



C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor

Jeffery Sayer, Director

IDAHO TRAVEL COUNCIL MEETING
Hotel McCall, McCall, Idaho
October 28, 2015
Rupert's Restaurant

Idaho Travel Council Members:

Doug Burnett, *Region I*
Lara Smith, *Region II*
Jim Manion, *Region III*
Diane Newman (Chair), *Region IV*
Matthew Hunter, *Region V*
Courtney Ferguson (Vice Chair), *Region VI*
Dick Anderson, *Region VII*
Rick Shaffer, *At-Large*

Commerce:

Matt Borud, *Chief Business Development Officer*
Diane Norton, *Tourism Manager*
Jill Eden, *Grants & Contract Specialist*
Laura Conilogue, *Administrative Assistant*

Welcome and Introductions

Chairwoman Diane Newman called the meeting to order at 8:32AM.

Diane welcomes the council.

Council, commerce staff, and audience introductions.

Dick Anderson moves to approve minutes.

Rick Shaffer seconds. Ayes have it. No discussion. **Motion approved.**

McCall Chamber of Commerce Update – McKenzie Christensen

McCall had a fantastic summer. It was busy through October and multiple businesses broke records this summer. They are starting a big Geofencing marketing campaign at the end of November or the first of December. They recently published a brand new semiannual magazine. It includes local flavor and gives away a few local secrets. 10,000 are printed, and you can also find it online.

They are going to be doing data collecting in December to figure out how many people come back to McCall.

They are in the midst of big project, community wide event, it is a competition between other small cities across the nation for a \$2 million grant. They have been working together with everyone in Valley County including New Meadows, Tamarack, McCall, Donnelly, Cascade, and Yellow Pine.

Department of Commerce Update – Matt Borud and Diane Norton

Matt and Diane discussed the fiscal year 2016 budget. The administration program budget is at \$907,890. The total personnel costs are up to \$761,900. There was a rent hike, otherwise all the costs stayed the same. Idaho had incredible July and August collections, up 13% from last year, including most regions are up double digits.



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The education and research budget is at \$130,000. They found that every region wanted more research done on Idaho so they put more money in the research budget and started working on four different projects:

1. STR Global, Inc. gets overnight stay numbers from hotels from all regions in Idaho, and is collecting data every month. Idaho Tourism is getting the data from surrounding states too.
2. Idaho Tourism put out a perception study on October 5, 2015. It was an online survey with 1,500 participants asking people how they perceive Idaho. The results will arrive in November.
3. Dean Runyan economic impact report. They collect data on the amount of visitors, travel earnings, spending, and employment. Then they compare that data with other major industries in Idaho.
4. Idaho Tourism is continuing their relationship with Insight to find the desirable demographic to market to.

There is \$50,000 in the budget to help set up a flight from Boise to Atlanta, GA. Idaho Tourism has been committed for two years but if the flight is not happening by January, they will get the money back.

The advertising budget is \$2,710,000, last year it was \$1,500,000. It increased because of increased bed tax collections. There will be \$25,000 allocated to sponsor the Sun Valley Film Festival. This year Idaho Tourism is partnering with the Fly Fishing Film Tour. It is a 150 city tour throughout the country. Tourism is collaborating with Fish and Game and Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association and will have a 30 second ad and a full page ad spread, plus web clips. Sponsorship for the Coeur d'Alene Iron Man Competition will continue at \$10,000. The Wines Fly Free program costs \$9,000, and Tourism is also sponsoring the North Fork championship and Taste Idaho at varying amounts.

Idaho Tourism has budgeted \$10,000 for the call center who will be answering the phone calls that come to the 800 number. So far it is a good partnership and has freed up time for Tourism staff.

