

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MARCH 11, 2008

PRESIDING: Deborah Hoefler, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Sorlye, Brian Barry, Rick Martindale, Nathan Knoll, Steve Meyer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brunella Gualerzi, Paul Petersen, John Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Jennifer Grossheim-Harris, Erin Chapman, Irene Carlow, Layne Whyman

GUESTS: Georgeanne Joufflas, Anna Maria Ray

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

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 12, 2008: Lynne Sorlye moved the minutes be approved as written, Brian Barry seconded, passed unanimously.

HOST REMARKS: Brian Barry briefly discussed the expansion of St. Mary's and played a video of the "Century Project".

GUEST REMARKS: Georgeanne Joufflas gave a brief history of Listening to Business (L2B), a program that surveys the opinions and perceptions of businesses in Mesa County. Administered by Economic Development Partners, a group of public and private organizations, the goal of the L2B program is to learn what existing businesses need to grow and expand. The survey group in this phase of L2B will focus on tourism/retail/service sectors in an effort to identify the barriers to growth in this community. Georgeanne invited VCB Board members to participate in these interviews; 1-hour training sessions are scheduled at the Chamber March 19 at 11:30 am and at the VCB March 20 at 9:00 am. The Board will be advised of the interview schedule when it is finalized.

BOARD ITEMS: Community Awareness Committee Lynne Sorlye stated that the purpose of the Committee is to increase awareness of the VCB in the community, especially the economic impact of the VCB's marketing and sales efforts. Accomplishments of the Community Awareness campaign include the year-round street banners which promote numerous events and community activities and development of the "local" logo which is used in print ads and printed materials (posters, etc.) that are for local use and distribution. An idea that was suggested at the committee's February 22 meeting was for the staff to conduct marketing training seminars designed to help tourism businesses reach out-of-town customers. During the discussion, it was noted that the VCB would not want to create a conflict with programs being offered by the Chamber or the Community College. Lynne commented that designing and conducting training

would be a commitment of staff time and noted that the Customer Service training was discontinued after several years because of poor attendance. The committee also discussed how to reach our local customers perhaps through service clubs and local organizations. Lynne suggested that there be more discussion of these topics at the retreat.

Special Events Brian Barry reported on two applications recently reviewed. Pork & Hops, in its second year, will be held the same weekend as the Winefest. Because lodging will sell out for the Winefest, the committee recommends an award of \$2,000 for marketing directed to the drive market. Event organizers need to understand the impact of Winefest on lodging availability and how that impacts the Special Events funding decision. Steve Meyer said that this event fits the mission of fostering new events. He agreed that the VCB should try to encourage the organizers to check the calendar before setting their 2009 date to ensure lodging availability and increase attendance.

Steve Meyer moved to accept the committee's recommendation of providing \$2,000 marketing assistance to Pork & Hops; Lynne Sorlye seconded, approved unanimously.

The Air Show requested \$20,000 in Special Events assistance. The Air Show Committee has blocked over 200 rooms for performers, support staff and vendors. Other events the same weekend (September 26-28) are the Downtown Car Show, Fruita Fall Festival, Mesa State Homecoming and Color Sunday. An award of \$7,500 is recommended for regional marketing and the Air Show must have a link from their site to the VCB's and use the VCB logo on their materials.

Lynne Sorlye moved to accept the committee's recommendation of providing \$7,500 marketing assistance to the Air Show, Steve Meyer seconded, approved unanimously.

Staff reported that the \$5,250 award to the Spring Barrel Tasting will be used to advertise the second weekend (May 17-18) and for a video shoot of the first weekend (April 26-27). The VCB will own the video and can use it on our website as well as on a promotional CD.

Staff also reported that newer and/or all-volunteer events take a lot of staff time because we are starting from scratch to create a marketing strategy along with marketing materials.

Annual Retreat The Director, Chair and Vice Chair have scheduled a conference call with Jasper Welch, the retreat facilitator, for March 14. Following are some topics the Director suggests be addressed:

- New hotels
- Proposed event center
- Effect of new assets on VCB's efforts and programs
- Gasoline costs
- Energy industry impacts
- Housing and workforce
- Remaining a viable tourism community
- Define research projects for 2008
- City's Comprehensive Plan

At the February 12 Board meeting, Gateway Canyons was the consensus location for the retreat. The Board requested staff request a bid from Red River Inn, outside Moab, as another possible location within the 1 – 1 ½ hour drive time. The Chair and Vice Chair will select the location after the Red River Inn responds.

American Airlines Board members are encouraged to attend the inaugural flight reception on April 7. Plan to be at the airport by 10:00 am. The Chair and Vice Chair will represent the Board at the April 24 reception in Dallas and Rick Martindale will attend as a representative of the lodging community. Prior to the reception, Debbie Kovalik and Barb Bowman will call on corporate clients; Jennifer Grossheim-Harris and Gaylene Orr will make media calls; and several tourism partners will meet with their existing clients in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area.

MARKETING/PROMOTIONS: We have already received positive feedback about the new website, which includes videos as a new feature. The Arts, Hearts & Tarts promotion went very well overall for its first year. There were 2,145 direct hits on that logo on our website.

Hill & Company: Anna Maria Ray distributed the 2007 year-end ADR/Occupancy report. The annual average daily rate was \$73, up \$5 over 2006. Annual average occupancy was 77.2%, up 4.5% over 2006. Billboards in Denver and Colorado Springs will run April – August; we will add a tag to the national ads to promote American Eagle flights to Dallas. The online conversion study will launch this month. The Hill & Company creative team has begun concepting ideas for the 2009 campaign.

STAFF REPORTS: January lodging tax receipts have been adjusted on the monthly report to reflect late payments; receipts for the month were up 24.9% instead of the 6.6% previously reported. February receipts increased 21.7% over 2007.

Sales: Erin Chapman reported that 30 sales leads have been issued YTD, which is 23% of the annual goal. In the process of converting to the new software, staff has reviewed and cleaned up 3,000 records prior to sending the database to the new vendor.

Layne Whyman reported that American Eagle and spring events banners are being installed in place of Arts, Hearts & Tarts banners. Parks & Recreation staff installs, takes down and stores all the VCB's banners.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm on motion of Steve Meyer and second of Lynne Sorlye.