

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

April 13, 2010

PRESIDING: Rick Martindale, Vice Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Williams, Deborah Hoefer, Brunella Gualerzi, Jessica Stimmel, Per Nilsson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Paul Petersen, Nathan Knoll, Glen Gallegos

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

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

MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2010: Deborah Hoefer moved to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Brunella Gualerzi, passed unanimously.

HOST REMARKS: Erin Curtis, BLM Public Affairs Specialist, stated that there are 6 million acres of BLM lands in the State of Colorado. The Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO) has jurisdiction over 1.2 million acres and receives over 1 million visitors per year, an unusually high number for BLM lands. Visitation during the last two years has increased dramatically:

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2009</u>
North Fruita Desert	57,000	90,000
North Desert/OHV area	100,000	350,000
Tabeguache Trailhead	30,000	60,000
Bangs Canyon Trailhead	10,000	30,000

The GJFO is in the process of reviewing and revising its Resource Management Plan, which is done every 20 years.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Special Events Per Nilsson reported on applications reviewed by the committee:

*Grand Valley Kennel Club Annual Dog Shows - \$500* This show has been held for 38 years; there were 500 attendees in 2009. The 2010 event will be lengthened to four days and attendance is expected to double. The committee recommends an award of \$1,000 to provide greater marketing assistance to this event that has strong potential to continue to increase overnight visitors. John Williams moved to award \$1,000 Special Events marketing assistance to the Grand Valley Kennel Club Annual Dog Shows, Brunella Gualerzi seconded, passed unanimously.

*Community Hospital Tour of the Valley - \$2,500* This has been extended to a 2-day event and organizers hope to increase attendance from 1,100 to 1,500; 40% of 2009 attendees were from out of town. Organizers are working on plans to show "Race Across the Sky" at the

Avalon Theatre on Saturday. The committee recommends full funding. John Williams moved to award \$2,500 Special Events marketing assistance to Tour of the Valley, Deborah Hoefler seconded, passed with five in favor. Per Nilsson abstained.

*Palisade Chamber of Commerce Peach Festival - \$6,000* The Peach Festival is the major fundraising event of the year for the Chamber of Commerce. Requested funds will be used to print and distribute poster displays and brochures at King Soopers/City Market stores throughout Colorado (150 locations). The committee has several concerns:

- Is the event generating very limited overnight stays?
- Are Palisade businesses charging the event for services?
- Is the Town of Palisade providing any funding?

The committee recommends a \$3,000 award (\$5,500 was awarded in 2009), and suggests that funding continue to decline in future years. The VCB promotes the peach harvest in a variety of ways, including delivering peaches to Denver/Colorado Springs media; sponsoring Chef Wayne's cooking demonstrations on Channel 9; advertising in regional newspapers and on our website. Debbie Kovalik stated that a presence in every King Soopers is very strong advertising to individuals that traditional methods may never reach. She asked the committee to request additional information from the Palisade Chamber – specifically, will the King Soopers promotion still be accomplished without full funding from the VCB. The committee will request more information and will present a recommendation to the Board at a later date.

*Celebrate the Hands that Harvest - \$3,500* This is the annual benefit concert for Child and Migrant Services. The event is not advertised outside Mesa County. This is a good cause, but is not likely to provide a strong return on investment to Grand Junction lodging properties or Grand Junction businesses. No funding is recommended, but the event will be listed on the web calendar and staff could provide media contacts for press releases. Jessica Stimmel moved that no funding be awarded, Brunella Gualerzi seconded, passed with four votes. John Williams and Rick Martindale abstained.

Annual Retreat Follow-Up Discussion is tabled to the May 11 meeting.

Special Event Policy Review The committee will meet at 12:30 pm April 30 at Quality Inn, then bring recommendations to the May 11 Board meeting.

STAFF REPORTS: Lodging tax receipts are down 26% for March, down 25% YTD; however, this is 12% ahead of 2006 revenue, which is the revised target. Brochure mailings for March nearly doubled, a result of receiving 3-months worth of leads from the Grand Circle Association.

Marketing/Promotions Internet usage increased nearly 30% over February, although the year-over-year change reflects a slight decline. Time spent on the site is 6.5 minutes and Signals of Intent to Travel (SITs) are strong. (An SIT is when a user visits three different sections of the site.) Many users visited the Specials & Packages section in March but there were few bookings. Golf packages are beginning to sell well for the hotels.

Eleven properties representing 1,500 rooms have agreed to participate in the Average Daily Rate/Occupancy Study.

Sales Erin Chapman and a representative from the Doubletree attended Meetings Industry Council tradeshow in Denver in mid-March; 19 leads were developed. The VCB hosted 18 meeting planners for a cooking event in Denver on April 1; five of our meetings properties partnered with the VCB. Over 70% of the attendees represent potential new business.

Convention Servicing Staff continues to engage community partners throughout the Grand Valley in Ride the Rockies activities.

Visitor Center Community outreach efforts have been very successful. Eleven groups have visited the Center in the past 6 weeks, including Cub Scouts and elementary school groups.

The Visitor Center is a Geocache site and has been visited by 18 people in the 1<sup>st</sup> two weeks. Geocaching is a treasure hunting game where you use a GPS to hide and seek containers with other participants in the activity. Geocaches are currently placed in over 100 countries around the world and on all seven continents, including Antarctica.

OTHER BUSINESS: The May 11 regular monthly meeting will be at LaQuinta Inn & Suites.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm on motion of Jessica Stimmel and second of Brunella Gualerzi.