

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
OCTOBER 11, 2005

PRESIDING: Jane Fine Foster, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Sorlye, Brunella Gualerzi, Kevin Reimer, Deb Hoefler, Steve Bailey

ABSENT: Steve Meyer, Eric Feely, Linda Smith

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

GUESTS: Brad Taylor, Aleta Davey

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 pm.

HOST REMARKS: Brad Taylor stated that the Colorado River State Park consists of five different locations – from Island Acres on the east to Fruita on the west. These are the 5th best revenue producers of the 41 state parks. The activities that visitors come for are not in the parks but in the surrounding areas that the GJVCB and Fruita organizations promote. Island Acres was full both Labor Day and Winefest weekends; Fruita was full for Winefest. Local Parks personnel appreciate receiving the VCB's advisories regarding busy weekends.

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 13, 2005: Kevin Reimer moved the minutes be approved as written, Deb Hoefler seconded, approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events: Riverbend Park is a much better location for the Colorado Mountain Winefest. Shuttle service from the hotels worked very well. Negative comments concerned the long lines at food booths and inadequate restroom facilities.

Surveys were conducted at the Downtown Car Show as the Board requested; results will likely be available when the final report is filed. Registrations were down slightly but, realistically, there isn't enough room for more cars in the current designated space. Most registrants were local, which is perhaps an indication that advertising should begin earlier and run in broader markets. Participants want more vendors on the street because they do not want to leave their cars unattended to go into a restaurant.

A workshop will be held at 2:00 pm November 8 to discuss the Special Events funding program. The regular monthly meeting will immediately follow the workshop.

2006-2007 Budget: The VCB's proposed budget has undergone two internal reviews; the entire city budget will be presented to Council on Saturday, November 5. The Director made the Board aware of lodging tax revenues as they relate to the TABOR amendment. Lodging tax receipts

are part of the General Fund and at this point are not growth-restricted; this is important in view of current year collections which are up 17% YTD.

Air Service: The Community Air Service Coalition is sponsoring an event “2005 Connections” in Orlando December 7-8. This is a new opportunity for small airports/communities to meet with airline representatives in 12 networking sessions. There will be no speakers or panel discussions. Airlines that are committed to be there include: America West, American, American Eagle, Delta/Skywest, Great Lakes, Jet Blue and Northwest. Diane Schwenke will attend on behalf of the Chamber and it is expected that the new Walker Field director will attend along with the Airport Authority Board Chair. The registration fee for the VCB Director to attend will be \$295. Lynne Sorlye moved that Debbie Kovalik attend “2005 Connections” on behalf of the VCB, Deb Hoefler seconded, passed unanimously.

Board Terms: The appointments of Lynne Sorlye and Steve Bailey expire December 31, 2005. Both are eligible for re-appointment and should send a letter of interest to the City Clerk indicating their interest is continuing to serve. Elections for 2006 officers will be held at the December monthly meeting. Those interested in serving are asked to forward their comments or indications of interest to Jane Fine Foster or Lynne Sorlye no later than the November 8 monthly meeting.

STAFF REPORTS:

Promotions: Barb Bowman reported that the September 30 Wine Train was the first co-op of this event with AAA; staff is working toward turning over this promotion to AAA. This group was an older demographic than previous Wine Train participants. Layne Whyman did an excellent job coordinating and managing all the details. This group didn't buy as much wine as previous guests; many seemed to be concerned about carrying and transporting their purchases. Staff has encouraged winery representatives to talk to groups about shipping options.

As a result of a presentation Barb Bowman made in Denver earlier this year, a Denver Rotary Club brought 32 people to Grand Junction for a weekend and a winemaker's dinner catered by Il Bistro. Club members are discussing the possibility of making this an annual event, limited to 50 participants. Most in the group had driven past Grand Junction but never stopped. These ad hoc groups are very demanding and require a great deal of personal, individual attention from staff. Staff would like the Board to provide direction in the future regarding the level of assistance and staff time that should be provided to these ad hoc groups.

Holiday Shopping Package: Fifteen hotels signed up for the promotion this year. Ads will run in newspapers in western Colorado and eastern Utah. Local merchants have been asked to provide 600 coupons to insert in the welcome packets that will be given to each party who checks in with a Holiday Shopping coupon. The promotion begins November 1.

Statistics: Lodging tax collections continue to outpace last year; September revenues were up 21%. Internet inquiries are also up substantially.

Group Sales: Wendel McConnell will continue telemarketing efforts to the VCB sales database. He has contacted all the meeting planner members of CSAE, MPI, PCMA and Front Range non-profits. The contract sales representative who will be hired next year will take over after this initial personal contact.

The National Tour Association Board meeting was very successful; two tours were booked as a result of this group experiencing Grand Junction. A record number of NTA Board members extended their stay to participate in optional activities.

The Colorado Parks & Recreation Association conference was well attended; participants enjoyed a variety of activities throughout the community. Debbie Kovalik attended District 5470 Rotary convention in Colorado Springs to promote attendance at the group's conference in Grand Junction in 2006. The District will also meet here in 2008. Staff is working to bring a United Methodist group here in 2009; the group is trying to secure lower room rates and convention center charges before committing.

OTHER BUSINESS: Bruce Noble, Superintendent of the Colorado National Monument, updated the Board on entrance fee increases that will be instituted in 2006. The Superintendent is beginning an outreach to a broad range of affected groups to discuss the proposed increases. The current fees have been in place since 1999: \$5/vehicle, \$3/person, \$15 annual pass. All the fees will increase in 2006 and will probably be instituted in April/May when the visitor season starts: \$7/vehicle, \$4/person, \$20 annual pass. The commercial rate of \$100 will not change.

Even after these modest increases, the Monument's per-vehicle fee will still lag behind other national parks in the area:

Arches	\$10
Black Canyon	\$ 8
Canyonlands	\$10
Dinosaur	\$10
Mesa Verde	\$10

Large destination parks such as Grand Canyon, Yellowstone and Grand Teton charge \$20 per vehicle. 80% of entrance fee collections stay in the park where the revenue is generated and is spent locally on contracts, seasonal labor, etc.

The Board is supportive of the modest increases and noted that the Colorado National Monument is the most-visited attraction in Mesa County, with over 300,000 visitors per year.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:18 on motion of Deb Hoefler and second of Lynne Soryle.