

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
SEPTEMBER 9, 2008

PRESIDING: Deborah Hoefler, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Sorlye, Brian Barry, Brunella Gualerzi, Rick Martindale, Paul Petersen, John Williams, Steve Meyer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Nathan Knoll

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Erin Chapman, Jennifer Grossheim-Harris, Holly Prickett, Irene Carlow, Tim Seeberg

GUESTS: Anna Maria Ray, Tim Campbell

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm.

MINUTES OF AUGUST 12, 2008: Lynne Sorlye moved the minutes be approved as written, John Williams seconded, passed unanimously.

HILL & COMPANY: Anna Maria Ray briefly reviewed the history of the current campaign, which was rolled out four years ago. The success of this campaign is proven by a high rate of repeat visitors and 71% awareness in the Denver market that Grand Junction is “Colorado’s Wine Country”. At the direction of VCB staff, Hill & Company is presenting two new campaign concepts that are designed to take the Grand Junction product to the next level.

In 2008 the VCB’s advertising plan began to reach out to a younger demographic to begin grooming future repeat visitors. The “Glasses” concept is a more artistic, specific appeal to that younger demographic – purely image and minimalistic. The identity of “wine country” will be reinforced by using wine glasses as the focal point of an ad or billboard and the glasses will hold items – a bike chain, golf tees, etc. – that convey the image of activities. Billboards could potentially have multiple glasses with different images to carry the message of the wide variety of activities visitors can enjoy here.

The “Landscape” concept is scenery-based and would incorporate wine country in a more subtle but impactful way and would appeal more to an older demographic. Familiar scenic images – such as a canyon backdrop behind a mountain biker or golfer – would be graphically designed to reveal the outline of a wine glass. This would catch the viewer’s eye, forcing a second look at the image. We would have to go on location to shoot new photography if this concept is preferred.

Debbie Kovalik suggested that pieces of both proposed concepts could be used to target different markets and demographics. Tim Campbell recommended that tag line “Taste the Adventure” be used if the concepts are mingled. Brunella Gualerzi complimented Hill & Company on the excellent presentation and said that she loved the “Glasses” concept, stating that it will really stand out among the scenery images that most Colorado advertisers use. Anna Maria Ray reminded the Board that Colorado residents are Grand Junction’s predominant audience and they know what is offered in different regions of the state.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Community Awareness Committee Lynne Sorlye reported that the committee recommends producing two community awareness pieces as single-fold, compact brochures. One would be basically talking points, focusing on VCB facts, e.g., history, services. This would be limited distribution to the Board, Council, press and service clubs. The second piece would be an event and meeting planner brochure, directed to locals, which would outline the VCB’s basic services, most of which are free. The committee also recommends that some funds be directed to local advertising in an effort to get more attention from the local press other than just lodging tax receipts. Local ads would focus on the role of the VCB, economic impact generated and highlight marketing efforts outside the area. These could be quarterly ads as well as Spring/Summer activity inserts and possibly TV; all would carry the local logo.

Special Events Committee Brian Barry reported on the committee’s further discussions regarding implementation of the existing Policy. The committee suggests identifying some events that the VCB will support based on criteria such as high return on investment, significant number of out-of-town attendees, and long-standing history in the community. The Board wants to remain flexible in reviewing funding applications, but it is important to enforce the requirement that applications be submitted not less than 120 days prior to an event. This year staff spent an inordinate amount of time reminding/asking event organizers to submit their applications and then working through numerous details that are the applicants’ responsibility. The intent of the Policy was to reduce staff time, not increase it. The committee recommends that each Board member “adopt” an event: A Board member will make the initial call to previously-funded events to remind them when their application is due and let them know that application deadlines will be strictly enforced.

City Administration Update Debbie Kovalik met with the Avalon Advisory Committee regarding that group’s fundraising feasibility study to expand the facility to accommodate the Grand Junction Symphony. The committee has identified \$3 million - \$7 million as an achievable fundraising goal.

The City budget process is nearing completion and the new financial software is in place. Debbie Kovalik, Barb Bowman and Tim Seeberg will meet with the City Manager, Deputy City Manager and Financial Operations Manager to discuss budgetary functions of the “new” combined department.

STAFF REPORTS: Erin Chapman reported that the number of leads issued is at 52% of goal and confirmed business is 46% of goal. The VCB hosted an education session for hotels and volunteers to learn more about September events. Presenters included representatives of Rock Jam, Wine Festival, Air Show and Downtown Car Show.

Other sales staff activities include:

- Meeting with District 51 Activities Director and Building Use Supervisor
- Assisted with Riverside Parkway opening
- October 3-5 soccer tournament hotel placement; number of teams are down from 2007
- Site inspection for Tourico, the official packager for American Airlines
- IDSS software training for hotels; properties will respond to or decline leads online
- Wine Country CD direct mail nearly complete; recipients will register for a 1-day fam

Statistics Barb Bowman reported that August lodging tax receipts were up 7.6%, indicating Grand Junction is beginning to show signs of softening. The lodging tax rate of growth is slowing but YTD collections are up 16.7% which is in line with the budget projection of 15%.

OTHER BUSINESS: Federal per diem rates for Grand Junction will increase \$10 to \$91 for FY 2009, (effective October 1, 2008).

Lynne Sorlye, Co-Chair for the Kiwanis District Convention, sent a letter to the VCB and TRCC thanking them for their excellent service and attention to detail that made the convention very successful.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm on motion of Brunella Gualerzi and second of Brian Barry.