

Utah Board of Tourism Development
Board Meeting Minutes – August 14, 2026
Bear Lake, Garden City | Rich County host

Board Members Present – Victor Iverson, Graydon Pearson, Nathan Rafferty, Jordan Smith, Kevin Smith

Board Members Virtual – Jason Murray, Harold Simpson, Jennifer Wesselhoff, Shayne Wittwer

Board Members Absent – Lesha Coltharp, Joanie Hammer, Kaitlin Eskelson, Jessica Merrill, Melva Sine, CJ Wade

Staff – Tera Atwood, Jenica Barber, Rachel Bremer, Ben Cook, Rachel Creer, Lorraine Daly, Michelle Evans, Kim Heys, Todd K. Jenson, Camille Johnson, Denise Jordan, Becky Keeney, Emma Kwanin, Anna Loughridge, Carli Mahas, Norm Mecham, Christina Martin, Josh Paluh, Virginia Pearce, Natalie Randall, David Williams, Diane Wilson, Heather Zang, Stacey Zoller

Others – Mayor Pat Argyle, Mari Bailey, Stacey Boney, Troy Callantine, Jeana Campbell, Venessa Castagnoli, Bill Cox, Raelene Davis, Machel Devin, Nycole Durfey, Anton Eckert, Blaine Fackrell, Tina Grange, Jordan Hewitt, Jordynn Hewitt, Matt Hoppe, Erin Judd, Joyce Kelly, Tami Leonhardt, Mari Livermore, Brittany McMichael, Sara Mejeur, Shanna Memmott, Joyce Metcalfe, Barbara Mirabelli, Ben Muhlestein, Lori Nay, Jeanette Peatross, Julie Pitcher, Angie Rothen, Celina Sinclair, Jonathan Smithgall, Mark Smoot, Barbara Stallone, Julie Hollist Terrill, Sara Toliver, Maria Twitchell, Matthew Watson, Sim Weston, Shanny Wilson, Miranda Wright, Allison Yamamoto-Sparks, Courtney Yazzie

Welcome and Introductions

Board Chair **Nathan Rafferty** called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and asked for board members and audience introductions.

Welcome Rich County

Tami Leonhardt, Tourism Director

Sim Weston, County Commissioner

Mark Smoot, Business Owner and Chamber of Commerce

- Raspberry Days was held Aug. 6-8. Visitation was a little lower than 2025 but still a good turnout.
- Fourth of July has become very popular and events in Heritage Park attracted 14K people—double from last year.
- Adding a second stop light has helped tourism traffic immensely.
- Rich County fair is very busy right now and Idaho's Bear Lake County is holding their fair at the same time.
- Always working on getting a hotel property in the area. We need this to get international visitors.
- Mark Smoot shared that Garden City recently completed a downtown development grant.
- Garden City's downtown alliance is working on a long-term plan for infrastructure and economic development.
- Three new restaurants opened this summer as well.
- The county's biggest strain is on the sheriff's office and EMS teams with the influx of summer population.
- Working on funding for a septic line down the east side of the lake.

- Formed a Rich County trails committee this past year and received two grants for studies to assist in developing additional trails on the east side. Recently completed a hiking trail on the east side.
- Completion of the paved trail that goes border to border on the Utah side.

MOTION: Jordan Smith motioned to approve the July 10, 2026, board meeting minutes. Victor Iverson seconded it. The motion was carried unanimously.

