

**Utah Board of Tourism Development**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
Newpark Resort, Park City  
Friday, June 14, 2024

---

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

---

Tourism & Film Staff	Rachel Bremer, Ben Cook, Rachel Creer, Lorraine Daly, Zach Fyne, Camille Johnson, Becky Keeney, Emma Kwanin, Carli Mahas, Christina Martin, Virginia Pearce, Natalie Randall, Sydney Sappenfield, Todd Tanner, Dave Williams, Liz Wilson, Heather Zang
----------------------	--

---

Public	Julie Comstock, Carrie Cox, Raelene Davis, Megan DeAngelis, Chris Eggleton, Kevin Ellis, Annie Francl, Sydnie Furton, Crystal Garza, Megan Griffin, Susan Hayward, Adam Herrup-Morse, Dan Howard, Todd Jenson, Kaylin Jones, Revice Jordan, Nick Larson, Daniel Kelly, Dallas Miller, Becky Mumford, Chris Newton, Claire Petty, Val Rasmussen, Randy Rhodes, Sachi Sado, Jen Shakespeare, Celina Sinclair, Jonathan Smithgill
--------	--

---

**WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

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

**Jennifer Wesselhoff, President & CEO of Visit Park City**, welcomed everyone to Park City and shared their new logo – a new “P” iteration. Represents Park City, a snowflake, a ski boot or ski run. Changing the logo color gives the appearance of a flower, or animated it stands for progres. Focused on stewardship, destination management and visitor education. Also have a new brand identity - *Mountainkind*. It represents the type of people who live in Park City. Hope it also represents how visitors experience their time in Park City - in a mountainkind way.

**Chris Eggleton, co-founder/co-owner Newpark Resort**, welcomed everyone to his property. Company works to stay intune with the values of love, friendship and energy (LFE) while working in the hospitality industry.

## MEETING MINUTES

**MOTION: Jennifer Wesselhoff motioned to approve the May 10, 2024, board meeting minutes. Commissioner Iverson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.**

## MANAGING DIRECTOR REPORT

**Natalie Randall**, Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism

- Recognized the UOT team in attendance and thanked them for hard work.
- Attended UTIA board retreat and UOT board retreat held this week. Thanked the board for the engagement at the retreats.
- Joan Hammer joined the board, representing the Utah Tourism Industry Association (UTIA).
- Thank you to Jennifer Wesselhoff for hosting both retreats and the Community and Partner Relations team; Chris Eggleton for welcoming the groups to Newport Resort.
- Joined the governor's office and division of natural resources for a fire sense press event as top of mind for our state. Work together with [Utah Fire Sense](#) to share the message and resources with regional partners and educate visitors.
- Presented at the Utah chapter of American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) to talk about the value of the visitor industry, and at leadership South Valley and Emery County's leadership cohorts.
- During May's interim session, presented to the economic development and workforce services subcommittee as tourism is a study item. Asked if the state should continue to market with an increase in visitor numbers and mature visitor economies throughout the state. Committee members will review the budget, and used opportunity to educate on the stewardship and destination development efforts.
- Many UOT team members visited Ogden to experience and learn more about the community and the story of passionate community members coming together to build and share what they love, and then build the industry together.

## SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

### **Economic Impact Report**

**Luna Banari**, Director of Utah Community Outreach & Government Affairs, Sundance Institute

- Sundance Institute was founded in 1981, and the Sundance Film Festival celebrated its 40-year anniversary this year.
- Since 2010, Sundance has brought a \$1B economic impact to the state. Post Covid, it has a \$250M impact in 2023 and 2024.
- The 2022 festival was online and 2023 and 2024 have been a hybrid model.
- This year's festival had the most submissions ever – 17,435 from 153 countries.
- The economic impact of Sundance in 2024 included \$132M gross domestic product (GDP); \$138M in state and local tax revenue; 1730 Utah jobs supported; and \$69.7M in local wages.
- While envisioning the festival's future and researching ways to stay sustainable, launched a host city selection process for 2027 and beyond.

