

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JUNE 12, 2007

PRESIDING: Eric Feely, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Deborah Hoefler, Lynne Sorlye, Brunella Gualerzi, Brian Barry, Steve Meyer, Rick Martindale, Bill Hill

MEMBERS ABSENT: Paul Petersen

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Jennifer Grossheim-Harris, Layne Whyman, Barbara Bowman, Amy Fortman, Irene Carlow

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m.

MINUTES OF MAY 8, 2007: Deborah Hoefler moved the minutes be approved as written, Bill Hill seconded, passed unanimously.

HOST REMARKS: Rick Martindale reported that the remodeling project is complete. The Quality Inn has experienced a change in their business: Friday and Saturday are now their slowest nights, they're turning people away on weeknights. Average daily rates have increased but guests do not appear to be price sensitive.

BOARD ITEMS: Special Events Committee Brian Barry reported that the Palisade Peach Festival requested \$3,000 for printing an event brochure. The VCB has historically provided other marketing assistance, e.g., resort newspaper ads, Denver media peach promotion, website specials/packages, and will continue those programs in 2007. The committee recommends approving the Peach Festival's request for marketing assistance in the amount of \$3,000. Deb Hoefler moved that the Palisade Peach Festival be awarded \$3,000 in Special Events marketing assistance for printing a promotional flyer; Brian Barry seconded, passed unanimously.

Community Awareness Committee Jennifer Grossheim-Harris reported that a variety of new banners have been installed. Some are "Welcome" banners, others promote JUCO and the 125th Anniversary.

STAFF REPORTS: Sales Barb Bowman reported that the occupancy rate/increased business is beginning to impact lodging properties' service level which, in turn, is changing the role of VCB staff. The VCB is receiving increased calls from tour operators and meeting planners requesting follow-up assistance due to the lack of response from hotel sales staffs. Individual clients have reported contracts not being fulfilled (e.g., comp meeting rooms or services) because of poor documentation in the hotel's sales files; clients attribute the lack of paper trail to staff turnover.

The Director will host a meeting of lodging properties' general managers/owners. Discussion topics could include existing and potential packages/promotions; target markets; research; occupancy/ADR; service delivery.

The Board recognizes that employee customer service training is a challenge for hotels because of high turnover and low unemployment rates. Bill Hill asked if Mesa State College might be encouraged to re-instate its tourism/hospitality program; perhaps the VCB could recommend such an intern program at the College. The Director reported that, for several years, the VCB has hired MSC marketing/communications students as interns, with very positive results.

(Steve Meyer joined the meeting.)

Barb Bowman met with 30 tour operators at the Travel Alliance Partners trade show in California. This is an invitation-only show in which groups of suppliers work together to sell each others tours.

PR/Marketing/Promotions Jennifer Grossheim-Harris reported on the 125th Anniversary promotions:

- 130 entries received for the family BBQ give away; the prize has been awarded
- "Visit Your Own Valley" co-op promotion with Cumulus Broadcasting; radio station contest winners come to the VCB to receive a commemorative coin and enter to win a package of prizes valued at over \$2,000

The website re-design continues to stay on schedule; Miles Media will contact all our tourism partners to obtain current information to post on our site. As part of their contract, Miles will make up to five follow-up contacts in an effort to get this information, which will save a great deal of VCB staff time.

In partnership with High Country Orchards, the VCB is promoting the cherry harvest; baskets of fresh cherries will be delivered to six Denver media outlets.

Administrative Lodging tax receipts are up 22% year to date and website activity is up 18%.

The City budget process is undergoing some changes; the current planning process will be for 2008 only instead of 2008-2009. Staff suggests investing in marketing "infrastructure" that could enhance our ability to expand programs in the future. Suggestions for budget consideration include:

- Technology
 - Website enhancements (e.g., webcams)
 - Sales database software
 - Visitor Center interactive exhibits
- Photography/video
- Expand public relations efforts
- Continue/expand community awareness and outreach

Staff will develop a preliminary budget for the board to review and discuss at a workshop at 1:30 pm July 10, followed immediately by the regular monthly meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS: Bill Hill suggested that the Director meet with cultural arts entities to discuss opportunities for the VCB to assist with promoting our cultural arts community.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm on motion of Deborah Hofer and second of Lynne Sorlye.