

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
September 8, 1998

PRESIDING: Brad Higginbotham, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ken Smith, Rich Nicholls, Bill Miers, Dan Sharp, Peggy Page

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robin Kleinschnitz, Lon Carpenter, Jamee Simons

STAFF PRESENT: Barb Bowman, Irene Carlow, Rene Heinrich

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Jack Yates, Kathy Dirks, Tom Guido, Stephanie Schmid

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

MINUTES OF AUGUST 11, 1998: Rich Nicholls moved the minutes be approved as written, Ken Smith seconded; approved unanimously.

Jack Yates welcomed the Board to Palisade and provided an update of activities in his community. The Peach Festival was a huge success; attendance was higher than last year and most food vendors sold out by mid-afternoon. Fourteen wineries will be represented at the Colorado Mountain Winefest; a new winery, St. Catherine, is planned south of Grand River Vineyards and the owners intend to remodel an existing packing shed as an event venue. The "Fishing is Fun" program awarded a grant for improvements at Riverbend Park, and the vintners association has indicated an interest in building a pavilion at the Park. Landscaping and lighting improvements are planned along Highway 6/24.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events – Registration for Tour of the Vineyards is very strong; the event is seeing growth as evidenced by advance hotel reservations.

The Board approved a revision in the Special Events Policy; applications must be "received at the VCB office by 5:00 pm" of the deadline date, rather than "postmarked" by the deadline date.

HILL & TASHIRO MARKETING AND ADVERTISING: Linda Hill recapped her meeting with VCB staff concerning the 1999 marketing program. Linda proposed a slight redistribution of the budget from leisure to group business. This would be a very focused campaign targeting the in-state, not national, market and would give strong support to Tom Mulholland, our sales person in Denver. There are many Front Range groups we are not currently reaching and we need to increase awareness in the Denver area. A direct mail campaign is planned for this fall, shortly after conclusion of the Denver sales mission, with additional mailings in February and July. This re-direction of funds would likely result in two less ads directed at the leisure market in 1999. The leisure media plan will also be revamped for 1999. The Board approved placing more emphasis on the group market.

Event ads (Celtic Festival, Winefest) are currently running. The holiday shopping program has been a strong regional draw and the campaign will be expanded this year. Seven travel writers will participate in a VCB-sponsored fam September 14-17.

STAFF REPORTS: Lodging tax collections are up 6.8% YTD, well ahead of the 4% increase projected for the year. City sales tax collections are also exceeding projections, which will result in an increase in the Vendor's Fee received by the VCB.

Co-operative marketing funds totaling \$600,000 are available through the Colorado International Marketing Organization. This matching fund program carries the stipulation that it must generate traffic through DIA; the first applications will be reviewed this month. The VCB is interested in this program but will wait until January to see what types of awards are made, then decide if we will apply for a Grand Junction program or co-op with other Western Slope cities.

This month the VCB will host the head of the Development Office of the U.S. Embassy-London; a photographer from a German publication; and 14 top producers from ADAC, the German equivalent of AAA. The Denver Sales Mission will be October 12-15, with a reception the evening of the 15th. Our budget includes expenses for two Board members to attend the reception. Brad Higginbotham would like to attend; staff will contact the absent members regarding this trip. VCB staff and 6 tourism partners will co-op with AMTRAK for a sales mission and trade show in Salt Lake City September 28-30.

NEW BUSINESS: The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 13 at Dinamation's Dinosaur Discovery Museum in Fruita.

POWDERHORN SKI RESORT: Kathy Dirks and Tom Guido presented a brief history of Powderhorn and discussed the challenges and opportunities for the coming season. The resort's greatest challenge is the limited number of beds available for destination skiers, who spend 4-5 times more than locals; Powderhorn must work with off-mountain lodging properties to attract the destination skier. One of their goals is to strengthen Powderhorn's relationship with the VCB and to participate more in co-operative marketing efforts. Group sales efforts will concentrate on Denver ski clubs, with some expansion into eastern Utah.

Season pass sales are up 40% through the end of August; 25% are new buyers. Laidlaw will run shuttle buses again this year; a route change is planned to make a pick-up on Horizon Drive instead of at Mesa State.

Ken Smith moved the meeting adjourn, Bill Miers seconded; there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.