



Advisory Board Meeting  
Thursday, May 30, 2019  
9:00 am

**Members Present:** Craig Massey – NM Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum  
Russell Hernandez – Salud! de Mesilla  
Belia Alvarez – Heritage Hotels  
Ana Berrun – Towneplace Suites

**Members Absent:** Debra Marks – Las Cruces Symphony Association

**Others Present:** Rochelle Miller-Hernandez (CVB), Jamila Gilbert (CVB), Albert Herrera (CVB),  
Leslie Gabaldon (CVB), Belle Morrow (Towneplace Suites)

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Ms. Berrun.

#### **II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 28, 2019**

Ms. Berrun called for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 28, 2019 Advisory Board Meeting. Mr. Massey moved to approve the motion. Mr. Hernandez seconded. All members were in favor and this item passed 4-0.

#### **III. PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS**

##### **Executive Directors Report – Rochelle Miller-Hernandez**

Rochelle Miller-Hernandez is currently acting as Interim for Jennifer Bales as Executive Director and Griselda Martinez is currently acting as Interim for Phil San Filippo as Director of Economic Development.

The Amador Hospitality restaurant complex is now completely open. Economic development and the TIDD are working on negotiating continuance of Amador Hotel renovation project. The Amador Hotel Historic Structures Report (HSR) is being completed. Legislative funds have been assigned to the project. Our Public Works department will be creating an RFP to bring on a design firm so that we can move forward with restoring the building based on the HSR. The Amador Hotel has been identified as a priority project by the TIDD, so the renovation will be funded partially through legislative appropriations and partially through TIDD funds.

Las Cruces Country Music Festival is set to be held October 11-13, 2019. Council has approved the budget for CMF and all expenditures will now be going through the City, not Friends of Visit Las Cruces.

The Las Cruces Convention Center expansion construction is set to be completed by mid-July, with the exception of an additional storage area being added which will not affect the use of the Center. A Resolution for the acceptance of the contract with the new LCCC management company will going to Council on June 3 and, if approved, new management will take over July 1.

At the beginning of May, Virgin Galactic made an announcement in Santa Fe that the employee relocation we were anticipating will be happening this summer. Spaceship Unity will also be moving to Spaceport America and the remaining test launches will be held here in New Mexico. When asked by press about Richard Branson's flight, the only answer given was within one year.

The Outdoor Recreation initiative is still in development. City management has given Economic development and the CVB the direction on developing a means to impact tourism and economic growth through tourism - such as creating demand for rock climbing, thus creating overnight stays, need for equipment sales and rental companies, and others.

Staff will be meeting with Jen Schroer, Cabinet Secretary for the New Mexico Tourism Department, later today.

### **Sales Report – Albert Herrera**

The Spotlight on the Southwest tour happened last month. Between Las Cruces and El Paso, they brought in between 80 and 100 tour operators. They toured Las Cruces, Mesilla, Farm and Ranch, and locations in El Paso. From this, at least 2 or 3 leads will be putting us on their rotation.

International Test & Evaluation Association (ITEA) is a conference that used to be at Hotel Encanto (when it was the Hilton). It outgrew the hotel and moved to El Paso and then to Albuquerque. We do not have their large conference but have been awarded a smaller conference in 2020. This should bring in around 200 attendees, with estimated sleeping rooms at around 210.

We are working on bidding on a conference for 2023 for the American Volkssport Association. This is a lead from Small Market Meetings. They should be out in about 6 months for a site tour.

The National Association of College and University Food Services (NACUFS) came out for a site tour in February and have secured their conference at NMSU. This is a lead that came from Connect Marketplace.

On travel, Albert, Jamila, and Rochelle will be attending IPW in June. Albert will also be attending the MPI WEC in June.

Quarterly newsletters should be going out by the end of the week.

For sports, the Senior Olympics Softball Tournament has rebooked for September 2019.

Ed attended the impromptu Go Bond meeting called by the Mayor and the big discussion was soccer and soccer fields.

The Spartan Race will be happening next November. This will bring in between 8-10,000 people. They should be out for a site visit soon. We are hoping to be able to announce this sometime this summer.

### **Media Report – Jamila Gilbert**

It's been a few busy months and we have a few busy months on the horizon.

We applied for and received a co-op marketing grant with New Mexico True which provides advertising in the amount of \$40,000 with a 1-1 match. We will have advertising on Pandora, Trip Advisor, and at the El Paso Airport.

We attended the PR Summit at the Governor's Conference at the end of April. 6 different CVBs and industry partners were there with their PR teams. This allowed for discussion on how to better leverage our earned and live media.

Final Frontier Tours are still departing from Las Cruces to Spaceport America. Staff will be joining one of these tours so they can provide more information to visitors.

Recently, staff toured Mesilla and the Mesilla Plaza with the New Mexico Historical Society. We have a "cheat sheet" with general facts on the Mesilla Plaza.

Our numbers are lower in the past month are a bit lower, due to a temporary pullback from digital marketing, like paid advertising on Facebook. Advertising is back to normal and numbers should be back up in May.

We are still working on creating landing pages for our site in Spanish that are easily searchable, navigable, and findable.

On the website and in other advertising and media, we are rolling out a new collage-style brand look. This will also be the cover for the next year's visitors' guides, which will be printed in July. We are working on making sure information on our website is fresh and up-to-date.

Sergio just made a walking tour on the app for the historic Alameda and Mesquite district, which should be on the app when it is updated as well.

We have introduced new "Las Cruces is the place for space" merchandise.

We will be working to have launch celebrations and live viewings when given notice, which could be as little as 4-6 weeks notice. We are working closely with State tourism office in order to do any preparations or planning that can be done ahead of time. One of their potential plans is New Mexico experience pop-up booths throughout the city, focusing on outdoor recreation, culinary, culture, and history.

IPW will be happening this weekend and Jamila will be attending the media marketplace, which will allow for meetings with a lot of international press.

#### **Rio Grande Theatre – Jamila Gilbert**

The Theatre is gearing up to be closed for around 2.5 months this summer for renovations to the fly loft and stage.

For recent highlights, RGT hosted several movies and a live event for Space Festival, which went well.

Star Wars Day, May the 4<sup>th</sup> Be With You, was at the beginning of the month.

The Immortal Wars showings, as part of the movie's press tour, will take place this weekend.

There will be a few classic movies, kids movies, and concerts coming up in June.

We will be getting a new system for concessions and ticket sales, in line with City policy requirements.

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

Rochelle Miller-Hernandez added that Sonia was recognized by City Council for 20 years of service to the City.

Rochelle Miller-Hernandez also added that one of our partners in Santa Fe also applied for and received a New Mexico True co-op grant for industry partners to attend the Travel and Adventure trade shows, which will allow industry partners to attend these tradeshow.

Rochelle Miller-Hernandez welcomed the newest member of our board, Russell Hernandez.

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 10:11 am.

Approved on: \_\_\_\_\_

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