



YOSEMITE MARIPOSA COUNTY TOURISM BUREAU
Board Of Directors Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2017

In Attendance:

Directors Present:

Kevin Shelton – Yosemite Resorts
Donna Nassar – Bed and Breakfast Association
MaryAnn Huff – Northern Mariposa County
Paul Ratchford – Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite
Christian Mueller – The Redwoods in Yosemite
Barbara Robinson – Indian Peak Ranch
Jeff Bray – Aramark Yosemite Hospitality
Dane Carlson – Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce

YMCTB Staff:

Terry Selk – Executive Director
Julie Hadzega – Travel Trade & Operations Manager
Carrie Kidwell – Administrative Assistant

Advisors Present:

Candy O’Donel – Community Member

Visitors:

Greg Little – Mariposa Gazette
Richard Harmon – Townsend Public Affairs

CALL TO ORDER:

- Meeting called to order at 2:15 pm by Terry Selk.

SELF-INTRODUCTION BY ALL IN ATTENDANCE

- Introductions were made



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PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA BUT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THIS BOARD

Members of the audience may address the committee on matters not on the regular agenda. Brown Act regulations restrict the committee from taking action on any subject presented that is not on the agenda.

- MaryAnn Huff indicated that Coyote Fest had a great turnout with over 3,000 guests and 70 vendors. Sacramento and Bay Area Car Clubs showed up as well. Terry mentioned there was a heavy presence of community camaraderie. The Trunk or Treat event exceeded expectations. Owners of Big Table Ranch are launching business on main street in the next couple of months. A big thank you to the board for their help and support of putting Coulterville on the map.

INFORMATION AND PRESENTATION MATTERS

- National Park Update
 - Terry Selk reported on behalf of Scott Gediman. Mariposa Grove opening is delayed until spring 2018. Tioga Pass and other facilities will be closing for the winter season soon, and Yosemite Ski area will open once it snows.
- Proposed Park Fee Increases
 - The rate increase across the board is quite significant. Public comments on the proposed rate increase can be made on the National Park Service website until November 23, 2017.
- Townsend Public Affairs Report
 - Continuing to work with the National Parks Conservation Association and Tourism Bureau staff on addressing the backlog of maintenance and improvements needed at Yosemite National Park. Senate Bill 751 would invest in increasing amount of funding for specific repair and rehabilitation activities at National Parks.
 - Working on efforts to identify sustainable funding for the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) to ensure continued services to enhance tourism in Mariposa County and Yosemite National Park.



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- Treasurer's Report
 - In Doug's absence, Terry briefly reviewed reports, highlighting any significant elements and noting that there was an error in the final net operating percentage. Terry also noted there was a billing error code between digital campaign management, website, and paid search terms which skewed the lines and would be corrected.
- TOT Report
 - July and August were pacing at last year's record pattern, even with the fires. Terry reviewed TOT growth over the last 5 years and individual year-to-year growth. Most noteworthy is off-season growth over last five years has been 42% which would reflect the time period of when the Tourism Bureau's advertising efforts have been most active. 2015/2016 to 2016/2017 overall saw 3.7% growth with 1.9% increase between October to April.
- Annual Report
 - Available to download directly from the website, www.yosemite.com
- County Funding Update
 - Terry will be attending a meeting of the Board of Supervisors on November 14th, 2017, and will report back to the board.
- Research Study Proposal
 - Destination Analysts is highly respected within the tourism field. It will cost \$28,600.00 to execute the ROI study requested by the County. The process should take approximately 8 weeks.
 - Terry reminded the Board that at any time the financial amount of reserves that we hold varies throughout the year and is not kept in a designated account for emergencies but rather is available in a collection of accounts which are protected by FDCI insurance. Summer months are the lowest in available cash reserves while winter retains the highest. Example: July, \$451,000, August \$558,000, and September \$687,000. This organization does not have a dedicated reserve in the event of a disaster. Conversations with colleagues in the industry have revealed that 30% of annual budget is set aside for reserve funds and the BOD should consider doing the same.
- Management District Plan Renewal Report
 - A final draft has been submitted to the County. Proposed 10-year renewal instead of 5 years, which will save approximately \$40,000.
 - Key components include:
 - Anticipation of \$1.3 million in annual TBID revenue.
 - No initial increase in TBID (rate would remain at 1%).