Idaho Tourism received its first reports from STR reports, however their contract states that the data can only be shared with the Idaho Travel Council. Idaho Tourism international research program is overseen by Avia reps. They signed a \$200,000 contract for two years. They are focused mainly on Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. Avia reps can give benchmarks to see how well the international program is growing and tracks the people that put on their passport that they are coming to Idaho. An international tourist typically spends \$265 a day when they vacation in the United States, and 33% of that is spent on lodging. The average stay is five nights and they typically go to three destinations. \$6,500,000 was spent in Idaho by international travelers in 2013. That comes out to about \$2,100,000 in lodging sales and from the 2% bed tax, Idaho Tourism received \$43,000. For every dollar Idaho Tourism spends advertising to international travelers, they get 50 cents back.



Tourism hosted two FAM trips in September 2015 touring Southern Idaho. Moving forward Tourism will be documenting the media that has come from the FAM tours.

Idaho Travel Council Proposed Changes Discussion – Jill Eden

In the August meeting some program changes were discussed:

Proposed Change: Grantee Audit Requirement

Audit payment will no longer be the responsibility of the grantee, but Commerce will pay for all audits out of Tourism's administration budget. All grantees with grants above \$100,000 will still receive an audit, but now 20% of grantees that fall below the \$100,000 audit requirement line will also be audited. It will not change the application process and there will be no need to re-write administrative rules. The auditor will be responsible for choosing random grantees awarded less than \$100,000 for an audit.

Matt Hunter motions to approve.

Courtney Ferguson seconds. Ayes have it. No discussion. **Motion approved.**

Proposed Change: Capital Outlay Requirements

To allow greater flexibility in capital purchases while maintaining the grant focus on marketing, Tourism and Grant staff propose to define Capital Outlay as trade show booths and electronic equipment that is essential to administering the grant, or marketing the area. They also propose that there is no limit to the number of capital purchases per region and that the regional reps will have discretion on how many to fund. They propose to limit the amount of capital purchase to \$500, with the exception of tradeshow booths, however pop-ups, banners, and other trade show items can be requested under marketing. The goal is to give the Council more flexibility for their regions.

Dick Anderson moves to approve.

Lara Smith seconds. Ayes have it. No discussion. **Motion approved.**

Proposed Change: Professional Development Training for Grantees

How it is now, Idaho Tourism pays registration and travel costs for grantees for ICORT and the Grant summit, however there are other conferences that grantees would benefit from. The proposal is to pay for registration costs, but not travel costs, for the Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO) Conference, and the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) Conference.

Dick Anderson moves to approve.

Jim Manion seconds. Ayes have it. No discussion. **Motion approved.**

Update on Jeff Sayer – Matt Borud

Matt Borud gave an update of Director Jeff Sayer. Jeff is leaving Idaho Commerce at the end of 2015 and is going back to the private sector, into the consulting business. The application deadline for the new director is Monday morning November 2, 2015. The Governor hopes to have his replacement by the end of November so the new Director will hit the ground running by legislative session.



Brundage Update – Jared Montague

Brundage had a good summer, hosting 14 weddings, 2 of which were in June which is abnormal since there is typically snow on the mountain still. They started Brundage Mountain Catering for the weddings. It has been so effective that they are thinking of doing catering in town.

They put in a \$500,000 renovation to the front of the lodge in order to make it more accessible to guests, and added 5,000 square feet of heated decks. The activity barn was expanded to include a new popular tubing hill. Brundage also built two new yurts, a bigger parking lot, and a new ticketing office. The grand opening will be on November 27. They have been focusing on the guest experience, including a new enhanced training regime for employees. There is a new survey for guests to let them know how they are doing.

Summer lasted until mid-September and included the McCall Jazz Festival the second weekend of September and a strong mountain biking season. Brundage received six inches of snow on Labor Day and are hoping they will get even more snow this year.

Ski Idaho Update – Jared Montague

Seven years ago they started ramping up the marketing for Ski Idaho. They believe Idaho has a lot to offer because the skiing options in Idaho are so diverse. There are 18 different resorts in Idaho, and most lack crowds. Ski Idaho recently started working with a new marketing firm, Hanna & Associates to redesign their logo and make it more clean and simple. However, "The Soul of Skiing" is still their slogan. They are going to four out-of-state ski shows to get the Ski Idaho message out.

