

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

January 10, 2012  
Visitor & Convention Bureau  
740 Horizon Drive

PRESIDING: Per Nilsson, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jessica Stimmel, Ron Beach, Lon Carpenter, Lynne Sorlye, Paul Petersen, Mike Bell, Glen Gallegos, John Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Barbara Bowman, Debbie Kovalik, Holly Prickett, Layne Whyman, Erin Chapman, Melanie Wiseman, Irene Carlow

GUEST: Mike Anton

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm.

The Chair welcomed Mike Bell and Lon Carpenter to the Board.

VISITOR CENTER UPDATE: Melanie Wiseman stated that we have 90 volunteers who staff the Center 362 days per year. The purpose of the Visitor Center is to extend the length of stay, resulting in increased room nights and overall visitor expenditures. Melanie has begun personal visits to every business on Horizon Drive to increase their awareness of the Center and the assistance we provide to visitors.

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 13, 2011: Lynne Sorlye moved to approve the minutes as written, Glen Gallegos seconded, passed unanimously.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Special Events Jessica Stimmel reviewed the Tour of the Vineyards application that was discussed at the December meeting. The request was denied based on the committee's perception that the Tour advertises and appeals to the same people as the Winefest and, therefore, no additional room nights would be generated. Jessica talked with the organizer and learned that this event targets a different market than Winefest; the requested marketing assistance would be used for an ad in *Competitor* magazine. The event was started the second year of the Winefest and is owned and operated separately. Special Events funding was awarded in the past but the organizer has not applied for Special Events assistance since 2005. The number of riders has dropped from 1,000 to 900 and the proposed ad in *Competitor* could potentially increase the number of participants, resulting in more room nights sold. Based on this new information, the committee recommends the Board reconsider this application and award \$2,000. Ron Beach moved to award \$2,000 in Special Events

marketing assistance to the Tour of the Vineyards, Lon Carpenter seconded; motion passed.

*Art & Jazz Festival - \$3,500 - \$4,000 requested* This is one of downtown's signature events, attracting 10,000 – 12,000 total attendees (4,000 – 5,000 from out of town). Organizers are trying to book more Front Range bands in an effort to draw more Denver-area visitors to this free event. The requested assistance would be used for ads on Colorado Public Radio and in newspapers in Colorado resort areas and eastern Utah. The committee recommends an award of \$3,500. The discussion included:

- How many years should the VCB continue funding a well established, successful event
- The importance of the VCB brand being associated with this signature event
- Potential pressure on lodging availability (Colorado Mesa University graduation)

Ron Beach moved to award \$3,500 in Special Events marketing assistance to the Art & Jazz Festival, Lynne Sorlye seconded; motion passed.

Board members volunteered to attend funded events as follows:

Open Studio Tours	John Williams
Art & Jazz Festival	Mike Bell
Tour de Vineyards	Lon Carpenter

The Chair asked that members report on their respective events at the next regular Board meeting following the event.

Air Show Western Colorado 2012 Mike Anton reported on the Air Show that will be held September 21-23. The Blue Angels will perform and this is the only jet team appearance in Colorado this year; projected attendance is 45,000. Tickets will go on sale in April or May and will be sold only online or at the gate. The air show committee is appreciative of the VCB's support in the past and looks forward to working with the bureau again to be an information resource as well as to help provide a positive experience for attendees/visitors.

City Administration Update Debbie Kovalik stated that City Council appointed Rich Englehart Interim City Manager; all department directors remain in their respective positions. In December, Debbie presented to Council a proposal to change the Avalon Theatre renovation project schedule. Under the original plan, Phase I renovation would begin in 2014 and all Avalon operations would be closed for 12-18 months. The new proposal is for the DDA to utilize its \$3 million commitment to begin construction in approximately 6 months on the theater expansion on the east side of the building. This proposal focuses on "public" amenities before "performer" amenities and ensures no disruption to current operations. The Avalon Theatre and movie schedule can still operate, resulting in less negative impact to the downtown economy than the original

plan. Council was supportive of this proposed change and the DDA's commitment to move forward this year.

Annual Retreat Staff suggests the retreat be held on Thursday, March 22 at The Chateau at Two Rivers Winery. Powderhorn was also considered as a possible location but the driving time would shorten discussion by 2 hours. The Board accepted the date of March 22 and agreed that The Chateau is the preferred location. Board members were asked to send their suggested discussion topics to both the Chair and Barbara Bowman.

Other Business The February agenda will include selecting possible dates to invite Council to a breakfast meeting.

STAFF REPORTS: Erin Chapman reported that 90 sales leads were issued during 2011, exceeding the goal of 89. The economic impact of business confirmed during the year is slightly under goal. However, leads issued in one calendar year are often confirmed in the following year. Because of that cross-over between calendar years, staff also tracks the conversion rate of leads issued to business confirmed.

Layne Whyman was contacted by Howard Allen Events (HAE), a professional event organizer that holds approximately 100 events per year, specializing in art and wine festivals. HAE has received tentative approval from DDA to hold an event downtown July 14-15; they have events in Frisco July 7-8 and in Park City July 21-22. Exhibitors are higher-end, juried artists and the festival will be marketed in cities that have direct flights to Grand Junction. HAE has its own marketing staff and will not be applying for Special Events assistance.

Statistics Barbara Bowman distributed the year-end reports, noting that the 1.5% decline in lodging tax collections is attributable to the refund issued in September.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Prepared by: Irene Carlow