

VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU

MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tuesday, July 14, 1992

PRESIDING: Don Bramer, Chairman

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Nelson, Tom Ralser, Cindy George, Frank Bering, Karen Moore

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Judy Manning, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Cindy Sherrill, Diane Schwenke, Bob Reece, Mike Heaston

MINUTES OF JUNE 9, 1992 MEETING: Cindy George moved for approval; Frank Bering seconded; approved unanimously.

SIGNAGE/ENTRYWAY COMMITTEE: The Committee has chosen three different designs to make a final selection from. A list of needs is being compiled and placement discussed; signs will be clearly visible to drivers. Input from the State Department of Transportation has been very good. The Committee will try to have a proposal ready to present to the City CIP in August; the City may be prepared to begin this project in 1993.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Dinosaur Days - Advertising has begun in Crested Butte, Moab and Telluride. Cindy Sherrill requested the VCB staff circulate a lodging questionnaire (similar to the one used after Country Jam) before Dinosaur Days. Renaissance Faire - No report. Kokopelli's Supermarathon - Mike Heaston distributed applications and showed the Board ads that are currently running. Mike's European counterpart has received over 350 requests for applications; Mike hopes to see increased American participation this year. Wine Festival - All documents are in order; the VCB's payment has been made, and supporting documentation has been submitted for the matching funds from the State. The committee has chosen entertainment and poster art and is working on packages. Printed collateral is due August 1.

CHAMBER REQUEST FOR REIMBURSEMENT: Copies of Bonnie Pehl-Petersen's July 6 letter were distributed. Don Bramer questioned the "Parameters" section of the proposal and asked how phone calls and walk-ins are documented. Diane Schwenke responded that phone calls are recorded on NCR telephone message pads, as the Chamber and VCB agreed. The original message is given to the VCB to respond to, the Chamber keeps a copy for tracking in the event that person calls again. Walk-ins are asked to sign the register at the receptionist's desk; information requested is name, city and number

in party. Some telephone callers don't give their name and address, but want information on a specific hotel or specific activity in the area. Diane stated that the 3,755 documented phone calls shown on page one of the proposal is really a total estimate for 1992. This figure derived from the 6-week period of mid-February through late April and is based on the Chamber's assumption that those 6 weeks represent 20% of the calls they will receive for the entire year.

Frank asked why the Chamber receptionist doesn't direct walk-ins back to the VCB offices and simply transfer visitor calls on the Chamber's new phone system to the VCB? The VCB staff can handle all visitor related inquiries; why is the Chamber being impacted?

Paul noted that the VCB is willing and able to take those calls and that we have not asked the Chamber to handle them. Judy Manning was asked to check on scheduling volunteers to work at the Chamber during peak periods of the day to handle these calls. Diane stated the Chamber would not be opposed to that type of arrangement; however, the Chamber would still want to keep record (name, address) of the people our volunteers helped. Diane said that these calls can't be identified as tourism inquiries right away.

Don asked Diane how the Chamber refers calls to hotels? Does the Chamber charge the hotel for referring a call to that property? Diane answered that the Chamber staff uses the VCB's brochure with all the hotels listed; 3 or 4 hotels would be recommended. Callers are generally referred to Chamber members. Diane considers this a VCB call, because the VCB receives the lodging tax; the VCB would not be charged for local calls. As an example, if a person walks in to the Chamber and requests a map, the VCB is not charged. If that person unfolds the map and asks for directions, the VCB is charged.

Don pointed out that in the hospitality industry (hotels), the front desk does not handle every call that comes in but transfers callers to the appropriate department/individual. Why couldn't the Chamber transfer calls to the VCB and take the burden off the Chamber? He stated he had no problem paying for documented calls.

Tom moved that the Chamber be reimbursed \$.50 per documented inquiry (walk-in or phone), and that the VCB be credited the same amount for relocation information taken by the VCB and given to the Chamber. Paul seconded.

Discussion: Bob Reece said that many people who call won't give their phone or address, they just want general information. The Chamber is providing service to those people and should be compensated.