Ski Idaho is also redesigning their website. It needs to be easy to navigate, communicate effectively, and have a fresh, relevant design. It will include a new color palette, extended use of video and imagery, and strong use of social media. Each mountain has their own page, and they will be responsible for reporting their snow inches and mountain conditions. Ski Idaho updated the templates for emails, the monthly newsletter, and for all their print advertising.

The fifth and sixth grade passport program is going well. It costs \$15 for fifth and sixth graders to get a passport to ski at any resort in Idaho. Not all resorts participate for sixth graders, but all do for fifth graders. Other state's ski resorts also participate in this program, including some in Washington, Oregon, Montana, and Utah. No one is denied as long as they are fifth graders.

Ski Idaho has a media budget of \$50,000 for 2015/16 to make specialty print, digital banners, and 15 second pre roll ads. Ski Idaho will host a reception before the Ski Dazzle show, the Carve Media event. Peak media will travel to several Idaho resorts in 2016 to shoot daily videos, resort vignettes, and raw video for the Ski Idaho website.

Jug Mountain Update - David Carey

Jug Mountain had a great summer, including a record number of golf rounds. They have been developing their mountain biking and trail program at Jug Mountain because they have been getting so much attention. All trails, golfing, and the clubhouse are open to public. They have made videos using drones showing the beauty of Jug Mountain, and Valley County.



Their wedding program is growing so they built a pavilion, and it has been a big draw. They also have a liquor license and a restaurant for wedding uses. It is a good addition to what they do but if they want to do even more they will need to hire more staff.

Mountain biking trails have been a big success. They run a shuttle up to the trails, purchase six new rental bikes every two years, host races that are getting bigger, and this year they created a mountain biking league with over 200 high schoolers who race all over Idaho.

Hotel McCall Update - David Carey

Hotel McCall was rebuilt in 1936. It has 19 rooms and is located in downtown McCall. Their restaurant, Rupert's, does dinners only. Rupert's chef got a James Beard nomination last year. The menu is constantly evolving with things like wine pairing dinners. Hotel McCall lets people book online, and so far they have good reviews, and a good online presence. The average length of stay at Hotel McCall is less than two nights, but the goal is to get people to stay longer. In order for that to happen, all of McCall, and Valley County, need to work together to have fun, exciting attractions for visitors to entice them to stay longer.

Staffing is an issue in McCall, there are not enough people in Valley County to do all the jobs and if there were, there is not enough places for them to live.

Tamarack Resort Update - Brad Larsen

In the summer of 2015, Tamarack reopened the mountain bike park and opened the cabana on the lake. They also had a big two day music festival, the Huckleberry Jam. Tamarack Resort made quite a few improvements, like expanding the snow making system and doing more trail work, and videos of their improvements have received over 130,000 views.

They started a new payment system using an Express Card. It attaches to your credit card and by using it you can save \$10 for a lift ticket. The goal is for that to be widespread at Tamarack in two years so customers do not ever have to go to a ticket window again.

Tamarack is growing vernacular around their brand. They have lingo such as "Tam Fam" and "Tamitude." The idea is that you can go skiing anywhere, but people want to belong to something bigger, and have a sense of community. Over the next few months, Tamarack will be releasing stories about people of the Tam Fam community.

The golf course and the Village in Tamarack is not actually owned or operated by Tamarack. Construction on the Village stopped in 2008, and has not resumed, and it is closed this year. The golf course did not open this year, and it probably won't be open next summer either, however they hope it will be open in the near future.

Cascade Update - Bobbie Patterson

Like McCall, Cascade also has a problem with staffing. The biggest issue in Valley County is affordable housing.



