

MINUTES OF THE  
VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
DECEMBER 14, 1993

PRESIDING: Frank Bering, Jr.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Nelson, Barney Barnett, Steve Hilliard, Karen Berryman, Tom Ralser, Linda Afman, Cindy George, Lon Carpenter

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Irene Carlow, Barb Bowman, Judy Manning, Erin Chapman

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Lana Turrou, Nancy Ellyson, Duane Cochran, Karen Sheldon, Loren Hedrick

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 3, 1993: Tom Ralser moved the minutes be approved, Cindy George seconded; approved unanimously.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Applications for 1994 Special Events funding were reviewed and discussed at a Workshop on December 7. Recommendations for funding are: \$10,000 to Colorado Mountain Winefest, \$1,000 to Cross Orchards Apple Jubilee.

Barney noted that a great deal of time went into the Special Events review. He would like to find a way to get more (entrepreneurial) events to apply. The Special Events funds are not a charitable foundation; the purpose of funding events is to bring more people and activities to Grand Junction. It was suggested that the VCB will be able to promote events more in the new Visitor Center. Further discussion of Special Events may be on the Board retreat agenda or at a special workshop.

VISITOR CENTER: Staff met with the builders on Friday and Monday, December 10 and 13; the project is on schedule. The VCB will vacate the Chamber building on December 30 and move into the new facility January 3. There will be no restrooms for the first week and Taco Bell has agreed to let staff use their facilities. If the permanent heat is not working January 3, it will be operating by the end of the first week. Roadbase will be laid December 15; insulation will be installed December 16 and drywall December 20.

Barney asked what the back-up plan is. The Director responded that the Ramada had offered two rooms for us to use as an office. Three separate business lines and the 800 line would be installed, with calls forwarded from City Hall to the business lines. Barney asked if anyone had approached the Chamber and asked if the VCB could remain in the building for another week. The Director said that the Chamber's new tenant has already moved into the second floor and is sharing space with Chamber staff. Steve will call Martiey

Miller to discuss any possibilities for the VCB to remain in the current offices through the first week in January.

**TOURISM SUMMIT:** Frank reported on the Governor's Tourism Summit held December 8. Because of the outcome of the election in November, the State will not fund any tourism marketing efforts. There are positive indications that the private sector will fund some type of marketing. The Welcome Centers will be kept open and state maps will be printed, although not in the same quantities as in the past. There may be some bridge funding (e.g., Coors Foundation). Market Orders are possible, but there is uncertainty as to whether the restaurants will support this type of organization and the required funding. Another summit will be held in March or April with a theme similar to that of the previous CTB annual conference. Two staff members will remain through April 1 and the Welcome Centers will stay open through that time. The 800 line will be answered by Ski Country USA. It is hoped that the legislature will appropriate funds to keep the Welcome Centers open year-round.

**FILM COMMISSION:** Lana Turrou addressed the Board on behalf of the Grand Junction Area Film Commission (GJAFC). The GJAFC requested funding from the VCB (approximately \$1,000 - \$1,500) to help the Commission continue its efforts to attract the film industry to this area. Funds would be used for photography, brochures and cooperative efforts with the State Film Commission. Historically, funding for the GJAFC has come from the private sector. Film commissions in other parts of the state co-op with convention and visitor bureaus, economic development councils and, in some cases, county governments.

Lana gave a brief history of the GJAFC's efforts and the types of film crews Grand Junction has attracted in the past. She said western Colorado lost two movies (City Slickers and Wyatt Earp) because of Amendment 2. The GJAFC had over 80 leads in 1992, but only 50+ in 1993; the fourth quarter of 1993 is ahead of the same period for 1992. Most of the leads come from the State Film Commission office.

The consensus of the Board is that this topic needs to be discussed at length before a decision can be made. Lana will provide copies of the GJAFC's brochures to be circulated among the Board.

**BOARD VACANCIES:** The vacancies have been advertised; Council will select several candidates for interviews. If Council would allow input from the current Board, Paul and Karen would like to participate in the interviews.

**ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR:** Barney nominated Paul Nelson as Chair, Steve seconded. Tom nominated Steve Hilliard as Vice Chair, Cindy seconded. Lon moved the nominations be closed. By unanimous vote, Paul Nelson was elected Chair, Steve Hilliard Vice Chair.

TASHIRO MARKETING: Linda Hill distributed copies of the 1994 advertising plan. New publications have been added to make up for the loss of the Official State Vacation Planning Guide. The major difference in the 1994 ad plan is the addition of TV advertising on the Front Range. A total of \$17,500 is budgeted for TV, which will allow for approximately 6 weeks of advertising. Special promotions may be offered to maximize those ads.

The 1993 direct mail campaign was successful (4% return) and another direct mail is planned for 1994. Research will be conducted at the Visitor Center; Tom Ralser will be asked to assist with this project. The Public Relations program will be put in place in 1994. Kathleen Brown, of Denver, is recommended to handle public relations, with a local person to conduct travel writer fairs.

Steve asked that the VCB/Tashiro think about possible ways to capture Las Vegas traffic. Norm Cook has been gathering information about this market and discussed this at the December Lodging Association luncheon. Las Vegas is moving away from strictly a gaming center to a family center, and more families will drive than fly. Linda responded that regional radio ads in the 4:00-6:00 pm slot and travel channels in other cities may be possibilities.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: November statistics were not discussed in detail due to the lateness of the hour. Steve pointed out, however, that December leisure traveler numbers are down; research indicates occupancy took a big fall. City-wide retail sales were down 10% in October.

Country Jam organizers have asked the VCB to assist with directing festival attendees to accommodations in private homes and would like a decision from the Board as soon as possible. The City Attorney advises this type of lodging is legal if stays are of 10 days or less. The festival in Eau Claire, Wisconsin receives this type of assistance from the local CVB; the hotels fill up and an additional 1,000 people are placed in private homes. The Eau Claire CVB is a Housing Bureau for Country Jam and has done this for three years.

There was discussion concerning potential liability to the VCB. Staff spends a great deal of time providing very specific lodging information to festival attendees and the VCB will continue to provide this service to visitors and the event. Country Jam organizers offered a 1-900 number as one of their suggestions to provide lodging information. One consideration may be issuing an RFP to see if any local business/individual wants to handle this.

The VCB does want to ensure that all hotel rooms are full before visitors are referred to private homes. The hotels have been very good about letting staff know that rooms have opened up so callers can be given the most current information available. Visitor Center volunteers have also been able to direct people to proper-

ties with available space. Some of the small properties do not take advance reservations and that is their business decision.

Paul Nelson stated that the Board cannot make a decision on such short notice. Staff is directed to research this topic and make a recommendation to the Board.

Policies need to be established for handout/display items at the new Visitor Center. The Director will set up a meeting with Barney, Paul and Lon for the first week of January to begin discussions.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Staff will compile and circulate a list of suggested dates for the Board retreat.

Steve presented Frank Bering and Tom Ralser with a gift from the VCB and expressed appreciation for their involvement with and service on the Board.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Duane Cochrane addressed the Board regarding his past involvement in the film industry and his interest in serving on the local Film Commission Board. He has met with the Director and discussed his interest in the GJAFC.

Tom Ralser moved the meeting adjourn, Frank Bering seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.