

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
JANUARY 13, 2004

PRESIDING: Linda Smith, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Sorlye, Kevin Reimer, Jane Fine Foster, Jill Eckardt

MEMBERS ABSENT: Peggy Page, Alan Friedman, Michael Somma, Steve Meyer, Kay Berry

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

GUESTS: Shirley Green, Annette Wilson, Jean Yale, Tom Kleinschnitz, Charlie Novinskie, Tom Duff, Harold Stalf, Linda Hill, Anna Maria Arizzi, John Pankey

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 pm.

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2003: Jane Fine Foster moved the minutes be approved as written, Lynne Sorlye seconded. Jill Eckardt noted a typographical error in the minutes and noted the correction: under Board Business, the last line should read "1 or 2 days". The motion was amended to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded and passed unanimously.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION: The Chair recognized three volunteers for reaching the milestone of 1,000 hours of service at the Visitor Center:

Jean Yale (3 years of service)  
Annette Wilson (5 years of service)  
Shirley Green (6 years of service)

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events Liaisons were appointed as follows:

Holiday Wine & Food Pairing – Linda Smith  
Spring Barrel Tasting – Kevin Reimer  
Downtown Car Show – Kevin Reimer  
Grand Valley Arts Festival – Alan Friedman  
Kokopelli Adventure Race – Lynne Sorlye  
Fruita Fat Tire Festival – Lynne Sorlye  
Rim Rock Run – Jane Fine Foster  
Colorado Mountain Winefest – Steve Meyer  
Tour of the Vineyards – Steve Meyer  
Grand River Indian Artists Gathering – Jill Eckardt  
Rose Hill Rally – Peggy Page

The Chair read a letter from Mike Heaston, organizer of the Kokopelli Adventure Race and Tour of the Vineyards, requesting the Board reconsider the funding stipulations placed on those two events. The awards were for 50% co-op advertising costs for ads in Rocky Mountain Sports.

Heaston stated that the events' advertising budgets did not have the matching funds for those ads. If the awards were made without stipulation, the VCB funds would be re-directed to other forms of out-of-town advertising. It was noted that both are long-term events that don't really need Special Events funds to keep going. Most of the participants in both events are from out of town, which fulfills the intent of the Special Events policy. Lynne Sorlye moved that the stipulations be removed, with the requirement that the event organizer get prior approval from the Board liaison on how the funds would be spent; Kevin Reimer seconded. Discussion: Jill Eckardt noted that stipulations had been placed on other awards and all the other recipients had accepted the conditions without raising this question. Lynne Sorlye said that an event organizer probably knows how advertising dollars are best spent in their target market. The safeguard on lifting the stipulations is that the Board liaison would have to approve the alternative expenditures in advance. The motion passed with 4 in favor and 1 abstention.

2004 Meeting Schedule Staff distributed a list of the monthly meeting dates with proposed locations. The list also includes observed City holidays so the Board will know in advance when the VCB office will be closed. Kevin Reimer confirmed that the Hampton Inn will host the February 10 meeting. Jill Eckardt said that Mesa State will host the May 11 meeting, instead of the July 13 suggested date.

Annual Retreat The Chair stated that the 2004 retreat will be a one-day session, in the Grand Junction area, as discussed at the July 2003 budget workshop. Those present suggested the following possible dates:

- March 24
- April 7
- April 8
- April 13
- April 14

Staff will gather information on possible locations.

Website Audit Tom Duff, Consultant for USDM.net, reviewed the audit process. On December 22, 2003 Duff and Jennifer Barbee, Vice President of USDM.net, met with the staffs of Hill & Co. and the VCB for an all day in-depth discussion of the existing site. USDM uses a "Best Practices" approach and makes recommendations on how marketing dollars can be leveraged via a website. The summary listed 5 issues to address:

- Enhanced reporting features
- Standardized data to track costs per inquiry, cost per conversion, total economic impact
- Upgrade Customer Relationship Module (CRM)
- Update online brand
- Current visitation is below similar-size bureaus

Strengths of the site:

- Good Content
- Staff resources dedicated to site management
- Management's interest in third-party assessment
- 2003 traffic increased over 2002

Recommendations include:

- Develop a double opt-in marketing strategy to increase the email database; send messages to database on a regular basis
- Prepare an Internet marketing plan, separate from the traditional marketing plan
- Establish monthly marketing and ongoing traffic generation tactics

The full report will be mailed to Board members. The audit will be discussed in depth at the annual retreat.

Other Board Business A representative of TravelHero online booking service will be in Grand Junction Thursday, January 22. Presentations will be at the Days Inn at 10:00 am and 2:00 pm.

HILL & CO.: Linda Hill was very complimentary of USDM and the work that has been done. Linda noted that many of the audit recommendations have been discussed by the Board in the past. We have been capturing email addresses and sending messages to the database. Hill & Co. will refine the areas of interest to narrower segments so that our email marketing can be more targeted.

The online conversion study of 2003 inquiries is complete and the final report will be presented at the February meeting. Anna Maria Arizzi presented the results:

- 14% response rate
- 55% conversion rate
- 65% first-time visitors
- 68% said they would return
- 78% rated their visit as 7 or higher (with 10 being highest)
- 28.6% stayed 3-5 nights
- 27% stayed 2 nights
- 17.5% stayed 1 night

Attractions visited received the following rankings:

- #1 Downtown
- #2 Colorado National Monument
- #3 Grand Mesa
- #4 Wineries

Activities received the following rankings:

- #1 Dining
- #2 Shopping
- #3 Scenic drives

The 2004 media plan is nearly final and will be incorporated in the 2004 Marketing Plan, which will be mailed to the Board in early February.

**STAFF REPORTS:** The Director presented the first proof of the newly-designed 2004 Visitor Guide and solicited comments from the Board. The Director reminded the Board that a lesser quantity will be printed than in the past and distribution methods will change so that the new

Guides will be sent to qualified buyers. Rack distribution will be discontinued; inquiries via reader service labels will be fulfilled with a rack card, with a call to action to go online or call the toll-free number to request a Visitor Guide. This change in fulfillment will aid in tracking the effectiveness of our ads. The Board was very pleased with the new brochure and complimented the staff and Hill & Co. on the design and layout.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.