

Minutes
El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau
Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, March 19, 2009, 4:00 p.m.
Rio Grande Hall A

Board Members Present

Betsy Behrenhausen
Elvia Hernandez
Kay Mooy
Jane Ratcliff
Bernie Sargent
Terry Guerra
Joe Daubach
Joe Frandina
Pat Valdez-Rios

Board Members Absent

CVB Staff

Bill Blaziek
Bryan Crowe
Veronica Castro
Brooke Underwood
Wendy Garrett
Pifas Silva
Valerie A. Garcia

I. CALL TO ORDER

- The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

II. Review of Minutes

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

III. UPDATES

A. Financials: Bryan Crowe reviewed financials for January 2009

- January revenues were strong with expenses in line.

B. Convention Sales Development : Brooke Underwood

Sixteen hotel leads were generated in the month of February representing a total of 6, 998 room nights with an approximate economic impact of \$971,888 Million.

- Notable Business includes:
 - Texas Transit Association – Annual Conference (2012)
 - Texas Conference of Urban Counties – Bi-Annual Conference (2011)
 - LULAC National Convention (2012)
 - Texas Health Information Management Association (2014)
- Texas Crime Stoppers Association – Annual State Convention was confirmed for the month representing a total of 480 room nights with an estimated economic impact of \$191,820.
- Director of Convention Development, Brooke Underwood hosted Laura May and Sharon McKenzie of the United States Bowling Conference on March 10-11, 2009. They toured 17 hotels and negotiated rates. Laura and Sharon commented on the cleanliness and convenience of the downtown attractions such as the museums and library of El Paso as opposed to the other cities they have visited.
- El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau will be working with Dr. Jim Petrick of Texas A& M University's Tourism Sciences Department to better understand the habits and economic impact of convention delegates to El Paso.
- Sales Manger, Jason Quintana will be traveling to Austin next week Thursday to met with 9 associations which include the Juvenile Justice Association of Texas, State of Texas Alliance for Recycling, Texas Association of Business, and Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Information to be distributed includes: Convention Sales collateral as well as hotel information including new properties as well as renovations to existing hotels.

C. Tourism Development: Veronica Castro

- In the month of February we received 1,418 inquires.
- We assisted 1648 visitors in our 3 Information Visitors Centers in the month of February.
- The new Nature Tourism brochure has been printed and is being distributed to key facilities.
- The El Paso Marathon proved to be successful. Over 1,600 patrons participated. A small percentage of them came from out of town.
- General Manager, Bill Blaziek, Director of Tourism, Veronica Castro, and Director of Convention Development, Brooke Underwood attended the annual Unity Dinner hosted by the Tourism Travel Industry. Bill Moody, Veronica Escobar and Debbie Farnum of Texas Association of Scholl Boards were our guests.
- Veronica Castro conducted and completed interviews for the individuals that will be working the El Paso booth in Reno during the United States Bowling Conference Open. The booth will be open in Reno from March 28th – July 4th.
- The 7th Annual National Tourism week will kick off on Monday May 11, 2009 with a Resolution that will be presented at County, followed by the Proclamation at City on Tuesday May 12th.
- Upcoming Events:
 - Kidsapalooza - March 28th
 - Dinosaurs at the Insights Museum
 - Robots at the Lynx
 - Aviation Exhibit at the Museum of History

D. Performing Arts Venues: Wendy Garrett

- Total attendance in both theatres for the month of January was 13,829. The break down in attendance was: Plaza Theatre had 2,288 attendees and the Chavez Theatre had 11,541.
- Number of performances for the month of January was 9. The Plaza Theatre had 3 hosted performances and the Chavez Theatre had 6 hosted performances.
- The El Paso Convention and Performing Arts Centers will be working with the El Paso Jazz Connection to kick off Jazz in the Canyon, a series of outdoor concerts that will be held at McKelligan Canyon the second Thursday of the month beginning June 11-October 8, 2009.
- The 2nd annual Kidsapalooza will be held on March 28, 2009 from 11 am to 5 pm.
- Upcoming Summer Events:
 - Alfresco Fridays – May 1
 - Music Under the Stars
 - Viva at McKelligan Canyon
 - Cheech and Chong
 - Boney James Concert
 - Sesame Street – Elmo Goes Green

E. Operations and Food and Beverage: Bryan Crowe

- There were 17 events presented in all venues in the month of February compared to 24 the year before.
- Attendance in all venues was at 33,640 in February as compared to the 32,635 patrons that attended the year before.
- Future events booked in February totaled 14, compared to 22 booked in February 2008. Some of the events include: American Heart Association, Park University Graduation, Texas Tech University Graduation, Texas Tech University Luncheon, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's Biz Tech and Grand Car Show.
- Highlighted events during the month in our facilities were: State of the Higher Education Luncheon, University of Phoenix Graduation Gala, Generation 2000, Borderland Tradeshow, and the Swearing in Ceremony.

- Revenue in Food & Beverage for the month of February was \$122,137 compared to \$87,434 last year. Year to Date Revenue was \$718,101 to plan of \$656,000.
- Big contributors to catering revenue in February were: University of Phoenix Graduation, and the State of Higher Education.
- Concessions Contributors include: Valentine's Dance, Pink Floyd laser show, LifeWay Christian speaker, and David Copperfield.
- Peter Wewers, new Chef joined the Savor team on March 14th.

F. Communications: Pifas Silva

- Unique visits to the website for the month of February reached 43,814, compared to 40,326 in January..
- The Communications Department hosted two travel writers with Saveur Magazine of New York and within the next month will host two 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 Active Life Magazine out of the United Kingdom and which was a result of the writer's visit to El Paso in August 2008. The Value of coverage was estimated at \$218,709.09 according to the Governor's Tourism Office.
- The bid presentation video which features Eduardo Xol from "Extreme Makeover Home Edition" and was shown at the previous month's meeting proved successful as the Code Enforcement Association of Texas selected El Paso for 2011.

G. Film Commission: Susie Gaines

- There were six leads in the month of December.
- Year-to-Date Economic Impact from film production is \$1,494,000.
- Film Commissioner, Susie Gaines will travel to Dallas for the International Film Festival and Association of Film Commissioners International Locations Expo.
- A new television show titled "Best Thing I Ever Ate" will begin filming in El Paso. This show will feature a celebrity who chose Chico's Tacos in El Paso to be featured on the show and will air on the Food Network.

IV. General Manager's Update

- General Manager Bill Blaziek gave an update on the United States Bowling Conference
- Assistant General Manager, Bryan Crowe gave an update on the Capital Projects, saying that it is moving along and will begin the next phase of construction.
- Director of Theatres, Wendy Garrett discussed the upcoming Summer Events Schedule.

V. Open Discussion

- Pat Valdez-Rios discussed the Border Violence meeting she attended and said that Customs and Law Enforcement are working hard to fight the violence and that RedCo was holding strong amidst the violence situation.
- Joe Frandina attended the "State of the Economy" Meeting at UTEP and reported that El Paso's performance betters other cities Nationwide.
- Bernie Sargent reported that Concordia Cemetery is developing a Buffalo Soldier Memorial.

VI. ADJOURN

- A motion was made by Joe Frandina to adjourn the meeting; Bernie Sargent seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 5:18 PM.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 9, 2009 at 4 p.m. in the Las Palmas Del Sol Room