TRT/TRCC Advisory Board Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, Apr 1, 2025 , 2 pm
Duchesne County Administration Building

Attendance In-person: Commissioner Tracy Killian, Irene Hansen, Ryan Lundstrom, Deborah Herron, Commissioner Jeff Chugg
Attendance online: Diana Giles, Ashly Kulland

Welcome and Introduction of Board & Staff

Everyone went around the room and introduced themselves.
Deborah Herron works at the County as the Economic Development Director, and will act as the TRT/TRCC Advisory Board secretary.
Commissioner Tracy Killian is currently serving as a Duchesne County Commissioner and is chair of the TRT/TRCC Advisory Board.
Irene Hansen is a former Duchesne County Commissioner and serves as a member of the Board.
Ryan Lunstrom serves as the Duchesne County Travel and Tourism Director, Convention Bureau Director, Crossroads Center Director, and Trails Committee Chairman. He also maintains and adds to the Duchesne County photo library which has over 50,000 photos.
Diana Giles is the General Manager of the Duchesne Best Western located on Main Street in Duchesne City.
Ashly Kulland represents High County Pizza. She is currently the Director of the Chamber of Commerce serving Duchesne County.
Irene Hansen introduced the group to **Commissioner Jeff Chugg**, the newest elected Duchesne County Commissioner.

Origination of Funds Transient Room Tax & Restaurant Tax Update

Irene Hansen gave an overview of the Transient Room Tax (TRT) and how the County used this money to promote “heads in beds”. TRT is only applied to stays less than 30 days. The State Legislature allows the county of origin to use this money on specific things. Duchesne County does not have many hotels so it does not collect very much in taxes. The County Commissioners have always supported the use of this tax to promote travel and tourism. When Irene started, the County was bringing in about $6000 per year, and now it brings in over $100,000.

Overview of Travel & Tourism Office

Promotion & Advertising

Ryan Lundstrom showed everyone where to find the Duchesne County produced videos on the Travel and Tourism website. He talked about advertising in the Golden Knights and Raiders season program guides promoting the County. The Travel Guide magazine produced by the County is also available for distribution and Ryan will take some more over to Diana after the meeting.
Ryan also talked about how the “Picture This” promotion originally started using grant money. The grant is no longer available, but because the program was so

successful, he is using some of the TRT money to continue promoting the County this way. He has also personally taken thousands of pictures from around the County at no cost, and now has a library of more than 50,000 photos that are available to use. Irene said when she first started, they didn't have any photos and would copy newspaper articles. Ryan has fulfilled many requests for the use of photos in material that is seen all over the world.

Staff Duties, Including Building Oversight

Ryan manages the Crossroads Center which has 4 part-time staff. He works closely with Mindi Crowley at the Centennial Event Center to coordinate events.

Support of Local Events

He promotes all the events happening around the County. Irene Hansen explained that Ryan also helped coin Duchesne County as the Family Reunion Capital of Utah.

Convention Services

In addition to the print materials and videos, Ryan's team puts together convention bags to give away at events. He gives away over 2000 bags every year with pamphlets, coupons, and postcards included.

Welcome Center

Ryan also oversees the Welcome Center in Duchesne City. Kathy Roscoe works part-time at the center.

Fam Tours

Before COVID, Ryan organized day-long events for family members traveling to the County for a reunion. He has also taken professional groups around the County to help them understand what the County has to offer.

Budget

Ryan explained how to find the TRT/TRCC budget on the website under the research tab. He currently has $121,264 for the year. This money comes from short term lodging at hotels, VRBOs, cabin rentals, etc. The County gets over $300,000 from the Restaurant Tax which is used to promote those businesses. Part of the budget goes to building maintenance. Irene expressed appreciation for the Commissioner's ongoing support of the Travel and Tourism department. In the last State Legislative Session, the representatives freed up some money to support much needed infrastructure like Search & Rescue services.

Constraints, Opportunities, & Partnerships

Some constraints that Travel and Tourism deals with are interactions with the Tribe. The Ute Indian Tribe is very resistant to travel across their lands and actively opposes promoting tourism. Duchesne County has always tried to be sensitive to the Tribe's needs. In the past, Irene promoted the Tribe's Pow Wow and other tribal events. The County tries diligently to have good relations with tribal members.

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Duchesne County has a strong partnership with Uintah County. Many of their attractions and festivals have spilled over into the area and have benefitted Duchesne. For example, Roosevelt put on a balloon festival after watching how successful Vernal's event was. Visitors to the Skinwalker Ranch often come through Roosevelt. Comic Con in Vernal brings lots of people to the Basin that eat at restaurants and shop at stores in Duchesne County.

Ryan offered to visit Diana's and Ashly's businesses individually to see what promotion he can offer them. He suggested having another meeting to look specifically at advertising and promotion. Irene mentioned that in SLC, a third of their TRT funding goes toward promoting ski lift tickets. Ryan doesn't just focus on travel and tourism; he works very closely with Deb Herron in Economic Development actively seeking people who want to move in, and grow businesses and families in Duchesne County. Irene stressed that we don't ever want to rely solely on travel and tourism.

Board Discussion

Irene explained that in the past she organized trips to take "front-line" workers (people that work at front desks and interact directly with the public) around the County to help them understand what is available for visitors to do while they are in town. Ryan has taken many groups on tours around the County. The Board expressed interest in organizing another one of these trips to help current employees. Irene explained that it is very important to give people incentives to come and stay, eat, and shop in town. Ashly asked what the Board could do for the County. Ryan explained that in order for him to apply for grants, Duchesne County needs to increase the TRT from 3% where it is currently to 4.25%. The Commissioners are going to need a lot of support to get the increase passed. Right now, only Summit and Duchesne Counties are not at the 4.25% and the legislature used grant applications as the means to force everyone to increase the tax rate. Diana said she doesn't know much about the tax and needs to do more research. Irene asked if people are concerned about paying the tax. Diana explained that when she first started working in the industry they seemed put out about paying it, but she hasn't heard any complaints lately. Ashly said that she didn't even look at her bill the last time she stayed at a hotel, she just paid the bill. Irene explained that the Board will see more about this in the weeks ahead and they will need to make a recommendation to the Commissioners on how to proceed. She also said the Board needs more representation, especially from the Upper Country area. Ashly recommended Yvonne Gardner as a potential member of the Board. The Board then discussed Forest Service and State Parks rentals. Finally the Board talked about future meetings. Ryan will look at scheduling a future meeting and reach out to everyone.

Adjourned the meeting at 2:57 pm.

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