

Minutes

El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau Advisory Board Meeting Thursday, September 12, 2008, 4:00 P.M. Las Palmas Del Sol Room

Board Members Present

Marilyn Munden
Betsy Berenhausen
Jane Ratcliff
Lidia Flynn
Terry Guerra
Joe Frandina
Pat Valdez-Rios
Elvia Hernandez
Joe Daubach
Kay Mooy
Bernie Sargent

Board Members Absent

Adeline Rogers

CVB Staff

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

- The meeting was called to order at 4:10 P.M.

II. Introduction

- General Manager Bill Blaziek welcomed Betsy Berenhausen, Elvia Hernandez, Kay Mooy and Bernie Sargent to the Advisory Board. Betsy is an army wife and secretary of the Rim Area Neighborhood Association, she will be representing District 1. Elvia Hernandez is president of Tigress Enterprises and has an extensive background in tourism, she will be representing District 3. Kay Mooy is a PhD candidate and lecturer at the University of Texas at El Paso, and an army wife, she will be representing District 7. Bernie Sargent is owner and President of Border Group, he is also President of the County Historical Commission, Bernie will be representing District 8.

III. Tribute to Don Haskins

- Bill Blaziek expressed our sadness in “The Bear’s” passing, which was followed by a tribute video.

IV. General Manager’s Orientation

- Bill Blaziek gave an overview of the El Paso Convention and Visitor’s Bureau and the El Paso Convention and Performing Arts Centers, along with the organizational chart and the breakdown of the Hotel Occupancy Tax funding and its distribution.

V. Review of Minutes

- Minutes approved

VI. UPDATES

A. Financials: Pat Genera reviewed financials for July 2008

- Revenues and expenses are on course with budget.

B. Convention Sales Development : Brooke Underwood

- 84 leads were generated this fiscal year for a total of 33,500 room nights and an approximate economic impact of \$15.7 Million.

- 52 pieces of business went definite for a total of 15,405 room nights with an estimated economic impact of \$9.9 Million. Notable business included: Association of Mayors, Councilmen and Commissioners, Texas Association of Museums, Texas Narcotics Officers Association, American Chemical Society, Lions Club State Convention.
- Brooke Underwood Director of Convention Development and the Convention Visitor's Bureau sales team traveled to Austin, Texas on August 20-21, 2008 for the annual sales mission "Margaritas and Massages". This event is held to host and entertain meeting planners and showcase El Paso as an attractive city to hold future events and conventions. The sales team received 3 requests for proposals as a result of this effort.
- Brooke Underwood Director of Convention Development and the Convention and Visitor's Bureau hosted a UTEP vs. TEXAS FAM (familiarization) on September 4-7, 2008. Five Meeting planners attended the FAM which included the National Guard of Texas, State Fireman's and Fire Marshall's Association, Texas Association for Bilingual Education, Health Occupational Students of America and a representative from Experient (representing 3 associations).

C. Tourism Development: Veronica Castro

- Inquires recorded for the Fiscal year 2007-2008, which includes e-mails, phone calls and faxes totaled 30,265.
- Walk-in traffic to our Information Centers for the fiscal year 2007-2008 totaled 22,500.
- Border Museum Guide: The Border Museum Association has created a new museums guide. They have printed 50,000 copies to be distributed throughout the city and in our Visitor Information Centers.
- We are working with UTEP and the Hotel Motel Association to conduct a study of visitors to El Paso. We will select several properties in different areas in town in order to get a good sampling. The purpose of the study is to gather information to include the purpose of their visit, length of stay, and money spent while on their trip. UTEP students will conduct the surveys and gather the information. We are currently scheduled to begin in October.
- The fall edition of our Visitor's Guide is now available along with the September-October Calendar of Events.

D. Performing Arts Venues: Wendy Garrett

- Total theatres attendance for the month of July was 2,115. Plaza Theatre with 1,264 Chavez Theatre with 851.
- Total Year to Date attendance is 147,236. Plaza Theatre with 65,240 and the Chavez Theatre with 81,996.
- Numbers of performances in the month of July were 3. Plaza Theatre with 2 performances and the Chavez Theatre with 1 performance.
- Number of performances Year to Date are 126 in both theatres. Plaza Theatre hosted 74 performances, the Chavez Theatre hosted 21 performances.

E. Operations and Food and Beverage: Bryan Crowe

- 22 events were booked in August 2008 as compared to the 14 future events that were booked in August 2007.
- Attendance in all venues was 34,209 in August 2008 as compared to the 11,007 patrons that attended all venues in August 2007.
- Highlighted events that are coming to the facilities are: Dinner and Gala for Hospice of El Paso, Southwest Baby and Family Expo, and the German Technology Days Expo.
- Disney's Winnie the Pooh event was attended by 3,171 patrons.
- The 1st Annual Film Festival held in The Plaza and Philanthropy theatres had a total of 22,244 in attendance.
- The August Revenue for Food & Beverage for the month of August is: Concessions Revenue - \$50,619, Catering Revenue - \$73,231, Other Revenue - \$225.
- Year-to-date revenue for Food and Beverage is \$1,316,000, a \$46,000 increase over last year.

- Big contributors to catering revenue in August were: Region 19 Teacher of the Year, State of the District Luncheon, Region 19 College Prep Conference, Community Foundation Events for Movies in the Plaza, and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employee ceremony.

F. Communications: Pifas Silva

- Website visits for the 2007-2008 totaled 796,005 which average 66,333 hits a month.
- The El Paso Convention and Visitor's Bureau are once again partnering with the State Tourism Office on a travel writer familiarization tour. We will host 18 travel writers who will be taking part in the Society of American Travel Writers conference in Houston. Ten journalists will come to El Paso prior to the conference and 8 will come after the conference. The dates are October 16-17, 2008 and October 22-23, 2008.
- The El Paso Convention and Visitors Bureau welcome Patricia Martin to the team as the new Advertising and Marketing Manager on September 15, 2008.

G. Film Commission: Susie Gaines

- There were 4 Leads for August – bringing the end of year total to 204.
- A UTEP commercial was filmed and wrapped by B Innovative Creative Productions with a total of 70 Room Nights (Hilton Garden Inn & Ramada Suites) with a direct economic impact of \$148,000.00
- The Short film titled “Unnatural Predator” by Feed Productions filmed and wrapped with a total of 175 Room nights and had a direct economic impact of \$225,000.00
- Room Nights total for the month of August was 245.
- The direct economic impact total for June was \$373,000.00.
- End of the year total room nights: 2,321
- End of the year total direct impact: \$3,078,450.00
- Film Commissioner Susie Gaines will travel to New York City next week to co-host along with film commissions from Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, South Padre Island, Amarillo, and Brownsville, the 2nd annual Film Texas Reception for New York filmmakers

VII. Presentation to Outgoing Board Members

- Bill Blaziek presented outgoing members of our Advisory Board, Marilyn Munden and Lidia Flynn with plaques of appreciation.

VIII. Open Discussion

- Special Events Director for the Sun Bowl Association Joe Daubach announced that the Sun Bowl Association will hold a food drive in concert with the Sun Bowl Thanksgiving parade. For more information please contact Mr. Daubach at 533-4416.
- President of the Concordia Heritage Commission Patricia Kennedy extended a letter of appreciation to the Convention and Visitors Bureau for providing her with El Paso promotional material for her trip to Odessa, Texas where she attend a conference of the Council for the Arts and Humanities.

IX. ADJOURN

- Meeting was adjourned at 5:33 PM.

The next meeting will be on Thursday October 9, 2008 at 4 PM in the Las Palmas Del Sol Room