

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JANUARY 8, 2008

PRESIDING: Deborah Hoefler, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Sorlye, Brunella Gualerzi, Brian Barry, Rick Martindale, Nathan Knoll, John Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT: Steve Meyer, Paul Petersen

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

GUESTS: Ed Miller, Diane Miller, Anna Maria Ray, Gaylene Ore

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 11, 2007: Brian Barry moved the minutes be approved as written, Lynne Sorley seconded, passed unanimously.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION: Vivian Brodine introduced Ed Miller, who has given 1,000 hours of service to the Visitor Center. Ed began volunteering in January 2002 after he and his wife, Diane, relocated from Ithaca, New York upon his retirement from IBM. Ed manages the brochure inventory and assists staff with many events, including the Governor's Conference on Tourism.

BOARD ITEMS: The Chair reviewed history and purpose of the Special Events and Community Awareness committees. Membership on the two committees for 2008 is as follows:

Special Events

Brian Barry, Chair
Nathan Knoll
Rick Martindale

Community Awareness

Lynne Sorlye, Chair
Brunella Gualerzi
John Williams
Steve Meyer

Annual Retreat The dates of April 14-15 were selected for the annual retreat. Staff will contact Jasper Welch to check his availability to facilitate.

HILL & COMPANY: Anna Maria Ray reported that the average daily rate for the 3rd quarter was \$78 up from \$71 in 2006. Average occupancy during the period was 90% compared to 87.6% in the prior year. One property is no longer participating in this research.

The marketing strategy sessions were very productive and the resulting 2008 Marketing Plan will be distributed at the February Board meeting.

A sample of the proposed 2008 Visitor Guide cover was reviewed by the Board; discussion items included:

- Crag Crest Trail is not in Grand Junction and does not depict the area
- Grand Junction is desert, not mountains
- Photo is similar to resort areas' marketing materials
- Many summer guests ask about the Mesa for hiking and fishing
- Travel decisions aren't based on a cover photo
- Most of the VCB's product is not in Grand Junction
- Red rocks, blue sky are great images of Grand Junction
- Difficult for one photo to depict everything Grand Junction offers

The Director stated that the Visitor Guide cover needs to be distinctly different each year so that the current edition is quickly and easily identifiable. This helps to manage inventory in the Visitor Center and other distribution points, and helps staff assist potential visitors on the phone. For the future, perhaps the Board could reach consensus on the cover direction for the next 3 – 4 years and staff and Hill & Co. could lay out photography plans accordingly. The VCB has a sizable photo library but many are not of high enough quality to use on the cover and most of our "people" shots need to be updated. Hill & Company will provide additional cover designs which staff will email to the Board. Responses will need to be received within 24 hours as the production/printing schedule is very tight and we are out of 2007 Guides; comments will be compiled and forwarded to the Chair. Brian Barry suggested that long-range planning of the Visitor Guide be discussed at the annual retreat.

STAFF REPORTS: December lodging tax receipts were up 31.4%; the year-end increase of 23.6% is on target with projections. John Williams asked if the VCB tracks the energy industry's impact on lodging. We did attempt such a survey but were unsuccessful because most hotels do not have the ability to track specific industry/business segments. The level of energy-related business also depends upon the individual property and reports range from 2% - 60% of total room sales.

Sales Barb Bowman reported that the sales staff exceeded the goal of sales leads issued by 3%. The conversion rate for 2007 leads converted to booked business is 30% thus far; 59% of 2006 leads issued have been converted. Our membership in CVB HotRates, a website for meeting planners to check hotel availability, produced 5 leads in 2006 and 4 in 2007. Later in 2008 we will evaluate our continued participation in this program.

Fams typically begin in April-May but activity is off to a very busy start with 4 scheduled in January.

IDSS of Minneapolis is the vendor selected to provide sales database software. This web-based program has excellent reporting capabilities and provides an industry partner interface.

Marketing/Promotions Local businesses have been largely unresponsive to Miles Media's request to verify information for our new website and the number of contacts required to get information is affecting the project and the completion date of the new site.

The cultural community has been very responsive and enthusiastic about the Arts, Hearts & Tarts promotion. Ads start January 16 (radio, print, TV) and lodging packages are on our website.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:02 pm on motion of Brunella Gualerzi and second of Brian Barry.