

Minutes

El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau

Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, June 14, 2007, 4:00 P.M.

The Las Palmas and Del Sol Room, El Paso Convention Center

Board Members Present

Bernie Olivas
Fred Jackson
Michael Shoffit
Lidia Flynn
Pat Valdez-Rios
Jane Ratcliff
Adeline Rogers
Cindy Fought

Board Members Absent

Marilyn Munden

CVB Staff

Bill Blaziek
Bryan Crowe
Terrie Todd
Wendy Garrett
Pifas Silva
Pat Genera
Dana Smith
Valerie A.Garcia

I. CALL TO ORDER

- The meeting was called to order at 4:08 P.M.

II. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- Minutes were filed as presented

III. UPDATES

A. Financials: Pat Genera reviewed financials for April.

- Revenues and expenses are on course with budget.

B. Convention and Tourism Development: Terrie Todd reported for the month of May.

- 12 leads were generated with a total of 4800 room nights, 3065 delegates and an economic impact of \$1,959,761.
- Eight leads were turned definite with a total of 1,371 room nights, 1,863 delegates and an economic impact of \$1,191,202..
- Four meeting planners were hosted in May including Vietnam Veterans of America, Rotary Club International, The Fan Association of North America and Jack Nokes with the Texas Museum association.
- The Visitor Information Centers served 8,054 visitors in May (an increase of walk-ins by 31% over May 2006)
- Cathy Countiss, Convention Development Sales Manager, made sales calls in Austin and while there attended the statewide meeting with Julie Chase from the Governor's Office on Tourism regarding Texas Sports initiatives.
- Rebecca Diaz, Tourism Sales Manager, attended the Mid-Atlantic Sales Mission with the Texas Tourism Department, calling on tour operators in Philadelphia, Maryland, and New York.
- The Tourism Sales team partnered with Holiday Inn Express, The Marriott, El Paso Outlet Shoppes and the regional publication to showcase El Paso at Expo Viaja in Chihuahua. There were over 3000 attendees and the team interacted with over 900.
- The Departments of State and Homeland Security approved the travelers' ability to use a valid photo ID and proof of a passport application to travel by air through Sept. 30th. Travel Industry Association will continue to push for realistic timetables to roll out the new passport requirements for land and cruise travel to the U.S. which is scheduled to be implemented by June 2009.

- El Paso will be Southwest Airlines featured destination on Southwest.com July 3rd-9th. Every seat in and out of EP will be on sale and the program offers the opportunity to showcase El Paso's many tourism attractions.
- The CVB Marketing Committee will meet at Butterfield Trail Golf Course for the quarterly meeting.
- The CVB partnered with the El Paso Street Festival to create a giveaway on Visitelpaso.com to promote travel and overnight stay in El Paso.
- The El Paso Museum of History had its grand opening, Sat. June 30th.
- Alfresco Fridays/Music Under the Stars starts June 15th and runs through August 17th.

C. Performing Arts Venues: Wendy Garrett

- Viva performances are every Friday and Saturday through July with a possible added week in August. This year is the 30th Anniversary of Viva El Paso. A dinner has been added before the show from 6pm-7pm and consists of a BBQ menu.
- Wendy Garrett traveled to Los Angeles to speak with agents about the Plaza Theatre and received positive responses from all.

D. Operations and Food and Beverage: Bryan Crowe

- April concession sales were \$41,993.31, these sales were strong because of the Sesame Street performance.
- The total Food and Beverage revenue was \$34,419.00 over the budgeted revenue.
- Successful events
 - University of Phoenix Graduation
 - Susan G. Komen Luncheon
 - Citizenship Ceremony
 - Texas State Teachers Association
 - Sgt. Majors Academy added another graduation at the Convention Center in May.

E. Communications: Pifas Silva

- The website received over 69,350 hits in May 2007, a 53% increase over 2006 which had 37,063.
- The June issue of Texas Highways Magazine featured 8 pages dedicated to El Paso and The Mission Trail.
- Viva press conference was covered by all TV stations
- We continue to contribute a 2 page editorial in the El Paso Magazine.
- Pifas is guest reporter on KDBC Friday Fun Things to Do and will highlight Viva, Alfresco Friday's, and Music Under the Stars
- El Paso has brought in over \$34,000 in media value in May, bringing the year to date value to \$910,000.
- Bill Blaziek is speaking at the Northeast Concerned Citizens Meeting.

F. Film Commission: Susie Gaines

- The Film Commission generated 24 new leads in May.
- There are currently 2 productions that are being filmed (Court T.V. & TX Tourism commercial)
- Texas Film Incentive Bill passed and funded.
- Susie Gaines will attend the Film TX Brunch in Los Angeles.

IV. GENERAL MANAGERS UPDATE

- Bill Blaziek introduced Valerie A. Garcia as new Executive Assistant and Dana Smith as the newest addition to the Sales team. Bill Blaziek gave an update on the USBC/Borderland legal status, and announced that the USBC will be coming to El Paso in 2010.

V. OPEN DISCUSSION

- Pat Valdez-Rios reported a misprint in the Meeting Professional magazine regarding the square footage at the Camino Real.
- Jane Ratcliff gave an update on Pat Haggarty's health status, requested a certificate of thanks for Joe Pickett, and asked the rental cost of the Pavilion at McKelligan Canyon. She also encouraged everyone to attend the 3rd Thursdays at the Museum for their networking event.
- Michael Shoffit reported recommendations for the Tourism Lyceum that will be presented to Mayor & Council
 - Downtown (Bus stops, kiosk's, ATM machines)
 - Concordia Cemetery – Infrastructure
 - Infrastructure at Mission Trails
 - Ascarate Park to add 200 ft to the lake
 - Need for a Sports complex in the El Paso area (20 Baseball fields, 20 Soccer fields)
 - Theme park

VI. ADJOURN

- Meeting was adjourned at 5:17 PM.

***The next meeting will be on August 9, 2007 at 4 PM.**