

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
MAY 11, 2004

PRESIDING: Linda Smith, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Somma, Kevin Reimer, Lynne Sorlye, Jane Fine Foster, Jill Eckardt, Alan Friedman

MEMBERS ABSENT: Steve Meyer, Peggy Page, Kay Berry

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

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

HOSTS REMARKS: Jill Eckardt welcomed the Board and gave an update on Mesa State's activities. Graduation ceremonies were just two days ago and the first summer session group has already arrived. The College will host over 6,000 guests through the summer. Enrollment for the 2004-2005 academic year is expected to increase 4%. Orientation is held every other week through the summer; 200-400 students and parents are expected. Mesa State would like to provide additional student housing but the issues of funding sources and land availability are significant challenges. It generally takes from 3 – 5 years from design of a dormitory to opening. The Moss Performing Arts Center is a tremendous asset to both the College and the community. The additional facilities will enable Mesa State to recruit and retain high caliber faculty and students; the performance hall enhances the quality of the cultural arts experience for the public.

MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2004: Jill Eckardt moved the minutes be approved as written, Lynne Sorlye seconded; approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events Participation in the Fruita Fat Tire Festival has stabilized in the 450-500 range, although paid participants decreased 79 from last year. This decline is attributed to winter weather in Denver the first two days of the event as well as increasing numbers of "scammers" – those who attend without paying. Multi-day events are difficult to capture paid participants and generally bring out those who do not pay, according to the event organizer. Next year will be the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a 24 hour relay may be added to increase interest and attendance. Printed materials included the VCB logo but the event site had no acknowledgement – banner, signage, etc. – of the VCB's sponsorship.

Spring Barrel Tasting The event was well attended and the food pairings were very good. The number of guests flowed well and some wineries think they could accommodate more people next year. Several participants mentioned they "traded off" attending this event instead of the

Winefest, which has gotten too crowded. The new location for the 2004 Winefest may really help relieve the congestion.

Rose Hill Rally Registered riders totaled 560, the highest number the event has ever drawn; 125 live more than 50 miles from Grand Junction. Special Event funds were used to print and distribute posters/entry forms in bike shops and other targeted locations in the Denver area and along the I-70 corridor.

Art & Jazz Festival The entertainment will be very eclectic and will include blues, jazz, acappella and gospel. Wine and beer will be served at this year's event. Organizers are working with area nightclubs to encourage a single-price ticket for admission to all the clubs.

The annual review of the Special Events will be an agenda item at a future meeting. Items for discussion include requiring all funded events to provide a table for VCB information and prominently displaying a VCB banner during the event.

Retreat Follow Up Barb Bowman gave a presentation on Sales Division activities and procedures, including how leads are generated, distributed and followed up. The Board asked what the VCB and/or our tourism partners might offer in order to close the sale on more of the groups that are reported as "lost business". Most business reported as "lost" is actually due to cancellation of the conference/event rather than being booked in another destination. Relationship-building continues to play a very important role in the group market. The VCB and tourism partners will host a Denver sales reception this Fall. The invitation list will include meeting planners, current and prospective clients from our database and Denver-area media. Michael Somma commented that the Denver reception is the single most important sales activity of the year and suggested the Board consider allocating unspent Special Events funds to upgrade the event.

STAFF REPORTS: Grand Junction Loves Company Layne Whyman reported that hospitality training kicks off with the initial session at City Hall tomorrow; two more sessions will be held later this month. (The "hospitality games" have been postponed for better weather.) KRMJ (PBS) will videotape the presentation so it will be available for the VCB to distribute as needed.

KRMJ is also taping an invitation to Peter Greenberg, travel editor for the Discovery Channel and The Today Show. Greenberg's presentation at the 2003 Governor's Conference on Tourism emphasized that video footage—of a unique subject—is how to gain attention for possible inclusion in his broadcast. The video, starring Dr. John Foster of Dinosaur Journey, is a video invitation for Greenberg to participate in a Dinosaur Discovery Expedition. Layne Whyman wrote the script.

Promotions Tamara Vliek presented the preliminary results of the wine train participants' satisfaction survey. Over 90% of the respondents rated their overall experience as a 4 on a scale of 1-5. A wrap-up meeting is scheduled for May 27; the VCB will also distribute survey responses to each vendor.

The "Give Us Your Best Shot" photo contest/golf promotion will run through the end of August on AM950 The Fan. Contest information and entry forms will be mailed to selected Front Range courses.

OTHER BUSINESS: Final wording on the TravelHero contract has been worked out and we should receive signed copies shortly.

The June 8 Board meeting will be hosted by the DDA at the Whitman Building, 248 South Fourth Street.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm.

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