

Idaho Travel Council  
Idaho Department of Commerce  
Thu 17 March, Lava Hot Springs, ID

Minutes

**Council Members Present**

J.J. Jaeger, Region I  
Frances Conklin, Region II  
John May, Region III  
Diane Newman, Region IV  
Bill Code, Region V  
Ray Byington, Region VI  
Dick Anderson, Region VII

**Council Members Absent/Excused**

Paul Norton, Member At-Large

**Commerce Staff Present**

Karen Ballard, Tourism Administrator  
ReNea Nelson, Grant Manager  
Laurie Zuckerman, Tourism Assistant

**Guests Present**

Bill Drake, Drake Cooper  
Josh Mercaldo, Drake Cooper  
Bridget Losee, Lava Hot Springs Foundation  
Scott Pearhill, Home Hotel  
Destiny Eglery, PCTC and LHSF  
Kristen Jensen, Great Rift Business Dev. Org.

**Guests Present - Continued**

Mark Lowe, Lava Hot Springs Foundation  
Tiffany Linsworth, Lava Hot Springs KOA  
Evelee Hill, Aura Soma Lava  
Gail Palen, Riverside Inn  
Vicky Lyon, Greystone Manor  
Birgitta Forest, Forrest Design

**Call to Order**—John May, Chair ITC (Audio 1 ITC Mar 2011)

Meeting called to order by Chair John May, followed by welcome and introductions.

May stated that last meeting's minutes would be approved during the March meeting.

Ballard stated that the following items will be added: email from Dick Andersen, notes Boise Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and additions to last pages.

**Budget and Tax MOU** – Karen Ballard, Administrator, Division of Tourism  
Ballard discussed Tax Commission MOU. It is currently on hold during the legislative session. We are dealing with new commissioner. Ballard will email copy of MOU to Council. Don Dietrich and Commerce staff worked for weeks to determine a new, clear figure for Commerce to be charged. Tax Commission agreed. This is a reduction of approximately \$16,000.

Ballard presented 2011 spending thus far and budget. Collections are over 6.34% for February. Collections are up 7.95% year to date. Tourism has been operating on a flat budget for 2011 with 5% contingency. Tourism traditionally grows over 7% annually. Drake Cooper has proposals for spending the extra collections

Ballard had budgeted \$45,000 for economic impact research. There are four to five different companies that can provide this data. We have been vetting these as well as working with the Department of Labor.

We asked Labor to propose an economic researcher for this task so that they will be confident with the final numbers. Department of Labor understands that tourism is a fragmented industry. Labor hired a researcher that they previously used for alternative energy who will now focus on tourism.

Labor has been working with EMSI from Moscow. They will work with Labor to create a taxonomy to figure out how much of various Idaho sectors are a result of tourism. We will share a seat with Labor. This taxonomy could be used year after year. This will cost \$7,500 each year instead of \$45,000. (10 min 30 sec)

May asked Council if they approve Ballard to move forward on working with Labor to create MOU. All agreed.

We are spending more on personnel and less on actual fulfillment which reflects that we are learning what the contractor is spending on labor. We should see the costs continue to decrease due to the drop in people calling 800 number. We would like to put their staff's knowledge into responding to text message questions and Trip Advisor forums. We would reallocate funds to do this.

May asked Ballard about the legal fees being three times budgeted amount. Ballard said estimated figure was based on three year rolling budget. The projected expenses were estimates. For example, this year we had charges for questions regarding Pocatello judge ruling on GBAD and our MOUs. The figures we now see are more realistic than those previously. Director Dietrich wants to make sure of legal opinions. Ballard agrees that it is wise to "play it safe."

May asked for clarification on the "transaction fee". Ballard will get clarification. It is a onetime fee. She believes it is the STARS program for cutting checks.

Byington asked for clarification on association conferences and other events. Ballard explained that most items Byington referenced are one time expenditures. When items cost more than estimated, she cuts back elsewhere. She inherited a "mystery" budget. This will take a few years to track and clarify.

