

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
JUNE 11, 2002

PRESIDING: Peggy Page, Chair

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Wade Haerle, Tillie Bishop

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Irene Carlow, Barbara Bowman, Layne Whyman, Kayla Arnesen

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Anna Maria Ray

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm.

HOST REMARKS: Michael Somma welcomed the Board to Redlands Mesa Golf Club and reported that business is 20-25% higher than projections. Tourism represents 45-50% of their business, with strong numbers from the Front Range.

MINUTES OF May 14, 2002: Jane Fine Foster moved the minutes be approved as written, Alan Friedman seconded; approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events Country Jam provided details of their TV commercials; from April 29 through May 6, the spot ran 528 times. The invoice totals \$3,824.52, just under the maximum funding award of \$4,000. Per the funding stipulation, the VCB will pay the invoice directly to AT&T cable. Celtic Festival This event is the same weekend as the Winefest and Air Show. Organizers are aware of potential lodging difficulties, but the date of their event is set by the "circuit" schedule. Brochures should be completed by June 14. The event's financial position is not as strong as previous years: insurance costs have increased 50% and they missed the deadline to apply for funding from the City's Commission on Arts & Culture.

Event Liaisons: Board members who have experience serving as liaisons will be available to give newer members background information on the role of the Board vis-à-vis Special Events. Some of the more common issues that are addressed include the intent of the Agreement, appropriate expenditures, and the final report.

Budget A report on expenses through June 5 was distributed and reviewed. The Director discussed the City budget process. Revisions to the 2002 budget will be discussed at the July meeting; the 2003 budget will be reviewed at the August meeting. The Director noted that Grand Junction is in a very strong position with lodging tax receipts up 8.8% YTD; hotels indicate that

June business will continue a strong trend. Denver's receipts are down 2 – 5% from projections and Colorado Springs is also reporting declining revenues. The Colorado Tourism Office Board has appropriated additional funds to develop crisis-management strategies and public relations efforts to make the public aware that only 1% of Colorado's public lands are affected by the wildfires and that the state is still "open for business" to travelers.

HILL & COMPANY: The summer campaign is in full swing with TV spots, the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall busboards and Colorado Golf magazine ads. Work on a new wine tour rack card is underway and three possible designs were presented. This year's piece will be more informational and place more emphasis on self-guided tours. For the previous two years, the rack card promoted hotels and transportation companies that participated in the winery tour co-operative program.

The Western Colorado Travel Expo will be entered in a competition sponsored by the Travel Industry Association of America; the category will be community relations/public relations. This competition is more tactical in its approach than HSMIA; submissions have to include details of the planning process, implementation, goals, tracking mechanisms and results.

Work on the fruit/orchard portion of the website was completed in late February/early March. We have been waiting for final detailed information from the Palisade Chamber of Commerce.

A visitor intercept study will be conducted at area wineries beginning June 17. The purpose of the study is to determine how people are hearing about Grand Valley wineries. A total of 220 surveys will be conducted; preliminary analysis will be presented at the August Board meeting.

STAFF REPORTS: Kayla Arnesen presented an overview of promotions and public relations activities during May. Staff will attend the Lafayette Winefest in June; the Denver peach promotion is scheduled for August 6-7.

Layne Whyman reviewed results of the Travel Expo. The Expo was a community outreach/public relations effort to educate local residents of the role of the VCB. The event was very successful:

- 1,348 registrations for Grand Prize (individuals over 18 yrs of age)
- 1,500 – 2,000 estimated total attendance
- 55 booth spaces
- 115 exhibitors

Exhibitors' survey responses were very positive: the Expo presented an excellent forum for their product, and hit their target market.

Two Rivers Convention Center has been reserved for May 8, 2003 for the second annual Travel Expo; the "Colorado's Hidden Treasures" theme will carry over. A postcard pre-mailing will be sent to all the 2002 exhibitors asking them to save that date. Preliminary suggestions for next year include expanding both the demonstration area and the kids' section, as well as dropping the educational sessions to shorten the day. Staff will work with the DDA/DTA on ways to get attendees and exhibitors to spend more time in the downtown area.

Sales: Barbara Bowman conducted a site inspection for organizers of the Governor's Conference on Tourism, which will be held here October 23-25. This year marks the first time the conference has not been held in on the Front Range; staff will work to involve both Fruita and Palisade in an effort to showcase the entire Grand Valley.

Barb Bowman and Debbie Kovalik attended the International Pow Wow trade show in New Orleans, along with representatives of the Adam's Mark, Grand Vista and Walker Field Airport. Over 70 trade contacts were made. Tour operators said they were having difficulty selling US travel this year but are optimistic that, in 2003, travel will return to the 2000 levels.

Visitor Center: We are still in the process of updating the exhibits. The BLM has agreed to do an entire section on public lands.

Convention Servicing: The Harley Owners Group – one of the largest groups we host – will meet here this month for the second year in a row. Staff is reviewing the type and level of services that we are able to provide to all the groups that request assistance. We want to ensure that the highest quality service is provided without over-committing staff and volunteer resources. Policy development is in process. Also, as we have worked with more affinity groups, we have discovered that those groups require much more staff time than meetings/conventions. We are tapping into staff members' personal interests to identify the needs of specific groups.

NEW BUSINESS: Larry MacDonald submitted his resignation to the Mayor and the Chair. He has accepted the position of general manager of the Hotel Colorado in Glenwood Springs. Council will advise how they wish to proceed to fill this vacancy.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm on motion of Alan Friedman and second of Kevin Reimer.