

Southwest Montana Meeting Minutes
General Board Meeting - Anaconda
Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Participants: Board Members: Becky Henne, Mike Mergenthaler, Julie Schroder, Mary Johnston, Dale Carlson, Dale Siegford, Maria Pochervina, Kerri Kumasaka, Halley Perry, Fay Najjar, Julie Shelton, Candi Whitworth, Mike Strang, Melanie Sanchez, Victor Sample, Jan Thorne, Becky DiGiovanna; Members and Participants: Jim Davison, Nadine Chiginsky, Lydia Janosko, Adam Vauthier, Karen Broussard, Anna Provost, Pam Sample, Desiree Shogren, Lauren Dillon, Ray Marxer, Kari Gagner, Andre Graa, Contracted Agencies - Tempest Technologies – Linda Brown, Shawn Peterson, Debbie Carlstrom, Mars STOUT, Corporate Cost Control – Rebecca Schmitz, Windfall – Crystal Glueckert, Employee Sarah Bannon

Call to Order

President Becky Henne called the meeting to order at 10:30 am MST. Welcomed

Approval of Minutes

Dale moved to approve the minutes. Mike Strang seconded.

Minutes approved and seconded

Public Comment

Overview of the Southwest Montana marketing analysis that will be sent to the Montana Office of Tourism

- We are the main lodging location between parks (Yellowstone and Glacier)
- There are 3,828rooms
- A mature audience of visitors. Roughly 80% are older. (see report for more details.)
- SWOC was approved

Institute of Tourism & Recreation Research (ITRR) - Visitor Information

- Ages 55 to 64 - 35%
- Ages 65 to 74 - 38%
- 76% of groups are repeat travelers
- 12% of groups are first time travelers

Travel Writers

Sarah announced that SW Montana will be attending an international market conference that has international magazine and social media writers. Billings will be the location. Montana is 4th for writer locations due to National Parks. California, Florida, and New York are above Montana. Discussion was addressed whether to focus our efforts for writers during off peak season.

Birding Brochure & Content for Advertising

Biggest success was the SW Montana Birding Map. Ideas for expanding content on wildlife watching.

- Shearing of animals on farms
- Atomic 79 specialty boots from Dillon
- Partnering with MOGA - they have hiking and other activities. Making a link on their website because they are one of the biggest industries in Montana for tourism.

Financial Report & Executive Report

Sarah Bannon welcomed everyone to the meeting. Next, Sarah discussed the current financial status of SW Montana and its progress. Report materials were available.

Regular Meeting - Brochure Exchange

Brochures were exchanged from all attendees.

MARS Report

Rebecca Schmitz gave the MARS Report. Some highlights from the report include.

- 9600 people wanted emails for the guides
- 11,000 guides were sent
- Most are windfall placement and 3rd is website for viewers.
- Interests are History, Wildlife, Nature, Attractions (like Bannack & VC)
- Top states visitors come from - California, Texas, and Illinois.

Lima Rest Area Update

Mike Strang gave a report about the Lima Rest Area. He is working with Department of Transportation to get the TVs installed. Should be installed today. People are requesting maps. Discussion on increasing payment to the lady filling the racks with the guides and information. Currently she is paid \$5 for each day.

Montana Governor's Conference of Tourism

Discussion and feedback for the Governor's conference. Positive reviews from attendees. Highlights included the Irish Dancers, Airport hosting the reception, and great location.

Photo Rights Public Land

Jocelyn Dodge updated the group about filming permits on public land. She will be meeting with Leona and Helena National Forest to discuss a multi forest agreement for exchange of products. The permit will be good for 5 years.

Legislative Information

Mike Mergenthaler reviewed the bills to watch during the legislative process. They included House Bill 661, House Bill 338, and another about Aquatic Species. Film bill final status unknown.

Marketing Update

Windfall gave a report on marketing in SW Montana. Report is attached and includes individual reports from TripAdvisor in different locations.

Discussion on what SWAG to order for upcoming events. Approved was Camera Cover, Cell Ring, and Carabiner. Bag vote was tabled. The products will be SWAG at the upcoming Billings Conference for writers.

Discussion was getting Garret Smith as a photographer. His negotiated rate would be \$1,000/a day.

Break for Lunch

Website, Internet Updates, Event Program, and Video

Tempest Technologies reviewed the progress of the website. There will be a new event pieces going up and everything will be updated. They are updated to spring and summer photographs and ghost story content.

HD Project - All units have been delivered. Either already up or being installed. One at the Butte airport is in place for those who were at the governor's conference. Each video location has a different video content and clips from different areas. Virginia City has their installed with two TVs. Looking at different

formatting for 2 TV's. Fairmont will be getting up after maintenance. Deer Lodge is in a middle of remodel and will be placed. Bannack is up to date and they will be installed but it will be them to get installed. No update on Lewis & Clark Caverns. Meeting with the Helena airport. Lima location will be working with MDOT to get the videos installed.

Video project with Ennis Chamber of Commerce has no updates.

Marketing Plan

Marketing plan budget discussed by the SW Montana Board to approve budget was motioned, seconded, and approved. No comments. Budget for next year will be presented at the Tourism Advisory Council in June.

Other Business

Switching meeting to Tuesday or Thursday. No vote.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:30

Next Meeting Thursday June 20th at Boulder Creek Lodge. September will be Boulder Hot Springs.