Tom amended his motion to: The Chamber be reimbursed \$.50 per documented inquiry (walk-in or phone) and that the VCB be credited the same amount for relocation information taken by the VCB and given to the Chamber. A documented inquiry is defined as a name

and address for phone calls, name and zip code for walk-ins, excluding inquiries from inside Mesa County. Frank seconded. Discussion: This will be on a trial basis; the Board may reconsider later if a large percentage of walk-ins give their zip code only. The amended motion passed unanimously.

Don noted that no funds were budgeted for this type of expense. He recommends that this inquiry reimbursement begin from this day forward, not retroactive as the Chamber requested. Paul agreed - this should begin either now or August 1. Frank suggested this begin July 15 and requests the cost of the Chamber's documented leads thus far this year. The Director recommended this expense be charged to our postage budget, as part of fulfillment expense. If the 1992 postage budget is exceeded, the Board would have to request an appropriation from City Council to transfer additional monies to this account.

Frank moved that the inquiry reimbursement process begin July 15, 1992. At the end of three months of this process, both the VCB Executive Director and the Chamber President present the first three months' results to the Board for review. Paul seconded; passed unanimously.

VCB RELOCATION PROPOSAL: The Director, Lanny Paulson and Tim Woodmansee met with John Moss regarding our concerns of cost and John's options for the VCB. John is frustrated with the amount of time this is taking and would like a decision quickly. He has given the VCB an additional 60 days to make a decision. The VCB will look at other levels of affordability. The current location has poor visibility and the lack of public restrooms continues to be an issue. The Director and Tom are working on economic impact figures and will soon begin a survey at the Center that will continue through the end of summer. There are few studies available that focus on the economic impact of a Tourist Information Center. Tom stated that the Bureau of Economic Research will insert in the VCB survey some questions pertinent to the Museum of Western Colorado (cultural tourists).

ELECTION OF CHAIR/VICE CHAIR: Paul Nelson moved that Frank Bering be appointed Chair for 1992-1993; Tom Ralser seconded; passed unanimously. Nominations for Vice Chair will be taken up at the August meeting.

NEW BOARD POSITIONS: Paul reported that many applications were received and this matter has been referred to the Quality of Life Committee. The Committee will discuss how to proceed; may schedule interviews if the candidates are not known to the Council. Philosophy and time commitment are very important to Council; it may be mid-September before these positions are filled.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Don told the Board that a local tourism business had asked to have convention leads mailed to them; the current policy is to send these leads to hotels only. He noted that meeting planners most often don't want any information other

than hotel bids while in the early stages of planning a convention. Staff is also concerned about releasing these initial inquiries because we are in the bidding stage with other cities. Some hotels have requested this information be kept confidential until a meeting is booked. The hotels have agreed to our releasing the name of a group 30 days before the meeting date. Staff suggested that the meeting planner guide could include a checklist of what information the planner would want from other suppliers. Paul moved to continue the discussion on lead generation until the August Board meeting and suggested staff continue lead distribution as usual; Frank seconded; passed unanimously.

The Director reported strong increases in all our statistics: Lodging tax is up 13% year to date, as is June 1992 vs June 1991. First quarter vendors fee is up nearly 13% vs last year. Calls to the 800 line are up 47% year to date, 18% for June. Brochure fulfillment year to date is a 34% increase over the entire year of 1992. Traffic at the Visitor Center is up 10% year to date.

Cindy noted that the Monument statistics will probably continue to reflect a decrease; revised calculation methods indicate that there is more traffic to Glade Park than previously reported.

Group sales reports total sales of \$1.4 million for the first six months. (This is 75% of the 1992 goal of \$1.88 million.) Convention Servicing has assisted 40 groups (7,226 people) for the period ending 6/30. (This is 80% of the 1992 goal of 50.)

TASHIRO: Ads promoting the Grand West will appear in both Denver newspapers in the Sunday travel sections, with a weekday pick up. Peach ads will begin the first week in August. The Adventure Guide is in the final proof stage. Plans have begun for the conversion study, and a cost-per-inquiry for the various publications will be prepared in the fall.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Director distributed a "sketch" marketing plan and copies of a preliminary budget for 1993. Option A is the 1993 budget as prepared in August 1991 and approved January 1992 as part of the City-wide budget process. As directed by the Board, staff prepared Option B to identify areas that could be decreased/increased to accommodate the Visitor Center building project.

Frank moved the meeting adjourn, Paul seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.