

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
DECEMBER 14, 2004

PRESIDING: Linda Smith, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Sorlye, Kevin Reimer, Jane Fine Foster, Jill Eckardt, Alan Friedman, Peggy Page

MEMBERS ABSENT: Steve Meyer

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Irene Carlow, Erin Chapman, Layne Whyman, Tamara Vliek, Sarah Allen, Vivian Brodine, Barbara Bowman

GUESTS: Fred Crabtree, Linda Hill, Anna Maria Arizzi, Bonnie Richards

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

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2004: Jane Fine Foster moved the minutes be approved as written, Lynne Sorlye seconded, passed unanimously.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION: The Chair recognized Fred Crabtree and thanked him for giving 1,000 hours of his time to the Visitor Center. Fred began volunteering in 1999; he retired from the Bureau of Reclamation after 32 years.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events The Rim Rock Run reported 246 runners from 11 states finished the race; of the 204 Coloradoans, 147 were from outside Mesa County. The Bolder Boulder sent three scouts to the race; this is usually a precursor to endorsement which could increase participation in the future. The Holiday Wine & food Pairing reported 94 participants, an increase of 39 over the 2003 event; an estimated 25% of the attendees were local. Organizers reported no sponsors other than the VCB.

Bob Witham delivered the Spring Barrel Tasting 2005 Special Event funding application on December 13. The Chair noted that the submission date was well past the November 2 deadline. The Chair also reported that, on October 28, staff had faxed a memo to four Grand Valley Winery Association members reminding them of the application deadline. The 2005 Special Events process was completed December 1 when Council approved the Board's funding recommendations. Staff is directed to send a letter to Bob Witham thanking him for the application but noting that the 2005 funding process had closed. Other advertising funds are available that the VCB could use to promote various events that do not receive Special Event awards. It was noted that the 2004 Spring Barrel Tasting sold out within 10 days with no advertising.

Election of 2005 Officers The Chair presented the slate of Jane Fine Foster as Chair and Lynne Sorlye as Vice Chair. There were no nominations from the floor. Alan Friedman moved that

Jane Fine Foster serve as 2005 Chair and Lynne Sorlye 2005 Vice Chair. Peggy Page seconded, approved unanimously.

The Chair presented appreciation plaques to outgoing members Alan Friedman and Peggy Page and thanked them for their service to the VCB and the community. Jane Fine Foster presented an appreciation plaque to Linda Smith for serving as 2004 Chair.

The Director advised the Board that she has been summoned for jury duty January 11, the regularly-scheduled date of the January meeting. The consensus of the Board is to reschedule the January meeting to the 18th, from 3-5 pm. The location will be announced at a later date.

The Board is invited to City Council luncheon workshop Monday, January 3 from 11:30 – 1:00 at Two Rivers Convention Center. Staff will make a presentation on 2004 achievements and strategies for 2005-2006.

HILL & CO.: Linda Hill presented an overview of the meeting planner focus group session held in Denver, December 9. The nine participants represented a good cross-section of group type and size. Overall perceptions of Grand Junction are positive; there is good brand/name recognition and the brand and positioning make Grand Junction a unique destination. The city is seen as affordable, friendly, with a quaint downtown; the Two Rivers Convention Center facility is viewed as a positive. Transportation and access are major challenges. Participants stated they lose attendance because of the distance: Front Range residents still believe it is a 6 hour drive to Grand Junction, even though all of them have driven to Grand Junction recently..

Meeting planners want RFPs to go only to those properties that can accommodate their group; however, they do understand the politics that CVBs have to contend with in sending RFPs to all area properties. Overselling a facility causes problems for the planners, particularly if a facility is not completely candid regarding construction issues. Participants said they identify with Grand Junction but not with individual hotels. They want/need personal interaction to build relationships with the various properties' sales staffs. The group gave very high marks to the VCB staff for their professionalism.

Anna Mara Arizzi gave an update on other projects:

- VCB staff will visit the Hill & Co. office for training on the new website
- Cover of the 2005 Visitor Guide was displayed; directory listings will be updated but there will be minimal changes to the copy and layout
- Overnight Visitor Study will begin in January; this study was last done in 2000

PROMOTIONS: Tamara Vliek reported that Holiday Shopping room night bookings are up 3% over the same time last year. New Year's Eve and Powderhorn specials are posted on the website. The 2005 Marketing Plan will be distributed at the February meeting. Wine train survey responses were very positive; 80% rated the experience as a 5, the highest rating. Planning is in progress for an unescorted Amtrak Valentine's Day package.

STAFF REPORTS: Barb Bowman reported that 254 Front Range meeting planners attended the Destination Colorado trade show December 7. Barb, Debbie Kovalik and an Adam's Mark

representative staffed a booth at “Celebrate Denver”, a consumer show that celebrated the grand opening of the Colorado Convention Center expansion. Cheyenne and Golden were the only other destinations exhibiting. Approximately 50,000 people attended. Barb will attend a travel agent/consumer show in Phoenix as a co-op with Powderhorn and the Holiday Inn.

VISITOR CENTER & CONVENTION SERVICING: A holiday open house for the volunteers was held December 8; 50 of our 78 volunteers attended. The Visitor Center will be closed Sunday, January 2 for interior maintenance.

OTHER BUSINESS: Dr. Tucker Hart Adams will present the results of her updated “Economic Impact of Tourism in Mesa County” study Friday, January 7 at 7:30 am at Two Rivers Convention Center. Brian Vogt, Director of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, will also speak. Invitations to the VCB-sponsored breakfast will be mailed December 20 with a follow-up reminder card 1 week before. The VCB will also host a reception from 5:00-6:00 pm Thursday, January 6 for Dr. Adams to preview her report. Invited guests will include City Council, County Commissioners, individuals interviewed by Dr. Adams and representatives of facilities that allowed us to do surveys (e.g., Walker Field, Colorado Welcome Center at Fruita). Dr. Adams will be available for interviews with print media immediately before the reception.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm on motion of Peggy Page and second of Alan Friedman.