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Cascade is getting new soccer fields, football fields, and businesses this year, and they broke ground for a new hot springs pool. Unfortunately the Payette River Games is not happening next year, as it was too expensive. Last year the Games brought people from 28 states and many other countries. The facilities for the games are still there, and can still hold other races if someone else wants to sponsor them. During the Games last year, Cascade partnered with Kelly's Whitewater Park and ran a 30 second ad on CNN which was then expanded to be a two minute video and was put on Cascade's website.

The biggest demographic for Cascade is people that drive up with their own beds, like families and seniors, so Cascade has been marketing them by making maps of attractions for visitors. The value of Valley County is that there are many cities and things to do nearby. They recently hosted a FAM trip to Lucky Ladd Mine near Cascade to show off the wilderness in the area. They also want to redesign their website to make it more mobile and user friendly for the visitors and businesses in Cascade.

Drake Cooper Agency Updates – Josh Mercaldo

Idaho Tourism is on a hot streak this year. Collections are up 9% from last year and website sessions are up 44% from last year. Drake Cooper and the Tourism team have been working hard to create more content for Visit Idaho, and people are interested in the content. There has been a statewide collaboration between many of the tourism centers and it has led to more paid media impressions. Josh predicts that the numbers should continue to increase.

The budget for the winter campaign is \$425,000 and will start in early November and go through February 2016. The markets they are mainly targeting are Seattle, Spokane, and Salt Lake City. They are doing an Uber promotion in Seattle. Winter marketing is all about outdoor recreation. This year they are shifting the content for the winter campaign away from only skiing, to winter carnivals and other outdoor recreation, in case Idaho does not get much snow again this year.

Jim Manion wanted clarification on the Uber campaign. Josh explained that on a rainy day in Seattle within first two weeks in December, an Idaho ad will come up on the Uber app when people call for a car. If these people click on the ad and start to engage with Idaho on social media, we will set up a giveaway.

They are working with other regional tourism organizations, these co-ops have a budget of up to \$300,000. In the past, Drake Copper has made the branding for the regional organizations, as well as put most of the ads together, but this year the partners are producing their own brand and ads. New partners this year are Alaska Air, the Oregonian Media Group, and Idaho Public Television.

The 2016 Idaho Travel Guide cover is ready and features Shoshone Falls and paddle boarders. They will be reducing print copies this year, down to only 110,000 until down from 125,000. Delivery of the Travel Guide will begin early January 2016.



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They are working with research groups to research tourism in Idaho including a perception study and an economic impact study. Research is not something they are going to do every year, in fact the image perception study will occur every eight years. They started working with a new group, Arrivalist. Arrivalist will tag the Visit Idaho ads online, and if someone clicks on them, their device will be embedded with a code from Arrivalist, and if that device comes into Idaho, it will send a notification. It's a good way to determine the return on investment.

For FY16 they are merging the Winter Campaign and the 18 Summers Campaign. It will be 100% digital marketing with print co-op support. The goal is to not just showcase a city, but to show all the activities that can be done in or near that city. "Find your Park" is a national campaign Idaho Tourism is working on. Co-ops are helpful to partner with someone that wants to market to the same groups, and resources are pooled to make a greater impact.

The old VisitIdaho.org is being rebranded. The new website features big visuals to get a potential visitor interested in Idaho. One new addition to this website is the Trip Guides section that has content a variety of users would find interesting, and a state wide focus. The new website launches on November 2, 2015. Things To Do has been the most popular section over the last eight years with a list of attractions around the state. It has a media gallery now via Flickr and a new press room to order maps and sign up for emails. The Places To Stay section is now integrated with Trip Advisor, and has user generated content with reviews. Each city has the Top 10 lodging places based on user ratings.

Closing remarks:

Courtney will be new chair in January.

Lara Smith nominates Jim Manion to be Vice Chair.

Doug Burnett seconds. All in favor. Ayes have it. **Motion approved.**

Meeting adjourned at 12:56 pm.