

Minutes

El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau Advisory Board Meeting Thursday, February 12, 2009, 4:00 p.m. Las Palmas Del Sol Room

Board Members Present

Betsy Behrenhausen
Elvia Hernandez
Kay Mooy
Jane Ratcliff
Bernie Sargent
Joe Frandina
Joe Daubach

Board Members Absent

Pat Valdez-Rios
Terry Guerra

CVB Staff

Bryan Crowe
Susie Gaines
Pifas Silva
Ashley Tantimanoco
Pat Genera
Patricia Martin

I. CALL TO ORDER

- The meeting was called to order at 4:09 p.m.

II. Review of Minutes

- A motion was made by Bernie Sargent to approve the minutes from the previous meeting; Betsy Behrenhausen seconded the motion. Minutes were unanimously approved.

III. UPDATES

A. Financials: Pat Genera reviewed financials for December 2008

- December revenues were strong with expenses in line.

B. Convention Sales Development: Pifas Silva

- Six hotel leads were generated in the month of January representing a total of 3,479 room nights and an approximate economic impact of \$1.7 million.
- Three pieces of business went definite for the month representing a total of 681 room nights with an estimated economic impact of \$173,472: Strategic Offensive Aggressive Passionate Prayer (SOAPP), World War II Veterans – 1st Armored Division Reunion, State Bar of Texas – Hatton W. Sumners Institute.
- Brooke Underwood, Director of Convention Development, and Jason Quintana, Sales Manager, attended the Texas Society of Association Executives (TSAE) Southwest Showcase in Austin, TX with representatives from Wyndham and Hilton Garden Inn hotels. Five Request for Proposals (RFPs) were received and are being worked on.
- Cathy Countiss, Senior Sales Manager, attended the Religious Conference Management Association (RMCA) Conference in Grand Rapids, MI. Six Request for Proposals (RFPs) were received and are being worked on.

C. Tourism Development: Patricia Martin

- In the month of January 1,663 inquires were received.
- A total of 1,740 visitors were assisted in our three Visitor Information Centers in the month of January.
- The room night counts for the Sun Bowl was completed and the report shows that of the 19 hotel properties reporting a total of 3,383 room nights were used with an estimated economic impact of \$1,513,893. In the process of completing the report for the Texas vs. The Nation game. Initial reports show the Camino Real Hotel (the host hotel) reported a total of 874 room nights. Still awaiting confirmation on other hotel properties.

- The Tourism Dept. is currently working with the Advertising & Marketing Manager to create a “passport” booklet with coupon savings for visitors to use while in El Paso. Seven hotels will participate in the discount program and will distribute the passport. Eleven area attractions will also participate along with nine partners (Convention & Performing Arts Centers, Museum & Cultural Affairs Dept., etc.) for a total of 20 pages of confirmed sponsors that will offer a discount at their establishment.
- Upcoming Events: El Paso Marathon, Kidspalooza, Dinosaurs exhibit at Insights Museum, Robots exhibit at Lynx Exhibit and the Legends of Chrome exhibit at the El Paso Museum of Art.

D. Performing Arts Venues: Ashley Tantimanoco

- Total attendance in both theatres for the month of December was 12,072. The break down in attendance was: Plaza Theatre had 10,053 attendees and the Chavez Theatre had 2,019.
- Number of performances for the month of December was 11. The Plaza Theatre had 9 performances and the Chavez Theatre had 2 performances.
- The musical show “Annie” did really well as part of the Broadway in El Paso series and preparations are underway for the next show in the series which will be “Bye Bye Birdie”.
- David Copperfield will perform two shows in the Abraham Chavez Theatre on Feb. 22.

E. Operations and Food and Beverage: Bryan Crowe

- There were 13 events presented in all venues in the month of January which is equal to the 13 the year before.
- Attendance in all venues was at 27,090 in January 2009 as compared to 17,882 patrons that attended all venues in January 2008.
- Future events booked in January 2009 totaled 41, compared to 18 booked in January 2008. Some of the events include: State of Higher Education, State of the City and the Baby Expo.
- Highlighted events during the month in our facilities were: Home & Garden Show, Texas vs. The Nation’s “Bite of the Border” dinner, Rotary Club’s “Celebrity Chef” gala, a bridal show and Lifeway Christian Resources’ Beth Moore presentation.
- Revenue in Food & Beverage for the month of January was \$50,478, compared to \$86,990 last year. Year to Date Revenue was \$597,993.
- Big contributors to catering revenue in January were: Texas vs. the Nation dinner.
- Concessions Contributors include: Bridal fair.

F. Communications: Pifas Silva

- Unique visits to the website for the month of January reached 40,326.
- El Paso has received free media exposure in the December issue of Texas Highways with an 8-page spread on El Paso and the city’s Holiday Lights.
- The Communications Department is working on hosting five travel writers over the next three months: two from Saveur Magazine out of New York, two from Texas Highways Magazine and one photo-journalist from Mexico in partnership with the State Tourism’s Mexico PR agency.
- Printed stories about El Paso were distributed for review to include an article in the New Zealand magazine, TNT, which was a result of the writer’s visit to El Paso in August 2008. The value of coverage was estimated at \$29,603.51.
- A bid presentation video was shown which features Eduardo Xol from “Extreme Makeover Home Edition” and will be shown to the general membership of the Code Enforcement Association of Texas.

G. Film Commission: Susie Gaines

- There were nine leads in the month of January.
- Year-to-Date Direct Impact is \$926,000.
- Film Commissioner Susie Gaines working extensively with “Extreme Makeover Home Edition” and CNN News during the month.

- The Film Commission Dept. is working on the updated version of the Film Commission Manual.

IV. Assistant General Manager's Update

- Byran Crowe gave an update on the construction project: project has begun but the demolition will be held until Feb. 17 once a wood wall for protection is erected.
- Abraham Chavez project (renovation) saw the contract approved in early January and will have the theatre off-line in March 2010.

V. Open Discussion

- Bernie Sargent discussed several items: new nature tourism brochure will be going to print this week with 10,000 copies being ordered; work has begun on a Buffalo Soldier Memorial Park and hopefully will be unveiled in 2010; an early settlement marker has been placed on the south side of the Kress Building downtown; a Butterfield Trail marker has been placed by the Butterfield Trail Golf Club to mark the spot of the famous trail; Franklin Mountain State Park visitor center will be located next to the Border Patrol and Archeology museums; the Socorro Rectory has been listed as one of the 12 most endangered buildings in Texas and work needs to be done to it and finally, the Golden Horseshoe needs to be heavily promoted so visitors can "get the flavor" of shopping in a border city.

VI. ADJOURN

- A motion was made by Bernie Sargent to adjourn the meeting; Elvia Hernandez seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 5:19 PM.

The next meeting will be on March 19, 2009