

MINUTES OF THE
VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
NOVEMBER 3, 1993

PRESIDING: Frank Bering, Jr.

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

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

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Greg Walcher, Wade Harley, Bob Taylor, John Arnold

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 12, 1993: Steve Hilliard moved the minutes be approved, Karen Berryman seconded; approved unanimously.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Nine applications for 1994 Special Events funding were received by the November 2 deadline. Copies were distributed to the Board. A workshop to discuss the applications will be held December 7 from 3:00 - 4:30.

BOARD VACANCIES: Frank Bering's and Tom Ralser's terms will expire December 31. The Director will ask the City Clerk to contact individuals who had previously applied for an indication of continued interest. The vacancies may also be advertised in the Sentinel.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Lodging tax receipts are up 17% for October, 12% year-to-date. Steve noted that business at the Hilton was not good the last half of September and the full month of October. The leisure/ transient market dried up; hunting business was down; there has been a high attrition rate for groups. Convention servicing has slowed. The number of groups is on target with our 1993 goal, but the number of delegates is down from 1992. Traffic at the Visitor Center is very slow.

Staff has researched options for a pay telephone at the Visitor Center and recommends entering into a contract with Mountain Telecom. The VCB will incur no expenses associated with the phone, and Mountain Telecom will pay the VCB 18% of each completed call. The City Attorney has reviewed and approved the contract. The Board directed staff to enter into an agreement with Mountain Telecom for pay telephone services.

TOURISM TAX DEFEAT: With the defeat of the tourism tax, the state Welcome Centers (including Fruita) will close December 31, 1993. The VCB has been approached by community members to take a leadership role in continuing operations at Fruita. Tillie Bishop

advised the Director that the State of Colorado owns the Welcome Center buildings. The State has a vested interest in keeping these facilities open and continued operations by the State would be the most equitable. If the State cannot operate the Welcome Centers, it may be opened up to interested communities to take care of the facilities. The Fruita Welcome Center's 1993 budget was \$83,000; after a quick glance, perhaps \$30,000 could be cut. The Cortez Chamber of Commerce has already indicated they want to continue running that Welcome Center; their offices are in the building.

All organizations that had planned to advertise in the 1994 Official State Vacation Guide will receive a refund. (The VCB had anticipated a \$16,000-\$17,000 ad.) Because the CTB will cease to exist December 31, some of the major questions being asked are: Who will answer the 800-COLORADO line? Will there be any fulfillment mechanism? Will another entity step in to publish the OSVG?

Concerning other organizations that are in place:

1. Ski Country USA may take some leadership role.
2. Travel Industry Association of Colorado is a lobbying group that has a strong membership and has been very active.
3. The Denver Metro CVB was awarded an additional \$400,000 by the Denver City Council for tourism marketing. We have good relationships with the DMCVB staff and membership in that organization may become more important. The Bureau has a planning guide that may come back into play.
4. Membership in the Grand Circle and Foremost West may be used to develop new/stronger alliances.

Greg Walcher discussed Club 20's historic involvement in tourism. Club 20 discontinued printing its tourism-related publication after the CTB funded the travel regions (approximately 5 years ago). A supply of that publication is in storage and Greg would make it available as an interim fulfillment piece; the quantity that has been stockpiled may be approximately a one-year supply.

The Southwest Travel Region (SWTR) has a substantial budget (from the Department of Local Affairs) that did not come from the CTB. However, there have been indications that the Department of Local Affairs will not give any funds to tourism promotion. The SWTR will try to protect that funding and make its publication, the Southwest Colorado Traveler, available to anyone or any region that wants to distribute it. Because the Traveler is the main vacation guide for the area, there have been preliminary discussions about making it a Western Slope publication. The SWTR Board will meet in Ouray on December 3. Club 20 is putting together a meeting of Western Slope tourism interests immediately before the SWTR Board meeting to discuss how to fill the void left by the CTB. Representatives of the Northwest Travel Region will be among those invited to attend this meeting.

John Arnold, Chairman of the Club 20 Tourism Committee, is also publisher of the Southwest Colorado Traveler. He is ready for this

publication to take in the entire western region of the state. With the demise of the CTB and the OSVG, there will be no advertising for Colorado and no fulfillment. In regard to another organization taking over the OSVG, John stated that the Guide has run a \$300,000-\$400,000 deficit per issue.

Steve noted that the area shown in the Southwest Colorado Traveler map is the region we sell. It is easier to move someone from Durango or Telluride than to bring someone from out of state. He is not excited about national advertising; he has never received benefit from the Denver CVB and is wary of the Bureau because their focus has to be Denver.

There was discussion about remaining flexible on media buys. The VCB should be prepared to take advantage of other opportunities that may present themselves in 2 - 3 months. Linda Afman stated there appeared to be consensus that decisions on short-term advertising commitments should be left to the staff and Tashiro, with long-term commitments brought to the Board. The Director pointed out that decisions on national advertising must be made by December 10. To maintain the level of inquiries, more publications would need to be added to the media schedule. Possibilities include Travel & Leisure and American Heritage; USA Weekend could be expanded from two regions to nation-wide. Barney stated that we do have advertising funds that are budgeted but perhaps may need to be redirected. He feels we should not make decisions too quickly.

The Director said that inquiries will go down no matter what we do. Rather than discussing advertising strategy, we should discuss strategies for alliances we have talked about building. Competition for Colorado tourists will be very intense, and in-state competition will be fierce.

Paul Nelson pointed out that we are building a new Visitor Center, the Monument and our other attractions are still here. We have lost something, but we still have a lot to offer to visitors.

Tom Ralser moved the meeting adjourn; Barney Barnett seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.