Managing Director Report

Natalie Randall

- Thank you to Rich County and Garden City for hosting our meeting. This is one of the board's most important meetings, since it covers approval of the domestic marketing campaign and the cooperative marketing grant program.
- Recently attended the One Utah Summit — the governor's economic summit — bringing strong representation from across the state to Cedar City.
 - Vice Chair Lesha Coltharp earned Rural Rock Star of the Year, confirming tourism's recognized role in the state's economic development.
 - GOED Commissioner Jeff Moss led a panel with Chad Linebaugh, General Manager at Sundance Resort; Brooks Kirchhmeier, co-founder and co-owner of Hill Top Hospitality; and Scott Miller owner of Milgro Nursery on how these pieces form Utah's broader economic ecosystem — a first-of-its-kind convening on this scale.
 - Board member Shayne Wittwer participated on a public lands panel led by Redge Johnson (Executive Director, Public Land Policy Coordinating Office). Along with Attorney General Derek Brown and local rancher John Reese, emphasizing multi-use land policy — agriculture, tourism, and beyond — rather than either/or thinking.
 - The office moderated a panel with Derek Westerra from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Cultural and Community Engagement Commissioner Kat Potter discussing Utah's global "Life Elevated" brand and the responsibility it carries heading into 2034 Olympic and Paralympic Games prep and the Temple Square open house.
- Earlier this week, Camille Johnson and I participated in a Region 6/Five Counties–hosted tour bringing D.C. staffers through Bryce and Zion.
- The tour reinforced the importance of national parks to gateway communities and the broader visitor economy, building on prior advocacy with the federal delegation.
- Both Republican and Democratic staffers attended, strengthening bipartisan relationships and firsthand understanding of Utah's public lands.
- Our August partner newsletter shared the state's 2025 tourism economic impact figures:
 - \$13.7 billion in direct visitor spending
 - Supporting 167,200 jobs
 - Generating \$2.7 billion in state and local tax revenue
- The office and industry are focused on tracing that revenue to tangible impact — connecting it to education, roads, outdoor recreation, and trails — to make the value concrete for everyday Utahns.
- Tourism remains one piece of a state economy that depends on staying dynamic and diverse.
- Residents matter as much as visitors, DMO partners, and businesses.
- New resident sentiment data shows 78% of residents believe tourism adds value to life in Utah, citing outdoor recreation access, restaurants, and cultural experiences.
- This supports the office's vision: "A state united in welcoming the world to experience Utah" — a vision shared industry-wide, not exclusive to the tourism office.
- The mission: elevate life in Utah by advancing the visitor economy through data-based, community-led marketing, development, and stewardship.
- The industry faces real headwinds ahead. We are hearing this from many partners throughout the state.

Think creatively about how we can be more dynamic.

- The Tourism Marketing Performance Fund (TMPF) — distinct from local transient room tax — funds the office's marketing and co-op grant programs, and indirectly supports outdoor recreation.
- TMPF investment has declined over recent years even as demand, competition, and marketing costs rise — a key context for upcoming presentations.
- TMPF breakdown: 10% to the Sports Commission, 20% to co-op grants (Michelle Evans to present), with the remainder funding the three core pillars — marketing, development, and stewardship (Ben Cook to present).
- Recognition to Ben and his team for the data-driven, long-term strategic work behind the marketing plan presented today.
- Recognition to Michelle and the Community and Partner Relations team for strategically restructuring the co-op grant program into multiple tiers to ensure adjusted funding is invested effectively across the state.

