

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
NOVEMBER 4, 2003

PRESIDING: Alan Friedman, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Smith, Lynne Sorlye, Kevin Reimer, Jane Fine Foster, Peggy Page, Steve Meyer, Kay Berry

MEMBERS ABSENT: Michael Somma, Jill Eckardt

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

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Anna Maria Arizzi, Christy Reed, Charlie Novinskie

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

SPECIAL EVENTS: As of October 31, the Rim Rock Run had 271 total entrants; 213 are from Colorado, 60 are local; 58 out of state representing 11 states.

The deadline for receipt of applications for 2004 Special Events funds is 5:00 pm today. Nine applications have been received thus far. A Special Events workshop will be held Thursday, December 4 from 3:00 – 5:00 pm at the VCB.

HOST COMMENTS: John Dwyer welcomed the Board to the LaQuinta Inn and Suites. Last spring, the LaQuinta began a new “frequency program”, affiliated with airlines, golf courses and retailers. High speed Internet connection will be offered soon and the property is undergoing other in-room upgrades such as new drapes and other furnishings. The LaQuinta Fruita property will open in early summer of 2004.

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 14, 2003: Jane Fine Foster moved the minutes be approved as written, Linda Smith seconded, passed unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: The Chair reviewed the process for election of 2004 officers, which will take place at the December 9 meeting. Several candidates have volunteered to serve. Those names will be presented and the floor will also be opened for nominations.

Veterans Hospital has requested a letter from the VCB in support of the hospital hosting the Golden Age Games in 2006 or 2007. This 5-6 day event will be held in August. Assistance from the VCB would be in the form of the letter of support, volunteers at the event and suggestions for attendee activities. Previous venues include Orono, Maine; Los Angeles; Duncanville, Texas; and Topeka, Kansas. The event would be funded by the Veterans Administration/Veterans of Foreign Wars and would be held at Lincoln Park and Mesa State College, with overflow to the local properties. Kevin Reimer moved that the VCB write a letter

supporting holding this event in Grand Junction, Jane Fine Foster seconded, approved unanimously.

The Chair recognized Debbie Kovalik for receiving the 2003 Governor's Award for Individual Outstanding Contributions to Colorado Tourism. The award was presented at the 2003 Governor's Conference on Tourism in Pueblo, October 27.

HILL & CO.: A consistent theme was heard at the various programs during the Governor's Conference on Tourism: travelers are looking for an "experience". Peter Yesawich's research revealed that 65% of all Americans are bored with their lives. Fewer travelers are repeat visitors – many are looking for something new. Another trend is termed "togetherness": people are traveling with friends, not just family, and sharing experiences. Another trend is "cheaper is chic-er" where everyone considers themselves a VIP; they want all amenities, but search for the lowest possible price.

Results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter Occupancy/Average Daily Rate study were presented. Occupancy was down 1% for both July and August; September occupancy declined 5%. Hill & Co. will try to gather data from participating properties on a monthly basis from April – September so that the VCB has more timely information and can react quickly to occupancy fluctuations. State-wide, it appears that August business was down with group business continuing to suffer. Motorcoach groups, which are usually 40 people, are down to 20-25 people. Meeting planners are not booking early, waiting for discounted rooms and hotels are discounting because room inventory is high.

STAFF REPORTS: The Grand Valley Winery Association's food/wine pairing event is November 22-23. The VCB sent flyers to Front Range liquor stores and issued a press release. Promotional efforts include regional print and radio ads as well as an email to the VCB's internet inquiry database. Amtrak was not included in this promotion because of the short lead time. The Holiday Shopping campaign begins November 6. This is a regional promotion that utilizes both print and radio; it is also featured on the website "Specials and Packages" section.

Lodging tax receipts are up 6% for the month. The Director suggested the need to discuss other measures of success which may be better indicators of results of the VCB's efforts. One consideration may be a new type of visitor survey method similar to those used by some ski resorts. Surveyors use hand-held computers to tabulate visitors' answers to key questions. This type of equipment could be utilized to survey visitors to local attractions; this methodology might be a requirement of events that receive Special Event funds.

The Chair welcomed Charlie Novinskie, who will serve as the Walker Field Airport representative to the VCB. Charlie stated that the Colorado Department of Transportation's economic impact study of commercial airports (which is conducted every 5 years) was released recently. That report indicates that Walker Field generates \$276 million in economic impact, the 6<sup>th</sup> highest in the state.

Charlie also reported that a restaurant located in the building between the terminal and Timberline Aviation will open in early 2004.

Group Sales: Twelve sales leads were issued in October, versus 7 for the same month last year; we are at 86% of goal for the year. Staff participated in a site inspection for the Gold Wing Touring Association, which has booked the Adam's Mark.

Convention Servicing: The VCB had an exhibit booth at the Chamber's Business Technology Showcase October 28; this is part of a continuing effort to prospect for local business. At the request of the Museum of Western Colorado, staff and selected volunteers evaluated customer service at the Museum's three facilities. The selected individuals visited the Museum facilities as "secret shoppers" and completed a survey which will be presented to the Museum Board later in November.

Layne Whyman has been invited to be a presenter at the Colorado-Wyoming Museum Association's Customer Service Training November 14. Participation in this all-day training session has been extended to downtown merchants.

OTHER BUSINESS: Charlie Novinskie reported that Walker Field will host the Airport Operators Association convention in May; the VCB issued a sales lead for this group. Powderhorn is doing a package with America West Airlines, partnering with area hotels. The package is being advertised on Phoenix radio.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 pm on motion of Lynne Sorlye and second of Peggy Page.