

Minutes

El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau Advisory Board Meeting Thursday, March 11, 2010, 4:00 p.m. El Paso Museum of History

Board Members Present

Joe Frandina
Bernie Sargent
Kay Mooy
Terry Guerra
Elvia Hernandez
Joe Daubach
Yolanda Acosta
Betsy Behrenhausen

Board Members Absent

Laurie Paternoster

CVB Staff

Bryan Crowe
Brooke Underwood
Veronica Castro
Pifas Silva
Carol McNeal
Valerie A. Garcia

I. CALL TO ORDER

- The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m.

II. UPDATES

A. Financials: Bryan Crowe reviewed financials for January 2010

- January revenues were strong with expenses in line.

B. Convention Sales Development : Brooke Underwood

- **February - 8 leads** were generated for the month representing 5,395 in total attendance, 7,641 Room Nights and an approximate Economic Impact of \$3.4 Million.
- Notable business includes:
 - LULAC-Women's Regional Conference
 - LULAC – National Convention
 - Conference USA – Basketball Tournament
- **February - 4 pieces of business** were confirmed for the month representing 376 in total attendance, 783 Room Nights and an approximate Economic Impact of \$ 240,414.
- Notable business includes
 - Texas Crime Prevention – Spring Training (July 2011)
 - United States Marine Corps (June 2010)
- **Attendance Booster**

Sales staff participated in the **Texas Association of Convention & Visitors Bureau's** Annual Oscar Event and Sales Blitz. The annual gala is by invitation only to meeting planners and organization executive directors. The event draws 150 of Austin/San Antonio and the surrounding area's top meeting planners. The Sales Blitz pairs CVB sales professionals, seasoned and novice, together in teams to make calls on Austin/San Antonio area organizations in order to educate planners on the value of working with CVB's. Additionally, once the blitz is completed we will receive a list of all associations covered during the blitz for a personal follow up.

C. Tourism Development: Veronica Castro

- We received 1,326 inquiries in the month of February. The majority of the inquiries were from our Tour Texas and visitelpaso.com website still catering to a large request from bowlers.
- In the month of February, we assisted 1,420 tourists in all 3 Visitors Information Centers.
- Ft. Bliss Visitor Information Center has been moved to a new location near the new Food Court area that is located in the new PX/ Freedom Crossing Mall.

- We are in the process of redoing the facade at the visitor information center located at the airport. The new area will include a new background with a 60 inch TV screen and two 30 x 43 inches poster holders.
- The Retired Senior Volunteer Program and UTEP Resource Women Center have agreed to assist in providing volunteers that will be greeting bowlers at the 9 contracted hotels and the airport.
- We have contracted the Pedi cabs services to be at the Convention Center and offer free rides to the bowlers in the downtown area. The drivers will have full CVB uniform the bicycles will have our USBC El Paso logo.
- The El Paso Marathon took place Sunday, March 6th. Over 2,135 runners were in attendance with approximately 500 from out of town.
- **Upcoming Events**
 - March 13th – Welcome new lions and meerkats opening of the Africa Exhibit.
 - March 20th – Franklin Mountain Poppies Celebration
 - March 27th – Kidspalooza at Arts Festival
 - March 27th – Opening Ceremonies USBC Women’s Championship
 - March 28th – Sunland Park Derby

D. Facility Sales & Marketing – Carol McNeal

During the month of February, 24,546 patrons attended 7 events in all venues. All events were presented in the theatres due to the United States Bowling Congress presence in the Convention Center. 71% of the events were attended by more than 500 patrons.

The Plaza and Abraham Chavez Theatres hosted 10,169 patrons and Year-to-Date have hosted 80,080 patrons resulting in a pace that is slightly ahead of the YTD 08/09 performance.

Convention Center highlights:

- Elegant Penguin Bridal Show, attendance of 2,439
- Generation 2000 Children’s Event, attendance of 4,124

Generation 2000 was the last Convention Center activity prior to the United States Bowling Congress move-in. At present, USBC is in-house and Convention Center activity reports will focus on our only tenant, USBC, until July.

