



Visit Bend Board of Directors Meeting Minutes September 16, 2014

Location: Bend Visitor Center

Present: Doug LaPlaca, Valerie Warren, Kevney Dugan, Nate Wyeth, Noelle Fredland, Jodie Barram, Matt Williams, Carolyn Eagan, Alan Dietrich, Dave Nissen, La Dona Canevaro, Amy Draheim for Brent McLean, Gregg Harper for Ben Perle, Scott Greenstone, Hank Therien, Lisa Sidor.

Guests: Wendy Puller, Joelle Brown, Andy Goggins, Jackie and Ray Haworth, Joe Ditzler, James Watts, Brent Graham, Paige Robinson, Paul Evers, Renee Mitchell, Tom Hinrichs, Dave Fox, Dave Rathbun, Olivia Imnan, Joelle Brown, Jamie Christman, Cindy Flues, Drew Jackson.

Call to Order

Doug LaPlaca called the meeting to order at 8:05am. Introduction of guests followed.

The minutes from the July Board Meeting were approved. Dave Nissen moved to approve the minutes and Noelle Fredland seconded. The vote to approve was unanimous.

Financial Report

Scott Greenstone presented financial statements from the first two months of the current fiscal year. TRT-based revenue is exceeding expectations even with growth projected into the budget. For the two months ended August 31st, revenue overall is up 17% over budget. Net income is currently 88,000 ahead of budget.

Scott noted that the City of Bend revenue is now broken out to show separately the additional revenue resulting from the ballot measure increase. Doug LaPlaca noted that the incremental funds are being tracked separately to allow for transparency as those funds are designated for out of state marketing.

Jodie Barram inquired about the percentage variance in the Visitor Development area. Scott stated that the Visitor Development fund is related to events and that there are often timing variances in this area.

Tourism Metrics Updates

Doug presented summary documents included in the Board Packet highlighting key tourism metrics.

The primary metrics used are TRT collections and gross lodging revenue. Summer 2014 is the third year in a row showing record numbers.

Doug discussed a chart showing citywide occupancy through June 2014 as compiled by RRC Associates based on information from Smith Travel Research.

Website traffic is also an important metric to measure as Visit Bend's marketing is focused on driving traffic to the site. July and August 2014 represented a 43% increase in visits over the same period last year. The website is on pace to exceed 1.6 million visits during the 2015 fiscal year.

Visit Bend's social media outlets continue to grow. The Visit Bend Facebook page now has over 100,000 followers. Other outlets such as YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram continue to grow.

2014/2015 Winter Marketing Update

The upcoming winter marketing campaign is designed to re-engineer how Visit Bend is marketing the winter season.

An overview of the plan for the winter marketing campaign was presented in the Board Packet.

The main goals and objectives are to increase shoulder season citywide lodging occupancy 3% year-over-year, shoulder season TRT collections 12% year-over-year, winter citywide lodging occupancy 4% year-over-year, and winter TRT collections 16% year-over-year.

The 2014/2015 strategy will include all of Oregon and the greater Seattle area. Advertising in targeted national publications such as *SKI magazine*, *Mountain Magazine*, and through Travel Oregon will also be included.

Additional strategies are listed in the Board Packet.

The first tactic is to implement the largest and most comprehensive winter and shoulder season advertising campaign focusing on the Portland, Eugene, and Seattle markets.

The winter mini-guide will also be distributed through the Pacific Northwest through targeted magazines.

The Visitor Guide with winter cover will be distributed throughout the Northwest.

The Bend Ale Trail is the cornerstone of shoulder season marketing efforts. November will be promoted as "Bend Ale Trail Month."

Visit Bend will also attend winter consumer ski shows as well as the Mountain Travel Symposium.

The winter 2014/2015 creative campaign - including print, TV, and radio - was presented during the Board Meeting.

Group Sales Updates

Group Sales Updates are included in the Board Packet.

Public Comment

Jackie Haworth commented that in-flight magazines may be an effective place to advertise although they are generally very expensive spots.

Andy Goggins asked if there would actually be trophies given as prizes during Bend Ale Trail Month.

Yes, there will be trophies.

James Watts asked if the breweries needed to do anything to prepare for Bend Ale Trail Month. Visit Bend will coordinate with the breweries.

Jamie Christman asked if there would be additional shoulder season - vs. winter - advertising. Shoulder season will be promoted through the Bend Ale Trail and through the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund.

Lisa Sidor commented that several visitors have commented how friendly everyone is around town.

Board Roundtable

Doug stated that a position on the Visit Bend Board of Directors will be coming open in November. He stated that anyone interested in this position should email him.

Gregg Harper stated that he like the winter campaign.

Amy Draheim is curious to see how the shoulder season will turn out.

Noelle Fredland said she is happy that the Hampton Inn is open and also stated there is one more concert left in the season.

La Dona Canevaro is impressed by the marketing campaign.

Jodie Barram stated that the City will be discussing vacation rentals starting with a presentation tomorrow night. She will also be attending the League of Oregon Cities meeting.

Alan Dietrich is looking forward to the launch of the “Drinkable Detours.”

Dave Nissen pointed out that it is important to remember that 70% of the TRT collections go into important infrastructure in the City as well as police and fire. He is concerned about the noxious weed issue around the area.

Matt Williams is hoping for more winter and shoulder season events. The Pine Ridge Inn had a good summer.

Carolyn Eagan stated that the City has just created a new streets division that will address issues such as paving and weed management. There will be significant street improvements and sewer work going forward.

There will be some construction work going on around the Colorado Avenue Bridge starting in the spring.

They are trying to get events into the shoulder season vs. the summer.

The meeting adjourned at 9:34am.

Notes By: Valerie Warren
September 16, 2014