



**BIG \* SKY**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

**Agenda**

**Board of Directors**

**Big Sky Chamber of Commerce**

**55 Lone Mountain Trail | Big Sky, Montana 59716**

**406-995-3000**

**9:00 AM**

**November 3, 2015**

[www.bigskychamber.com](http://www.bigskychamber.com)

- I. Call to Order Regular Public Meeting
- II. Public Comment
- III. VBS Liaison Report

| <u>Action Items</u>   | <u>Responsibility</u> |
|---|-----------------------|
| IV. Approve Minutes   | DOC                   |
| V. Approve September and October 2015 Financials                    | Paul                  |
| VI. Request for formal support CDC Application<br>(Prospera/NRMEDD) | Kitty                 |

**Discussion Items**

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- VII. Transportation Discussion DOC/Kitty
  - a. Structure (subcommittee, multiple nonprofits, local, regional)
  - b. Developing priorities
  - c. Professional support
- VIII. Preparation for legislative session Kitty/Kevin
- IX. TEDD Update Kevin
- X. Big Sky Business Section/Bozeman Chronicle Kitty
- XI. Visitor Center Report Marci

**Parking Lot**

Tourism Master Plan

**Important Dates**

Holiday Light Installation November 16  
Small Business Saturday November 26

**Adjourn**



**BIG \* SKY**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
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*Meeting Minutes*

**Big Sky Chapel**

**Big Sky, Montana 59716**

**406-995-3000**

**September 8th, 2015**

[www.bigskychamber.com](http://www.bigskychamber.com)

**Call to Order:** 8:43 a.m.

**Present:** David O'Connor, Paul Robertson, Brandon Bang, Kevin Germain

**Absent:** Shawna Winter, Sarah Griffiths, Bill Simpkins

**Public:** Julie Grimm, CAP Mentor Coordinator; Tom Yahraes, CEO, Big Sky Discovery School

**Public Comment:**

Julie Grimm, CAP Mentor Coordinator, Thrive

- Julie works for Thrive as the CAP Mentor Coordinator in the Big Sky School District. Programs in the Big Sky School District include: the Child Advancement Project or CAP mentoring, Girls for a Change and Parent Liaison.
- Lori Swenson is the Parent Liaison and helps with additional support. Julie works with CAP and Girls for a Change. Parent Liaison is funded by Women In Action. CAP and Girls for a Change is funded by the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation.
- Julie is constantly recruiting for the CAP mentoring program. The program is during the school year and during the school day. Mentors do need to pass three background checks to be admitted to the program. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> year CAP has been at the Big Sky School District. CAP has partnered with the Gallatin Riverhouse Grill to have a CAP recruitment event on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. It will be a trivia night.
- Julie asked the Chamber Board that if they know anyone interested in becoming a mentor to invite them to the recruitment event.
- A new program this year is Girls for a Change, which includes Girls on the Run and Heart and Soul. 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Graders also participate in a conference on October 17. It is a great opportunity for girls across the state to collaborate and learn more about it.
- 18 girls are registered for Girls on the Run. There are volunteer coaches that are coaching the girls. Paul asked if there is any need for the Spanish First Program. Julie noted any fluent Spanish speakers interested in volunteering should contact the school.

Tom Yahraes, CEO, Big Sky Discovery School

- The Big Sky Discovery School is hoping to appeal to seasonal and ski academy children.
- Tom passed out the strategic vision to the board. His main purpose is to introduce Big Sky Discovery School's product to the Chamber Board and throughout the Big Sky Community.

## Visit Big Sky Liaison

Kitty Clemens, Executive Director

- VBS just wrapped up the media fam. Alex did a great job with the itineraries. We did pick up a news blurb from one of the expectant FAM tours and it was a negative review. She did not write very positive things about food or her experience. Kitty does know that many of the other reporters were posting positively about their experiences.
- There is a marketing committee meeting on Thursday. VBS will get the advertising agency on the line, finalize the media buy, and finalize winter.
- David asked about Kerbspace. Kitty stated Kerbspace has not been performing to expected standards. For example, they are not providing analytics. Furthermore, Kerbspace is not improving the user interface after multiple requests from staff and business owners. Kitty mentioned Kerbspace has installed indoor units in downtown Bozeman.
- We want to loop David, Catherine, and Kristen Brown in the contract and specifics in to discuss the issue of hardware. The new vendor we are looking into is a product that is already out and being used in other CVBs. This new vendor will be presenting at the DMAI Visitor Services Conference Marci will be attending in Salt Lake City at the end of September.
- We feel it is important to present our desire to change vendors to Resort Tax and our reasons for doing so. The money spent in this fiscal year has been on content curation, which is Erik Morrison. This is very valuable to us. He has greatly expanded our media library, which is extremely helpful to VBS.
- The questions is whether or not we own the equipment on the kiosks. Kristen Brown needs to review the information on the ownership of the hardware in order to give us legal counsel.
- David thinks we should involve Resort Tax as soon as possible. David agrees that VBS did due diligence and exercised in good faith regarding choosing Kerbspace, Inc. as their vendor for the Sidewalk Concierge project. However, we do acknowledge that the vendor is not performing as promised.

