

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
OCTOBER 9, 2007

PRESIDING: Eric Feely, Chair

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brian Barry

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

GUESTS: Bobbi Sampson

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m.

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2007: Paul Petersen moved the minutes be approved as written, Deb Hoefler seconded, passed unanimously.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION: Vivian Brodine introduced Bobbi Sampson, who has given 2,000 hours of service to the Visitor Center. Bobbi moved to Grand Junction in 1991 and joined the volunteer staff in 1995.

HOST REMARKS: Deb Hoefler welcomed the Board to Mesa State and reviewed some of the changes to the Campbell Center that resulted in better/more efficient use of the space. The information desk and staff offices are the only spaces that were not renovated. She noted that student fees pay for the Center and students voted to increase those fees to make much-needed improvements. A new building is planned and the design phase for that project is just beginning. Total enrollment is just over 6,000 and the residence halls are full with 1,181 students housed on campus.

BOARD ITEMS: Special Events On September 14, staff sent a letter to George Decker requesting confirmation of the dates of the 2008 Colorado Pro Rodeo Association Finals. No response has been received. The committee will not review the application until that information is received.

Governor's Conference on Tourism Barb Bowman reported that there are nearly 500 registrants for the conference which begins tomorrow. Staff will compile a report which the Colorado Tourism Office could include in future RFPs for the conference so that other communities will be aware of the investment of financial and staff resources necessary to host this group. Barb gave special recognition to Layne Whyman for her countless hours and excellent work in

planning and managing registrations; organizing the CTO reception at the Museum of the West; and recruiting and scheduling conference volunteers.

City Budget The Director reported that the City Manager regularly communicates budget information to Council and each Council Monday workshop is devoted to budget discussions. The VCB will work with Two Rivers Convention Center on external marketing, e.g., some of the VCB's ads will include Two Rivers, and Two Rivers' staff will be able to attend specific trade shows.

STAFF REPORTS: Sales Barb Bowman reported that the number of sales leads issued is at 81% of the annual goal. The Director and Barb Bowman will attend the Rotary District Conference in Durango October 12-14 in an effort to boost attendance at the 2008 conference in Grand Junction.

Marketing/Promotions Jennifer Grossheim-Harris reported that the numerous media fairs we have hosted recently have produced articles immediately; many of those media were leads from the CTO.

Seven meetings properties participated in the VCB's trade show booth display co-op program. The VCB oversaw design and production of the displays to maintain a consistent "Grand Junction" image. Partners provided artwork so that each individual property's display will have their name and logo. Several of the displays can be used together for larger sales efforts to underscore the strength of the Grand Junction team in promoting the entire area, not just an individual property.

AAA wine trains are scheduled the last two weekends in October. The Colorado Wine Industry Development Board will no longer be able to send Doug Caskey on these trains. Staff has secured the commitment of two local individuals who are knowledgeable about local wines to take over some responsibilities so that staff is not required on every wine train. One of these individuals will accompany staff each of the next two weekends to learn the ropes and be able to assist with the two AAA wine trains next April. Other wine train weekends next year will be in May with the Colorado Music Fest and in the Fall with Rocky Mountain PBS.

Director's Report The director requested that the report from Hill & Company be tabled.

September lodging tax receipts increased 28% over the same period last year. The VCB is receiving more frequent complaints about hotels, e.g., cleanliness, insufficient accommodations, services not received. It's quite possible that the very high occupancy rates we are experiencing will result in declining service levels and additional customer complaints. The Director requested the Board have an in-depth discussion about this at the November meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS: Bill Hill discussed the increasing interest in Cultural Heritage Tourism nationwide and suggested the VCB consider committing additional marketing funds to the cultural heritage market. He would not offer this suggestion during a revenue downturn but, in view of the increased lodging tax receipts resulting from very high occupancy rates, this could be a tremendous opportunity. The VCB has been very effective in building up the wine industry in

the Grand Valley. If the bureau could direct similar efforts toward cultural heritage tourism, the cultural arts community might be brought up to the same level of recognition as the wine industry. Perhaps the VCB could create a Cultural Heritage Tourism Task Force to explore how to build this image, which would benefit the entire community.

The Director responded that this market segment was discussed at the Board's April retreat and staff has identified a variety of ways to incorporate this market. The Director and staff members do meet monthly with representatives of arts organizations to explore new/additional ways we can work together. The VCB's initial foray into a major cultural promotion will be in February 2008 with a month-long arts/culture/culinary promotion. This \$50,000 campaign will target communities within 150 miles of Grand Junction. The demographic of arts patrons is similar to winery and golf clientele and the VCB continues to research ways to cross-market to those audiences.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm on motion of Rick Martindale and second of Lynne Sorlye.