## UTAH FILM COMMISSION

**Virginia Pearce**, Utah Film Commissioner

- Recent projects include *The Secret of Skinwalker Ranch, Season 5* on The History Channel; *Branching Out* on Hallmark Channel; *Winter Spring Summer or Fall* premiered at Tribeca Film Festival; and, *The Image of You* in select theaters and digital.
- Locations for markers along the Utah Film Trail, an idea that began five years ago to create a physical presence for memorable Utah filming locations throughout the state, will be announced in late August.

**MOTION: Jennifer Wesselhoff motioned to approve a total of \$81,000 for incentives for the following productions which have met the criteria defined by statute. Commissioner Iverson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.**

<i>A Piece of Silver</i>	\$40,000
<i>Navajo Highways</i>	\$41,000

**MARKETING UPDATES**

**International Update**

**Rachel Bremer**, Global Markets Director, Utah Office of Tourism

- The Global Markets team works with six vendors that represent seven international markets.
- International visitors are back and recovery from the pandemic is very strong. International visitors are considered high-value – stay awhile and spend money in Utah.
- Forecasted growth for international visitor spend from 2019 to 2028 is expected to grow almost 125%, while the forecasted growth for the number of international visitors is 35%.
- The U.S. dollar remains strong against major international currencies but it is a hurdle as it is a little more expensive to travel to the U.S.
- China remains a volatile market but we are seeing an increase in visitors. Recovery is slower but it remains an important market.
- Forecasting for 2028 has Canada, China, France, Germany and Australia as top international markets to visit the United States, and the spend in Utah over the next three years increasing steadily.
- Utah has remained competitive with states in international visitor spend and ahead of most neighboring states. Result of staying active in markets during the pandemic while some states stopped all efforts.
- Best way to target visitors and build brand awareness is through the travel trade industry as limited by budget. Travel trade partners are strategically best.
- Selected to participate on Italy immersion mission with Brand USA and only four destinations invited - Utah, Visit D.C., Visit Puerto Rico and Visit Seattle.
- Attended IPW, the largest domestic conference that brings in buyers and media from all over the world, and was selected to host a press conference.
- Hosted multiple international FAMs including India, Germany and UK groups.
- German rep team attended ITB Berlin on our behalf and invited Joyce Kelly of Greater Zion to participate this year.
- Worked with T.R.U.E America operator as an effort to extend visitor time in Utah destinations. Stayed in Salt Lake for three nights before heading south.
- Co-op with partners and states to host FAMs is cost effective. Hosted FAM with Australia’s American Airline for high-end agents and a China road trip campaign with Arizona.
- DMO partners Logan, Salt Lake, Kanab and Moab worked together on a Karryon industry campaign.
- Traveled to India in January for the India Trade Mission and Brand USA’s India Mission. More than 46K visitors to the booth over four days.
- Emma Kwanin attended the Paris trade mission in January and the UK/Ireland mission in March. Focus on 100 Year of Film in Utah resonates well with international trade media.
- Tree Utah partnership with tour operators meets German and French travelers’ goals of giving back and sustainability. The amount given to the organization has increased each year and the bookings in Utah have also increased.

- PR efforts include hosting journalists but do a lot of vetting and make sure from targeted publications. Seeing good results from all media FAMs, especially India.
- Cycling tour from 2022 is still producing coverage. It works well to target niche markets in established markets.
- Recent media mission with DMO partners in Canada and it was three cities in three days with film focus.
- Future considerations and opportunities for international visitors include hosting the 2034 Olympics, Temple Square reopening, expansion of SLC airport and direct flight from Asia, Washington County growth, Deer Valley expansion and interest in 100 Years of Film in Utah.
- Brand USA is a federally funded, non-profit organization. They receive their funding from customs fees. Goal is to create programs and opportunities for state tourism efforts.

**Sydney Furton**, Group Account Director, Tourism, Love Communications

Global Markets Consumer Marketing

- Build on brand awareness and consideration in targeted international markets - United Kingdom, Germany, France, Australia and New Zealand.
- Utilize *The Mighty 5<sup>®</sup>* and *The Greatest Snow on Earth<sup>®</sup>* campaigns and depend on international reps to help determine media partners.
- Budget is \$230K for this complete media campaign and able to spread the dollars by working with partners on campaigns.
- The Australia campaign is still active and current numbers include – 7.8M impressions; .05% post impression rate; .18% click through rate; and, \$44k enriched hotel bookings.
- United Kingdom and Germany see higher engagement and interest from *The Mighty 5<sup>®</sup>* and summer travels.