## ACTION ITEMS

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### Approval of Minutes

- A motion to approve the August minutes was made by Brandon Bang and seconded by Kevin Germain. With all in favor, the motion passed.

### Approval of July and August Financials

- Kitty mentioned the budget is not in QuickBooks, so the board does not have Budget vs. Actual. Profit & Loss does show a loss because we are still missing several member renewals. We are also missing the golf tournament revenue for the month.
- Paul gave the financials a cursory review and did note that the net loss was at \$24,000. Other than the previously mentioned loss, Paul believes the financials are in order. David also noted it looks good.
- Paul Robertson made a motion to approve the August financials and it was seconded by Brandon Bang. With all in favor the motion passed.

### Approval Record Retention Policy

Kitty Clemens, Executive Director

- Last year, the Big Sky Chamber of Commerce was audited due to an error on the 2011 tax return.
- During the audit there were two boxes we were unable to check on a required from on the return: a record retention policy and whistle blower policy. Kitty had to check “No” to those boxes so she wanted to make sure not to do that on this year’s tax return as the IRS wants those policies in place for nonprofits.
- There were some questions on the Record Retention Policy and Kitty asked the board for feedback. David asked: How much is this specific to non-profits and how much is it standard business practices.
- David asked if these guidelines could be a benefit for our members to use in their businesses. Kitty replied: Absolutely.
- David request that we table the Record Retention Policy in order to circulate it to our accountants and confirm the dates in the document. Once those dates are confirmed, the board will vote on the document.

### **Approval of Whistle Blower Policy**

Kitty Clemens, Executive Director

- The Whistle Blower Policy started with Lisa Kerry Davis, the labor attorney the Chamber had to meet with related to a past employee.
- With the approval of both documents, the Chamber can check “Yes” to every box on our next tax return.
- The Whistle Blower Policy is finalized and can be approved in today’s meeting.
- Kitty mentioned that if we have an employee or a board member that is doing something illegal, they can come to Kitty or a board member with the issue. Furthermore, if an employee is asked to do something they feel they should not be doing, then they can also bring that to the boards attention.
- A motion to approve the Whistle Blower Policy as written was moved by Kevin Germain and seconded by Brandon Bang. With all in favor, the Whistle Blower Policy was approved.
- David mentioned that transparency is important for our organization and this is another tool for transparency.

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

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### **Staff Reports**

Kitty Clemens, Business Expo

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Business Expo is scheduled for Tuesday, October 6 at Moonlight Basin. There are still a lot of pieces to be pulled together. Moonlight staff has been great to work with. This event is almost a month after the golf tournament, which is good timing for our members.
- Kitty has a lot of ideas for speakers. She is hoping to find a representative from Longwoods International to discuss the Halo Effect study.
- Kevin suggested that someone from Utah might be a great idea and that Visit Utah has been exceeding expectations in the tourism industry.

- David agrees that the partnership between tourism and transportation has been an incredible partnership for the state and might be a good topic for the Business Expo.