Marketing Report

Domestic Marketing Plan

Ben Cook

- This presentation covers the year's marketing efforts as a whole and the marketing committee reviewed this in depth a few weeks ago and provided valuable feedback.
- The “Why?” for what we do is that tourism changes communities — often for the better, but not without real challenges to consider.
- As the office has emphasized, visitors make life better in Utah — bringing both opportunities and challenges, but delivering real economic and quality-of-life value.
- The customer journey starts with awareness (considering vacation options), moves through research and evaluation, and ends in the purchase (the trip itself).
- The loyalty loop follows: a great, community-connected experience turns visitors into advocates and repeat travelers, reducing the need for continued marketing to reach them.
- Our office's role centers on the awareness and consideration stages; DMOs and partners drive the evaluation stage; businesses and communities on the ground create the loyalty loop.
- Our marketing plan focuses specifically on the awareness and consideration space, though all stages remain critical industry-wide.
- Campaigns extend across all media types, following the PESO model (paid, earned, shared, owned) rather than focusing on individual platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or print.
- The goal is full-campaign coverage across every touchpoint where customers consume media.
- Our campaigns continue leaning on proven hooks (the Mighty Five, the Greatest Snow on Earth) while expanding storytelling to cover all six corners of the state.
- Predicting trends resembles weather forecasting — imperfect, but still useful for guiding decisions.
- The economy remains strong overall, though consumer sentiment is low, making travelers more price-sensitive and prone to trade-offs.
- Travel interest remains at an all-time high, even as travel patterns shift but American Express survey data shows strong interest in travel that pushes people outside their comfort zone — a strength area for Utah.
- America's 250th anniversary drove interest in historical sites; national parks may see similar attention this year.
- Flat funding continues to strain media buying as media costs rise and competition from other marketers increases.
- The media landscape keeps evolving rapidly (AI, TikTok, social media shifts), requiring ongoing attention.
- Major upcoming events — America's 250th and the Salt Lake Temple open house next spring — offer opportunities to inspire visitors to extend their trips to other parts of the state.
- Maintaining strong resident sentiment remains a priority alongside marketing efforts.
- Results from last fiscal year campaigns:
 - The Utah Person campaign launched last year with strong results.

- The ski campaign achieved 50% national advertising awareness — an excellent result for a first-year campaign.
 - Incremental travel (trips directly attributable to advertising) reached 6.3% for the ski campaign (slightly down from last year) and 3% for the parks campaign (flat year-over-year).
- **Nathan Rafferty** asked if you could put a specific dollar amount on the 6.3%? The ROI is clearly a lot more than what we spend on advertising.
- Ad-aware travelers spend over \$2,000 per trip versus under \$2,000 for unaware travelers — about a 12% difference. They also engage in almost 60% more activities.
- Ad-aware travelers show much higher rates of social advocacy and share their excitement about where they went on their social channels.
- Core Utah brand associations – *The Mighty 5®*, *Greatest Snow on Earth®*, *Utah Life Elevated®* all increased from the prior year.
- This marks the fourth or fifth year of measurement, showing consistent positive movement over time — important since travel decisions may come years after initial brand exposure.
- Our primary marketing goal this year is to enhance the economic impact of travel and tourism in Utah (broadening focus beyond leisure travel to the full visitor economy).
- The secondary goal is to continue strengthening travel brand associations across all audiences.
- Three strategic priorities:
 - Awareness - inspire awareness and interest in Utah travel.
 - Travel impact - Extend visitor length of stay and spend.
 - Planning & Preparation - Guide visitors to plan well, explore widely and travel responsibly.
- Four audiences carry over from last year: adventurers, families, skiers, and venturistas. Venturistas are the newest segment — social-first travelers who frequently share experiences online.
- Last year's Utah Person campaign marked the first unified campaign across all marketing efforts, built on the idea that Utah isn't for everyone — it's for the right person.
- The campaign has become a powerful, unifying showcase of the state's diversity, informed by current travel trends.
- Audience-specific versions target each of the four segments — for example, the ski campaign speaks to the adventure audience, while the family-focused spot emphasizes groups, children, and shared memories.
- **Nathan Rafferty** noted it is a "Super El Niño" and Ski Utah has used it as a vehicle to talk about what could come this winter.
- **Nathan** asked if there is demographic data from the LDS church on the type of visitors from other large temple openings?
- Having discussions on how to best collaborate and it is top of mind to get data from the open house. This is a unique experience. Tour tickets open in September and it will be interesting to look at who is reserving them.
- **Nathan** added that it would make sense to target the two types of visitors – ones that are of the faith, coming to visit the temple specifically and will stay with friends and family. Secondly, others might make an entire trip around it and realize it is a once in a lifetime opportunity.
- Here is an overview of the four core advertising campaigns:
 - Parks and Beyond — built around the Mighty Five hook, this campaign draws visitors to the state's national parks.
 - Ski and Winter — anchored by the Greatest Snow on Earth message, this campaign covers the winter season.
 - Urban and Outdoors — this campaign highlights the state's alpine opportunities and targets the new "suburban explorer" audience.
 - Always Adventure Safe — new this fiscal year (launched in May), this campaign focuses on visitor safety and preparedness. It originally launched under an EDA grant, performed well, and the board approved continued funding at the prior meeting; results are still coming in.
- The budget and timing for parks and beyond:

- Media investment: \$3.7 million in paid media, plus \$195,000 in paid social media.
 - Flight window: October 15 through May 30, 2027.
 - Unlike prior years — which included a winter flight, a holiday blitz, and a spring push with breaks in between — this campaign will run continuously without ramping down.
 - Creative will rotate: winter-specific content focused on off-season travel behavior transitions into traditional spring/summer creative.
 - Running continuously helps the campaign stay optimized within ad algorithms, since downtime disrupts algorithmic performance.
- The budget and timing for ski and winter:
 - Media investment: \$1.97 million in paid media, plus \$105,000 in paid social media — flat year-over-year (a later comparison slide will confirm this).
 - Flight window: October 1 through a targeted end date of March 15, with a caveat.
 - The team will monitor El Niño conditions closely and may adjust or end the campaign early if winter conditions prove difficult — similar to last year, when performance dropped sharply in March during a challenging winter.
 - If similar conditions appear likely this year, the team may frontload spending earlier in the season to maximize impact.
- Nathan asked if it was possible to work the Super El Niño into some of the most targeted advertising.
- Possible to work it into social channels easily and email blast opportunities.
- Mark Smoot noted as an operator they'd much rather work with cancellations than last minute bookings for a big snow year.
- The budget and timing for urban and outdoors:
 - Media investment: just under \$800,000 (approximately \$700,000+) in paid media, plus \$110,000 in paid social media.
 - Flight window under consideration: April 15 through June 30.
 - The team wants to stay flexible on this campaign given the anticipated demand surrounding the Salt Lake Temple opening.
 - The broader Wasatch Front and Wasatch Back regions will still receive marketing support, though the approach may differ from past years.
 - The team is still early in this exploration and has time before the campaign's traditional launch window.
 - Next steps: develop the concept further, present it to the marketing committee, then bring it back to the full board.
- Nathan noted it would be interesting to call the convention and visitor bureaus of areas having recent Temple open houses.
- The team is traveling to ESTO and will ask colleagues from those areas.
- **Graydon Pearson** asked if Kaitlyn should comment on when the Salt Lake convention center is closing as it will open up a lot more hotels during events.
- Natalie Randall noted that Visit Salt Lake is working very creatively on how hotels stay busy during those times.
- The Adventure Safe campaign, which is funded through some carry forward funding already approved, will run March 15 to May 15 which is a little earlier. Target spring break travelers and run up to summer travel.
- As a reminder, the office runs a multi-channel strategy across paid, earned, shared, and owned media — today's presentation doesn't cover all of it in depth to keep things moving, but significant work happens across each channel.
- On the earned media side, the marketing team collaborates closely with the Communications team of Anna Loughridge and Sorell Grow.
- This team drives national media coverage, hosts journalists, and plans media FAMs (familiarization trips).

- Shared media is where Ariana Rees leads social media efforts and continues to drive strong engagement across all channels. She stays ahead of emerging trends and actively explores new platforms.
- Kim Heys leads visitutah.com on the owned media side and this includes a weekly email newsletter.
- The team is investing in AI visibility, aiming to ensure VisitUtah.com becomes a key resource as more travelers turn to AI tools for trip planning.
- Jointly Kim and Josh Paluh produce video and photography content showcasing the state.
- **Nathan** commented that the plan seems very well thought out.
- **Graydon** asked for reflections on why the spending stayed flat.
- The team prioritizes media spend last within the TMPF allocation process — retainers for various agencies and other costs (including international) get funded first, but the team works to keep as much money in media as possible, since that's the most critical piece.
- The team reviewed every line item closely to identify cost-cutting opportunities and keep non-media costs lower.
- Several agency retainers decreased significantly, generating meaningful savings.
- The team took a deliberate, thoughtful approach to funding above-the-line items so more budgets could stay in media, especially as agency costs continue rising.
- Most agency contracts run five years, so cost escalations only occur every couple of years — helping limit the impact.

