

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
OCTOBER 9, 2001

PRESIDING: Wade Haerle, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alan Friedman, Linda Smith, Bill Mears, Jane Fine Foster, Frank Bering

MEMBERS ABSENT: Peggy Page, Chris Blackburn, Kevin Reimer, Larry MacDonald

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Karin Mast, Irene Carlow, Layne Whyman, Erin Chapman

GUESTS: Anna Maria Ray

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

BOARD BUSINESS: Bill Mears reported that the Kokopelli Adventure Race was well attended; 56 teams, representing over 200 people, competed. The event received good press coverage.

Wine Festival ticket sales were up 10% over last year. The main limitations on the future of this event are the number of hotel rooms valley wide and the capacity of Palisade Park. Jane Fine Foster reported that St. Kathryn Cellars had 30-40 visitors the day of the festival who were just touring the wineries because they were unhappy with the large crowds at the park. All six venues of winemakers' dinners were sold out.

The Director attended a meeting with representatives of Country Jam, Sheriff's Office and County Commissioners. Country Jam reported that 18-25% of their attendees were from outside the Front Range; the bigger market is the Salt Lake City area.

Council re-authorized the "expand-the-tent" program for an additional five years. Council is interested in the potential to bring more regional residents to Grand Junction to shop, especially with the new retail outlets that are slated to open in the near future.

Chamber Events Center Committee: A discussion was held regarding the Chamber of Commerce's presentation for a proposed events center and request for financial support from the VCB Board for a feasibility study. Alan Friedman suggested the VCB might consider contributing a percentage of the cost, rather than a fixed amount. The consensus of the Board is that any study should be conducted by a consultant from outside the Grand Junction area. The Board also agreed that guidance from City Council is necessary before going further. Alan Friedman moved that (1) the VCB Board appoint a representative to the Chamber committee studying the events center and (2) guidance from Council be requested on any funding for a study;

Jane Fine Foster seconded, approved unanimously. At the Chair's request, Alan Friedman agreed to serve as the Board representative to the Chamber committee.

Tourism Industry Status: Indications are that all Colorado destinations will be advertising heavily to the in-state drive market, increasing competition dramatically. The Colorado Springs CVB has been directed to cut \$80,000 from its budget for the balance of 2001 and \$400,000 from the 2002 budget.

On September 10, the Colorado Tourism Board approved the 2002 marketing campaign; after the events of September 11, the Board was presented with seven marketing options. Those options will be presented at the Governor's Conference on Tourism October 25-26, with a Board decision expected in November. Alan Friedman moved and Bill Miars seconded that the Board send a letter to the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) stating the VCB's desire that the CTO continue national promotions in an effort to increase the state's market share; approved unanimously.

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001: Jane Fine Foster moved the minutes be approved as written, Linda Smith seconded; approved unanimously.

HILL & COMPANY: The staffs of Hill & Company and the VCB will meet November 7 for a brainstorming session to begin developing the details of the 2002 campaign.

Sample print ads, radio spots and website pages promoting the Olympic Torch Relay are ready to send to the Salt Lake Organizing Committee for approval. One community ad and one lodging ad have been prepared.

The first ads for the Holiday Shopping Package will appear November 6. The budget for this promotion has been increased 20%; the campaign will be expanded to include radio and, possibly, cable TV. Contingency funds are being considered to supplement the additional ad buys. Alan Friedman moved that \$5,000 from contingency be used for the Holiday Shopping Package and Olympic Torch Relay promotions; Jane Fine Foster seconded, approved unanimously.

STAFF REPORTS: The Director and Barbara Bowman met with owners of Two Rivers Winery and toured the conference center and inn, which is under construction. The events center will be mentioned in the Visitor Guide, as is St. Kathryn Cellars' event center. Initially, the owners indicated that they will participate as a bed & breakfast property in the VCB's 2002 marketing efforts. As part of that program they will receive meetings leads generated by the VCB sales division.

September lodging tax receipts increased dramatically and YTD receipts are up 10.9%. October receipts should also be strong because of the soccer tournament, marching band festival and various other School District athletic events. Staff hosted a press conference October 4 to honor the School District for its contributions to tourism and the resulting impact on the local economy. The economic impact of the District's October events is nearly \$100,000. On October 5, staff and volunteers from Cross Orchards handed out apples and flag stickers on Main Street after the marching band parade.

Building Remodel: Contractors interested in bidding on the project will attend a site visit at the Visitor Center October 12.

Promotions/Public Relations: Recipe contest winners visited Grand Junction October 12-14, compliments of AMTRAK. A journalist who visited this summer wrote an excellent article for a Japanese publication. Others travel writers staff hosted recently were from *Taos Magazine* and *In the Black*, a Denver-area publication.

Sales: Barb Bowman recognized Erin Chapman for successfully managing lodging accommodations for the 90+ soccer teams, as well as participants in several other large events, October 5-7. This was a sold-out weekend for area hotels. Layne Whyman was also acknowledged for organizing information for children's activities for team members between competitions.

OTHER BUSINESS: Three Board members' terms expire this year: Bill Miers, Alan Friedman, Peggy Page. Applications for appointment (or re-appointment) are due to the City Clerk's office November 16.

The next regular monthly meeting will be Tuesday, November 6 at the La Quinta Inn and Suites. The Board will hold a workshop to review Special Event applications Tuesday, November 13 at 3:00 pm at the VCB office.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm on motion of Jane Fine Foster and second of Bill Miers.