### **FY25 TMPF Budget Review & Approval**

**Dave Williams**, Associate Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism

**Becky Kenney**, Director of Strategy, Utah Office of Tourism

- Following the 2002 Olympics, UOT had a \$900K marketing budget to promote the entire state, compared to Colorado and Arizona who were spending \$10M per year. The industry needed to come together and come up with a funding mechanism for our office, without raising taxes. The Tourism Marketing Performance Fund (TMPF) was created.
- As industry increased sales tax revenue, in areas specific to tourism - lodging, restaurants, car rental, guides and outfitters, etc., the TMPF was supposed to increase. It was designed to increase by up to \$3M every year.
- There was a formula for how it was designed to grow but it was at the legislature's discretion. Increases were limited and reduced following the 2008-09 great recession but they also realized tourism as a key economic driver.
- \$25M was the highest budget ever in 2020 followed by a steep drop due to the pandemic.
- Our budget is consistent with Colorado and Arizona but higher than Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and New Mexico.
- Legislation dictates that 10% of funding passes through our office to the Utah Sports Commission and it states that 20% goes toward the cooperative marketing grant program. The remaining goes toward marketing efforts.
- Fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30 so we estimate the carryforward. Estimating \$400K in co-op funding and \$500K for marketing.
- Co-op grants program includes traditional co-op, destination development partner co-op and VISA destination insights data reports.
- Cooperative Marketing Committee Chair Lesha Coltharp encouraged grant applicants to watch the training created by the CaPR team.

- The committee has reviewed the process to make sure the money is going most directly to tourism marketing through the DMOs and Ski Utah. Also set aside funds for culture and arts organizations that are attracting out of state visitors.
- Encouraging smaller arts organizations in communities to work with DMOs to include funding requests in their application. The DMO will track the ROI and will make sure the marketing funds are used effectively.
- This is to make sure the money is being spread throughout the state and used is the best way possible for the biggest return on investment.
- Estimating \$15.8M budget for marketing, development and stewardship. Base all of our actions on a solid research foundation.
- Contracts section of the budget includes agency retainers, research and development and our “always on” elements. Those elements include paid social media, email newsletter, SEO, PPC, travel guides, sales mission and trade shows.
- With a \$1M decrease to FY25 budget, cutting back on research contracts this year to see if we miss it.
- Three marketing campaigns - Southern Utah, Ski and Northern Utah - are funded by bulk of funding.

**MOTION: Jason Murray motioned to approve the plan for the Tourism Marketing Performance Fund budget of \$21,822,800. Kevin Smith seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.**

#### UTIA UPDATE

**Joan Hammer**, board member representing UTIA

- UTIA board retreat held, June 12-13.
- Utah Tourism Conference is September 24-27, in Layton. Early bird registration closes at the end of June.
- UTIA presented at the interim session and anytime used to educate our legislators is positive.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Jason Murray noted changes coming in 2026 for large vehicles traveling the Zion-Mt. Carmel highway to enter Zion National Park (east). Size restrictions introduced due to safety concerns, improve driving conditions, and reduce the likelihood of structural damage to the road, bridges and tunnels.
- Melva Sine mentioned that Congress has been charged with eliminating tax and tips for tipped employees and there should be a bill coming. Employees would not have to pay taxes on their tips and this would be a benefit for the hospitality industry.
- Kevin Smith shared that as a member of the Ivins city council, they voted to do a truth in taxation but after reviewing the TRT forecast from Black Desert, they learned they won’t need a property tax increase for the next five years. Decided to not do anything with truth and taxation and see how this first year pans out. Example of a community benefitting from the visitor economy.
- Joan Hammer shared that former Senator Pete Knudson passed away recently. He was a champion of tourism. His wife, Georgi, served on the Utah Board of Tourism Development.

#### **MEETING ADJOURNED**

*The next board meeting will be held virtually on Friday, July 12 at 10am.*