May elaborated on fluidity of programs and therefore budget items.

Ballard and Byington discussed that personnel costs are split, but Ballard is slowly moving those costs over to administrative side.

Conklin suggested we have continuing spoken narrative on each item on the budget explaining where we are on the spending. (26 min)

Ballard spoke to questions on on-line advertising. We have only spent 12% so far. Ballard explained that we do not have enough funds to spend throughout the year. Online marketing starts now. Furthermore, print campaigns are now so integrated they include online advertising as well.

Jaeger requested update on familiarization trips and press trips. Knothe's trip to Australia produced many travel articles. Ballard discussed SATW Fam Trip has produced several articles. In fact one of the writers is spending time in the Sun Valley are to create a mobile applications. Norton attended PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) which pitched ideas and stories as well as having a writer come here.

Ballard explained how staff is creating and tracking ROI on these Fam Trips. Ballard would like to present these reports during August meeting.

Tourism has seen many articles produced as a result of Mitch's Australian trip and Scandinavian trip. It is nice to see these two markets increase quickly.

May wondered how events in Japan are affecting us. Ballard does not expect Japanese market to grow in near future. Ballard speculates we may have Japanese come to see the INL.

In China more provinces are opening to travel. By 2015, fifty-seven million Chinese may be coming to US. The package trips that she has seen are five days from San Francisco through Yellowstone. We may not see results of this growth for five to ten years. It is a large market share that we must continue to watch.

Byington asked for information about Canada. Ballard responded that Drake Cooper will be presenting ideas later in the meeting. Ballard would like to restore funds to Canadian market. We are considering a FaceBook page just for Canada.

**Motion.** Code motioned and Conklin seconded that ITC approve budget. All agreed. (40 min)

May asked for discussion on budget projections. What are council members' projects for the rest of the year?

- Region 1: Jaeger believes collection will grow because economy improving.
- Region 2: Conklin believes collections will stay.
- Region 3: May believes region three will see some increases. He is projecting growth for summer months like Jaeger and Andersen.
- Region 4: Newman believes her market might grow a small amount; she is uncertain about growth because of gas prices.
- Region 5: Code does not believe his market will grow because of gas prices.
- Region 6: Byington believes collections will grow because winter is slow in his region. He is finding people are getting used to higher gas prices although they will be staying closer to home.
- Region 7: Andersen is up 38% this month. He is optimistic.

**Tourism Grant Program** -- ReNea Nelson (Audio 2 ITC Mar 2011 Grant)

### **Accounting for 2009 Grants**

There are only six 2009 open grants. Five are under audit. Cathy Bourner is managing the sixth open grant with McCall Chamber; it is pending back-up documentation.

Region II has reverted the most funds. Those funds go back to the regional pool, not the grantee. If a large amount was reverted, Nelson adds notes explaining the situation. Conklin explained that there was a lot of turn-over in her region; they chose to revert the funds.

Nelson discussed streamlining how we pay print invoices. Currently, we reimburse ½ of cost and wait to receive the tear sheet. We don't pay the full funds until we receive tear sheets. Nelson requested we reimburse vendors the full amount before we get the tear sheets.

May pointed out that there can be cost savings if we pay invoices up front. Nelson notes that grant administrators will have to submit tear sheets if they want to close their grants and get future funds. Furthermore, Nelson has faith the grant managers will comply as they are very good about this now.

**Motion.** Byington motioned that Nelson change the verbiage and Conklin seconded. All agreed.

Nelson passed out documentation that the council had discussed during the previous meeting which covered consultant charges with regard to trade shows. (12 min.)

May is not in favor of paying consultant salaries for trade shows. We give grantees more freedom on fulfillment and have taken away other restrictions. He is not in favor of opening up the possibility of salaries used for some roles and not others. Nelson advised that grantees can use those costs for cash match.