MOTION: Jennifer Wesselhoff motioned to approve the 2026-27 Domestic Marketing Plan as presented and Victor Iverson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

- **Nathan** took time to recognize Mayor Pat Argyle for joining the meeting, as well as Commissioner Bill Cox. Thanked them for hosting the meeting.

Utah Film Commission

Film Incentive Program

Virginia Pearce

- Recent releases and projects coming soon include *The Chosen* In the Wild with Bear Grylls. They did not request an incentive but filmed in Castle Valley, Canyonlands, near the Colorado River and Great Basin Desert.
- *The Mouse* is a project that received funding almost three years ago and released in theatres Sept. 4. It was filmed in Salt Lake and Davis counties. They did a long festival circuit and won a lot of awards throughout the country.
- Another project we supported called *The Daughter Left Behind* is premiering on Lifetime tomorrow.
- And, *Edie Arnold is a Loser* is a very good, small project that received funding a few years ago. It premiered at South by Southwest and has won awards throughout the country.
- The film incentive program receives an annual legislative appropriation, most of which is now ongoing funding, which is a new development this year.
- The program was cut by \$9 million last year, reducing the total from the previous \$20 million (which included \$12 million earmarked for rural projects) down to \$11 million.
- The funding reduction directly limits the number of projects the program can support, though the team is working to stretch available funds as far as possible.
- Three projects are up for review: one under the Community Film Incentive Program and two under the regular funding bucket.
- The Community Film Incentive Program targets local projects specifically — requiring a local director, writer, or producer — with funding ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000.
- The regular funding bucket covers any project above \$500,000.
- *The Last Treasure Hunt*

- A smaller project from a returning team who previously struggled to align all the pieces needed to move forward (script, casting, availability, funding) — the team is excited to finally see it come together.
- A narrative feature — a cinematic family adventure blending warmth, humor, and emotional depth with escalating tension, centered on the Lost Treasure of Monuma.
- Filming will take place in Kane and Washington counties (Southern Utah).
- Budget: \$258,000, qualifying for a 20% incentive totaling \$51,783.
- Currently in pre-production, with filming set to begin later this summer.
- *The Secret of Skinwalker Ranch, Season 8*
 - This is a well-known, popular History Channel show now in its eighth season, filmed in Vernal.
 - The show has helped establish the area as a destination for supernatural-fan tourism. It helped launch *Phenomecon*.
 - This is the production's second year receiving incentive support — last year was funded through the rural fund, which has since dropped from \$12 million to \$3 million, forcing difficult funding decisions.
 - The committee evaluated the project against key criteria: jobs created, local spending generated, and whether the incentive is necessary to secure the production in Utah.
 - Some productions will film in Utah regardless, but the incentive encourages higher or longer spending — similar to how marketing extends a visitor's stay.
 - Skinwalker Ranch specifically needs Utah (it's based in Vernal), so the incentive remains essential to the production.
 - Due to funding cuts, the incentive was reduced from 20% (last year) to 10% this year, resulting in a \$241,000 tax credit instead of last year's larger amount.
 - The production understood the funding cut and remains glad to be included in the program, with hope that Vernal's economic impact from the show continues.
- *Untitled, Confidential Project*
 - Written and directed by Utah native Robert Machoian — a highly regarded filmmaker who teaches photography at BYU and has had five or six films at Sundance, including *Omaha* (writer) and *The Killing of Two Lovers* (written and directed, filmed in Kanab).
 - Machoian wrote this project specifically for Cedar City — a rare opportunity, since the area doesn't see many productions of this scale. Local advocate Maria Twitchell is thrilled about the project's presence in Cedar.
 - Details remain confidential at the production company's request. More information should be available within the next month.
 - **Graydon** noted that funding available for incentives has dropped significantly, even as competition for those dollars has increased sharply, and asked Virginia how this project got to Utah.
 - Robert called and told us that he sold his script outright — an unusually rare deal, since studios typically ask writers to produce a finished film before agreeing to buy and distribute it. This upfront sale reflects both the script's strength and Robert's reputation.
 - The studio initially planned to shoot the film in New Jersey, despite the script being written specifically for Utah.
 - The team built an accurate Utah production budget and compared incentive offerings against New Jersey, highlighting Utah's advantages: easier permitting (especially in rural areas), a film-friendly and film-forward environment, and greater value for production dollars compared to some larger, more saturated filming hubs.
 - Robert pitched Utah's case directly in LA, and the combination of this pitch and the incentive secured the project for Utah — a result Robert celebrated enthusiastically.
 - This marks the second major win of its kind in recent years — the team similarly competed against Vancouver (with a larger budget) to bring HBO's *Mountain Head* to Utah. That

