

MINUTES OF THE VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
SEPTEMBER 13, 1994

PRESIDING: Paul W. Nelson

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Kleinschnitz, Bill Bessinger, Fay Timmerman, Lon Carpenter, Steve Hilliard

MEMBERS ABSENT: Cindy George, Barney Barnett, Karen Berryman, Jay Trent

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Linda Hill, Tim Campbell, Char Shoffner

MINUTES OF AUGUST 9, 1994: Lon Carpenter moved the minutes be approved, Fay Timmerman seconded; approved unanimously.

BOARD BUSINESS: Adventure Bound will pick up the raft trip participants at the Hilton tomorrow; depart at 8:00 am, return at 5:00 pm.

The Board is invited to the volunteer banquet Thursday, September 15 at Cross Orchards at 6:00. The banquet is the VCB's opportunity to thank the volunteers for the countless hours of time they give to assist visitors to Grand Junction.

As follow-up to the August meeting, the Chair sent Tashiro photos and dimensions of the Grand Junction entryway sign on I-70. Tashiro will make suggestions for presentation to Council.

Annual Meeting: The format of previous annual meetings was discussed. Approximately 500 invitations are mailed; attendance has ranged from 90 - 125. The meeting is intended to inform the community of the VCB's marketing efforts and results; however, staff has received several comments that the VCB is being "braggadocious". Few Board members have attended past annual meetings.

Now that the VCB is established, an annual meeting may not be necessary as a means of providing information about the bureau's activities. Several alternatives were discussed: an article in the City resident newsletter; news release; newsletter format to an expanded mailing list; press conference. Staff is directed to compile information about the number of people involved in tourism in the Valley, along with payroll/tax figures from tourism businesses. The Director and Tashiro will draft a one-sheet outline to send to Board members for comment. The post-season wrap-up meeting, scheduled for mid-November, may be an opportunity for a press conference.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: August lodging tax receipts (for July business) were up 7% over 1993. An increase was not anticipated because July

included two weeks lodging for 300 firefighters and no lodging tax was collected on those rooms.

The Visitor Center reported visitors from 26 foreign countries. Expected completion of traffic signals on Horizon is November 1. John Moss contacted the Director and City Manager about better signage for the Center. Mr. Moss indicated he may provide financial assistance for a lighted sign. Staff will check on the City sign code to verify what is allowable.

TASHIRO MARKETING: As the creative process for the 1995 campaign begins, Tashiro is seeking the Board's input for refinements, changes, etc. Linda and Tim discussed the previous years' strategies and how they were formulated (Front Range focus sessions, conversion study). While 70%-80% of the VCB's visitors are in-state travelers, the campaign must also speak to a national audience. Without the CTB, the VCB faces an incredible uphill battle in the national market. Linda reminded the group that an ad is a lead source, and the visitor guide is the critical sales tool. Tashiro plans to conduct focus groups in Denver in late January or early February 1995.

The Board suggested we need to appeal to the adventurer who wants a wilderness experience. The mountain experience on the Grand Mesa is not the experience people are "buying" in Breckenridge/Vail/Aspen. For the small travel planner ads that need a unique hook, dinosaurs are the preferred focus. We should be cautious in trying to advertise rates or "values" so consumers don't perceive the area as cheap and undesirable. (Linda pointed out that Grand Junction is a value in national comparisons, but not Colorado comparisons.)

There was a lengthy discussion about the Front Range market, its importance and if the Denver newspapers are the best value for our advertising dollars. The number of impressions vs trackable calls was discussed. Perhaps staff could ask other destination advertisers how many responses they received to compare with ours. TV has a much more significant impact, but is not as trackable. Tom stated he will do more national advertising; less than 20% of his business comes from the Front Range.

Utah is developing dinosaur tours, another example of how that state is capitalizing on the absence of Colorado state-wide advertising.

Bill moved the meeting adjourn; Lon seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.