

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JULY 13, 2004

PRESIDING: Linda Smith, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Somma, Lynne Sorlye, Jane Fine Foster, Steve Meyer, Peggy Page

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jill Eckardt, Alan Friedman, Kevin Reimer

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

GUESTS: Aleta Davy, Anna Maria Arizzi, John Pankey, Charlie Novinskie, Sam Szymanski

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 pm.

HOSTS REMARKS: Aleta Davy welcomed the board and provided an update on activities at the park. The spring and early summer have been very busy; most weekends the 63 campsites are sold out and recently the park has filled up during the week. The June 25 issue of *USA Today* rated Fruita State Park as of the 10 great places to pitch a pup tent. The park was also listed in the top 100 family campgrounds by "Reserve America"; six campgrounds in Colorado were recognized, all of them state parks.

MINUTES OF MAY 11, 2004: Michael Somma moved the minutes be approved as written, Jane Fine Foster seconded; approved unanimously.

HILL & CO.: John Pankey discussed the website redevelopment which will incorporate the top priorities identified in the USDM audit conducted late last year. A number of competitive sites were reviewed as part of this process. Navigation will be redesigned to funnel visitors by type: leisure, meeting planner, tour professional, media. More content will be pulled forward to the home page and back-end reporting capability will be improved. Two creative concepts were presented and discussed; the Board's initial preference was for concept #2. It will take 2-3 months of staff time to reload and reformat all of the content after all the design approvals are received. The approximate launch date will be late October-early November.

Summer Campaign: The billboards are still up in Denver and more boards may be placed in the fall. The AAA Colorado ad is running; back-to-school shopping and peach promotions are coming up next.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events **Art & Jazz Festival** organizers feel the event was very successful for the most part; this is a positive event for the VCB to support. Attendance was

higher and the quality of entertainment better than last year. Private club owners are very supportive of the event as they benefit from increased crowds who come into their businesses for live entertainment after the Festival closes for the evening. The owners feel, however, that the event can't grow and succeed if it continues to be free. With even a nominal charge of \$5 per person the event would be able to bring in bigger acts and higher quality entertainers.

Spring Barrel Tasting was an excellent event with 358 paid participants, 90% of whom were from out of town. Most attendees were very involved in asking questions, prompting discussion about the various niches of the wineries. The event had more of the "Napa wine tour feeling", according to the organizers. Sales were approximately twice what they were in 2003.

Tour of the Vineyards and Rim Rock Run The funding agreements and supporting documentation have been submitted and are awaiting the City Attorney's approval. Some of the insurance certificates have needed additional modifications to meet the City's requirements.

Colorado Mountain Winefest The agreements are on file but all requirements of the certificates of insurance have not yet been met. Three hotels are offering early bird lodging/ticket packages; four restaurants have sold out for winemakers' dinners.

STAFF REPORTS: Promotions The Lafayette Winefest was not well attended due to bad weather. Staff did field numerous inquiries about the wine train; the date of the next wine train will be announced September 8 in conjunction with Denver radio CD104.3. We expect the train to sell out again. To capitalize on the high level of interest, we may follow up with promotion of the Holiday Wine and Food Pairing as well as small newspaper travel section ads that promote taking Amtrak to Grand Junction. Staff has met with participating wineries, hotels and transportation providers to begin planning for the fall event. RMA Tours will again take reservations and an RMA representative will be on the train, along with a VCB staff member and Doug Caskey. Staff will have a booth at the Keystone Wine Fest August 28-29; golf/lodging packages will be promoted.

The Director recommended that additional funds be spent on advertising the fruit crop, Peach Festival, and other August activities; ad placements would be in the Denver Post and some regional papers. The Special Event account has a balance of \$10,500 -- \$2,500 that was not awarded and \$8,000 resulting from the cancellation of two events. Peggy Page moved, and Michael Somma seconded, that unspent funds in the Special Event account be used to promote August activities; passed unanimously.

Statistics Lodging tax receipts are up 6.6% for the month, 3.3% YTD. City sales tax receipts are 2% above projections. Staff distributed a list of lodging tax rates and CVB funding for various cities in Colorado.

The CTO has contracted with Weaver Publications for publication of the Official State Vacation Guide, advertising sales, fulfillment and website development/ maintenance. The State budget includes \$5.4 million for the CTO/tourism marketing.

Staff recently met with Kent Oldham, who holds the franchise for the Triple Crown Baseball tournament which has been held in Steamboat Springs for many years. Oldham would like to bring the Junior Tournament (ages 16-18) to Grand Junction and has had preliminary meetings with Parks & Recreation and several hotels. The tournament would represent approximately 400 rooms per night for 3 – 5 nights in late July. Parks Department fields are not in use and it would be a great time for additional hotel business. Steve Meyer noted that Triple Crown would likely overlap with the Taco Bell Tennis Tournament, which is the 3rd week in July.

Sales Plans are underway for the Denver sales reception which will be held August 26 at the Colorado Culinary Institute. Two Board members are invited to attend; those who are interested can contact the Director.

We are preparing a proposal to host the September 2005 National Tour Association Board of Directors meeting. The incoming Chair selects the locations and invites them to bid on one of four meetings during the coming year. This is the first time Grand Junction has been selected to bid.

Convention Servicing The Hospitality Training CD for hotels/area businesses is nearly final. Two new events will come to Grand Junction in the next few months. The Rocky Mountain Horse Expo is scheduled for October 22-24, with another Expo in Durango the following weekend. The Grand Mesa Outdoor Expo will be held at the Mesa County Fairgrounds in February 2005. (The event is too big for Two Rivers Convention Center.) This event is managed by a professional promoter and the main sponsor is Sportsman's Warehouse.

OTHER BUSINESS: Charlie Novinskie reported that enplanements at Walker Field Airport were up 25% in June.

The August meeting will be at the Empire Theater, 2825 North Avenue.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 pm.