



Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, January 31, 2019

9:00 am

Members Present: Craig Massey – NM Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum
Debra Marks – Las Cruces Symphony Association
Vince Vaccaro – Lorenzo's Restaurant
Ana Berrun – Townplace Suites Marriot

Members Absent: Belia Alvarez – Heritage Hotels

Others Present: Jennifer Bales (CVB), Rochelle Miller-Hernandez (CVB), Jamila Gilbert (CVB), Leslie Gabaldon (CVB), and Phil San Filippo (ED)

I. CALL TO ORDER –The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Ms. Berrun.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 27, 2018 Ms. Berrun called for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 27, 2018 Advisory Board Meeting. Mr. Vaccaro moved to approve the motion. Mr. Massey seconded. All members were in favor. Passed 4-0.

III. PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS

Executive Directors Report – Jennifer Bales – Board terms are for three years and usually come to an end in March. Both Deb and Craig will reach the end of their first term in March and both have agreed to be reinstated for their second term. Vince will reach the end of his second term in March and is not eligible to be reinstated. We have reached out to Russell Hernandez of Salud de Mesilla and he has agreed to serve. We are working on his paperwork

and, if the Mayor approves, his term will begin in March and the February meeting will be Vince's last.

We just recently moved Veronica, who was our Admin Assistant, to Sales & Service Coordinator. We have Leslie as our Interim Admin Assistant and are currently going through the process to interview candidates. Hopefully by next month, I will be able to say that we have someone as our new Admin Assistant.

The contract with Global Spectrum, who handles the management of the Convention Center, is coming up. We have an RFP out which closes on February 7. They should have a decision by March and then that decision will go to Council. If approved, we will begin the transition.

There are two items that are going through the legislature regarding tourism. The first item is regarding Airbnb. They are looking at changing the lodger's tax statute to decrease the number of rooms from 3 to 1. If that passes, and if it passes through our City Council, Community Development will have to start licensing Airbnbs and they will have to pay GRT, Lodgers Tax, and the Convention Center Fee. The second item is the Hospitality Fee. Albuquerque has a 1% Hospitality Fee. The way that statute was written, it applies only to municipalities with 250,000 people which is only one city in the state. NMHA is trying to remove that population stipulation.

The City was approached by a State Senator and State Representative to get on the bandwagon for Outdoor Recreation. Legislature is currently going through to create an Outdoor Recreation Office for the state, which would be in the state's Economic Development Office, if it passes. We are revamping our website to make Outdoor Recreation pop. Economic Development was approved by City Council to budget for an Outdoor Recreation employee within the City as well.

The last announcement from Richard Branson of Virgin Galactic was that there would be a launch mid-year. There will be another test launch sometime in the next month as well. The mid-year launch would be the first launch from the Spaceport here and is the launch that Mr. Branson would be on. We are looking at hosting a series of free events on the Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of the launch in the Downtown Plaza. These events will be ticketed and fenced for crowd control. There is a lot of potential for news coverage on the launch. Mr. San Filippo has been in contact with the Superintendent of LCPS and there are talks of having the launched streamed via CCTV to all LCPS students. There will also be viewing areas in Las Cruces so that the public will be able to view the launch. When the

launch is scheduled, we will get about a month of notice and it will be scramble time for Economic Development and CVB staff.

Sales Report – Rochelle Miller-Hernandez – Based on the STR report we are up. Occupancy year to date is up 3.5% at 59.4%. In December it was up 7.3% from last year, from 52% to 55.8%. ADR in December was up 5.1% to 72.15%. Year to date, ADR is up 1% to 74.26%. Rev Par in December was up 12.9%. Year to date, Rev Par is up 4.6% to 44.12%. We had a new sporting event in December, the New Mexico Junior Wrestling/USA Wrestling Youth Wrestling Qualifier. 2,250 people attended this event. We have a significant Academy of Science student tour coming from Austin. We attended our second San Diego Travel & Adventure Show. We are working with Economic Development on attending SXSW. In Conventions, a lot of leads have come from Connect Marketplace. Also, Albert has been nominated to be on the New Mexico Meeting Planners International Association board. In Sports, we have won back the USSSA National Girls Fast Pitch from El Paso.

Media Report – Jamila Gilbert – Jamila presented a look at October through December of last year with the Marketing Report. There was a 30% increase in new visitors to the website from last year to this year. A lot of the people that are new to the website we think are coming from Mexico. We are trying to tailor some of our pages, content, and marketing to the Mexican market. The cost per 1,000 impressions on our Google advertising is consistently low, which allows us to spend less and buy more ads. On Facebook, we have noticed that we have an uptick in the 24-34 age group. Mobile usage went up 63%, so we will continue to tailor our content to mobile users. We had a ton of page views on the Prado and a lot of them were from Mexico. Dining & Explore has less views than previous years, so we will make sure that this is up-to-date. Our visits by City are still really high in Las Cruces. Other cities included in this are “not set,” which we think represents the Mexico market, Albuquerque, Dallas, El Paso, and Denver. On the horizon, we have For the Love of Art month. We did an e-mail campaign and had 1695 e-mails opened and have sold 3 hotel packages as a result of this. The people that opened those e-mails were mostly from California. One thing that I noticed is that people who are coming from the “not set” market are bouncing fairly quickly from the pages, possibly because they aren’t geared to them. We plan to build out a micro-site that will feature our key pages in Spanish. We have established a relationship with one of the editors of New Mexico Magazine and I have sent some pitches that they may be

interested in, which has resulted in Las Cruces being featured more in New Mexico Magazine. On Social Media, females are still our primary audience at a rate of 7 to 1 over males. Our best performing ad was a photo of the Organ Mountains taken by Rochelle's husband in which we asked for some interaction from the community. 67,000 people saw this and there was a lot of engagement of people liking and sharing this. For the Love of Art month will be continuing and we are sponsoring them. This is the 21st year of this month-long event. The Las Cruces Space Festival will be coming up in April and we are helping to promote this week-long event as well.

Rio Grande Theater – Jennifer Bales – Mr. Faivre was out, so Jennifer Bales gave some updates on the Rio Grande Theater. For the first 2 quarters, attendance was at 10,000 people. We are on track to beat last year's attendance numbers. Because of the age of the Theater, there are a lot of projects and things that need to be fixed. The Theater will be shut down for repairs, looking at July and August and possible a little into September.

IV. **NEW BUSINESS**

Leslie put together a calendar for the next two years of meetings. They will always be the last Thursday of the month and we don't meet in July, October, November, or December. Board meetings are open to the public.

The last we heard on the completion of the adjacent buildings, they are planning to soft-open in February and hard-open in March.

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 10:01 am.

Approved on: _____

Ana Berrun; Chair, Las Cruces Convention & Visitors Bureau Advisory Board