

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
January 12, 1999

PRESIDING: Dan Sharp, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brad Higginbotham, Robin Kleinschnitz, Bill Mears, Rich Nicholls, Peggy Page, Ken Smith, Alan Friedman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jamee Simons, Wade Haerle

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

GUESTS: Rich Helm, Allison Sarmo, Katie Severinsen

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 pm.

Rich Helm, Executive Director of the Museum of Western Colorado, conducted a tour of the educational tower (which will open in late January) and provided an update on Museum activities. Building renovations continue: the first floor of the C.D. Smith Building will be ready to house exhibits the end of this year and all new exhibits are planned for the Whitman building in late Spring. Two new passenger vans were purchased recently for transportation to the dinosaur digs, which will double the number of trips to the quarry. The dino dig program is being expanded to include a one-day "family" dig. The website has been redesigned and will link to both the VCB and Chamber. The Museum is taking the lead role in organizing a new event for Labor Day weekend at Cross Orchards. Tentatively named "Valley Pride Festival", the event will represent the broad range of cultural arts in the Grand Valley.

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 1998: Brad Higginbotham moved the minutes be approved as written, Robin Kleinschnitz seconded; approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: New Board Members: The Chair welcomed newly-appointed members Alan Friedman and Wade Haerle.

Annual Retreat: The retreat will be held in Glenwood Springs February 22-23. The tentative schedule is:

Monday, February 22

11:30 am Depart Grand Junction

1:00 pm Lunch at retreat facility (location to be determined)

Special Events discussion

6:30 pm Dinner with 6-8 Glenwood Springs-area tourism partners

Tuesday, February 23 – discussion items

Website

2000-2001 budget

Policies

Special Events: The Rim Rock Run, held November 14, “sold out” at the maximum of 350 runners from 15 states and Canada. The Park Service declared the race a “safe success”. A staff writer from *Runners World* magazine participated in the run and showcased the race in an 8-page article.

Board members will serve as liaisons with events funded for 1999 as follows:

Southwest Fest – Bill Mears
Fruita Fat Tire Festival – Wade Haerle
Tour of the Vineyards – Brad Higginbotham
Celtic Fest – Alan Friedman
Grand Valley Gaited Horse Show – Rich Nicholls

Allison Sarmo, Coordinator of the Arts Commission, made a brief presentation about the Commission’s activities. The Arts Commission is fully funded by City Council; 50% of the budget is given to event promotion and the Coordinator’s ½-time position is the only staff. Allison and the VCB Director met earlier today with special event/festival promoters to discuss funding policies and procedures as well as advertising events. The group will meet again in early April.

A private citizen from Palisade approached Mayor Janet Terry about placing a permanent piece of art in the roundabout; the individual will donate seed money toward the purchase price. The Arts Commission has been asked to oversee a committee that will raise funds as well as select the artwork.

STAFF REPORTS: Updates and revisions to the Visitor Guide have gone smoothly. John Fielder’s photos will, again, be included in the Guide and we are very pleased to have a photo of the Botanical Gardens to complement the information about that attraction. The media plan has been revamped, dropping publications that performed poorly in 1998 and adding new publications to the mix. Our Internet address in each travel directory ad will be coded to track the source of Internet hits, just as we ask telephone callers where they found our phone number. Newspaper ads have been reduced and banner advertising on 16th Street Mall buses has been added to the marketing program; these banners can be used to promote special events such as the peach harvest and Winefest.

Lodging tax receipts for the year increased 7% over 1998; brochure mailings and phone calls were down but were offset by an increase in Internet inquiries.

Total visitation to the Visitor Center decreased 3%, but international visitors increased 4%. Out-of-state visitation has decreased dramatically since 1996. New exhibits on the deck will be installed within the next 2 weeks. Four new volunteers have joined the Center staff, mostly referrals from current volunteers.

The sales division attained 98% of goal of sales leads issued and the estimated economic impact of those leads is \$200,000 over projections. For the period August-December, our Denver sales representative generated leads totaling 12,400 room nights.

Ken Smith moved the meeting adjourn, Rich Nicholls seconded; there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.