## **Membership Report**

Shannon Odom, Membership Director

- Shannon has gotten through to several of the key members. He was also able to golf with one of the FAM participants at Big Sky Resort, Moonlight Basin and Spanish Peaks. He thinks there will be many positive reviews on the journalist's golf experience.
- With the help of the Big Sky Ambassadors, Shannon has organized two ribbon cuttings: Ari O Jewelry and Beehive Basin Brewery as well as two business after hours: Pure West Christies and Lone Mountain Land Company.
- Rainbow Ranch is hosting the September Business After Hours. RR is hoping to reposition itself to be a more visitor friendly lodge.
- Shannon attended the Rocky Mountain Regional Summit at Big Sky Resort and listened to Taylor's presentation on ski marketing, and other presentations relating to the tourism industries including Amtrak.
- Shannon has been working on the golf tournament. We currently have 25 teams and 13 hole sponsors. The tournament will be followed by a reception.
- David believes there will be last minute sign-ups for teams and we seem to be on track with the tournament. Shannon mentioned not everyone from last year will be playing this year. We do have some new members interested in playing this year.
- Shannon mentioned that we do need 5 more hole sponsorships. Shannon would like to revisit the budget and has some new ideas for next year's event.
- Shannon had a very productive meetings with the ambassadors, by reviewing the ambassadors' roles. He wanted to make sure everyone was still on board with the program. Dick and Carrie sent out a survey and got some great feedback on the program. He suggested creating a sign-up sheet for events if we have several events in the same week in the future. Everyone is on board with the new guidelines.
- Kitty asked if Dick will be staying on board as the chair. Kitty mentioned the Consignment Cabin is closing. He said a couple of people have asked him about buying his business. His lease expires at the end of September.
- Shannon gave metrics on membership to the board as a comparison from last year. August was a big renewal month for our members. Shannon mentioned the biggest renewals were July and August, but we did have a few renewals in September. Some of the dropped or inactive members were from closed businesses. Many of the statements sent out have been paid.

## **Visitor Center Report**

Marci Lewandowski, Visitor Services Manager

- Visitor numbers continue to be up from the previous year. The current numbers for August are 2919, which is a 21% increase from the previous year.
- September numbers are on pace as well. We are seeing a different demographic of mostly retirees, but this still includes strong numbers.
- Marci will have a full report of statistics for the 2015 grant funding season at the October meeting.

### **Misc. Chamber Events: Important Dates**

Kitty Clemens, Executive Director

- Great Pumpkin Giveaway will be Saturday, October 24, the week prior to Halloween. We checked with Big Sky School District #72, Morningstar Learning Center and Big Sky Discovery School in order to get accurate enrollment numbers for the children in the Big Sky Community. We want to make sure we have enough pumpkins for everyone.
- We are also ordering banners for the holiday lights. Our banner installation will be Nov 16. We have several banners broken and do need to switch out several banners. Randy can do it all at one time. He is contracted for the entire year.
- Kitty mentioned we will be kicking off on the Hwy 191 corridor plan. It is a one year commitment.
- Kitty had a very long meeting with the full housing group but without the consultant. The group decided on the construction on 18 townhomes as the preferred alternative.
- This project can be replicated and we hope to have value added constructed costs that will bring costs down each time we build.

### **Other Non-Agenda Items:**

Kevin Germain, Chamber Board of Directors

- Kevin: Can we add Big Sky to the I-90 sign? Kevin and many people in the Big Sky community feel this is an important addition to our community.
- Kitty mentioned she attends the MDT transportation meeting and is the only member of the public. She has invited our MDT commissioner several times, but he has not attended.
- David thinks it would take a broad based coalition of people to begin to change the sign to include Big Sky in the I-90 sign. David asked if we can make this an agenda item for the next meeting. Kitty and the Chamber board agreed to add the I-90 sign onto October's agenda.

### **Adjourn**

- A motion to adjourn was made by Kevin Germain and seconded by Brandon Bang. With all in favor the meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marci Lewandowski  
Visitor Services Manager

## **Legislative Initiatives for 2016 session**

### Montana Economic Improvement Zones (EIZ)

#### **Concept:**

EIZ would encourage investment in identified areas throughout the state for the purpose of:

- Attracting and retaining a qualified workforce
- To cure blighted neighborhoods with high unemployment
- Improve access to training for low income populations
- Revitalize commercial districts and repair abandon buildings.

#### **Intent**

EIZ Projects encourage community participation and public private partnerships. An EIZ would be administered by the county in which they are located. EIZ Administrators work with their communities to bring forward proposals that meet economic development needs and have the support of the community. Montana taxpayers may earn state income tax credits by contributing to targeted efforts within EIZs. The local EIZ Administrator is authorized by the statute to charge reasonable fees to organizations for their oversight of the program.

#### **Income Tax Credit**

Individual donors having made a certified contribution to an EIZ Project may claim 50% of a cash donation as an income tax credit, and half of that amount (25%) for an in-kind donation. The actual credit earned is figured based on all eligible contributions during the tax year, and capped at \$100,000 per tax-payer with the balance carried forward up to 5 years.

Corporate donors may take a 25% income tax credit for cash contributions and 12.5% income tax credit for in-kind support.

