

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
OCTOBER 14, 2003

PRESIDING: Alan Friedman, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Sorlye, Jane Fine Foster, Peggy Page, Steve Meyer, Linda Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jill Eckardt, Michael Somma, Kevin Reimer, Kay Berry

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Irene Carlow, Barbara Bowman, Erin Chapman, Tamara Churchman, Layne Whyman

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events The Rim Rock Run has 165 registrants, which is 20 less than the same date last year; 102 are Colorado residents, 27 are locals. The Wine Fest was very well attended and area hotels were sold out. Four coupons were turned in on the VCB's "bounce back" weekend offer which encouraged visitors who could not find lodging for Winefest weekend to come September 26-28. Six people attended the Special Events "how-to" workshop; staff discussed the policy, criteria, review process, funding year and the requirements of award recipients.

November 4 is the deadline for submission of Special Event funding applications for the coming year. A workshop to review those applications will be held at the VCB Thursday, December 4 from 3:00 – 5:00 pm.

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2003: Jane Fine Foster moved the minutes be approved as written, Lynne Sorlye seconded, approved unanimously.

HILL & CO.: Production of the 2004 Visitor Guide is on schedule. A copy of the ad for the 2004 Official State Vacation Guide was displayed. Copies of the new photography were also distributed; the shot list was developed as a result of comments made by focus group participants.

Website: Enhancements are being made to the lodging module that will tie Specials and Packages to the search feature. A "Book it now" button will be added that will link to Travel Hero; over 20 local properties are currently listed with Travel Hero. Travel Hero can now book our specials and packages on line and will also do bookings for small properties that don't have online capability by making a phone call to the property to confirm availability, rate and final booking. This will ensure that all Grand Junction properties have the ability to participate if they so choose. Hotels pay a commission to Travel Hero and the VCB will receive part of that revenue for bookings done through our site.

Research: The online conversion study will begin in November. All data for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter occupancy/rate survey has not been received. The report will be distributed as soon as all information is received from the participating hotels.

STAFF REPORTS: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Tamara Churchman and Irene Carlow will attend the Governor's Conference on Tourism in Pueblo October 26-28.

Promotions: The Holiday Shopping Package will launch November 7; downtown and the Mall have both put together very nice hand-outs for guests who book rooms under this promotion. An added feature of the Specials & Packages website re-design is the VCB's ability to input and manage all the copy, photos, etc. We will be able to change the content, the "look" and the order in which specials are listed on each page.

New Wine Event: The Chair, Vice Chair and Director met with representatives of the Grand Valley Winery Association in August. At that meeting, the GVWA discussed holding a new wine and food pairing event November 22 as a kick-off to the holidays. VCB staff and Hill & Co. subsequently met with AMTRAK and Denver radio station CD104 to explore opportunities and partnerships to promote the event. Staff has requested specifics about the event from the GVWA so that promotional efforts can begin, but no details have been forthcoming. The GVWA hopes to meeting Friday, October 17 to discuss the event. Staff requests Board direction on how to proceed.

Discussion: With just 6 weeks until the event and no details developed, it is difficult to ensure that this would be a quality event. Both AMTRAK and the Denver radio station would need a longer lead time to develop and advertise a weekend package. If the VCB developed a train/wine weekend for the event and it were unsuccessful, it could reflect badly on the future of the event. This may need to be a regional promotion, rather than state-wide, considering the short time frame. The "wine train" promotion the Board discussed at the annual retreat is separate from the wine/food pairing event. The "wine train" would be an excellent public relations opportunity to unveil it to the media, but a good lead time is necessary to lay the foundation. The "wine train" should be an ongoing activity – not an isolated event – to run regularly, perhaps seasonally, similar to the Winter Park Ski Train.

Board directs staff to advise the GVWA that the VCB must have all event details by Monday, October 20 in order to promote the food/wine pairing as a Front Range event. After October 20, the VCB would promote the event in the regional market.

Lodging Tax: September receipts were down 11.5% with a year-to-date decline of 3.4%. City sales tax revenues also declined. Lodging did not sell out for the soccer tournament weekend (October 3-4) event though the same number of teams participated as last year. A number of teams did not overnight on Saturday, October 4 because of students' other extracurricular activities.

Group Sales: Staff hosted seven fairs and two site inspections during September. Barb Bowman attended events sponsored by the Colorado Society of Association Executives and the Society of Government Meeting planners. The second piece of the 2-part direct mail campaign was sent to 800 clients and prospects in the Denver area.

Other Staff Activities: Barb Bowman and a representative of Walker Field attended a Skywest Airlines-sponsored meeting in Salt Lake City October 8 to discuss promoting Skywest in its regional markets. Also attending were representatives from other cities served by Skywest in this region. Attendees discussed their advertising, incentive and promotional efforts. The group learned that the Salt Lake City airport offers a co-op advertising program with regional airport partners. Staff will provide Skywest with photos and fact sheets for possible use in the in-flight magazine. We will also provide one image and the city tagline to be used for SkyWest.com (3 million visitors per month) and the Salt Lake City Flight information displays.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Chair received a letter from the City Clerk regarding the upcoming vacancies/term expirations. The Clerk asked for input regarding the qualifications, attributes, and/or experience the Board would like Council to consider when interviewing candidates.

Discussion: Attendance is paramount; individual knowledge and skills aren't important if not participating in meetings. Balance in the Board makeup is important; a variety of backgrounds is good. It is hard to know if an individual is sincere in serving and contributing to the community, or if they want to "pad" their résumé. That may not come to light until a person is appointed. Ask why the person wants to serve; what is their interest in VCB activities/tourism-related issues and how that interest would affect their service as a Board member; what types of conflicts (both personal and professional) exist that may interfere with their ability to attend meetings. Ask candidates what other board(s) they have served on and what they feel they contributed to those boards/organizations.

The Chair will relay the discussion topics to the City Clerk.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.