

Minutes

El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau Advisory Board Meeting Thursday, April 8, 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 Acosta

Board Members Absent

Kay Mooy
Elvia Hernandez

CVB Staff

Bill Blaziek
Bryan Crowe
Brooke Underwood
Pifas Silva
Carol McNeal
Valerie A. Garcia

I. CALL TO ORDER

- The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m.

II. UPDATES

A. Financials: Bryan Crowe reviewed financials for February 2010

- February revenues were strong with expenses in line.

B. Convention Sales Development : Brooke Underwood

- **March** - 6 leads were generated for the month representing 880 in total attendance, 984 Room Nights and an approximate Economic Impact of \$562,672.
- Notable business includes:
 - Military Officers Association of America
 - Texas Council on Family Violence
- **March** - 8 pieces of business were confirmed for the month representing 2,830 in total attendance, 1,143 Room Nights and an approximate Economic Impact of \$1.8 Million.
- Notable business includes
 - USA Boxing Border Association-Junior Olympic Tournament (May 2010)
 - I'm Big on Sports – Shoot at the Border
 - Texas Association Single Square Dancers (March 2011)

C. Tourism Development: Veronica Castro

- In the month of March 2010 we received 2,761 inquiries. The majority of inquiries were from AARP and visitelpaso.com.
- In the month of March we assisted 2,017 tourists in the 3 Visitor Information Centers.
- Two trainings were held for USBC volunteers and 6 for airport staff. These trainings educated volunteers and airport staff on what USBC is and what the city is expected to experience during their 3 month stay.
- USBC Opening Ceremonies were held on Saturday, March 27th.
- We attended two El Paso Community College Trade Shows in March. Trade shows highlighted El Paso's "things to see and do." The idea was to keep students in El Paso over Spring Break so that they may experience their city.
- We attended the White Sands Missile Range Deployment Fair where over 500 soldiers and their families were assisted.
- Bonita Tate will be attending TTIA in Corpus Christi on April 27th. TTIA will host over 200 travel counselors including AAA offices TXDOT offices.

- We are currently surveying the bowlers at the information center located in the Convention Center lobby. The survey is intended to measure the bowlers experience in El Paso.
- Two travel fairs are planned for National Tourism Week. The first will be held on Friday, May 14th during Alfresco Friday and the second will be during Armed Forces Day on May 15th. Area attractions will be invited to participate.
- The Hotel Motel Associations May luncheon will feature Janet Green, Director of the School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management at NM State University.
- On April 24th we will be present at Featherfest 2010. This event is in its 10th year and will take place at Keystone Heritage Park. The CVB will distribute information on area attractions and things to see and do.
- **Upcoming Events**
 - Downtown El Paso Ghost Tours: April 10th, 7-9 pm, EP Downtown Library
 - Concordia Cemetery Midnight Ghost Tour: April 17th, 11:30 pm-3 am, Concordia Cemetery
 - First Thanksgiving Celebration: April 23-25, San Elizario
 - FeatherFest: April 24th, Keystone, 9 am-3 pm
 - Of Mice and Men: April 23, Wise Family Theatre, 8-10 pm
 - Sun City Roller Girls: April 18, El Paso Coliseum, 5-9 pm
 - Mission Trail Art Market: April 24-25, San Elizario, 9 am-4 pm

D. Facility Sales & Marketing – Carol McNeal

During the month of March, 13,482 patrons attended 12 events in all venues. 9,074 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. 63% of the events were attended by more than 500 patrons.

The Plaza and Abraham Chavez Theatres hosted 8,649 patrons in March and Year-to-Date have hosted 82,081 patrons which is on pace with FY08/09 performance. Total year-to-date attendance in all theatre venues is 99,700, an 11.9% increase over FY08/09.

Convention Performing Arts Centers highlights:

- Elegant Penguin Bridal Show, attendance of 2,439
- Cabaret (Broadway), total attendance of 1,813
- El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestra, total attendance of 754
- Peter and the Wolf, El Paso Symphony Orchestra, total attendance of 728
- Megadeth rock concert, total attendance of 2,090 (Sold Out)
- Porgy and Bess, El Paso Opera, total attendance of 2,463

March 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
- Rudolph Budginas (Concert Pianist), April 10, Abraham Chavez Theatre (Showtime El Paso)
- Stomp, April 20 & 21, Plaza Theatre
- Norah Jones, April 29, Plaza Theatre (Sold Out)
- Mariachis for Mom, May 8, Plaza Theatre
- WAR rock concert, May 15, Abraham Chavez Theatre

Spring Entertainment on the Plazas

- Alfresco Fridays began on April 2 with the wonderful talent of Imperial Sonora (they will return later this summer) and attracted over 850 patrons. This series will continue throughout the spring and summer on Arts Festival Plaza. As always, refreshments will be available.
- Entertainment, as an enhancement to the USBC bowlers' experience, has also begun in the shopping mall located inside the Convention Center. This entertainment will continue at 5:30 p.m. on

Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 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 March was \$80,343. Year to Date Revenue was \$765,000.
- Concessions Contributor included:
 - Megadeath
 - Oasis Lounge and Bistro

F. Communications: Pifas Silva

- Unique visits to the website for the month of March reached 63,716, compared to 45,813 in March 2009, a 39% increase. Impulse Development of El Paso continues to work on a new design which 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 Spring issues of Ride Texas, Texas Travel Log and True West Magazine.
- The Communications Department hosted a photographer on March 16 who was shooting photos of El Paso for the State's Tourism office website. Currently we are working with state's tourism office again on a travel writer and a photographer for a press trip on May 9-10. 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 ten journalists YTD.
- The past month has been productive with a variety of publications doing interviews/seeking photos for upcoming publications. They include: Texas Golfer Magazine, Meetings South Magazine and Texas Meetings & Events.

G. Film Commission: Susie Gaines

There were 6 leads in the month of March, bringing the year-to-date total to 72. 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.

• **March Filming/Wrapped:**

Autumn Leaves' Productions continues to film their Independent film titled "Rebels" which will continue in April as well. The film commission has permitted an additional 3 City Locations for them for 7 days with a Direct Impact of \$5,000.00

BBC/London is in town filming a documentary on human trafficking generating 15 room nights with a \$38,000.00 direct impact.

III. General Manager's Update

- Bill Blaziek announced the successful kick off of Alfresco Fridays.

IV. Open Discussion

- Bernie Sargent informed us that Leon Metz will be receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award.

V. ADJOURN

- Meeting was adjourned at 5:14 PM.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, May 13, 2010 at 4 p.m. in the Las Palmas Del Sol Room in the Convention Center