

Utah Board of Tourism Development
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 8, 2024

Board Members Present	Kym Buttschardt, Nathan Rafferty, Lesha Coltharp, Kaitlin Eskelson, Victor Iverson, Jason Murray, Jennifer Wesselhoff, Shayne Wittwer
Board Members Virtual	Jared Berrett, Graydon Pearson, Jordan Smith, Kevin Smith, CJ Wade
Board Members Excused	Melva Sine

UOT Staff	Tera Atwood, Kevin Blomquist, Rachel Bremer, Ben Cook, Rachel Creer, Lorraine Daly, Zach Fyne, Sorell Grow, Kim Heys, Camille Johnson, Denise Jordan, Becky Keeney, Anna Loughridge, Natalie Randall, Arianna Rees, Sydney Sappenfield, Todd Tanner, Vicki Varela, David Williams, Diane Wilson, Liz Wilson, Heather Zang, Stacey Zoller
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Public	Stacie Boney, Julie Comstock, Carrie Cox, Ralene Davis, Megan DeAngelis, Kevin Earl, Kaden Figgins, Sydnie Furton, Megan Griffin, Joanie Hammer, Susan Hayward, Adam Herrup-Morse, Todd Jenson, Ethan Koeller, Nick Larson, Jennifer Leaver, Brittany McMichaels, Shanna Memmot, Dallas Miller, Becky Mumford, Chris Newton, Falyn Owens, Val Rasmussen, Rosie Serago, Kaylin Jones Stephens, Celina Sinclair, Sara Toliver, Maria Twitchell, Jen Wakeland, Allison Yamamoto-Sparks
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WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Kym Buttschardt called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and asked for board member introductions.

MINUTES

MOTION: Jennifer Wesselhoff motioned to approve the January 19, 2024, board meeting minutes. Jason Murray seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

MANAGING DIRECTOR REPORT/LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Vicki Varela, outgoing Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism

- A challenging legislative year with the Tourism Marketing Performance Fund (TMPF). Feel relieved but anticipate it will be reduced by \$200K. The original proposal was to cut \$14.8M. With a few weeks left in this year's session, the TMPF is still at some risk.
- The Scenic Byway bill is on track following lengthy discussions with Sen. Harper to preserve the scenic byway approval and segmentation process.

Natalie Randall, incoming Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism

- Next phase for the TMPF budget, it will go to the executive appropriations committee. They will look at it with a magnifying glass so there is still the risk that it could be reduced.
- Also ongoing information and updates about the Transient Room Tax will be shared at the UTIA membership meeting tomorrow.

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE of ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Ryan Starks, Executive Director

- Announced that Feb. 9 is Vicki Varela's last day with the State, and Natalie Randall began as Managing Director on Monday, Feb. 5.
- Recognized and thanked Vicki Varela for her many years of service and leadership.
- Welcomed Natalie Randall as the new managing director and acknowledged the strength of the team with David Williams, as the Associate Managing Director.
- Recently conducted a tourism roundtable with Gov. Cox and many industry leaders and stakeholders. The Governor is very committed to making sure the industry stays strong.

COMMUNITY and PARTNER RELATIONS UPDATE

Camille Johnson, Community & Partner Relations Director, Utah Office of Tourism

- CaPR Team core responsibilities - relationships, education and resources.
- Within the Red Emerald Strategic Plan, the *Enable Community Led Visitor Readiness* is the pillar the team's goals match:
 - increase two-way feedback with DMO partners (relationships)
 - create and empower visitor economy champions through community collaboration (education)
 - access to grant programs for local tourism communities (resources)
- Distributed \$4.7M in 2023 cooperative marketing grants.
- So far, 33 destination development projects have been funded with \$1.2M in Economic Development Administration (EDA) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants.
- UOT received \$3.8M in EDA-ARPA funding that was earmarked for pandemic recovery for travel, tourism and outdoor recreation projects.
- This money was allocated in 2021 and projects have to be completed by 2026. These grants are no-match grants.

MARKETING UPDATES

Ben Cook, Director of Marketing & Communications, Utah Office of Tourism

Southern Utah+ Spring Campaign

- Two goals of the Southern Utah+ spring campaign are to promote travel to Southern Utah and promote planning and preparation.
- Key performance indicators include advertising awareness; brand awareness and perception; level of service and spend lift; impressions and engagement.
- Targeted audiences are explorers, achievers, mindful travelers and families. Also doing a micro-audience of film tourists with the 100 years of Utah film anniversary.
- The creative for "*In Love With Utah*" gives the audience the opportunity to "think, feel and do" in Utah.

Julie Comstock, Creative Director, Love Communications

- Reminder that the creative is used for 3-5 years during a campaign and the best performing assets are identified and then continue to be used. Also update and add to the high performing assets.
- Updates have been made from snowy shots to warmer, sunny outdoor experiences.
- We want to show our audience that you connect to the beautiful places you are visiting, and you also connect to the people you are experiencing it with. That extends the experience of tourism beyond the actual trip.

