

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FEBRUARY 12, 2002

PRESIDING: Peggy Page, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Alan Friedman, Jane Fine Foster, Kevin Reimer, Linda Smith, Jill Eckardt, Michael Somma, Wade Haerle

MEMBERS ABSENT: Larry MacDonald, Tillie Bishop

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

GUESTS: Anna Maria Ray

HOST REMARKS: Tammy Anderson welcomed the Board to The Chateau at Two Rivers Winery. Bob Witham stated that this conference/event center and country inn had been part of the original plan. The Chateau has a full catering kitchen and a full tavern license, which means they can sell alcoholic beverages other than wine. Ten guest rooms range in price from \$79-\$145. The entire facility is now complete and they will focus on marketing and improving their product. Winery production in 2001 was 4,200 cases; 2002 is projected at 6,600 cases with an ultimate goal of 8,000 cases at full production.

The meeting was called to order at 3:25 pm.

MINUTES OF JANUARY 8, 2002: Wade Haerle moved the minutes be approved as written, Linda Smith seconded; approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: The Chair introduced and welcomed new members Jill Eckardt and Michael Somma.

Annual Retreat: Staff discussed a list of possible locations for the annual retreat. The Board selected The Chateau at Two Rivers Winery for the one-day session April 9. Jasper Welch, Four Corners Management Systems, will return as facilitator. New Board members will be asked to complete a brief "personality" questionnaire that identifies predictable behavioral traits and tendencies. The resulting composite profile of the Board will help all members better understand the variety of communication styles and personality traits within the group.

Western Colorado Travel Expo: Kevin Reimer reported that the first mailing of registration information was sent to local tourism partners; that information will be sent to statewide DMOs on February 19. The purpose of the Expo is to position the VCB as the leader in the travel industry and the main information source as well as to expose local attractions and businesses to local residents. Customer service and hospitality training sessions will be offered in the morning

and the expo will be open to the public from 2:00 –9:00 pm. The Board has committed \$15,000 from the Special Events budget for this event and hopes to eventually expand this to a 2-3 day event.

Special Events: Board liaisons were appointed as follows:

Fruita Fat Tire Festival – Wade Haerle
Country Jam – Alan Friedman
Colorado Mountain Winefest – Michael Somma
Kokopelli Adventure Race – Jill Eckardt
Rim Rock Run – Kevin Reimer
Celtic Festival & Highland Games – Linda Smith

HILL & COMPANY: Media is being placed and TV proposals (from both Channel 4 and cable) are being reviewed. The 2002 Marketing Plan was mailed to Board members and should have been received prior to this meeting. The 2002 year-end ADR/Occupancy Survey was distributed. Occupancy for the year averaged 64%, down slightly from 2000, but the average rate held steady at \$60. Grand Junction fared better than other markets: Vail saw a 3% decline for the year, with a significant decrease in group business after 9/11; Grand County was also down 3% for the year.

Design and layout is nearly complete on the meeting planner direct mail piece. Emphasis this year is on visuals, with very little copy.

STAFF REPORTS: Olympic Torch Relay Event Twenty-seven corporate sponsors contributed \$5,800 in cash and \$5,600 in-kind services toward the event. VCB staff took on additional responsibilities for the event: Layne Whyman managed transportation and parking; Karin Mast organized the media center and served as the contact for media inquiries. Other staff members and numerous volunteers worked in various capacities the day of the event. The lodging package that was promoted on our website and through regional media outlets was successful. The Visitor Center logged a record number of visitors for January as hundreds of local residents came in to pick up free flags and pom-poms.

The overall impact of the Olympics on Grand Junction was minimal. Some guests who stopped at the Visitor Center indicated they were on their way to Salt Lake City, but room availability surveys did not reflect an unusual increase in occupancy. Walker Field saw increased activity because it was one of the designated airports for private aircraft to undergo security screening before being cleared to land in Salt Lake City. West Star Aviation organized a hospitality room for screened passengers waiting for clearance to proceed and the VCB participated in that effort. Because individuals working in the hospitality room had to have advance clearance, we were unable to utilize our large staff of volunteers on a rotating schedule. The VCB paid two individuals to work half-day shifts every day from February 8 – 23; this unanticipated expenditure will total approximately \$1,000.

Building Improvements The conference room project is complete; new carpet was installed in the Visitor Center; and staff work space has been reorganized.

2002 Visitor Guide Copies were distributed. Staff is coordinating a mailing of 8,000-10,000 Guides to our database of AAA offices and travel agents; the entire sales database; and a press release to our media database.

Statistics Staff will discuss the status of January lodging tax receipts (for December business) with the Finance department. Receipts are down 16% from a year ago, which conflicts with the results of the Occupancy/ADR study. Survey participants report that occupancy increased 7% from December 2000 and average daily rate increased by \$2. With the exception of lodging tax receipts, increases were seen across the board: advertising responses, internet users and accesses, and out-of-state visitors to the Visitor Center.

Group Sales Staff received a request to retrieve some fairly specific client and booking information from the sales database. The existing database program was designed to sort the sales records in a variety of ways that enable staff to target sales efforts to specific markets. For example, the records are sorted to generate labels for meeting planners only to receive the direct mail piece; contacts made at a specific trade show receive appropriate follow-up materials; previous contacts from a trade show can be reviewed prior to attending the current year's show. Staff is seeking direction from the Board regarding the potential of expanding programming capabilities to fulfill requests for detailed information. Programming and support is provided by the City's Information Services division, and staff will consult with the IS manager concerning the level of support that would be necessary in order to respond to requests for more complex sorts. The Board requested more information on what the staff can do now without additional programming, and directed that this topic be included on the April 9 retreat agenda for further discussion.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Country Jam representative was unable to attend this meeting but met with the Director on February 11. Radio advertising in Salt Lake City has not performed well and organizers are checking into replacing that with ads in Colorado Springs and Denver. Country Jam would be willing to put the VCB's logo on all of their materials.

Public Relations Grand Junction was featured in the current issue of "Where to Retire".

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 pm on motion of Linda Smith and second of Michael Somma.