

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
MINUTES OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
AUGUST 14, 2007

PRESIDING: Eric Feely, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Sorlye, Brunella Gualerzi, Paul Petersen, Rick Martindale, Bill Hill, Brian Barry

MEMBERS ABSENT: Steve Meyer, Deborah Hoefler

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Jennifer Grossheim-Harris, Barbara Bowman, Vivian Brodine, Erin Chapman, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Donna Haskins; Sally D'Agostino, Chair, Fruita Tourism Advisory Council; Odette Phelps, City of Fruita; Eric Mello, Cobb & Associates; Ture Nycum, City of Fruita

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

MINUTES OF JULY 10, 2007: Paul Petersen moved the minutes be approved as written, Bill Hill seconded, passed unanimously.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION: Vivian Brodine introduced Donna Haskins, who has given 2,000 hours of her time to the Visitor Center over the past 14 years.

Vivian distributed invitations to the annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet which will be held September 11, immediately following the regular monthly meeting. Both the meeting and the banquet will be held at Two Rivers Convention Center.

HOST REMARKS: Sally D'Agostino, Chair of the Fruita Tourism Advisory Council, welcomed the Board and introduced Eric Mello, Marketing Director for Cobb & Associates, who presented an overview of Fruita's tourism efforts. For the past two years, the marketing campaign has focused on a 500 mile radius, east to Denver and west to Salt Lake City, as well as the mountain resort areas to promote early mountain biking. A consistent press program is in place and additional emphasis is being placed on the web site which has been redesigned to include video components such as YouTube. Traditional advertising is supplemented with paid searches on Google, MSN, and Yahoo. Site traffic has doubled every year since Fruita increased its presence on colorado.com. "Mike the Headless Chicken" event continues to expand and garner more press coverage, including international, each year.

Ture Nycum, Recreation Director for the City of Fruita, provided an update on plans for a community recreation center. A preferred location has been identified, near the site of the new Family Health West facility, and an architectural firm has been hired to conduct a feasibility

study as well as to estimate construction and operating costs. A presentation to Fruita City Council is anticipated for November/December. If approved, the April 2008 ballot would include a sales tax increase (generating an additional \$800,000/year) to fund the recreation center.

**BOARD ITEMS:** Budget The Director presented a detailed discussion of marketing expenses that the Board had questions about at the July budget workshop. Brunella Gualerzi moved to approve the 2007 Revised and 2008 Proposed budgets as presented, Brian Barry seconded, passed unanimously.

Special Events Committee members were given an application for marketing assistance for the Colorado Pro Rodeo Association Finals September 5-8, 2008.

**HILL & COMPANY:** Anna Maria Arizzi updated the Board on the summer campaign, including special event ads and the Peach Festival promotion. The CTO co-op advertising totaled approximately \$75,000, including Internet buys. Colorado.com is not performing as well as hoped; incorrect information about Grand Junction appears throughout the site and both the agency and VCB staff are working to correct that. We will continue our partnership with Colorado.com but the rate of return has not increased with expenditures.

A direct sales piece for the group market is in process. Instead of just a printed piece, recipients will get a computer memory stick with a 2-minute presentation on Grand Junction and a link to the VCB site. The idea for the memory stick resulted from input received at the Spring meeting planner focus group.

**STAFF REPORTS:** The federal per diem rate for Grand Junction hotels has increased from \$69 to \$81, effective October 1. The State of Colorado usually follows the federal per diem rate, with a lag time of approximately 6 months.

The Denver/Colorado Springs peach promotion was very successful. A Denver Post reporter will attend the Peach Festival as a follow-up to the previous article regarding the poor crop.

The website re-design is a bit behind schedule as Miles Media works to incorporate valuable input provided by staff. The decision was made to launch a little later than initially planned in the interest of having the best product possible.

Lodging tax receipts are up 19% for the month of July, 22% YTD.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** The Director presented a proposal from Event Strategic, Inc. (ESI) for a new advertising opportunity. ESI provides 40-ft luxury RVs that are “wrapped” with an ad campaign and taken to major sporting events, trade shows, golf tournaments, etc. The company has been in business 27 years; its corporate clients include Sony, Kodak and Blockbuster. Tourism destinations have been included the past two years, including the Florida Space Coast Office of Tourism. The proposed contract includes appearing at a series of 200 days during a 12-month period. ESI contacts the event organizers and pre-arranges for placement of the RV at each event/location. This would be a way to reach niche markets by appearing at events such as

the Cherry Creek Arts Festival, Museum of Science and Nature, Denver Pavilions, sporting events, etc. Tracking would be done via give-aways and capturing email addresses. The \$130,000 contract includes the RV, staff, scheduling, set up, promotion planning, execution and fulfillment, inventory control, event summary reports, fuel, parking, insurance and maintenance.

Paul Petersen suggested that the perception of a Grand Junction resident who saw this bus at an event needs to be considered. A resident might comment on it to Council and ask if the VCB funds are being spent appropriately. The Director said that the bus wrap would be similar to billboards that local residents see in various parts of Denver and Colorado Springs. Lynne Sorlye suggested that billboards are more acceptable and have more reach and exposure. Brian Barry agreed with Paul and asked what is the objective? If the objective is to drive people to the website, those funds might be better spent on the Internet. The Director suggested that the campaign could be unveiled in Grand Junction and the RV program launched from here. The "bus" would be in addition to billboard advertising, not in lieu of. Bill Hill voiced concern of attracting more people during a period of very high occupancy. Why promote more summer events if we have no more rooms to sell? Brian agreed that it is an "outdoor" tool so summer would likely be the highest exposure/use. The consensus is that this topic needs more discussion and a Board committee might be formed to review the details and report to the full Board.

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