

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

December 13, 2016

Clarion Inn
755 Horizon Dr.
Grand Junction, CO

PRESIDING: Brad Taylor, Chair

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Josh Niernberg

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Mistalynn Meyeraan and Kim Machado

GUESTS: Karin Mast and Carrie Tomlinson – Miles Media Group, Gaylene Ore – Ore Communications

The meeting was called to order at 2:38 p.m.

Minutes from the November 8, 2016 board meeting: Susie Kiger moved to approve the minutes as written; Don Bramer seconded. Minutes approved.

Ore Communications Presentation

Gaylene Ore, from Ore Communications, provided a recap of public relations (PR) activities for 2016. The objectives have been met and highlights include 23 media visits, media event in Salt Lake City, a meeting with 20 North America media outlets at the SATW Conference, meetings with 16 Canadian media outlets at Travel Media Canada, 11 desk-side meets in Seattle and Portland, 3 TV segments and 1 radio spot for the Front Range Peach Promotion and hosting group winter and fall press trips. Key media placements include Fox 31 Denver, Fox 21 News Colorado Springs/Pueblo, Colorado's CW2 Denver, The Dallas Morning News, ST. Louis Homes and Lifestyles, The Denver Post, The Huffington Post, Yahoo!, Arizona Fairways, Forbes and U.S. News and World Report. Estimated unique visitor circulation is up 10% over 2015.

Family trips will be a focus for 2017 and Gaylene will be working with the advertising and website marketing contractors from a PR prospective to develop their priorities for 2017.

Miles Media Presentation

Carrie Tomlinson from Miles Media presented a review of the GJVCB's website and internet marketing accomplishments for 2016. These include a new and responsive website launched in February with updated profile pages and templates, a search field, and a RSVP page for familiarization trips with media and tour professionals. As a result of an audit of the current GetSmartContent, new appealing and authoritative content was added that allows more opportunities for people to find our website. Templates were updated for the Enewsletter to match the new website and logo. Monthly analytic reports have been upgraded into a more graphical visualization through dashboard reporting to help focus attention on key trends and comparisons. Video creation is an opportunity and the Miles team will be working with Hill Aevium to develop this. The website for Two Rivers Convention Center was also upgraded with new content pages and modernized navigation and visuals.

Content creation was key in 2016. Based on Brightedge software, SEO and Content were managed based on user habits to increase organic traffic results. Efforts paid off as pageviews were at an all-time record high of 1.5 million and organic search went from 253,755 users to 429,671 in 2016. Referral traffic was lower in 2016 due to the fact that the GJVCB no longer has two sites that refer to one another, which dropped the overall visits to the site. That drop is not an accurate presentation of actual visitors to the site and the year still ended positively with the improvements to the site and successes achieved through organic traffic.

The GJVCB and Miles Media were recently awarded two significant national industry awards. One is the HSMIA Adrian Bronze Award for website redesign and the other is Travel Weekly's Silver Magellan Award for New Responsive Website.

Special Event Committee Update

Mistalynn Meyeraan provided an update from the Special Events Committee meeting held on Monday, December 12, 2016. The Committee reviewed 4 applications for special event funding and made the following recommendations:

- Desert RATS Trail Running Festival – April 14, 2017. Requesting \$3,000. The Committee recommends awarding \$1,500 with the potential of additional funds should the Special Event budget increase.
- Country Jam – June 15 – 18, 2017. Requesting social media and other marketing in exchange for radio coverage in targeted destination markets. The Committee recommends this request.
- Colorado Gypsy Fest – September 22 – 24, 2017. Requesting \$1,000. The Committee recommends awarding \$300 which is the same amount awarded for this year's event.
- Fruita Fat Tire Festival – April 27 – 30, 2017. Requesting \$2,500. This is a follow-up from the November meeting. The City of Fruita has awarded \$3,500 for this event. The Committee recommends awarding \$2,500.

Jamie Lummis motioned to approve the Committee's recommendations as stated above; Susie Kiger seconded. Motion approved.

Update on November 18, 2016 Letter to Mayor

Brad updated the Board on the status of the letter to the Mayor requesting City Council refer a ballot initiative for the April 2017 City election to raise the lodging tax. On December 9th, Brad, Don and Debbie met with Mayor Phyllis Norris, Councilmember Barbara Traylor-Smith, City Manager Greg Caton and City Attorney John Shaver to discuss the request. With the addition of the Events Center sales tax ballot initiative, the chance for success of passing a lodging tax increase could be a challenge. City Council's recommendation to the Board is to consider deferring the ballot initiative for a lodging tax increase. The Board agreed to postpone placing the initiative on the April 2017 ballot. Several Board Members stated that more time is needed to build a comprehensive and measurable marketing plan for the increase in revenue derived from a possible lodging tax increase. With the assistance of Staff, Brad will submit a follow-up letter to Council.

Other Business

- Election of Officers – Brad Taylor reported that Julie Shafer has expressed interest in serving as Board Chair for 2017 and Don Bramer has expressed interest in serving as Vice Chair again. An election by ballot was held. Julie Shafer was elected as Board Chair and Don Bramer was elected as Vice Chair unanimously for 2017. Susie Kiger volunteered to assist with the duties of Vice Chair.
- Brad Taylor recognized Sharon Woelfle for her 4 years of service on the GJVCB Board of Directors and presented her with an engraved gift on behalf of the Board and Staff.
- Barbara Bowman recognized Brad Taylor and Don Bramer for their efforts as Board Chairman and Vice Chair for 2016 and presented them with an engraved gift on behalf of the GJVCB Staff.

There being no further business, Jamie Lummis motioned to end the meeting; Susie Kiger seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.