

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
January 11, 2000

PRESIDING: Bill Mears, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alan Friedman, Brad Higginbotham, Wade Haerle

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dan Sharp, Robin Kleinschnitz

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

GUESTS: John Doyle, Si Grantham, Walt Orloff, Pat Green, Les Turner, Shirley Bonati, Valley Straight, Marie Nowland, Jane Craig, Doloris Hornbeck, Roeberta Sampson, Linda Hill, Lisa Rohe

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

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events: Brad Higginbotham reported that the Fruita Bluegrass Festival final report was submitted before the deadline. The event showed a profit of over \$9,000 and was a big success. The VCB provided \$2,750 in funding, the maximum allowable under the policy. The application indicated that sponsorship funds were committed from the Fruita Tourism Advisory Council, but the final report did not reflect any monetary support from the Council or the City of Fruita. Brad will follow up to clarify. Bill Mears reported on the Festival Italiano's final report. The event raised over \$13,000 in cash and \$8,200 in-kind donations; however, only \$730 was spent on marketing and it does not appear that the VCB funds were spent appropriately. Additionally, organizers were granted a 10-day extension to file the final report (to November 27) but the report was not submitted until December 31. The consensus of the Board is to review the Special Events funding policy at the annual retreat, specifically that section that addresses report submission as well as discrepancies between the sources of funding stated on the application vs. the actual funds received.

Volunteer Recognition: The Chair recognized each of the 11 volunteers present for achieving the milestone of 1,000 hours of service at the Visitor Center and presented each with a certificate of appreciation. The VCB could not operate the Visitor Center without the dedicated staff of volunteers we are so fortunate to have. The volunteers present and the year each began assisting visitors at the Visitor Center are:

Si Grantham	1987	Marie Nowland	1989
Valley Straight	1989	Les Turner	1990
Shirley Bonati	1991	Walt Orloff	1993
Doloris Hornbeck	1993	Pat Green	1994
John Doyle	1994	Jane Craig	1994
Roeberta Sampson	1995		

Elle Bigelow, who began her volunteer service in 1992, was unable to attend.

The Chair noted that 3 of 9 Board seats are currently vacant. The Chair determined that, for purposes of this meeting, a majority of the 6 existing Board members would constitute a quorum in order to conduct the business of the Board.

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 14, 1999: Wade Haerle moved the minutes be approved as written, Brad Higginbotham seconded; approved unanimously.

Annual Retreat: Four possible dates were selected for the annual retreat: April 4, April 5, March 30, March 31. Any of those dates are acceptable to the members present, with April 4 being the first choice; staff will check those dates with the two absent members as soon as possible and respond to all members with the agreed-upon date. The retreat will be a 1-day session, held in Mesa County; Powderhorn Resort was suggested as a possible location.

The Chair distributed Country Jam's statistics of estimated economic impact. Staff was asked to prepare an estimate of the economic assistance (staff time, 800 line calls, etc.) that the VCB provides to Country Jam.

HILL & TASHIRO MARKETING AND ADVERTISING: Linda Hill distributed the final ad plan and circulation figures for 2000. Many of the national ads have already been placed. After detailed review of the 1999 budget, HTMA was able to pre-bill some 2000 advertising expenses in 1999. This allows us to maintain our national presence and still accomplish the 2000 goals of added emphasis on the in-state and regional markets. The focal point of the Front Range campaign will be "Colorado's Wine Country".

In mid-February we will launch an on-line press kit with photos on the website. Writers will be able to download low-resolution photos and will be instructed to contact the VCB for high-resolution photos for publication. The VCB's new staff person will do all the uploading and revising and will build a database of travel writers.

The Grand Junction poster was displayed. The VCB will frame 20+ posters to give to airlines, legislators, senators and will also identify high-profile/high-traffic locations to hang the poster to increase awareness of the area. Posters will also be given to AAA offices and other travel agents. Other distribution efforts include Visitor Center sales and advertising poster availability on the website.

The direct mail/conference planner piece is complete. The initial mailing will be to 2,000 regional meeting planners.

The Marketing Plan will be distributed at the February Board meeting. Preliminary 4th quarter data indicate that occupancy is increasing but ADR is decreasing. The Overnight Visitor Study project is on track and a preliminary report may be available for the February meeting.

The VCB received 2 Bronze awards from the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International and another national association in the 1999 competitions: complete campaign, kids ad ("Big Things for the Little People") and collateral.

STAFF REPORTS: The Fruita Welcome Center is closed this week (January 10-14) for renovations. More travelers are stopping at our Visitor Center for weather-related information. Total 1999 visitation at the Visitor Center was down 4%; in-state visitors were down slightly, out-of-state decreased 8% while international visitation continued to be very strong and showed an 8% increase. We will begin recruiting for new volunteers in an effort to keep our total staff at 80.

Over 50 people attended a VCB-sponsored meeting of hotels and local tourism partners to discuss packaging as a tool to increase occupancy and visitation. The featured speaker was Pat Lee, marketing director for Taubman Associates, the management company for Cherry Creek Shopping Center and numerous other high-end centers around the country. Very positive, enthusiastic responses were received from attendees.

Group sales efforts in the coming year will shift slightly to target affinity groups. A trend that emerged during 1999 was that groups are booking rooms/meeting space direct with the hotels, but relying on the VCB staff for assistance with details. If this trend continues, the number of sales leads issued may decline but the amount of staff time spent on each group would likely increase to provide the higher level of service groups would require.

The Director will attend Mayor Wellington Webb's general meeting on regional air service in Denver January 18. The Tourism Industry Association of Colorado will host its annual Legislative Reception at the Adam's Mark-Denver on Monday, January 17. The budget includes expenses for one Board member to attend. The Board was asked to contact the Director if there was an interest in attending.

NEW BUSINESS: Bob Taylor, president and owner of Travel Host Grand Junction, announced that the local publication was awarded the Best Production Package award at the national Travel Host conference. Bob and his wife Betty also received the Omni Award; this is the first time a small-market publication has won that award. The Grand Junction Easy-Fold map the Taylors developed has been so well received that it is being used around the country as a sales tool/sample for other local area maps. The Taylors have individualized their publications for each community in the area so that a traveler staying in a Grand Junction hotel sees only Grand Junction information instead of regional information. Travel Host is distributed in hotel rooms, at the Visitor Center and is also included in all convention servicing packets. The Taylors are very pleased with their success and thanked the VCB for its support and co-operation.

Alan Friedman moved the meeting adjourn, Brad Higginbotham seconded; there being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.