production had such a strong experience that HBO has already inquired about returning next summer.

- These wins reflect the loyalty loop concept: positive on-the-ground experiences with Utah's crews and communities create lasting impressions that bring productions back.
- **Victor Iverson** stated that we really miss the money the legislature cut. He reported that hoteliers and hospitality industry business report back that these projects that get incentives really help their businesses.

Production	Estimated Utah Spend	Incentive Amount Per Production	Locations (Counties)
<i>The Last Treasure Hunt</i>	\$258,913	\$51,783- 20%	Kane, Washington
<i>The Secret of Skinwalker Ranch, Season 8</i>	\$2,411,966	\$241,197 - 10%	Uintah
<i>Untitled Republic Pictures Project</i>	\$6,626,992	\$1,656,748 - 25%	Iron, Utah
	\$9,297,871 TOTAL Spend	\$1,949,728 TOTAL Incentives	

MOTION: Graydon Pearson motioned to approve \$1,949,728 for incentives for the three productions presented which have met the criteria defined by statute. Kevin Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Cooperative Marketing Committee Report **Co-op Grant Program**

Michelle Evans, Grant Specialist

- The co-op marketing grant program plays a significant role in the next stage of the visitor loop Ben presented, reaching across the state.
- Several significant changes took effect this year, aimed at streamlining the program and improving clarity for applicants.
- The program previously operated as one application process covering two funding buckets; this made it difficult to fairly compare very different applicants (e.g., Ski Utah alongside smaller organizations like the Moab Music Museum).
- The program is now split into two tiers, each with its own application, allowing more accurate "apples to apples" comparisons.
- A second scoring committee was added specifically for Tier 2, creating an opportunity for additional DMOs to participate in the review process — a change partly inspired by positive feedback from Joan Hammer (Box Elder), who valued being part of the review process last year.
- The application itself was refined to be less labor-intensive while remaining strongly quantitative on ROI, ensuring thoughtful, well-supported investment decisions.
- Strategic clarity was also improved to keep the program clear and focused on boosting Utah's visitor economy.

Jordan Smith, committee member

- Serving on the co-op committee has revealed the substantial effort required to prepare applications, manage the portal, reach eligible applicants, and complete the evaluation process.
- In a given year, the program may support 100+ individual active grants, and applicant numbers continue to grow.

