

**Minutes**  
**El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau**  
**Advisory Board Meeting**  
**Thursday, May 13, 2010, 4:00 p.m.**  
**Las Palmas Del Sol Room**

**Board Members Present**

Joe Frandina  
Bernie Sargent  
Laurie Paternoster  
Terry Guerra  
Betsy Behrenhausen  
Joe Daubach  
Yolanda Torres

**Board Members Absent**

Kay Mooy  
Elvia Hernandez

**CVB Staff**

Bill Blaziek  
Carol McNeal  
Brooke Underwood  
Verónica Castro  
Pifas Silva

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

- The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m.

**II. UPDATES**

**A. Financials: Bill Blaziek reviewed financials for March 2010**

- March revenues were strong with expenses in line.

**B. Convention Sales Development : Brooke Underwood**

- **April** - 3 leads were generated for the month representing 700 delegates, 1,155 Room Nights and an approximate Economic Impact of \$1.6 million.
- Notable business includes:
  - American Association of Medical Assistants
  - Texas Recreation and Parks Society
- **April** - 2 pieces of business were confirmed for the month representing 270 Room Nights and an approximate Economic Impact of \$121,486.
- Notable business includes
  - Texas Council on Family Violence
  - FBI Command College
- A confirmation that Mary Kay has booked their 2012 Career Conference in El Paso was received. This is the organizations second consecutive year in El Paso. The Conference attendance is projected at 2000 and will utilize roughly 370 room nights.
- Representatives from El Paso will travel to the CUSA Athletic Directors meeting next week to bid on the 2011 CUSA Men's & Women's Basketball Championships.
- Representatives are also preparing to travel pending word from the TRAPS BOD that El Paso has been short listed. If selected Jason Quintana will travel to Waco Monday May 18 for a presentation to the General Membership.

**C. Tourism Development: Veronica Castro**

- In the month of April 2010 we received 2,141 travel inquiries. The majority of inquiries were from Tour Texas, Texas Monthly and AARP.
- In the month of April we assisted 2,017 tourists in the 3 Visitor Information Centers.
- We received feedback from the bowlers regarding a lack of access to popular areas in El Paso. We researched a couple of different ideas and opportunities and have started a shopping shuttle, leaving the Convention Center 4 times a day and stopping at the Sunland

Park Mall and the Outlet Shoppes at El Paso. Roundtrip charge is \$10. The shuttle started on May 10. Marketing materials have been provided to all hotels.

- We are currently surveying the bowlers at the information center located in the Convention Center lobby. The survey is intended to identify the bowlers experience in El Paso.
- Leesy McCorgary, Tourism Sales Manager will be attending International POW WOW, May 17-20 in Orlando as part of a co-op with the Texas State Tourism Department. She will be visiting with International Tour Operators. Also, the Texas Tourism PR department will be there pitching Texas stories to all international media.
- Veronica Castro will be attending a Travel and Tourism College, June 13-18 at the Texas State University in San Marcos. This is an intensive week long course in all aspects of marketing, promotion, communications and sales related to travel and tourism.
- **Upcoming Events**
  - Farmers Market: May 2-July 25, Outlet Shoppes at El Paso
  - Balloon Fest-Memorial Weekend
  - Mission Trail Art Market: May 1-end of summer, 9 am-4 pm

#### **D. Facility Sales & Marketing – Carol McNeal**

During the month of April, 16,520 patrons attended 20 events in all venues. 11,106 of these patrons attended events in the theatre venues and the remainder attended events related to the United States Bowling Congress in the Convention Center. 65% of the events were attended by more than 500 patrons.

The Plaza and Abraham Chavez Theatres hosted 11,106 patrons in April and Year-to-Date have hosted 103,655 patrons which is on pace to meet our annual goal.

#### **April Plaza and Abraham Chavez Theatre highlights:**

- Alfresco! Fridays, average attendance of 1,000+
- Bill Maher, total attendance of 1,386
- Chicago Concert, sold out
- El Paso Symphony Orchestra, total attendance of 1,417
- STOMP, total attendance of 2,207
- YWCA Reception, total attendance 1,165
- Norah Jones, sold out

#### **Future Event Highlights:**

- Jazz on the Rocks, the season's first performance, May 13 at 8 pm
- War in concert, estimated attendance of 2,000, May 15
- British Ballet Academy, estimated attendance of 2,000, May 15
- Cathedral High School, estimated attendance of 2,000
- Loretto Academy High School, estimated attendance of 1,200
- Miss Teen El Paso, estimated attendance of 2,000
- Goo-Goo Dolls, June 8
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#### **Spring Entertainment on the Plazas**

- Alfresco Fridays continue.
- USBC entertainment continues in the shopping mall located inside the Convention Center, at 5:30 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Jazz Thursdays until July. The local groups include dancers from Viva El Paso and will perform for approximately one hour each day.

#### **E. Operations and Food and Beverage: Bill Blaziek**

- Revenue in Food & Beverage for the month of April was \$253,400. Year to Date Revenue was \$1,023,000
- Concessions Contributor included:
  - USBC Concession Sales
  - YWCA Catering Sales

- Oasis Lounge and Bistro

**F. Communications: Pifas Silva**

- Unique visits to the website for the month of April reached 77,065, compared to 43,367 in April 2009, a 78% increase. We jumped about 13,000 unique visits from last month's 63,716.
- Impulse Development of El Paso continues to work on a new website design which we will launch later this month.
- El Paso has received free media exposure in the March issues of Ride Texas Travel Log, Meetings South and See Texas First.
- Currently the Communications Dept. is working with the state's tourism office on travel writer/photographers for upcoming press trips. We continue on pace with last year's total and should surpass our goal again this year of 20 writers. So far we have hosted 12 journalists YTD.
- Last week we launched our weekly El Paso CVB Factoid electronic newsletter. We have received favorable comments on it to include advisory board members, Betsy Behrenhausen and Elvia Hernandez as well as City manager Joyce Wilson.

**G. Film Commission: Brooke Underwood**

- There were 82 inquiries for the month. 76 from AFCL.
- Permitted a city park location for EPK Productions who shot a Music Video. Direct Impact: \$15,000.
- Susie Gaines attended the annual Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCL) Locations Expo in Los Angeles, April 15-18. Received significant leads and are working quickly to respond to their requests for information.
- **April Filming/Wrapped:** Autumn Leaves' Productions wrapped their Independent film titled "Rebels". Permitted an additional City Location for them for 4 days. Direct Impact: \$5,000

**III. General Manager's Update**

- Bill Blaziek gave a brief re-cap on the Travel Rally that was held on May 13<sup>th</sup>. The Rally saw over 100 individuals from the tourism and hospitality industry. Special guests included Mayor Cook, UTEP's Coach, Mike Price and Sunbowl's Executive Director, Bernie Olivas.

**IV. Open Discussion**

- Bernie Sargent informed us that Economic Development has started discussing additional signage for the downtown area.
- Joe Daubach discussed the Academy Sports and Outdoor Sun Bowl International Soccer Tournament on June 12-13. The event will feature a trade fair.

**V. ADJOURN**

- Meeting was adjourned at 5:03 PM.

**\*The next meeting will be on Thursday, June 17, 2010 at 4 p.m. in the Las Palmas Del Sol Room in the Convention Center\***