion.

Linda relayed Kathleen Brown's suggestion that a travel writer fam be scheduled for late September-early October. We have reached the saturation point with Front Range media and will look at the budget availability to bring 3 or 4 writers from the east or Midwest. Kathleen has reported that media responses and mailings are up for the year.

Family Fun magazine picked up our press release about Dinosaur Days and we have received significant responses on the 800 line. We do not have a Dinosaur Days schedule yet, but are including Dinosaur Valley's activities list along with the Visitor Guide that is mailed.

Linda and the Director reviewed a rough cut of the updated video; the website homepage and address will be shown at the end of the video. Powderhorn has some footage that they would like included in the video as a trade for a presence on the VCB's website (a winter skiing icon and link to Powderhorn's site). The skiing footage would be an enhancement to the video, but the Board agrees to incorporate it only if Powderhorn allows usage for free. Any Internet link to Powderhorn would be at the regular fee of \$150 per year.

BOARD BUSINESS: A final report on the Fruita Fat Tire Festival has not been received yet; the due date is June 24. The Grand River Artists Gathering was a great event and received good press coverage. There were more vendors than the event could accommodate. Final report is due July 16. The Colorado West Paint Horse Classic was very well attended and organizers gathered excellent demographic statistics. There were nearly 1,700 entries from numerous states. The event had over 400 attendees from out of town, utilizing 114 room nights and over 100 camping sites. Estimated economic impact is in excess of \$60,000.

Applications for the second cycle of Special Events funding were received from 5 events. A workshop to review the applications will be held at the VCB Wednesday, June 25 from 3 – 5 pm.

STAFF REPORTS: Advertising responses continue to be strong: brochure mailing are up 29% YTD; 800 inquiries are up 52% through the end of April. These increases will impact both the telephone and postage budget line items. Additionally, staff is keeping a tight rein on Visitor Guide distribution to ensure the supply will last until the 1998 Guide is produced. Distribution priorities are: telephone inquiries, Visitor Center, convention servicing. The quantity of Adventure Guides printed will be increased to make up for fewer Visitor Guides for local distribution.

Lodging tax receipts are up 8.3% YTD, well above the 3 ½% projection for 1997. 1998-99 revenue projections will be revised as needed in August as part of the City budget process. Staff developed a budget “wish list” and will prioritize those items in advance of the Board’s budget workshop July 22.

Governor Romer vetoed HB 1351, which would have set aside state-wide promotional funds. The governor also made four appointments to the Colorado Tourism Board; all appointees are from the Denver area.

The Tourism Industry Association of Colorado (TIAC) has hired a professional to lobby the legislature to set aside general fund monies for state-wide promotion. The Director is currently Vice President of TIAC and has been asked to accept the office of president when the new term begins in July. Holding this office would entail a big time commitment; all the front range members have served as president and would like a western slope representative to serve. The GJVCB is the only long-standing, active member and the Director has been on the Board for several years. In addition to the time commitment, serving as president for the coming year might involve lobbying on behalf of TIAC. The City Attorney does not feel this would be a problem as long as the City of Grand Junction doesn’t receive any promotional funds directly. All of the promotional funds that will be requested will be used for state-wide advertising (as the previous CTB tax was); none will be disbursed to marketing organizations such as the VCB. The Board is supportive of the Director serving as president of TIAC; the Director will request approval from the City Manager.

Visitor Center: The Center has a number of new volunteers, but still needs more to cover all shifts of the extended summer hours. Our supply of Grand Mesa Scenic Byway brochures is very low. The Forest Service advised that funds are available for reprinting, but the Byway Committee has not been able to agree on how to spend these funds; it appears there will not be any more Byway brochures this year.

Group Sales: Representatives of the Hilton, Ramada (now Grand Vista) and Holiday Inn joined VCB staff in attending the international trade show Pow Wow earlier this month. We met with 46 international tour operators; some are pulling business from Moab due to high airfares. Our history of

attendance at this show has paid off—the operators know where Grand Junction is, so the full appointment time can be spent selling our product rather than educating these potential clients.

Colorado Municipal League confirmed their conference will return to Grand Junction in the year 2000. We will host a hospitality suite at the 1999 conference, in conjunction with the host hotels for the conference in 2000.

The first motorcoach group booked by Travelsphere, a British operator, arrived June 9 and will spend 2 nights at the Hilton. This is the first of 4 motorcoaches Travelsphere will bring to our area during 1997.

A representative of the National Union Association is scheduled for a site inspection. We have worked with this group for 4 years.

Ride the Rockies participants will arrive June 14; 470 people will be coming on motorcoaches. 20 restaurants/merchants printed coupons to distribute to the riders as part of the VCB's convention servicing packets.

Through May 31, we have issued 60 sales leads, which is 45% of goal for 1997.

Dinosaur Diamond: Both the Chair and Sabrina Bebb-Jones represented the Board at the recent meeting. The Dinosaur Diamond group is anxious to proceed with securing scenic byway (Prehistoric Byway) designation in Colorado and Utah. The Colorado byway commission accepts applications only in the fall and the consensus of the group is to go forward this year. This would require a Memorandum of Understanding and Management Plan signed by all involved in managing the proposed byway, e.g.: cities, counties, federal and state land management agencies, museums, attractions and, possibly, private land owners and commercial businesses that wish to participate. The Board recognized that staff resources are already stretched to cover peak season and VCB projects currently in process. Staff will not be available to attend Dinosaur Diamond meetings for the next several months; the Board will look at this organization again next year. The Chair will contact John Schneiger, Fruita City Manager, to let him know the Board has placed this on hold until November; the VCB does want to continue receiving minutes of meetings.

Bill Miers moved the meeting adjourn, Brad Higginbotham seconded, there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.