

MINUTES OF THE
VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPECIAL MEETING
JULY 13, 1993

PRESIDING: Frank Bering, Jr.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cindy George, Paul Nelson, Barney Barnett, Karen Berryman, Steve Hilliard

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Judy Manning, Irene Carlow, Nancy Buettnner, Barb Bowman

GUESTS: Linda Hill

MINUTES OF JUNE 8, 1993: Karen Berryman moved the minutes be approved, Cindy George seconded; approved unanimously.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Renaissance Faire Planning meetings are being held weekly. Representatives of the event attended the Renaissance Faire in Larkspur and returned with several ideas to promote crowd participation. More people are involved in committee work this year. Entertainment contracts are being finalized; cable TV advertising is being placed (in Gunnison, Aspen, eastern Utah). Grand West All paperwork is in order and payment is being made this week.

VISITOR CENTER: Bid packages will available on Friday, July 9; bids are due Monday, July 26. A Special Board meeting will be held Tuesday, July 27 to review the bids. If the Board accepts a bid, the recommendation will be taken to Council August 2 and 4.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Lodging tax receipts are up 11% for June, or 9.2% year to date. The decrease in inquiries is attributed to less advertising by the CTB; the CTB's inquiries are also down. Visits to the Visitor Center are up 9% year to date. Vendors fee is up significantly over 1992. The CTB is planning the 1994 Vacation Planning Guide in the event voters approve the tourism tax. All advertisers will have to pay for space before the election; all monies will be refunded if the tax does not pass.

Hotels were full Country Jam weekend, but it appears attendees at the festival did not spend discretionary dollars. Restaurants reported a slow weekend and Eagletree Tours did not see any business as a result of Country Jam. Organizers of the event seem to be frustrated with the process and lack of community support. Staff has heard some concerns that the event may move out of Grand Junction.

The BLM has offered to take the VCB Board and staff on a raft trip. The Board selected Friday, August 20 for a one-day trip.

We are seeing an increase in international visitors at the Visitor Center. Nine new volunteers were trained during June; we currently have 62 volunteers. Three training trips were taken during the month and another trip is planned for next week. Steve Hilliard noted that the volunteers were very helpful to the hotels during Country Jam, directing visitors to available lodging and filling rooms that opened up.

The Missouri Valley Fire Chiefs conference, representing 350 - 400 people) is booked for 1996. We will host a fam for members of the National Tour Association Board of Directors on September 19th and 20th following their meeting in Denver. If any VCB Board members would like to join any of the activities during this fam, staff would certainly appreciate their participation. We are receiving numerous calls regarding dinosaurs. Dinamation has been inundated with calls and has advised us they will no longer be able to host media visits. VCB staff can certainly continue doing dinosaur fams, but Dinamation staff will not be available to host the media. A writer for the German magazine Merian (similar to National Geographic) will be here this month. A German film crew that was here last year will be returning in August to film a segment for a TV show. We recently closed our first Canadian tour group.

Steve said the VCB should be pro-active in improving interpretation along Rabbit Valley. A discussion followed concerning how to make the visitor's experience better and more informative. The Director will contact Richard Simms to schedule a work session with the Museum and VCB boards.

Staff is beginning budget preparations for 1994-1995; the 1994 budget outline was distributed to the Board. Proposed project expenses by account will be presented at the August Board meeting. The largest new expense recommendation for next year is CINET, a group sales computer network link through the International Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus. Advertising will remain the same. Staff will actively solicit tourism partners to participate in a coupon booklet for Convention Servicing packets; individual coupon inserts have been discontinued for the balance of 1993. A Public Relations program is also planned. If the tourism tax is not passed, we will lose the very significant benefit of the CTB's advertising as well as access to all the travel writers the CTB provides. Conversely, if the tax does pass, the CTB will continue to funnel even more travel writers to us and we do not have enough staff to provide the individualized attention these writers need.

TASHIRO: The Winefest promotion is in place with Continental Airlines and Thrifty Car Rental. This promotion with Birds Eye Foods represents a \$12,000 value. We have received good coverage in The Denver Post in two special sections, including one front page photo of the Monument. Copies of the Grand West ad were distributed. A mock-up of the meeting planner direct mail was displayed. Preliminary results of the ADR are nearly ready and

will be reviewed in depth with the Director; some properties have not responded.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO VCB MATERIAL: John Shaver, Assistant City Attorney, addressed the Board concerning public access to material the VCB generates or requests to be prepared (e.g., the ADR study). Because the VCB is an agency of the City of Grand Junction, the VCB is subject to the statutory obligations of the open meetings law. There is no specific exemption for proprietary information. If material, reports, etc. are prepared by a public agency, it is public record; there are limited exceptions for trade secrets; personnel records are treated differently. It is a criminal offense if information requested is not provided and an individual (staff, Board member) can be personally liable for denying access to information.

Regarding the ADR survey, a copyright could be secured if the information is eligible for copyright; the data compilation could not be copyrighted. If the VCB uses this information in its daily operations, it becomes public record. Tashiro proposed an agreement between the agency and the lodging properties that individual property data would not be released; data would be merged for a combined report. John said that, under that proposal, the information would be available to the public.

Frank said that the VCB contracted with Tashiro for an ADR survey; Tashiro then contracted with individual properties for specific information that Tashiro will keep private. John responded that, if the VCB contracts with Tashiro for a report only, then the underlying information gathered to prepare that report is not public information. There would be two separate legal contracts: (1) between the VCB and Tashiro and (2) between Tashiro and an individual lodging property.

Staff described the CINET system and will get specific information for John to review and give an opinion on regarding public access.

There was also a discussion regarding the VCB's potential liability when taking people on fairs or even generally telling visitors what is available to do here. John feels there may be a tacit representation that an individual business is insured, can perform, etc. Debbie asked if the VCB should require proof of liability insurance from all entities/businesses listed in the Visitor Guide? John replied that it depends -- is it a recommendation, or information on what is available to do? Someone may construe it as an implied contract, expressed warranty, etc. Staff will work with the volunteers to make sure they understand what their role in the organization is, and the types of statements they make in suggesting activities to visitors.

Karen moved the meeting adjourn, Steve seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.