Andersen moved to **not** allow grant funds be used for consultant salaries for trade shows. Newman seconded. All voted Aye. Nelson will make those changes. (15 min)

### **Grant Summit**

The purpose of the Grant Summit is for existing grant managers and new grant applicants. Attendance has continued to drop off at the end of the day, so a new format will be visited for next year. (17 min)

Summit surveys showed a 4.2 (4 of 5) ranking. There were 62 in attendance including staff and speakers. Every region was represented. Grant managers appreciate Council Chair John May's presence and input.

May was impressed with attendance and presenters. He saw that it is helpful for grant managers to, in essence, do one stop shopping which includes networking and exposure to new information. Nelson added that this is the kick off to the grant application process so that they can use this information when writing grants.

### **Council Choice Awards**

Nelson is Conklin's assistant for Council Choice Awards. Council are to vote on best projects and advertisements that have been submitted. Code has voted. Others have gone into system to review.

Conklin explained how to navigate the website to make nominations for the three categories. Members must remember to vote on marketing material for 2010. Members will have to email Conklin with website nominations because there is no online voting for that category. Members must complete this by the end of March. (26 min)

Prior to meeting in May, council members will pick three top winners. Winners will be presented during Governor's Awards Ceremony at Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism. Conklin reminded members to also look at the multi-regional grant advertisements.

### **Nomination for Take Pride in Idaho Award**

Nelson passed out forms and requested council members not only fill out and return forms, but to encourage others in their regions to fill out nominations. The deadline is April 4, and it is available on-line. Some nominations have been returned to date.

**Drake Cooper** – Bill Drake and Josh Mercaldo (Audio 3 ITC Mar 2011 Drake Cooper)

### **Spring FSI Updates**

- FSI is a go with Madden Media
- Major western DMAs + Calgary + Boise
- Circulation of 522,000 inserts + 4-month SEO program on VacationFun.com and conversion study by Temple University
- Ad sales close this Friday
- 10.5 pages of ad support (goal of 12)
- Includes Division of Tourism, SWITA, Boise CVB, Idaho RV Campgrounds Assoc, Moscow Chamber, Salmon Valley Chamber

### **FY11 Media Updates**

#### New Media Support

- American Living TV series
  - Travel Channel segments during Spring 2011
  - National print – full page ads
- Online campaign with Microsoft
- Extension of traditional print
  - Reader's Digest (discounted national circ)
  - NW Cycling (Pac NW focus)
  - Salt Lake Magazine

#### Contingency Recommendations

- Online (SeattleTimes.com)
  - \$40-\$60K
- Print (Costco Connection, Budget Travel, Ladies Home Journal, Family Fun, Highways)
  - \$40-\$80K
- Canada
  - Targeting Calgary with Calgary Herald
  - \$40-\$45K
- Print and Canada can be co-ops
- Media can be scaled to fit any budget level

Council opened discussion to the floor:

Evellee Hill stated that we need to focus on China and the Northwest . We need to look at SLC & port authorities. Mercaldo added information about tours coming from China.

Gail Palen had questions about Madden and sweepstakes. (18 min)

May requested that Council give Drake Cooper direction for spending in the last months of the fiscal year.

Code is comfortable spending to 5% which would be \$147,000. Code added, that because we are growing at 6 - 7%, he is even comfortable spending slightly above. Mercaldo added that if we need to scale back and cancel orders, they can cancel on-line orders. It is harder to cancel print.

Byington does not agree to cut back on advertising, but he wants to leave some in reserves so that if we have a dip, we can continue to market in the summer. Ballard explained that she projects there will be extra money. It can roll over into the next fiscal year.

Conklin recommended giving spending authority for \$147,000. If Drake Cooper are ready and money is available, Conklin recommends to fully budget on-line and Canada. Then they could spend the rest in print and Costco Market. Andersen believes \$150,000 would leave extra beyond that amount so that will have even more.

