Southwest Montana
General Board Meeting Minutes
Lee Jewell Conference Center, 1100 Hollenback Lane, Deer Lodge, MT
Thursday, September 24, 2026 -12 noon to 3 pm
Meeting Started at 12:13 pm

Attendance: Dan Rickman, Alyssa Starr, Linda Brown, Angela Wetz, Susan Outt, Bruce Binkowski, Kelly Upright, Coni Upright, Stacy James, Ava Hoffman, Amanda Cooley, Barb Reiter, Haley Burgess, Chiara Schober, Arva Klapan, Jacque Lavelle, Jeanette Koph, Sonya Rosenthal, Al Christopherson, Kasey Edge Faur, Jocelyn Dodge, Adrea Opitz, Travis Brower, Debbie Westfall.

Welcome and Announcements:

- Introduction
- Appointment of Stacy James replacing Julie Shelton for Deer Lodge County.
- Approval of May minutes: Motion to approve the May minutes by Jocelyn Dodge; second by Jeanette Kopf. Motion passed
- Finance Report: Maria provided an overview of the bed tax revenues and current budget expenses. Maria will provide a QuickBooks report to include the annual budget to show percentage of budget spent and improve the expense description. No action taken on the financial report.

Director Report

- Bylaws: Discussion on meeting compliance. The bylaws do not stipulate the number of meetings that must be held. In an effort to minimize meetings to enable more people to attend it was suggested meetings would be held in September, October, January – election of officers, April – brochure and marketing plan approval, and June – field trip. In lieu of monthly meetings information can be provided on the member site on the website and newsletter.
- Ambassador Program – Program is ready for everyone to use. Program is available on the member site on the website.
- Regions have been encouraged to be a part of Agritourism.
- Voices of Montana Tourism Summit is coming up and registration will be on the website.
- Governor's Conference on Tourism – Awards were given to Sarah Bannon for her work as Executive Director for over 25 years and to Ander Optiz-Visit Helena for their Arts and Culture Campaign to launch the Montana Heritage Center.

Tempest

- Handout highlights – website had 280,890 sessions by the public with the Beaver slide receiving almost 500,000 views on Facebook.

Abbey Agency

- Running warm season ads right now with approximately 33% engagement.
- Paranormal ads have launched for tours and towns after dark. No metrics yet.
- Smithsonian Magazine has a story placement
- Haley provided a review of postcards, stickers, and ads.

Call Center

- Elaine was not present, but provided information on an overview of what was distributed.

Community Updates

- Community events and updates provided by attendees.

Meeting Adjourned