

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JUNE 9, 1998

PRESIDING: Brad Higginbotham, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Mears, Ken Smith, Dan Sharp, Jamee Simons, Rich Nicholls, Lon Carpenter

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robin Kleinschnitz, Peggy Page

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Irene Carlow, Judy Shormann, Barb Bowman

GUESTS: Corinne Nystrom, J.J. Johnston, Jann Ertl

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 pm

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 10, 1998: Rich Nicholls moved the minutes be approved as written, Ken Smith seconded; approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events - The South West Fest had an estimated attendance of 8,000-10,000. Advertising was placed in regional papers and an editorial appeared in Downtown Magazine. Special Events funds were spent appropriately. Fruita Fat Tire Festival had 450 registrants from 14 states and Canada; 400 were from the Front Range and Utah. Based on the VCB's multiplier, the economic impact was \$198,000. The Grand River Indian Artists Gathering submitted a preliminary report indicating 195 people attended the Friday night reception and 3,300 attended the Saturday-Sunday event (half the previous year's attendance). The Paint Horse Show had 150 exhibitors from outside the area, including 5 world champions, representing 12 states. This is one of the top 5 shows in the nation. VCB funds were used for national advertising. Interest in the Desert Sun Half Iron continues to increase because it is a qualifying event for the Iron Man Triathlon. Organizers experienced some difficulties earlier in the year because a conflicting event had reserved Highline Lake for the same day, and asked the Desert Sun to combine with that event. The State Parks Department gave the Desert Sun preference for the date and the event will proceed as planned.

Corinne Nystrom updated the Board on Walker Field Airport activities. An airport staff member participated in the VCB's booth at Pow Wow; this was a good experience and they hope to attend again. Corinne attributes the airport's good "health" to a diversity of users, tenants and types of business. A good relationship is being developed with Air Wisconsin and staff has heard positive feedback from consumers. Mesa Airlines is upgrading its fleet for the Phoenix route. Delta Skywest is experiencing growth; the carrier is temporarily providing jet service to Walker Field during a short period of construction at another airport served by Skywest. There has been some growth in general aviation and interest has been expressed in developing along H Road. When FedEx approached Walker Field about developing a mini-hub, the company was most interested in infrastructure, good weather and interstate. The Airport Authority Board believes having FedEx as a tenant will be very positive for the airport and the community, and is trying to accommodate the company's request to move in August 1 so operations can begin September 1.

J.J. Johnston distributed MCEDC's new presentation folder. MCEDC is changing how the organization markets to high-tech companies by emphasizing this area's quality of life. Five visitations are scheduled for June (all company owners); MCEDC representatives will make a recruitment trip to Salt Lake City this year. The MCEDC Board has a policy of not recruiting in-state companies for possible relocation to Grand Junction.

HILL & TASHIRO MARKETING AND ADVERTISING: Linda Hill showed KCNC's promotional spots for JUCO and the Art & Jazz festival; the station will produce additional spots promoting the Celtic Festival and Colorado Mountain Winefest. HTMA will monitor responses to ads run in the Salt Lake City Tribune and may consider buying time on cable. The 1st quarter ADR/Occupancy Study was distributed. Linda cautioned that two properties have not provided their data for this report, and that adding LaQuinta to the study will also affect occupancy.

Longwoods International's study of Colorado tourism is due to be released June 16. Preliminary indications are that Colorado has lost 30% market share in pleasure trips since 1992, with an overall decline of 15%. Awareness of Colorado as a vacation destination was #1 in 1992, #17 in 1993 and #13 in 1997.

Ads will run in Front Range papers every Sunday through the summer. The website continues to perform and is beginning to replace print advertising to some degree. Additions to the meetings section are in process. The Board requested that peaches be shipped to Denver TV stations and possibly to radio stations and Salt Lake TV stations.

STAFF REPORTS: Lodging tax collections are up 4% YTD; Visitor Center visits are up nearly 3%; Internet users are up 33%.

Staff attended the international trade show Pow Wow in Chicago and were accompanied by representatives of the Hilton, Holiday Inn, Grand Vista and Walker Field Airport. The partners met with 40 people representing 18 countries, and made over 159 total contacts during the trade show.

NEW BUSINESS: One application for Special Event funding was received from the Nordic Council for Winterfest '98. Upon review, the Board denied funding because the application did not meet the Policy criteria:

- funds can only be used for advertising
- Special Event funds cannot constitute more than 50% of total expenses
- requested amount must be matched by cash and in-kind services from other sponsors, but not more than 25% in-kind.

Rich Nicholls moved that no funds be awarded, Ken Smith seconded; passed unanimously.

Annual review of the Special Events policy will be on the July agenda; Rich Nicholls and Dan Sharp will contact applicants/event organizers for input. Discussion of potential policy revisions included:

- Are two funding cycles necessary?
- Is the policy too restrictive, i.e., should the 3-year funding cap still apply?
- Instead of paying funds direct to an event, should the VCB pay for direct advertising of events, or "split" the award by paying some funds to the event with a matching amount spent on direct advertising?

The Board directed that \$15,000 in Special Events funds not awarded for the budget year be spent on remaining funded events. Staff will ask HTMA to present a proposal for additional advertising at the

July Board meeting. License plate surveys were conducted during the Grand River Artists Gathering and two JUCO games. The Board approved charging those expenses, as well as future license plate surveys, to Special Events.

The owner of a small parcel of property adjacent to the Visitor Center (on the east) has offered the land to the VCB for approximately \$8,600. The Director was instructed to work with the City property agent to explore possible acquisition.

The next meeting will be July 14 at the VCB.

Lon Carpenter moved the meeting adjourn, Dan Sharp seconded; there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10.