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- Language would allow for limited rate increases over the 10-year period should it be necessary – i.e. catastrophic event, loss of County funding, other.
- Maximum annual increase of up to 1% with a 30-day objection notice and a maximum of 3% over the ten-year term of the plan.
- Minimum wait time for any increase would be one year from the anniversary date of the 10-year plan. Regardless, through this process, the Board of Supervisors has the overall authority to accept or deny any proposed increase.
- Information on new Nature Bridge project
 - First ever education facility within a National Park, and proudly, within Mariposa County. Buildings are built to withstand the next 100 years. Included are thirty miles of trails for mountain biking, hiking, and other - 20 deemed ADA accessible. Planned opening date is September/October 2018 with a total of 224 beds within 8 buildings, 2 bathhouses, a conference hall, dining hall, classroom, staff building, apartments, maintenance building, fire station, and an amphitheater with a fire ring. Nature Bridge is also working with YARTS to provide a stop at their location, which would be beneficial for all of Yosemite West.
- Marketing Update
 - BART Fall Campaign: the 6-week campaign reached 142.5% of goal with a total of 13,000 sessions, including direct, organic and non-paid visits to Yosemite.com and Yosemite.com/BART from specific locations being within San Francisco. Mobil clicks to Yosemite.com/BART were 40.9% of goal.
 - Pandora Fall Campaign: 3-week campaign running one week at a time, mid-September, mid-October and early November reached 88% of goal with website clicks of 1000.
 - San Francisco Chronicle: 1-month run date with 64.7% of goal reached with 150 clicks to Yosemite.com/SFGate to date. Run not completed.
 - Bay Area News Group: 1 week eblast time frame brought in 250 clicks to the website. September overall performed with a 15.75% open rate and a 16.72 CTR, both of which are above industry standards. The co-op links performed well with Yosemite Red Door Apartment receiving 375 CTRs and Tenaya Lodge receiving 369.



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- October Sunset Magazine: actual results recorded at 51.3% of goal over a 2-month timeline. 150 hits to Yosemite.com/Sunset, with a bounce rate of 19.05% averaging at 6 pages per session and nearly 6 minutes on the website.
- The Australia office is working on bringing 3 GoPro influencers for a 2 to 4-day trip highlighting Mariposa County in the offseason.
- Social media campaigns are contracted out in order to improve implementation strategy more fully; Facebook approaching 90,000 followers.
- Strong media activity out of the UK office. Visit CA Japan conducted first Club CA Travel Agent training program of year. Yukari Fowler, a local Mariposa resident from Japan, has been making presentations and conducting sales calls on our behalf.
- California Golden Chain Highway 49: John Kautz, the owner of the Ironstone Vineyards, has asked Terry to spearhead a marketing initiative to revitalize the recognition of Highway 49 as a driving route through CA's foothills. Terry's counterparts at Tuolumne and El Dorado Counties are also involved. Early efforts include a Facebook page on which some events have already been posted including the Coyote Fest in Coulterville. The 100-year anniversary of the highway will be in 2019.

ACTION MATTERS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION, REGULAR AGENDA

- Approval of minutes from 9/14/17 Annual Meeting
 - MaryAnn Huff motioned for September 14, 2017, minutes to accept as is, Donna Nassar seconded the motion, and all were in favor with none opposed.
- Approval of minutes from 10/11/17 Special Meeting
 - MaryAnn Huff motioned for October 11, 2017, minutes to accept as is, Donna Nassar seconded the motion, and all were in favor with none opposed.
- Position statement on proposed National Park/Yosemite National Park fee increases
 - There was discussion regarding whether the Tourism Bureau should file an official statement in response to the proposed fee increases. It was decided that all board members should file a statement in addition to TB. Consensus was that such increases would greatly affect lodging length of stay. Board authorized Terry and staff to compile statement reflecting opposition to the proposed increases. Barbara Robinson made motion for Terry and staff to craft a statement, Paul Ratchford second the motion, all were in favor with none opposed.



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- Marketing Committee recommendation for support of the Visit CA Ride the Winter Wave Olympics campaign
 - \$20,000 investment, would give exposure in high-traffic areas during the Olympics. Video content in Seoul's Time Square, VR experience. Overall promotion experience as California being the ultimate destination to experience the great outdoors, from snow to surf and everything in between.
 - Would need to tap into reserves to make this happen, looking for recommendations from the board.
 - Jeff Bray motioned to do the top tier at \$20,000, to support the Visit CA Ride the Winter Wave campaign, Paul Ratchford seconded the motion, and most were in favor with one opposed.
- Marketing Committee recommendation for support of the Visit CA Canadians Guide to California campaign
 - \$9552 investment for a Travel trade and consumer distribution mailed to 12,000 travel agents to use as a sales tool and electronically distributed to 14,000 agents to share on social media platforms. It will also be distributed with the December issue of CT Magazine, which is Canada's only sales, business, and career developed a resource for travel agents.
 - Would need to tap into reserves to make this happen, looking for recommendations from the board.
 - Barbara Robinson motioned to support the Visit CA Canadians Guide to California Campaign, Paul Ratchford seconded, and all were in favor with none opposed.

COMMENTS FROM BOARD AND STAFF:

- MaryAnn Huff commented that should any highway closures occur resulting in travelers being rerouted to highway 132, to contact her.
- Terry Selk noted that over the next two months, all lodging partners will have the opportunity to give us information on promos, incentives etc. for a blog post, and eblast. Social engagement on blog posts tends to get more traffic with these types of posts.

ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting was adjourned at 4:12 pm.