

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

SEPTEMBER 13, 2011

PRESIDING: Per Nilsson, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Williams, Paul Petersen, Renae Phillips, Glen Gallegos, Lynne Sorlye, Nathan Knoll, Jessica Stimmel

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ron Beach

STAFF PRESENT: Barbara Bowman, Debbie Kovalik, Jennifer Grossheim-Harris, Layne Whyman, Holly Prickett, Theron LaFountain, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Chris Clemens, Pattie Welch, Tom Leydon, Scott Mercier, Tim Foster

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

Debbie Kovalik introduced Theron LaFountain who has joined the department staff as manager of Two Rivers Convention Center and The Avalon Theatre.

MINUTES OF AUGUST 9, 2011: Paul Petersen moved to approve the minutes as written, Lynne Sorlye seconded, approved unanimously.

PRO CYCLING CHALLENGE: Tim Foster and Scott Mercier are speaking on behalf of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). Tim surmises that next year's route will reverse but that Denver and Vail could be "givens". With the success of this first year, 36 cities are bidding and any negotiating room has likely been lost. He wants Grand Junction to be the overall start as well as the start-finish of one stage, which would keep the participants in Grand Junction 2-4 nights. The LOC is also requesting funding from both the City and the County. He estimates hard costs of hosting this event would be \$250,000.

Scott Mercier stated that hosting the race is a unique opportunity to showcase the diverse features of this area. The LOC would still like to pursue a stage over the Colorado National Monument, but there are other routes in the area that would be challenging. He rode one potential route – Land's End Road – two days ago. As a professional cyclist for 5 years and a member of the Olympic cycling team, Scott believes the different aspects of that route would be challenging to the riders.

*The Denver Post* reported that the Pro Cycling Challenge was the largest sporting event in Colorado in 2011 and that 20% of the State's population saw part of the race live. According to Tim Foster, bringing this race to Grand Junction would be a huge economic generator, with national and international media coverage. Millions of people

worldwide viewed various parts of the race on TV and via streaming video. Each host city had 30-second and 60-second commercials and the announcers talked about the surrounding area during down-time of the race.

Scott said that the LOC is not asking for marketing resources because "this event markets itself". The Committee is requesting a financial contribution of \$50,000 from the VCB. Additional funding requests that will be made:

- \$75,000 from City of Grand Junction (some possibly in-kind)
- \$75,000 from Mesa County

The 2012 RFP is scheduled for release the end of this month. Responses will be due November 1. One of the bid requirements is for the host community to provide 600 hotel rooms.

*Tim Foster and Scott Mercier departed the meeting.*

CCT ADVERTISING Pattie Welch reviewed elements of the 2011 marketing campaign, including billboards, print, and meetings advertising. CCT and Miles Media work very closely together to coordinate implementation of the marketing plan and maximize the VCB's marketing resources. For example, website visitors are tracked more accurately because a separate landing page is designed for each specific campaign. We can also better track the effectiveness of the creative design: winery creative outperforms golf; adventure/biking was removed from the creative rotation in July based on lower response.

Results of March-August advertising activities include:

- SEM
  - Over 1 million impressions
  - Click-through rate increased each month
- Specific market results:
  - Denver Metro – 88.7% of clicks
  - City Specific
    - Colorado Springs highest, followed by Salt Lake, Dallas, Phoenix, Houston
  - Wine Enthusiast
    - Denver Metro are 76.5%
    - Colorado Springs 12%

VCB staff and the agency will meet tomorrow to begin planning for 2012.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: The Chair opened discussion of the Pro Cycling Challenge funding request. The Chair stated that he is a member of the Local Organizing Committee; the Vice Chair stated that he is a member of the Local Organizing Committee Executive Committee.

## Discussion/comments from Board members:

- The TV coverage and streaming video of the event was like watching commercials for Vail and the other cities. But how can the VCB come up with \$50,000 especially in view of the significant budget cuts of the past two years?
- The VCB might fund this event in lieu of specific advertising. Is this a better way to spend some of our advertising dollars?
- Everyone supports the event; the question is the type and level. The committee requested funds from the VCB and they'll also request funds from the City. The VCB is part of the City – it's the same pot of money. We need to look at the VCB mission statement. In-kind contributions may be more appropriate than cash. What else is on the 2012 calendar? Every bidding city has a lot to offer; the race may come to Grand Junction one time only or it may return again in 4-5 years.
- What if it comes to Grand Junction every year? We would have to totally re-think the VCB budget.
- Need to look at all the other groups and events that are scheduled for 2012, especially those events that are staples of the community and the conferences that come every year.
- We give JUCO \$10,000 cash every year. We should be able to find funds in next year's budget and determine if spending that amount on the Pro Cycling Challenge is a better buy. The race would be important for this town and it is different than other special events because coverage and interest is world-wide.
- What is the City of Grand Junction doing? We need to go through a process, identify the VCB's role and look at all City departments' commitments to the event.
- What budget line items would have to be cut to fund this event?
- Refer the request to a Board committee; need staff involvement to understand the logistics of hosting/supporting a major event; pressures on staff; budget impact and recommendations on reallocation of funds.

Debbie Kovalik suggested the Board could recommend an in-kind contribution for the use of Two Rivers Convention Center as a media center. Two days' facility rental would be approximately \$10,000. Food and beverage expenses are separate (hard) costs and would not be included in the VCB's contribution. Barb Bowman stated that staff resources are a consideration for a major event such as this. By way of example, when we hosted Ride the Rockies, both Barb Bowman and Layne Whyman worked on little

else for 6 months. This year, staff has worked with 120 events and there are several large events/conferences confirmed for next year that we have committed resources to.

The USA Pro Cycling Challenge funding request is referred to the Special Event Committee for review. The Committee will present their recommendation at the October 11 regular monthly meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm on motion of Jessica Stimmel and second of John Williams.