

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

June 14, 2016

Clarion Inn
755 Horizon Drive
Grand Junction, CO 81506

PRESIDING: Brad Taylor, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Don Bramer, Susie Kiger, Kevin Reimer, Julie Shafer, Billie Witham, Jamie Lummis, Sharon Woelfle

MEMBERS ABSENT: Josh Niernberg

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Mistalynn Meyeraan, Kim Machado, Kristin Lynch, Katharina Morrison

GUESTS: Greg Caton – Grand Junction City Manager, Marty Chazin – Mayor Pro-Tem

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

Minutes from the May 10, 2016 board meeting: Kevin Reimer moved to approve the minutes as written, Julie Shafer seconded; minutes approved.

Darshann Ruckman, General Manager for the Clarion Inn, welcomed everyone to the Clarion Inn. The property is celebrating its 50th anniversary in June. The Clarion Inn is currently ranked 7th (Gold Award) out of 178 Clarion properties in the U.S. The sister property, Econo Lodge, is also ranked 7th out of over 700 Econo Lodge properties in the U.S. There are 239 rooms at the Clarion Inn and 49 rooms at the Econo Lodge; employing 85 – 90 people during the high season. Barbara Bowman presented an award to Darshann and the staff at the Clarion Inn for 50 years of excellence in the hospitality industry.

Brad Taylor welcomed the new City Manager for Grand Junction, Greg Caton, to the board meeting and introductions were made. Greg gave a background of his career which includes several years working in Durango as the Assistant City Manager and serving on their tourism board. Due to another commitment, Greg left the meeting early.

Staff Reports

Convention and Event Services – Kristin Lynch explained the groups that she assisted in May. Year to date she is servicing 85 groups with a goal of 125 for the year.

Visitor Services – Katharina Morrison stated that visits to the Visitor Center in May increased 3% over the same period in 2015, despite ongoing construction on Horizon Drive. Due to heavy construction on Horizon Drive during May, the Tourism Open House was held on June 1st. As expected, attendance was lower than last year. The open house will be moved back to the month of May for 2017. On June 23rd, the Visitor Center will host the Preserve America Youth group which consists of around 75 middle and high schoolers to educate them on tourism in the Grand Valley.

Marketing and Public Relations – Mistalynn Meyeraan shared the website statistics for May and also provided the following updates:

- Several media and journalists have been hosted including: The Aspen Times, Parker Lifestyle Magazine, Colorado Life Magazine, Summit Daily News, a Chinese International FAM, German International FAM, Italian International FAM, and Colorado Wine Board
- Recent PR coverage includes a feature cover story by The Aspen Times, Fodors, cover story in Parker Lifestyle Magazine, the Denver Post, Summit Daily News, Aspen Daily and Sky High (Winter Park)
- Ads will be live soon on the 16th Street Mall; includes busses and billboards
- Working with Miles Media to improve Two Rivers Convention Center’s website
- The official release of “A Grand Day in Colorado” video from the Grand Junction Economic Partnership is pending, but a viewing will be held at their annual meeting. The GJVCB is a sponsor of this video will be able to use it in our marketing efforts.
- Two large video shoots will occur shortly; a Brand USA culinary video and Colorado.com video

Group Sales – On behalf of Erin Chapman, Kristin Lynch reported that 54 leads have been generated, out of a goal of 97 for the year. Staff has been very busy with tour operator FAMs, including groups from the Netherlands and Germany.

A site inspection has been scheduled for July 1st for the 2017 Colorado Governor’s Conference on Tourism.

Board Member Outreach

The discussion centered on how to accomplish the action items identified at the board retreat; in particular, the areas of outreach and partnerships. The board will meet with the Fruita Tourism board in September. Suggestions were made to invite the new airport manager and the Community Air Service Task Force to a future board meeting as well as the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce to discuss how the organizations can work together. Councilmember Chazin encouraged the board to follow through with the action items of adopting a City Councilmember and setting up an education session.

The discussion shifted to the future of Two Rivers Convention Center (TRCC). Councilmember Chazin mentioned that City Council is looking at ways to balance the budget and that there have been discussions to reallocate the VCB’s Vendor’s Fee for other uses, including to pay for Two Rivers Convention Center subsidies. He suggested that City staff along with the GJVCB staff and board identify various options for operating TRCC and then present them to City Council. The board agreed that a committee be established to discuss this.

Other Items

- Don thanked Jamie for meeting with his assigned City Councilmember in a timely manner.
- GJVCB staff will contact the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife and arrange for them to attend our next board meeting, if available.

There being no further business, Don Bramer motioned to end the meeting; Sharon Woelfle seconded, motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.