- Recognition given to the team supporting this process for their strong work.
- The co-op grant funding comes from the 20% TMPF allocation — approximately \$20 million total this year, with \$4 million designated for co-op grants.
- A portion of that supports the co-op data program, which tourism partners across the state can buy into to support their marketing and promotion efforts through the research office.
- After that allocation, the program had just under \$4 million available this year — a decrease from previous years.
- Applications have increased from about 58 (three years ago) to 64 this year.
- The funding shortfall has grown accordingly: \$1.6 million in FY25, increasing over the last two fiscal years, and surpassing \$2 million for the first time this year.
- More applicants — including small businesses and DMOs — are applying, often requesting larger amounts, even as total available funding declines.
- Tier 1 (DMOs, counties, Ski Utah)
 - Total requested: \$4.5 million; total available: \$3.3 million — a shortfall of nearly \$1.2 million.
 - Recommended awards: approximately \$3.3 million, or about 73% of requested funding — a percentage that has declined consistently over the past three years.
- Tier 2 (non-profits for events, experiences, attractions)
 - Total requested: \$1.6 million; total available: \$650,000 — a shortfall of about \$1 million.
 - Recommended awards: approximately \$650,000, or about 40% of requested funding.
- About 65% of total requested funding across both tiers was recommended for approval this year.
- All four committee members on each tier independently evaluate every proposal, reviewing extensive application materials, including full marketing plans and specific campaign plans.
- Scores from all committee members are averaged, and funding is awarded in tiers based on score thresholds: 90%+ receives 90% of the request; 87–89% receives 84%; 85–86% receives 83.5%; 84% or below receives 70%.
- Scoring also incorporates in-person interviews conducted over three days at the North Capitol Building.
- A significant amount of creativity goes into these proposals — including collaborative marketing plans across companion counties, targeted campaigns for new and growing markets, and increased focus on astro-tourism and agro-tourism, reflecting recent state investment in those areas.
- Applications vary widely — from requests for international flight-buy campaigns to foundational digital marketing support for rural destinations just getting started online.
- **PDF of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Awardees attached to the meeting minutes.**
- The following board members disclosed that they are employed or benefit financially from one of the organizations that are receiving grants:
 - Nathan Rafferty
 - Kevin Smith
 - Jennifer Wesselhoff
 - Victor Iverson
 - Shayne Wittwer

MOTION: Jordan Smith motioned to approve \$3,983,874 for the Round 26 Cooperative Marketing Awards. Kevin Smith seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Announcements

- **Commissioner Cox** shared that in conjunction with the Rich County Fair there is a rodeo tonight at 7:30 pm.
- **Nathan Rafferty** wanted to recognize the struggle that Eagle Point in Beaver County has been going through. They suffered a very large wildfire that affected the entire resort. Unfortunately a week later they suffered a flash flood that ruined the road to and from the resort. UDOT's estimate to repair the road is \$300M.

- Eagle Point is going to pause operations for this season. The resort is important to the community and provides jobs in the county.
- Graydon Pearson noted continued development on the east side of Deer Valley. The Canopy, a Hilton property, is opening this weekend. There is a lot going on over there.
- **Celina Sinclair** reminded everyone about the Utah Tourism Conference, Oct. 13-16, where you can stay at one of the new hotel properties at the Deer Valley East development.
- She also announced that two members of the tourism board – Nathan Rafferty and Shayne Wittwer – will be inducted into the Tourism Hall of Fame, alongside Senator Evan Vickers.
- Kevin Smith shared:
 - Greater Zion tourism director Britany McMichael has accepted a job with Washington County and they are actively looking to replace her. Big shoes to fill.
 - People in the tourism industry consistently model kindness and inclusivity, standing out in a world often defined by contentiousness and competition.
 - Tourism and hospitality represent a high form of love and inclusion — they turn strangers into family through acceptance, shared humanity, and uplifting care. At its core, hospitality means deliberately opening your space, culture, and heart to someone you don't know.
 - Utah does this exceptionally well — arguably better than most states.
 - "Life Elevated" isn't just about the mountains, ski resorts, or the beautiful red rock canyons — it's also about the people and an elevated sense of welcome that sets Utah apart.
 - This welcoming spirit is a core reason the state succeeds in tourism.

The meeting adjourned.