

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
May 11, 1999

PRESIDING: Dan Sharp, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Wade Haerle, Don Teets, Alan Friedman, Jamee Simons, Rich Nicholls, Bill Miers

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ken Smith, Brad Higginbotham, Robin Kleinschnitz

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barb Bowman, Judy Shormann, Erin Chapman

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Kevin McConnell, Bonnie Henson, Kathleen Brown, Nicole DePriest

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m.

MINUTES OF APRIL 13, 1999: Bill Miers moved the minutes be approved as written, Rich Nicholls seconded; approved unanimously.

Kevin McConnell, co-owner and Executive Producer of The Cabaret, welcomed the Board to the theater. His goal is for The Cabaret to be a complete, full time, full service dinner theater facility with three theaters: (1) the main stage, offering "family" productions; (2) a smaller theater presenting cutting edge productions 20-25 weeks of the year; (3) a children's theater offering performances by paid adult actors. The existing theater seats 155; the owners are trying to purchase the building and adjacent property to allow for expansion. The Cabaret wants to be an active partner with the local tourism industry and is interested in offering packages (e.g., skiing, shopping) and would offer a special schedule for group tours.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events: Bill Miers reported that the Southwest Fest was very successful, with attendance estimated at 8,000. This is the third year the event has received Special Event funds and, under the current policy, is not eligible for further funding. Wade Haerle reported that the Fat Tire Festival had a very good turnout, in spite of the weather. The event drew travel writers from Canada and Europe. Rich Nicholls has been working with the Grand Valley Gaited Horse Show to make sure the VCB is recognized as a co-sponsor. The show program was printed before funding awards were announced, so the VCB's contribution was not recognized. The VCB will be recognized in announcements during the show and organizers will also put up a banner with the VCB name and logo. Alan Friedman reported that Celtic Festival organizers have not yet secured Worker's Compensation coverage. Last year organizers submitted a letter detailing their inability to secure Worker's Compensation and may provide a similar letter for consideration this year.

Bill Miers reported that an estimated 1,000 people attended the National Tourism Day celebration in Denver. This may be an open event next year, instead of limited to participation by the tourism industry.

**HILL & TASHIRO MARKETING AND ADVERTISING:** Linda Hill introduced Kathleen Brown, who has handled the VCB's public relations campaign since 1994. Kathleen recently moved to Fruita from Denver and looks forward to continuing to work with the VCB.

Linda Hill discussed the summer newspaper campaign; ads are scheduled for the Denver Post, Rocky Mountain News/Boulder Daily Camera, Salt Lake City Tribune, Deseret News and Colorado Springs Gazette. The television ads were shown; the Denver schedule runs from May 17 through September 15 (KMGH Channel 7). Ads will also run on Salt Lake City cable channels.

The new website is expected to be launched in late May. The VCB has 3 pages on the colorado.com site as well as banners linking to the VCB site. Linda distributed a synopsis of website hits by publication.

Two properties have dropped out of the ADR/Occupancy Survey; the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 1999 figures represent 1,090 rooms rather than 1,305. HTMA will recalculate the survey figures from the date of inception based on 1,090 rooms.

Kathleen Brown reported that KCNC Channel 4 filmed a Colorado Getaways segment in early May. The piece, which has not aired yet, featured the Trail Through Time, McDonald Canyon and Highline Lake. The Sunset Magazine blossom tour story that included Palisade was the result of a VCB press tour 2 ½ years ago. The Grand Valley will again be featured in the August issue of Sunset in an "emerging wine region" story. In June the VCB will host a staff writer from the London Daily Mail (Sunday circulation 2.3 million).

**STAFF REPORTS:** Lodging tax receipts and advertising responses are up compared with 1998. Most CVB's in the state are reporting increased internet activity and declining phone calls.

**Hospitality Training:** The sessions were very successful and staff has received positive feedback from participants. We received 83 RSVPs and 47 people attended the 1-hour presentations and talked with exhibitors during the 1-hour "trade show" format.

**Sales Division:** In response to hotels' requests, staff invited local event promoters to the regular quarterly coffee. The VCB organized a similar forum 2 years ago and the networking opportunity was very important to both meeting properties and promoters. Hotels asked for a weekly event calendar for their front desk personnel; VCB staff will prepare and distribute the calendar on a 3 month trial basis.

An intern from Mesa State has been hired for the summer to do an analysis of Grand Junction's regional competition in the meetings market. The report will be presented at the September Board meeting. The new manager of Two Rivers will be asked to provide input on the questionnaire being developed.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Sam Suplizio contacted the Director and asked if the VCB would be willing to sponsor a JUCO team at a cost of \$1,000. **DISCUSSION:** The Website Committee

just reviewed the entire budget to identify funds that could be used for website upgrades. However, contingency funds in the amount of \$10,000 are available in the 1999 budget and sponsorship could give the VCB better visibility to local residents. The Board also identified the importance of supporting “marquee” events and discussed possible perceptions about the appropriateness of a City department sponsoring a team.

Motion by Rich Nichols: The VCB contribute \$1,000 to JUCO as a supporter of the Grand Junction lodging and hospitality industry; Bill Miears seconded, passed unanimously.

The Director has been appointed to the CTB Governance Committee and Marketing Committee. The committees will report to the legislature with recommendations on which entity/organization should manage the \$5 million appropriated for tourism marketing and how those funds would best be spent. Other western slope representatives are Rod Barker and Stan Broome. The Director will be required to attend regular monthly (or semi-monthly) meetings in Denver.

Alan Friedman moved the meeting adjourn, Jamee Simons seconded; there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.