

Meeting Minutes for Visit Southeast Montana Board of Directors

The **MISSION** of Visit Southeast Montana is to increase visitors to Southeast Montana by increasing awareness of our region, showcasing our cultural heritage, developing memorable experiences and educating our residents about the economic benefits of tourism. www.SoutheastMontana.com

June 20, 2018 – 10:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Community Center on Wilbur
Broadus, MT

Board Members in Attendance:

Chip Watts; Christine Whitlatch; Dale Galland; Dan Johnson; Dennis Kopitzke; Diana Murnion; Glenda Ueland; Jeff Ewelt; Lyn Ohl; Sabre Moore;

Staff Present: John Brewer, Brenda Maas

Guests: Glenn Heitz (Prairie County Museum); Kristen Sackett, Alex Wardell; Megan Richter Bland; Kyle McGowan (Windfall Studios); Courtney Luedtre; Nathan Satran; Chris Dantic (MT State Parks); Jessica Malone (Broadus Chamber); Melissa Billing (Broadus Chamber); Laura Lee Ullrich; Shari Robertson (EPEDC)

Meeting called to order at 10:03 a.m. and attendance taken.

Welcome and Introductions

Jessica Malone of the Broadus Chamber welcomed the group and shared the town's long history as the "Gateway" into southeast Montana. Outdoorsman and sportsman make the area a destination. The Powder River Historical Museum is a great draw and tells the complete story of the area.

Public comments

Christine Whitlatch asked that the TAC look at establishing a time during their meetings for regions and CVBs to meet at TAC meetings. Laura Lee Ulrich encouraged people to learn about the Warrior Trail. Windfall provided an update on their photo shoot taking place in region (day before, during and after meeting date).

Approval of April Meeting Minutes

Christine motioned to approve the April minutes; Dennis provided second. Motion passed.

Financial Overview

Profit Loss to date presented by John Brewer. Lodging tax revenue is over budget by \$7,508; actual new revenue in private funds was budgeted at \$20,000, actual is \$6,750. Motion to accept by Glenda Ueland. Seconded by Sabre Moore.

2019 Administrative and Unrestricted Budgets

The state allows for 20% of new collections to be used to administer the region. The Billings Chamber is under contract to manage the region. This year we trimmed the budget by about \$8,000 from last year but allowable funds are being reduced by \$17,000. There is a deficient of \$14,062 anticipated. The Billings Chamber board has agreed to reduce the rent and management fees by \$4,000. Discussion occurred about relocating offices to a less expensive option. It was argued by the board that both organizations receive significant benefit from the contract and co-location. There is also benefit with co-location of SEMT and Visit Billings. Jeff Ewelt motioned to accept the Administrative and Unrestricted budgets. Seconded by Dianna Murnion. Motion passed.

Strategic Discussion

Produce Quality Marketing Initiatives

Marketing Update

Brenda reviewed the quarterly dashboard. Call center inquiries are slightly below last year most likely due to web site challenges. Social media is tracking ahead of last year.

Image library is increasing as shots are increasing with summer weather. Travel guide is moving forward. A number of recent familiarization tours have occurred (intentional and western, art and adventure themes).

Updates on advertising, creative, social media, the Trail to Little Bighorn Battlefield and more shared.

If you would like Brenda to come to your community and make presentation on the region, please let her know.

Tourism-facing website (funded with lodging tax) has launch but needs work. There are formatting issues and changes in the database. Discussion about microsite (privately funded) not showing up on the mobile (Summer.southeastmontana.com), which Kyle McGowan and Kristen Sackett of Windfall fielded. March to May there were 20,000 views.

Windfall Update:

Kristen Sackett of Windfall introduced herself and shared her background (Beth Burman Frazee of Windfall moved to a different position).

Kristen reviewed recent ad placements and creative in print and digital. We are involved with many co-op and partnership ads with Glacier Country, Visit Glendive, Visit Billings and others. This significantly expands our budget. Web site discussion on need for regional tourism entities to provide content, calendar info etc. Kyle fielded the questions, discussed future actions including cleaning up the "feed" from State's business listings.

Develop Marketing Partnerships...outside the region

Visit Billings new agency of record is looking at a partnership with SEMT and Rapid City for Great American Road Trip connecting us to Mount Rushmore.

Grow In-Region Partnerships...to connect to constituents

Workshops

4,000 visitors in May at Medicine Rocks. Attributed to the State's billboard.

News you can Use is emailed each Wednesday – watch for useful information.

SEMT recently bought a package with *Special Cowboy Moments* (RFD-TV) using opportunity funds. There will be six airings. Our commercial will be used twice during each show and we will be featured in the opening and closing. Sabre is working with the film crew in Ekalaka as well.

Cooperative project with Dino Trail entities includes a short video for each location on the Trail (Carter Co. Museum; Makoshika State Park; and, Frontier Gateway Museum), which will be shot in late July.

Support Tourism Product Development

Nothing new to report

Committee/Task Force and Board Reports

The Nominating Committee recommends Dale Galland as Chair; Jeff Ewelt as Vice Chair; Sabre Moore as Secretary/Treasurer; and, Chip Watts as Immediate Past Chair.

Christine Whitlatch moved to approve all for these positions; Glenda Ueland provided second. Motion passed.

New Board Applicants: Recommended to accept the following Board applicants: Glenn Heintz (Prairie County Museum/Prairie County); Randy Schoppe (Big Horn County Museum/Big Horn County) {waiting for final letter of support }; Kevin Kooistra (Western Heritage Center/Yellowstone Co.) {waiting for final paperwork}; and, Jessica Malone (Broadus Chamber/Powder River County). Sabre moved to approve and Dennis Kopitzke provided second. Motion passed.

Second Terms: Lyn Ohs (Musselshell Co.) eligible for second term. Motion to retain Lyn for second term made by Dennis Kopitzke and seconded by Jeff Ewelt.

Other announcements

- Dan Jonson: Appreciates the work this board does but needs to resign due to work commitments. Commented on our wonderful region and encouraged us to see the region as a pass through and not a destination.
- Glendive: Makoshika is largest state park. They continue to seek utilities at the campground for the park for increased camping.

- Ekalaka: Shindig July 28 with dino dig and activities. Sept 8 vintage rodeo. March 7-9 in Miles City state museum association will meet. MTOTBD granted \$9300 over two years for a dino trail poster series. 14 dino sites in state in total.
- Broadus: Jess Lockwood, bull rider, is from Broadus. Highway construction is a challenge.
- Forsyth: Trail to the Little Bighorn complete and doing a walking tour brochure. Fair July 18-22.
- Terry: Planning Yippee Days July 28. Working on the historic Yellowstone Trail. Starts on the east coast. 4th of July Rodeo. Cornhole tournament, street dances, etc
- Billings: ZooMontana has three new healthy baby otters. A lot of events (Ren Fair, Family Day, numerous concerts, Beef and Brews)
- Hardin: Big Horn Days starts today. Warrior run, concerts, re-enactment. September will have Country Fun Day.

Meeting adjourned 2:25 p.m.

Board Meeting Schedule

All meetings 10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted. All times subject to change.

The new Executive Board will prepare the FY19 meeting schedule and Brenda will share in by early August.

Meeting sdjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Group was invited to visit the Powder River County Museum for a tour and refreshments.