- New banner ads added to the assets and updates to previous ones to improve the performance of the asset. Dark skies banner ads performed very well last year so will stay the same this year. Retargeting banner ads performed very well as they currently are designed.
- Banner ads are programmed to animate when people view them online. The movement is intended to help the audience feel what the experience of visiting Utah will feel like.

Megan Griffin, VP/Media Director, Love Communications

- The budget for this campaign is just under \$4M and the dates it will run are from Feb. 15 to June 30, however two windows in March (to drive April bookings) and June (to help carry bookings through the later months) will have heavier runs.
- Great success from the 2023 campaign to build on new opportunities, and a variety of media channels will be used.

Ben Cook, Director of Marketing & Communications, Utah Office of Tourism

- Planned spend on paid social media is \$118K with goals to increase website visitations and the number of video views. Projecting the budget will give high results in link clicks, video views, impressions and engagement.

In Love, In Utah Activation & Contest

- J/PR and Anna Loughridge worked together to come up with plans for this activation using the in love, in Utah theme and Valentine's Day.
- Two pop up chocolate shops - one in New York City and the other in Los Angeles - will serve as the launch pad for a national story contest about Utah love stories. We will be taking a piece of Utah to these two markets.
- These two locations were selected because they are big media markets but also they are high-value travel markets for us.
- On Valentine's Day in the two cities there will be an interactive, one day shop where visitors will be invited to learn more about Utah, glimpse into a dark skies experience and get a free box of Solstice chocolates that are Utah branded with *The Mighty 5[®]*.
- The national story contest will run from Feb. 14 to April 15. This will drive traffic to the website where people can submit their personal *In Love, In Utah* story.
- Entries will be reviewed and four winners will be selected. We've partnered with four properties and the prizes will be roundtrip airfare, a 3-night stay and a meal stipend.
- While in New York and California, we will be meeting with the media.
- Plan to build media familiarization (FAM) tours from these stories that will be unique, interesting and one-of-a-kind stories which will engage the media even more.
- Worked with the activation agency, Makeout, to create the physical space. Brand ambassadors will be onsite to host guests in the space and talk about visiting Utah.
- Bringing Utah into these cities.

UTIA UPDATE

Lesha Coltharp, Board Member/UTIA secretary/treasurer

- Tourism Day on the Hill is tomorrow, Feb. 9.
- UTIA full membership meeting begins at 9:10-10:40 am. Will be a legislative update.
- New texting service launched for UTIA to stay up-to-date on events. Text UTIA to 205-670-8974 to join.
- Announced Celina Sinclair as the new Executive Director of UTIA.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Visit Salt Lake encouraged everyone to attend SkiJoring on Saturday, Feb. 10, 1-4 pm on West Temple.
- Beaver County Strategic Development Director Jen Wakeland shared they recently wrapped up event at Eagle Point Ski Resort with Shaun White. Mud season ahead will bring a lot of cycling and high school mountain biking events.

- Juab County's Shanna Memmot announced the relaunching of their website and new brand. Also completing a new travel guide. Thanked the UOT board for the coop grant program.
- Joan Hammer from Box Elder County announced late summer, early fall installation of the 43-foot, golden spike sculpture that you will see driving on I-15N.
- Allison Yamamoto-Sparks with San Juan County shared the progress of a new bike trail - Mud Springs Trail - on the north end of the county.
- Kym and UTIA President Breck Dockstedler read a proclamation honoring Brad Wilson.
- Jennifer Wesselhoff announced that the Park City Convention & Visitors Bureau achieved a membership milestone of 1000 members. Celebrated the 40th year of Sundance Film Festival with community celebration, and completed the FIS World Cup at Deer Valley. In Wasatch County, the Mayflower development announced their new name, Deer Valley East Village.
- Lesha Coltharp shared that Vernal has launched a series called Small Town Comeback. It documents the first five years of the 10-year-plan to stabilize the economy in the Uintah Basin. It has a history of being a boom or bust economy. The series focused on the revitalization of Main Street.
- Jason Murray shared that the guide and outfitter industry has new outfitters. Many are daytrip programs with new, creative ways to experience Utah. Southern Utah market experiencing BLM permitting delays. They've put a moratorium on new permit filing as they are backlogged.
- Ski Utah's Nathan Rafferty announced that Park City Mountain Resort is having their 60th Anniversary celebration this weekend. In 1963, Park City built the world's longest gondola which launched the thriving mountain town economy. The original gondola is no longer there but it has been replaced with 43 different chair lifts and 7000 acres of ski slopes. Utah has the most snow in North America to date, and currently Alta has the most snow with 362" year to date.
- Commissioner Victor Iverson reported on Washington County and Greater Zion thriving in the sports event space with ironman, Huntsman World Games and anticipating the LPGA and PGA events. Working with Zion National Park to understand the need for a visitor use management system. Washington and Kane County put together a travel study to measure capacity from the East entrance and the tunnel. If national parks implements a national park reservation system it directly affects *The Mighty 5*[®]. Visitors plan to visit multiple national parks when they come so if visitor numbers decrease at Zion, it will decrease at other parks as well.

MEETING ADJOURNED

The next board meeting will be held on Friday, April 5 in Bluff.