

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
February 14, 2006

PRESIDING: Lynne Sorlye, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Deb Hoefler, Steve Meyer, Denise Henning, Jane Fine Foster, Kevin Reimer, Eric Feely

ABSENT: Bill Hill, Brunella Gualerzi

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

GUESTS: Bruce Hill, Anna Maria Arizzi, Tim Campbell, Justin Martin, Hunter Carmichael, Gaylene Orr

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

MINUTES OF January 10, 2006: Denise Henning moved the minutes be approved as written, Deb Hoefler seconded, passed unanimously.

The Director introduced Hunter Carmichael, manager of the Marriott Courtyard and Residence Inn. Hiring for the two properties will begin in April so that the staff team will be assembled well in advance of the hotels' opening in late August 2006.

HOST REMARKS: Rex Tippetts, Manager of Walker Field Airport, discussed some of the issues facing the airline industry overall and how those issues affect air service to Grand Junction. The Airport Authority is beginning a research project that will include a market assessment. Results of the study will be presented at a community forum that will be an opportunity to educate local residents about air service to Walker Field.

BOARD BUSINESS: Jasper Welch is confirmed to facilitate the Board's annual planning retreat May 1-2 at Gateway Canyons Resort.

The 2006 Marketing plan was distributed.

Regional hotel rates and availability are being impacted by the demand for temporary housing for oil/gas industry workers and the leisure market is being displaced as a result. Adventure Bound reports that they can't get hotel rooms in Craig for their raft trips and that hotel rates in Steamboat Springs have increased greatly. Limited room availability and increasing rates could potentially impact tour operators who bring groups into the region.

Building Remodel: Staff is working with Community Development to develop timelines necessary to begin construction in October. Public Works and Purchasing are also assisting the VCB in this project.

HILL & CO.: Immediately prior to the Board meeting, Tim Campbell, Vice President of Hill & Co., presented the history of the VCB's creative campaigns, development of the Grand Junction image/product and the branding as "Colorado's Wine Country".

The 2006 media plan is complete; a significant percentage is directed to outdoor advertising (billboards, 16th Street Mall buses) to maintain the high awareness Grand Junction has developed in the Denver and Colorado Springs areas.

The Online Conversion Study final report was distributed. The final 2005 ADR/Occupancy Study has been delayed because of a change of ownership of a participating property. The new owners have agreed to provide the 4th quarter statistics and the report will be distributed as soon as that information is received. Additional data is still needed to complete the Overnight Visitor Study.

The VCB is working with the Cultural Arts Commission to promote increased visitation to cultural facilities. Hill & Co. is designing a "passport portfolio" that will feature cultural attractions and may include coupons for admission to various non-profit facilities.

The final design of the 2006 Visitor Guide was displayed and Denise Henning discussed the design and contents and suggested that day trips (maps, itineraries) should be listed on the back cover; a pull-out piece listing restaurants and shopping should be included; that a logo does not appear in the Guide and a logo should be designed and used on everything

Tim Campbell responded that the Visitor Guide stands alone and its purpose is to "tell a story". The design and format is guided by research, which has clearly demonstrated that using "Colorado's Wine Country" narrows the market segments we can reach with the guide.

The Director reviewed results of Front Range focus groups conducted in July 2003 and the changes to the Visitor Guide that resulted from the research. At that time, "Colorado's Wine Country" was the focal point of the cover. Several focus group participants thought the guide was about wineries only and would (or would not) pick it up for that single reason; participants wanted a quick overview, then they will go online for more information and details.

The Chair noted that arriving at the current format was a lengthy process involving a great deal of Board input. The Board approved the design and the visitor-related businesses that are included in the directory listings.

Focus sessions with potential and previous GJ visitors that will test the Visitor Guide appeal, overall creative, branding and services needed are budgeted for Fall 2006.

STAFF REPORTS: Website: Miles Media has outlined five consumer email newsletters; the first one will be launched in March. Thanks to Hill & Company for their work on the newsletter template design to ensure that it fits with our complete creative campaign. The first four editorial stories are nearly complete.

Staff Vacancy: Interviews of four candidates were held February 13. Members of the interview panel have indicated their preferred candidate and a final decision will be made in the next 1-2 days.

City Council: Mayor Bruce Hill thanked Board members for their service to the community and the valuable input the Board provides to Council. The Mayor reported that 18 people attended the initial planning meeting for the City's 125th anniversary celebration in Summer of 2007.

Promotions: Layne Whyman reported that 463 packages were sold in the Holiday Shopping promotion; 15 lodging properties and 54 retail businesses participated. The Valentine Wine Train Weekend, with RMA Tours, was advertised in the Denver Post and Colorado Springs Gazette. AAA Wine trains are scheduled for March 31-April 2 and April 7-April 9. Upcoming promotions include:

- Spring Break, partnering hotels and attractions
- Golf live remote with Denver radio station – May
- Art & Jazz festival, potential package with AAA

The Denver Golf Expo was very successful; the VCB and Redlands Mesa had adjoining booths again this year. Attendees were very interested in Grand Junction and many had played both Redlands Mesa and Tiara Rado.

Statistics: Lodging tax receipts for 2005 saw the greatest percentage increase (18.2%) in the VCB's history. Internet statistics through 2005 were up 29.6%. Miles Media assumed management of the website January 2006; statistical reports are being finalized and will be available for the next Board meeting.

Irene Carlow reviewed the year-end budget report.

Sales: Barb Bowman reported that Donna Horii has been hired to represent the VCB in the Front Range market. The Sales Division hosted a meeting with directors of sales (DOS) of all meetings properties; these DOS meetings will be held quarterly.

Barb Bowman and Debbie Kovalik attended Go West Summit in St. George, Utah, where they met with international tour operators who bring groups to the Rocky Mountain region. Barb will attend ITB in Berlin, Germany, March 5-13; the VCB attends this travel show every-other-year in cooperation with the Colorado Tourism Office and other partners in the state.

Visitor Center: Vivian Brodine reported that there are five new volunteers in training. We continue to focus on recruiting new volunteers and maintaining the optimal number of 75 year-round volunteers. Two Mesa State students are volunteering as part of their community service; the students perform a variety of support services rather than work in the Visitor Center.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm on motion of Steve Meyer and second of Jane Fine Foster.