

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

February 14, 2012
SpringHill Suites
238 Main Street

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, Holly Prickett, Layne Whyman, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Katie Steele, Brad Taylor

HOST REMARKS: Kevin Reimer welcomed the Board to SpringHill Suites by Marriott, a 100-suite hotel offering WiFi, complimentary breakfast and Marlo's Lounge. Main Street Suites has undergone a multi-million dollar renovation and will soon join the Marriott family as a Fairfield Inn & Suites.

The meeting was called to order at 3:25 pm.

MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2012: Jessica Stimmel moved to approve the minutes as written, Lynne Sorlye seconded, passed unanimously.

BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS: Glen Gallegos moved to reschedule the next regular monthly meeting to March 6 from March 13, John Williams seconded, passed unanimously.

Lynne Sorlye moved to designate City Hall as the location to post notices of VCB meetings and agendas, Ron Beach seconded, passed unanimously.

The Board would like to meet with Council to discuss the importance of tourism in the Grand Valley and the economic impact generated by the VCB's programs. Staff is directed to contact City Administration for possible dates that would be convenient to Council. It may be best to schedule this after the March 22 Board retreat.

Special Events Jessica Stimmel reported that, thus far, \$9,000 has been awarded of the \$35,000 budgeted for this year. The Committee reviewed four applications:

Colorado Lavender Festival - \$4,540 requested This is the second year of the 3-day festival which will be held July 6 - 8; the VCB awarded \$2,550 in 2011. Last year's

event was well organized and had 3,550 attendees, with an estimated 20% of those from out of town. The committee recommends \$2,840 for ads in *Herb Companion* and *AAA Encompass*.

Discussion: Will the exhibit area be expanded to accommodate additional vendors and attendees? Can the event grow at its current location? Board members who attended last year said the current venue has capacity for additional vendors and attendees. Glen Gallegos moved to award \$2,840 in Special Events marketing assistance to the Colorado Lavender Festival, Lynne Sorlye seconded, passed unanimously. *(On February 16, via electronic voting, the Board unanimously approved increasing the award to \$2,890 to correct a clerical error in the cost of the AAA Encompass ad.)*

Flyin' Miata - \$1,000 requested This is the 15th year of the 2-day event; the VCB has supported it for several years and awarded \$750 last year. The event is capped at 100 Miata owners and there is no potential for growth. The committee recommends no funding but encourages the bureau to support the event in non-financial ways such as the website calendar of events, possible press releases, etc.

John Williams moved that Special Events marketing assistance not be awarded to the Flyin' Miata, Glen Gallegos seconded, passed unanimously.

Western Colorado Classic Auto Fest – estimated request \$5,000 - \$10,000
This is a new event proposed for August 31-September 1, 2013; organizers are requesting a Special Events award so they can start marketing the event this year. The application lists a number of marketing activities but does not indicate the award amount that is being requested nor the specific uses of that award. In general, the application reflects good potential:

- It is scheduled for Labor Day weekend – there are no other events that weekend
- 500 vehicle entries are expected the first year
- Organizers estimate 5,000 attendees and expect to draw heavily from Southern California

The committee tabled this application and directed staff to request additional information from the organizer, including a timeline of promotional efforts for both 2012 and 2013. The committee will bring a recommendation to the Board after that information is received and reviewed.

Tour of the Moon - \$12,000 requested This new event is a recreational cycling tour over the Colorado National Monument on Saturday, October 6. The committee recommends supporting this event but is split 2-2 on the amount of the award:

- **\$8,000** – for ads in *Competitor Magazine* (\$5,000) and either postcards or a broadcast email campaign (\$3,000)
or
- **\$5,000** for ads in *Competitor Magazine* only

This has the potential to be a major event with 90% of participants expected to be from out of town, staying two nights. It is scheduled for the first weekend in October, which used to be sold out with soccer teams. The tournament schedule changed a few years ago and this is the first event proposed that could replace the economic impact of those soccer teams.

Riders can choose between either a 41-mile or 62-mile course; the start/finish is at Two Rivers Convention Center. The number of riders will be capped at 2,000; organizers expect 1,000 for the first year. Two event organizers with strong, successful backgrounds have joined forces for Tour of the Moon. Other events to their credit include Fruita Fat Tire Festival, 18 Hours of Fruita, Elephant Rock and several others on the Front Range. They have talked to VCB staff for several years about their desire to bring a new cycling event to the valley. They have received approval from the Colorado National Monument for the 2012 ride and will have to re-apply each year as all such events do (e.g., Tour of the Valley).

Discussion:

- What is the estimated economic impact?
 - 1,000 riders 1st year = \$200,000 (staff considers this conservative)
- Does funding for Tour of the Moon have any bearing on future support of USA Pro Cycling (if awarded a stage in 2013)?
 - No – these are two different budget years

Glen Gallegos moved to award \$5,000 in Special Events marketing assistance to Tour of the Moon, John Williams seconded. Motion passed with 7 in favor, 2 opposed because they supported funding at the \$8,000 level.

Annual Retreat Board members are asked to send suggested agenda items to both the Chair and Barbara Bowman. Topics identified thus far:

- City Administration update by Interim City Manager, if available
- Presentations by CCT Advertising, Ore Communications, Miles Media
- Special Events review
- CTO update (possibly by deputy director)

Marketing Plan Barbara Bowman and Holly Prickett reviewed results of 2011 and goals for 2012:

2011

- Lodging tax collections nearly even with 2010
- Occupancy rate up almost 2%, Average Daily Rate (ADR) down \$1.87
- Website unique visitors increased 18%
- Mobile website launched in May
- Sales leads issued up 9%, exceeded goal for the year

2012 Goals

- Moderate growth in both occupancy and ADR
- 3.6% increase in lodging tax, 2% increase in sales leads, convention groups, visitor center traffic and website visits
- Website redesign
- Social media continues to be a high priority; tracking will expand
- "Wine Country" brand will encompass entire lifestyle

STAFF REPORTS: January lodging tax receipts were up 3.3% over 2011. The monthly website report has been reformatted; new analytical programs are being put in place but not all historical data can be converted. The 2012 Visitor Guide was distributed. Four training sessions will be held for volunteers and two open houses are scheduled for businesses listed in the Guide to pick up the new Guides and tour the Visitor Center

RIVERFRONT COMMISSION: Brad Taylor and Katie Steele thanked the VCB for its ongoing support of the Riverfront Trail and Brad presented expansion plans for the next 2 – 5 years. Several special events are planned during this year as The Riverfront Trail celebrates its 25th anniversary. Both the City and County have always been committed to the Riverfront and the project has benefitted tremendously from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) funds over the years.

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

Prepared by: Irene Carlow