

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

March 9, 2010

PRESIDING: Paul Petersen, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nathan Knoll, Rick Martindale, John Williams, Glen Gallegos, Jessica Stimmel, Per Nilsson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Deborah Hoefler, Brunella Gualerzi

STAFF PRESENT: Barbara Bowman, Debbie Kovalik, Jennifer Grossheim-Harris, Melanie Wiseman, Layne Whyman, Erin Chapman, Holly Prickett, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Karin Mast; Linda Hill and Kate Peterson via teleconference

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 pm.

The Chair introduced Per Nilsson and welcomed him to the Board.

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2010: Nathan Knoll moved to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Rick Martindale, passed unanimously.

MILES MEDIA AND HILL AEVIUM JOINT PRESENTATION: Trends identified in a recent national survey of leisure travelers include:

- Booking windows are shorter
- Average number of trips taken in the past 12 months has increased
- More travel by auto than by air
- Use of the Internet for travel research is increasing
- Social media use is increasing
- Package pricing that includes activities is very important
- 63% are looking for bargains and discounts
- Reasons cited for not traveling in the past year:
 - 57% personal finances
 - 50% gasoline prices
 - 32% cost of airfare

One-third reported using the Internet to learn about local cultural arts and heritage, which bodes well for the VCB because the site is content-rich. The local experts' blogs (featuring cultural arts, food/wine and outdoor activities) are on hiatus until Spring but still have a high visitation rate. According to the Pew Research Center, the number of individuals who use the Internet is nearly equal to the number of people who watch TV, a 12% increase in Internet usage in the past five years.

The meetings market is expected to take 2-3 years to fully recover. Nationally, business travel typically represents one-third of hotel occupancy; that figure is higher in Grand Junction.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Special Events Nathan Knoll reported on applications reviewed by the committee:

Mesa County Fair Wine Competition \$1,500 requested This would be a new event for wineries that use Mesa County grapes; the committee assumes the entrants will be mostly local wineries. The event is not defined, no date has been set, no sponsors have been secured and it is unlikely to produce overnight stays. For those reasons, the committee recommends no award.

Western Colorado Triathlon \$5,140 requested This event is the same weekend as Colorado Mountain Winefest. Organizers expect that many participants will camp at Highline Lake or in Fruita. Any overnight stays generated would be one-night (Friday only) which will interfere with the much higher number of Winefest weekend packages the hotels can sell. The committee recommends no award.

Rim Rock Marathon \$7,090 requested This is a one-day event in November; participation is limited to 400 runners. Currently, organizers are promoting only Fruita hotels. The committee recommends \$3,675 for magazine advertising, with a requirement to link to the VCB's lodging section, and provide statistics about attendees/participants after the event. Nathan Knoll moved to award \$3,675 in marketing assistance to the Rim Rock Marathon, Rick Martindale seconded, passed unanimously.

Flyin' Miatas \$1,200 requested Over 80 Miata owners are expected to stay 3-4 nights for this event August 5-8. This owners' group has been getting together for over 12 years and they have a very well-developed itinerary. The committee recommends \$1,000 for printing mailers. John Williams moved to award \$1,000 in marketing assistance to the Flyin' Miatas, Jessica Stimmel seconded, passed unanimously.

Special Events awards thus far total \$22,175; four more applications will be reviewed next month.

STAFF REPORTS: February lodging tax receipts were down 22%, YTD is down 25%. Revenue is, however, 12% above 2006 levels, which is reflected in our 2010 budget revisions. Staff continues to review the budget and will present recommendations for savings at the retreat.

Convention Services Layne Whyman reported that the Colorado Pro Rodeo Association is in the process of negotiating an additional 3-5 year contract to hold this event in Mesa County. This is a direct result of the support and assistance provided by the VCB and the entire community. Planning for Ride the Rockies is coming together nicely.

Sales Erin Chapman reported that we are 13% to goal of sales leads issued. At the 1st Quarter Coffee, staff asked the hotels to display/distribute the Visitor Guide at their front desks as a way to promote attractions and activities to their guests. Several properties stated they can't display the Visitor Guide at their front desks because of franchise regulations – other hotels are listed in the Guide. In response to that need, staff developed a rack card with a list of area activities. Also in response to our hotel partners' requests, organizers of major events will be invited to the 2nd Quarter coffee to be held in April.

Also in April, the VCB will host a meeting planner event in Denver. The VCB and participating properties will invite selected clients to a cooking event that will pair Colorado wine with Colorado cuisine. Attendance is limited because this is a participatory event; we will break into small groups so that everyone is involved. This is a great opportunity for the GJ sales team to interact with clients in a fun, relaxed setting and strengthen personal relationships.

Other sales activities include continuing to work with Miles Media on enhancements to the meeting planner section of the VCB website.

Visitor Center Melanie Wiseman reported on continuing outreach efforts to local groups to meet at the Visitor Center. Groups currently scheduled include Cub Scouts, school classes and the Friendship Force.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm on motion of Jessica Stimmel and second of John Williams.