#### **Project tax credit limitation**

Projects are held to a \$500,000 tax credit limit per project per calendar year. Once \$500,000 in tax credits have been certified for an EIZ Project, no more contribution tax credits can be awarded that year. It is primarily the responsibility of the Project Organization, with oversight by the local EIZ Administrator to monitor contributions and stay within the credit certification limit.

#### **Donations/Minimum Donation**

The maximum or ceiling for a minimum contribution for any EIZ Project may be set. This ceiling is intended to ensure that the credit is accessible to all Montana tax payers wishing to support local economic development initiatives while making sure that the value of the contribution justifies the administrative costs including monitoring Project activity, processing certifications, and logging and reporting the tax credits certified.

#### **Oversight:**

The Department of Commerce office of economic development would identify the first zones under predetermined criteria. These zones from around the state would be entitled to solicit investments from individuals and corporations for approved projects within the zone.

The organization running the Project must be a nonprofit or government entity. Either the entire organization or a specific activity of the organization may be eligible for EIZ Project status. Program

activities would be recertified on an annual basis. Investments would be eligible for a state income tax credit as well as regular income tax deductions.

### **Eligible Projects:**

- Business assistance. Examples include: business training and counseling, incubators, finance funds, and feasibility studies.
- Economic Development Organizations. Project status may be given to a public/private non-profit economic development organization.
- Job training programs .These projects focus on training a workforce for a critical industry in the EIZ.
- Infrastructure projects. Examples of infrastructure include water, sewer, transportation, telecommunications, and streetscapes.  
Infrastructure must be publicly owned or turned over to a public entity upon completion of the project. The proposal must demonstrate that no more than 50% of donations come from entities which have the potential for direct benefit from the project.
- Neither jobs associated with the sponsoring non-profit organization, nor those for construction of a Project facility are considered job creation. The Project must impact the broader EIZ community.
- Community Housing – access to these facilities are essential to livable and resilient communities; labor shortages in Montana are acute and projected to worsen. Projects to support resilient communities that have residential facilities sufficient to connect workers to job centers and support service and retail businesses are eligible.
- Capital campaigns of a limited term to develop or refurbish community housing and may be considered.
- Funding drives that support operations of key community facilities such as preschools, recreation centers and artist/maker space are also eligible to apply.
- Health Care Facilities. Facilities determined to be essential to the economic viability of an EIZ community may be considered.
- Visitor Event/ Attraction - These projects attract people to the EIZ and result in spending at other area businesses. These may be tourist attractions, museums and events.
- Higher Education – A project to support a capital campaign for building and/or equipment with a clear economic development link may be considered. Certain job training projects may be eligible.

### **Additional Zones**

Additional EIZs may be designated by making application to the Montana Governor's Office of Economic Development.



## **Regional Tourism Development Districts**

RTDD's support business expansions and relocation with a clear link to new income from sources outside the state and encourages spending throughout the state. A Regional Tourism Development District (RTDD) supports and encourages new business development that attracts and retains world class talent to choose Montana as a place to work and play. In some cases, the RTDD may also be able to provide support for initiatives led by non-profit entities pertaining to key industries or regional development of visitor services related facilities that include more than one city or county.

## **Requirements**

A RTDD may receive project funding through the use of tax increment financing (TIF) for the purpose of funding a catalytic destination development project, create expanded access to a qualified labor force or to create new jobs in distressed areas of Montana. To qualify as a RTDD, district master plans should support:

- A strong level of local public/private matching commitments
- Potential for economic "spinoff" benefits, such as attracting suppliers, generating high prestige, or a large expansion initiative
- Be a response to a special local economic event, such as an acute housing shortage for the community workforce or an industry creating jobs replacing recent lay-offs
- Creation of new Montana exports in the form of increased out of state visitor spending for the state.
- Establishment of new headquarters in Montana
- Other unique conditions

## **Intent**

RTDDs are created for the purpose of fostering and developing incremental increases in Montana regionally. A RTDD exists to create a project that would otherwise not be solely funded by private investment. Projects within the district may receive TIF funds to develop public attractions, facilities for transportation, improve infrastructure, create community housing, and remediate underutilized commercial properties.

## **Eligibility**

Regions may apply to the Department of Commerce on an annual basis. Applications must demonstrate regional collaboration and substantial need for support. Up to two Projects that demonstrate the highest return on investment and greatest net new revenue for the region and the state can be selected annually.

## **Governance**

Eligible board members will be registered voters residing within the designated district boundaries. County commissioners may appoint up to nine district board members representing travel and tourism interests, including one public official, (elected or public employee) to a RTDD board.



