

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
March 13, 2001

PRESIDING: Wade Haerle, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Miears, Kevin Reimer, Jane Fine Foster, Chris Blackburn, Linda Smith, Peggy Page, Alan Friedman, Frank Bering

MEMBERS ABSENT: Larry MacDonald

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

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Anna Maria Ray, Palma Wilson

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

MINUTES OF JANUARY 9, 2001: Peggy Page moved the minutes be approved as written, Bill Miears seconded, approved unanimously. Alan Friedman requested that the meeting notes from February 13 be corrected to reflect his absence.

HOST REMARKS: Charlie Novinskie reported on the 2-½ year, \$2 million renovation project underway at Walker Field. Completed improvements include new furniture in the passenger waiting areas, carpet and signage. The Airport Authority office will move to the 3rd floor; the MCEDC office will move to a different location on the 3rd floor; and some structural problems will be corrected as well.

Walker Field, which operates in the black every year, provides an annual economic impact of \$175 million. Airport operations are funded through passenger fees and State and Federal funds; no funds are received from either the City or County. All passenger carriers' load factors are above 40%; Great Lakes Aviation's load factor is the highest. Year to date enplanements are down 2%, which is attributed to recent labor disputes. Walker Field is a diversion point for all ski traffic and the VCB continues to provide information packets that are given to all passengers on diverted flights. Outgoing freight has doubled in 10 years, with FedEx accounting for 50% of last years' total.

BOARD BUSINESS: Annual Retreat After reviewing possible locations, staff suggested either Los Altos Bed & Breakfast or Bookcliff Country Club; Los Altos was selected by acclamation. Board members will receive a survey of discussion topics to rank in order of priority.

2002 Olympics: The Torch Relay will arrive in Grand Junction late afternoon February 2, 2002; approximately 120 support staff will overnight. The City has formed a committee to begin planning events celebrating the Torch Relay.

VCB staff is researching the impact of the 1996 Summer Games on communities surrounding Atlanta, Georgia. Columbus (104 miles from Atlanta) benefited significantly because that city was the site of the baseball events; over 10,000 people attended each game. In Marietta (15 miles), hotels had some spill-over; specific figures were not available but the city did not have as many people as they had anticipated. Savannah (252 miles) hosted the yachting and boating events; statistics will be forwarded to us in the next 7-10 days. Rome (66 miles) is a small community, not on an interstate and difficult to get to. The community anticipated significant impact because of its close proximity to Atlanta and invested \$100,000 in planning and staging a 2-week festival during the Games. The festival was attended by locals only and the community derived no economic benefit from the Summer Games.

Staff has begun a lodging survey of local properties for February 7-17, 2002 and information will be updated regularly. Package room blocks in Salt Lake City hotels will be released in late September and we will have a better idea of actual availability at that time. (Hotel rooms were still available in Sydney, Australia the night before the 2000 Games began.) Public relations is the area that presents the greatest opportunity for Grand Junction; 15,000 media will cover some portion of the Winter Games. We will investigate targeted outdoor publications and try to plant story ideas that journalists could cover immediately before/after their assignment in Salt Lake.

Hotel/ticket packages range from \$3,160 - \$10,400 per person for 3 nights. Individual ticket prices range from \$35 - \$425; opening and closing ceremony tickets are \$885 per person. All ticket information is on the official website www.saltlake2002.com.

The Chair reported that both Colorado and Wyoming have withdrawn from the 5-state Olympic marketing consortium. Colorado previously committed \$1.5 million for direct marketing and a presence in Salt Lake.

HILL & COMPANY: Linda Hill presented the Board with the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International gold award for the entire 2000 Creative Campaign and a silver award for the 2000 Direct Mail; an additional silver award was received for the 2000 Billboard Campaign.

The agency is in the midst of the creative redesign of the VCB's website. Site navigation will be simplified to make it easier to use. The primary categories will be scaled back to include:

- Wine Country
- What to Do
- Lodging
- Meetings and Groups
- Area Information
- Contact Us
- Press Room

Proposed Phase II of the redesign includes virtual reality, online vacation club, webcam and a members only section for local tourism partners to update their individual information. Phase III would include room availability/reservations, activity planner and a virtual concierge (a VCB staff person online during the entire workday to provide immediate response to inquiries).

Alan Friedman asked Linda about website Phases II and III that were proposed 2 years ago that were not realized. Linda responded that creative usually lasts 4-5 years; the Landscape of Adventure has been in use 4 years. The current proposals will integrate the newly approved creative to the website. This Phase II and III are actually different phases than proposed last year. Hill & Company's new staff gave the numbers to the phases which now incorporate many new features. The redesign also includes a sub-site for meetings, with pages dedicated to a specific group.

The VCB would not act as a central reservation agency nor accept lodging deposits; rather the proposal is to work toward a seamless transaction from the VCB site going to/through an approved site such as the Wine Festival or Country Jam. The new calendar of events is operational and provides more information to consumers.

The *Gourmet Magazine* ad was displayed; this will be accompanied by a full page editorial. We are still negotiating with *Wine Enthusiast*.

Hill & Company was awarded the advertising contract for the Colorado Wine Industry Development Board.

The Visitor Guide artwork is at the printer and a press check is scheduled for March 20.

STAFF REPORTS: The Board was reminded to expect continued decreases in telephone calls as well as overall advertising responses due to the advertising redirection away from national to regional. Parade Magazine, our only national consumer ad, appeared March 11 and we are already receiving responses.

The Director distributed the 10-year financial projection and briefly discussed the City's 2-year budget process. The Board will see staff's initial recommendations in May and June.

Sales: Staff attended ITB-Berlin, the largest international trade show in the world, March 1-10. While at the show, we learned that the City of Denver and DIA withdrew future funding for Colorado's German in-market representative. The news was very disappointing, especially in light of Lufthansa's inaugural Frankfurt-Denver flight March 25.

Hospitality training is schedule for May 1 with 2 sessions, at 10:00 am and 4:00 pm at the Holiday Inn.

OTHER BUSINESS: There will be no regular monthly meeting in April.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m. on motion of Alan Friedman and second by Jane Fine Foster.