

Minutes
El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau
Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, April 9, 2009, 4:00 p.m.
Las Palmas Del Sol Room

Board Members Present

Betsy Behrenhausen
Elvia Hernandez
Kay Mooy
Jane Ratchiff
Bernie Sargent
Terry Guerra
Joe Frandina

Board Members Absent

Pat Valdez-Rios
Joe Daubach

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 4:04 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 February 2009

- February revenues were strong with expenses in line.

B. Convention Sales Development : Brooke Underwood

Twelve hotel leads were generated in the month of April representing a total of 4,683 room nights with an approximate economic impact of \$4.6 Million.

- Notable Business includes:
 - Mary Kay Cosmetics – Annual Conference
 - TX State Association of Fire Fighters – Annual Convention
 - Texas Recreation & Park Society
 - TX State Teachers Associations
 - Grantmakers for Children, Youth & Families
 - Juvenile Justice Association of Texas
- Four pieces of business went definite for the month representing a total of 681 Room Nights with an estimated economic impact of \$495,535.
- Sales Manager, Lisa Ritchey will travel to Austin this month to meet with ten associations.

C. Tourism Development: Veronica Castro

- In the month of March we received 4,239 inquires.
- We assisted 1,869 visitors in our 3 Information Visitors Centers in the month of March.
- We have received the El Paso Marathon demographics report. They are showing a total of 1,560 total runners. It is reported that 408 of those participants are considered out of town participants. Some of these participants came as far as Puerto Rico, New York, Washington, DC, and Spokane Washington to name a few.

- Tourism Marketing Manager, Leesy McCorgary hosted a Tour Operator, Four Seasons Vacations, from Minnesota. They spend five days in El Paso visiting local attractions and hotels. This Tour Operator will bring USBC women bowlers to El Paso for a total of five groups over five weeks.
- 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:
 - Featherfest – Keystone Park

D. Performing Arts Venues: Wendy Garrett

- Total attendance in both theatres for the month of February was 12,702. The break down in attendance was: Plaza Theatre had 5,810 attendees and the Chavez Theatre had 6,892.
- Number of performances for the month of February was 8. The Plaza Theatre had 4 hosted performances and the Chavez Theatre had 4 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 McKelligon Canyon the second Thursday of the month beginning June 11-October 8, 2009.
- The 2nd annual Kidsapalooza was a great success.
- The Plaza Theatre is teaming up again with the Community Foundation to bring the 2nd Annual Film Festival beginning in August.
- Wilco will be performing in the Abraham Chavez Theatre on June 17th.
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- Upcoming Summer Events:
 - Alfresco Fridays beginning May 15
 - Music Under the Stars
 - Viva at McKelligon Canyon
 - Cheech and Chong Comedy Show
 - Boney James Concert
 - Sesame Street – Elmo Goes Green
 - Broadway Series – Rain A tribute to the Beatles

E. Operations and Food and Beverage: Bryan Crowe

- There were 21 events presented in all venues in the month of March compared to 16 the year before.
- Attendance in all venues was 35, 427 in March compared to 28,866 patrons the year before.
- Future events booked in March totaled 20, compared to 9 booked in March 2008. Some of the events include: Miss El Paso Teen USA, US Mexico Border Health Association Reception, Region 19 College Tech Prep Conference, Las Palmas Medical Center Conference, REI Mixed <Martial Arts/Boxing Event, 4th Calvary, 1st Armored Gala, NEA Hispanic Caucus, Car Show.
- Highlighted events during the month in our facilities were: Expo Ltd. Spring Home Show, attendance of 9,300 over 3 days, Kidsapalooza, EPSO Side by Side Concerts, 4th Brigade, 1st Armored Gala.
- Revenue in Food & Beverage for the month of March was \$81,245 compared to \$115,800 last year. Year to Date Revenue was \$810,717 to plan of \$771,000.
- Big contributors to catering revenue in February were: El Paso Community Foundation Organ Concert for Janice Windell.
- Concessions Contributors include: Tejano Legends, Home Expo, and Generation 2000.

F. Communications: Pifas Silva

- Unique visits to the website for the month of March were 45,813, an increase of 2,000 over February 2009 (43,814) and an increase of 5,500 over January 2009 (40,326).
- El Paso has received free media exposure in the April issue of True West and the Spring 2009 issue of Texas Meetings + Events.
- The Communications Department will host a photo-journalist from Mexico in partnership with the State Tourism's Mexico PR agency over the Easter Weekend.
- 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 \$22,307.68. This is the third article from that press trip.
- The USBC news conference on April 7 was successful with approximately 70 in attendance. All local media participated.

G. Film Commission: Susie Gaines

- March brought us 11 new leads that we're actively working on.
- Year-to-Date Economic Impact from film production is \$1,640,700.
- Film Commissioner, Susie Gaines traveled to Dallas and attended the International Film Festival and Association of Film Commissioners International Locations Expo.
- A new television show titled "Best Thing I Ever Ate" filmed in El Paso and brought 10 hotel room nights at the Holiday Inn Express with an economic impact of \$50,000.00 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.
- Film Commissioner Susie Gaines is attending Master Study Courses at the Association of Film Commissioners International Locations Expo.
- House Bill 873 has unanimously passed through the first stage of voting. This bill grants filmmakers funding to film in the state of Texas.

IV. General Manager's Update

- General Manager Bill Blaziek thanked our Advisory Board members for their attendance and support at the United States Bowling Conference press conference.
- Mr. Blaziek traveled to Arlington, Texas with Bryan Crowe, Brooke Underwood, and Patricia Martin to discuss the marketing plans for the United States Bowling Congress Conference here in El Paso.
- Bill Blaziek and Assistant General Manager Bryan Crowe will travel to Las Vegas, Nevada to attend the United States Bowling Conference Men's tournament.
- Mr. Blaziek announced that Rave Marketing has been chosen by USBC as the marketing firm for the 2010 United States Bowling Conference Women's Tournament.
- The Oasis Lounge will be open as a retail upscale cocktail lounge early June.

V. Open Discussion

- Bernie Sargent reported that Concordia Cemetery is developing a Buffalo Soldier Memorial and will be funded by the Historical Commission. Bernie also reported that on April 25th the Featherfest and Butterfly Gardens will open. He also informed us that 9 signs will be placed along the Rio Grande that will feature paintings and stories on the history of El Paso.

VI. ADJOURN

- A motion was made by Joe Frandina to adjourn the meeting; Kay Mooy seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 5:20 PM.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, May 14, 2009 at 4 p.m. in the Las Palmas Del Sol Room