## **Penny for Housing**

Certain areas around the state of Montana are allowed to charge a Resort Tax of up to 3%. These areas qualify due to the high impact of visitors. Communities choose to appropriate tax revenues for a variety of public services.

Communities eligible to charge this resort tax on the sale of luxury goods, by nature, have high real estate prices due to demand for second homes. Many of these communities have conducted studies and determined that more than 50% of their workforce must commute from other communities due to the high cost of housing.

### **Intent**

Allow for an additional penny raising the local resort tax cap to 4 cents is proposed for the purpose of providing a dedicated funding stream to develop housing for full time, year round residents in Montana's resort areas.

Resort communities will retain local control on the taxing rate by being required to hold an election to approve the extra penny for housing fund.

Sustainable economic development provides livable communities that match employment centers to housing. By so doing, families benefit from reduced transportation costs, roads require less maintenance, air quality is improved due to less vehicle miles traveled and local business benefit from increased year-round customer base.



**Date:** November 3, 2015  
**To:** Big Sky Chamber Board of Directors  
**From:** Marci Lewandowski, Visitor Services Manager  
**Subject:** DMAI Visitor Services Conference: Salt Lake City: Sept. 27 – Sept. 29

### **Information Item**

Summary of DMAI Visitor Services Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah from Sunday, September 27, 2015 through Tuesday, September 29, 2015.

### **SUMMARY EXPLANATION**

I attended the 2015 DMAI Visitor Services Summer with over 100 attendees from different DMMOs. There were several different topics discussed, all aimed at sharing ideas to improve visitor services. Some of the highlights include:

- **Colleague sharing**—successes, needed improvements, best practices, challenges, and trends to understand what is changing at visitor services centers across the nation.
- **Meet Minneapolis Presentation**—Meet Minneapolis presented on their new visitor center now located in downtown Minneapolis. The downtown center is a social media command center, retail shop, and ticket vendor for many of downtown’s events and activities. Minneapolis did outsource their retail shop to a different vendor, but does receive a portion of the profits.
- **WOW Awards**—DMAI presented the WOW awards including: Extreme Office Makeover to Visit Norfolk who upgraded their visitor center effectively for only a few thousand dollars; Best Idea, Most Replicable to Visit Chapel Hill for its access guide for people with disabilities; Best Idea, Most Creative to Mike the Bike, a traveling kiosks that attends events; Main Street Visitor Center to Dallas/Ft. Worth for its new and improved main street visitor center.
- **Destination NEXT/Business Findings**—DMAI Board Member, Scott Beck, discussed DMAI’s Destination NEXT strategy and findings from the initial data set. DMAI surveyed over 327 DMOs from 36 countries to find key trends: including technology and customer expectations. DMAI hopes to use this data and additional data collected from DMOs to further increase brand building and not only create “best practices” from DMOs, but “next practices” for DMOs to thrive in an age of increased technology and social sharing.
- **Visit Baltimore, Leveraging Technology & Multi-use Space**—Visit Baltimore presented how it was able to upgrade its visitor center and make technological improvement by using its waterfront glass building for events on nights and weekends and the accompanying revenue it generated.
- **MobiManage, Interactive Experience**—Doug Ralston, CEO of MobiManage presented on their business and products giving several examples of how technology can increase the visitor experience of a DMO. Examples included: Visit Sedona, Visit Orlando, and Amelia Island. Doug discussed the CMS system as well as the importance of the UI experience in order to ensure the right amount of bandwidth for success. I followed up with Sedona in order to receive feedback on

their experience in working with MobiManage and the success of the systems in place in their visitor center.

- **Excellence in Customer Service**—Rudy Vidal, Managing Director of Vidal Consulting Group discussed how to create differentiation and preference over your competition. He discussed the components of brand loyalty and the importance of brand management. He stressed the importance of not trying to satisfying your customer, but creating an emotional connection with your DMO.
- **Break-out Sessions**—several breakout sessions during the conference were held in order to “dive deeper” into the subject matter. I found the breakout session with MobiManage to be most helpful as I was able to ask all of the questions related to their service I needed in order to make an informed decision on using them for the native app and kiosk systems. I also attended a dinner with MobiManage and their clients, which was helpful in receiving feedback on their systems.

I felt the Visitor Services Summit was extremely informative. In addition to networking, I was able to learn a lot about what other DMOs were doing and what improvements visitor centers are hoping to make in the coming years. Much of the discussion centered on technology and ways for visitor centers to improve technology in their centers.