

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

October 14, 2014

John McConnell Math and Science Center
2668 Unaweep Avenue
Grand Junction, CO 81503

PRESIDING: Per Nilsson, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Glen Gallegos, Brad Taylor, Billie Witham, Sharon Woelfe

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kevin Reimer, Lon Carpenter, Kate Graham, Mike Bell

GUESTS: Cassidee Shull - Colorado Association for Viticulture and Enology (CAVE); Linda Hill, Sara Moore, Pati Martinez – Hill Aevium

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Mistalynn Meyeraan, Holly Prickett, Kristin Lynch, Erin Chapman, Kristin Winn, and Kim Machado

The meeting was called to order at 3:11 p.m.

Minutes from the September 16, 2014 board meeting: Brad Taylor moved to approve the minutes as written, Sharon Woelfe seconded; minutes approved.

Bambi Harmon, Operations Manager at the John McConnell Math and Science Center, welcomed and thanked the board and VCB staff for their support of the Math and Science Center. Each year, the Center hosts approximately 8,000 field trips and they have been tracking guests who visit. Challenges include space limitations and increasing awareness of the Center and its programs. To resolve those, the Center will eventually move to a new facility next to Dinosaur Journey in Fruita within the next 2 to 3 years. A capital funds campaign will begin soon.

Cassidee Shull, Executive Director of CAVE, presented an overview of the 23rd Annual Colorado Mountain Winefest held on September 18 – 21, 2014. The VCB is the longest sponsor of the event and one of the largest sponsors. A new event was added this year, Wine, Dine, and Paint. The food and wine pairing was expanded and another educational seminar was added. Many of the events were sold out and the festival had close to 6,000 attendees, a record number. Over 50 wineries and over 50 vendors participated in the festival. She shared the results of an online survey sent to attendees of the event. A strong majority of 550 respondents indicated they were very likely to attend next year's event and would recommend the event to a friend or colleague. Linda Hill asked if a question can be added to the survey which will indicate the number of visitors who stayed overnight verses day visitors. Cassidee said she will add that.

The 24th Annual Colorado Mountain Winefest will be held on September 17 – 20, 2015. Tickets will go on sale beginning December 1, 2014 with special deals for both general admission and VIP.

Staff Reports

Marketing and PR: Mistalynn Meyeraan reported the following:

- A mountain bike marketing cooperative with Fruita and Palisade, called Red Hot Dirt Days, is now in place and she encouraged the board to view the website, www.redhotdirtdays.com.
- The VCB has been working with Powderhorn to create ski packages for the upcoming season.
- Production of the 2015 Grand Junction Official Visitor Guide is in progress.
- The Colorado Governor's Conference on Tourism is coming up on October 29 – 31, 2014. The VCB submitted nominations for two awards: one for our peach campaign called "Peachy Agritourism Marketing". Second, we have nominated one of our outstanding visitor center volunteers, Doris Blake, for the Volunteer of the Year award.

Lastly, Mistalynn thanked Brad Taylor for coordinating and assisting in mapping the Colorado Riverfront Trail using Google Trekker.

Event and Convention Services: Kristin Lynch reported that September and October were busy with assisting groups and events including, the Grand Junction Off-Road, Western Colorado Classic Car Show, Tour de Vineyards, Colorado Mountain Winefest, Tour of the Moon, Club 20 Fall event, Wine Train, and the GeCo GIS conference which brought in approximately 500 people.

Sales: Erin Chapman reported 5 leads for the month which brings us to 72% of goal. Site inspections were held for the Land Rover Rally (through the assistance of a local four-wheeling expert), and the Knights of Columbus. We have been working with the Knights of Columbus for 10 years to bring their meeting to Grand Junction. The BMX Nationals will be held on August 21 – 23, 2015 in Grand Junction at the new BMX facility which should be completed by June 2015.

Visitor Center: Kristin Winn reported that the visitor center was busy during the summer months, however the year-over-year numbers remain down overall. The volunteers have been busy with assisting groups such as the GeCo GIS conference, Club 20, and the Western Colorado Classic Car Show, and stuffing packets. Kristin will be attending the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel's West of 50 Senior Fair to recruit new volunteers.

Advertising Presentation

Representatives from Hill Aevium presented a creative vision and advertising strategy for Grand Junction based on their branding and marketing methodology. Pati Martinez recapped and shared insights from the video presented at the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) formal presentations in September. Based on that along with additional research they have conducted, their suggested creative strategy includes three premises: 1) Wine Country is the brand – connecting Grand Junction with Wine Country; 2) perceived value is greater than distance traveled; 3) everyone has a choice. Making the experience of visiting Grand Junction emotionally compelling, unique, and different than anywhere else will help overcome the perceived distance to travel here. A mood board and video was shared that includes the slogan "It's Different Out Here". Linda Hill stated that this is just a draft and the vision may change.

Per Nilsson asked how this vision will bring meetings to Grand Junction and suggested talking with the decision makers for groups and meetings and sell to them. Debbie Kovalik responded that we need to

define the problems we have first and identify all market segments that we need to improve our marketing towards. Glen Gallegos said that we will not get results quickly and we need to partner with other people to send out the same message about Grand Junction. Linda suggested an envisioning session to identify goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics starting with the knowledge of why visiting Grand Junction is different than visiting other Colorado destinations.

The board and staff agreed that an envisioning session will be held at the next board meeting on November 18th. Further details will be communicated.

Other Business

- Barbara shared that the Museum of Western Colorado and the Palisade Chamber of Commerce have both applied independently for a regional grant from the Colorado Tourism Office matching grant program, and have asked the VCB for a letter of support. VCB staff determined the best course is to send one letter indicating support for all entities. The board agreed.
- Board member terms for Mike Bell and Lon Carpenter will expire at the end of 2014. The application deadline is October 31, 2014.
- Brad Taylor mentioned that the Tour of the Moon brought in a broad range of riders from out of town. Barbara added that we were sold out on Friday that weekend of the Tour of the Moon and that event brought in 1,900 riders from over 30 states and 2 countries.
- Sharon Woelfle stated that a representative from Expedia is in Grand Junction for a presentation. Barbara added that the representative is addressing why Grand Junction's average daily rates are low.

There being no further business, Brad Taylor motioned to end the meeting; Billie Witham seconded, motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.