The Plaza and Abraham Chavez Theatres hosted 10,169 patrons and Year-to-Date have hosted 55,534 patrons. The El Paso Symphony Orchestra’s outreach program for schools was moved from January to February resulting in a slightly off-pace month-end performance. However, February numbers will reflect the addition of approximately 12,000 student attendees and will put us back on pace toward the annual target of 155,000 attendees in the two theatres.

January Plaza and Abraham Chavez Theatre highlights:

- Riverdance, total attendance of 8,851
- El Paso Symphony Orchestra Young Peoples Concert, total attendance of 10,679
- El Paso Symphony Orchestra, total attendance of 3,423
- El Paso Electric Company Employee Meeting, attendance of 681

Future Event Highlights:

- Porgy and Bess/El Paso Opera, March 12 and 13, Abraham Chavez Theatre
- Cabaret/Broadway, March 15, Plaza Theatre
- Kids Palooza/El Paso Symphony Orchestra, March 27, Arts Festival Plaza
- El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestra, March 28, Plaza Theatre
- Sesame Street, 8 shows, first week of April, Abraham Chavez Theatre
- Political satirist Bill Maher, April 3, Plaza Theatre
- Chicago, the band, April 6, Plaza Theatre, SOLD OUT
- Stomp, April 20 & 21, Plaza Theatre, (on-sale Friday, March 12, 12 Noon)
- Norah Jones, April 29, Plaza Theatre, (on-sale Friday, March 12, 10:00 a.m.)

Spring Entertainment on the Plazas

- Alfresco Fridays begin on April 2 and will take place throughout the spring and summer on Arts Festival Plaza. As always, refreshments will be available.

- Entertainment for bowlers will also be featured at 5:30 p.m. on the new Convention Center Plaza on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays beginning in April and continuing until July. The local groups, including dancers from Viva El Paso will perform for approximately one hour each day. Refreshments will also be available during performance times.

E. Operations and Food and Beverage: Bryan Crowe.

- Revenue in Food & Beverage for the month of February was \$55,763. Year to Date Revenue was \$695,507.
- Big contributor to catering revenue in February was:
 - El Paso Electrical Meeting
- Concessions Contributor included:
 - Riverdance
 - Oasis Lounge and Bistro

F. Communications: Pifas Silva

- Unique visits to the website for the month of February reached 59,560, compared to 43,814 in February 2009, a 36% increase. We are also in the process of bringing on a new web development company: Impulse Development of El Paso. We will relaunch visitelpaso.com in May and hope to see more increases with the newer designed site.
- El Paso has received free media exposure in the January issues of Texas Highways and Southern Living.
- The Communications Department has scheduled a photographer to shoot photos of El Paso for the State's Tourism office. Currently we are on pace with last year's total and should surpass our goal again this year of 20 writers. So far we have hosted five, this photog will make six YTD.
- We continue our schedule of USBC presentations to community organizations such as Paso Del Norte Group, Central Business Association, Downtown Rotary and others. Presentations will run through the middle of March with a final presentation to the Hotel Motel Association on March 18. El Paso 15 (the government channel) taped the CBA presentation and began airing it this week on cable channel 15 and will do so until March 26.

G. Film Commission: Susie Gaines

There were 3 leads in the month of February, bringing the year-to-date total to 66. Leads include requests and inquiries for location pictures of a specific area, local crew, how to film on or at International locations, and when they would need a city permit.

• **February Filming/Wrapped:**

Autumn Leaves' Productions continues to film their Independent film titled "Rebels". Will continue in March. Permitted an additional 2 City Locations for them.

III. Assistant General Manager's Update

- Bryan Crowe gave a presentation on the many facets of the CVB and The Convention Center and Performing Arts Centers.

IV. Open Discussion

- Elvis Hernandez graciously thanked the Convention and Visitor's Bureau staff for all their hard work on the United States Bowling Congress.

V. ADJOURN

- Meeting was adjourned at 5:14 PM.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 8, 2010 at 4 p.m. in the Las Palmas Del Sol Room in the Convention Center