May summarized the Council's recommendation to put the budget together at \$150,000 and work with Conklin's priorities. (30 min)

### **Agency Updates**

- Wrapping up ITC Winter (extended by 3 weeks with additional offers from Brundage, Sun Valley and Targhee)
- Sled the Rockies wraps at end of month
- New Visit Idaho site launches next week
  - Synchronized brand touchpoints
  - @Visit Idaho Twitter, You Tube channel, tourism blog
- Beta launch of tourism business blog for staff
- Assisting staff with TripAdvisor media launch

### **Great Idaho Getaway**

"Year 2" campaign launched this month

- Site on 3/1/11

- Print launched in March issues
- Online media will launch 4/1/11
- Monthly mega contest will run March through Sept, 2011 (North Idaho in March)

#### Digital upgrades

- You Tube channel updates have occurred
- Set of new GIG videos have been loaded

#### Social media, PR & continued outreach

New distribution channels include:

- Amazon Instant Video
- Flixster
- Hulu Plus

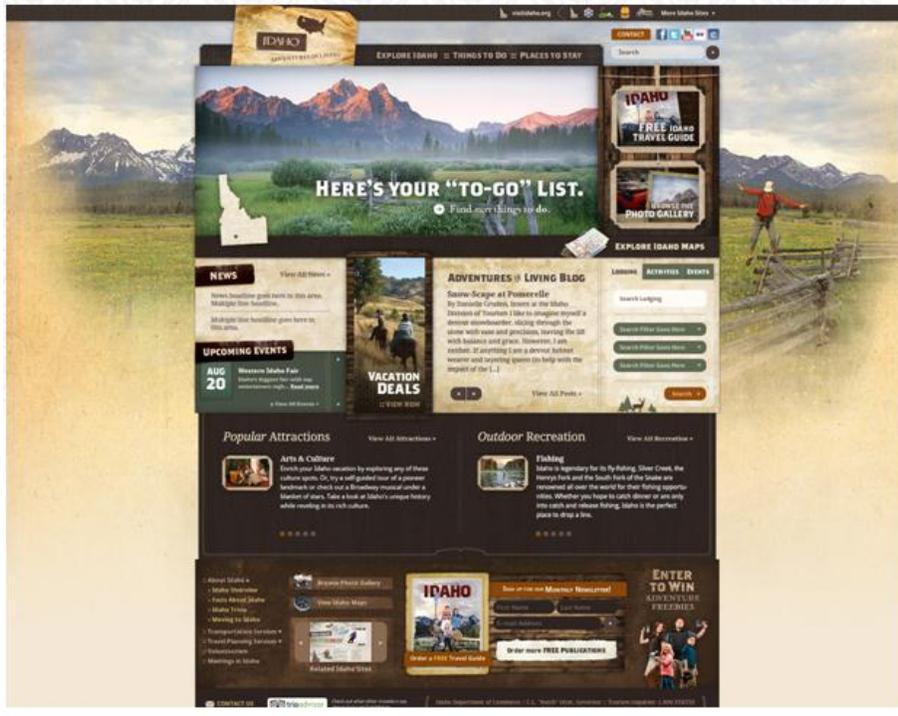
Council discussion:

Mercaldo explained how they used footage to create six minute video for Nancy's European trip and a four minute video for Mitch's Australian trip.

May caught Mercaldo's term about a need for a Hero Video. Mercaldo demonstrated concept on You Tube. (Please see You Tube note further down the page.) They would like thirty well organized videos which don't need to be updated weekly like FaceBook. (Idaho in Motion slide) YouTube needs less curation. There will be room for *User Submitted* videos. We may be the first state to do this.

Conklin wondered if we can stream this at ICORT? Mercaldo and Drake confirmed that this is possible and will show that the Adventures in Living resulted in comprehensive, state-wide marketing. Ballard wants to educate Idaho tourism industry that they can use these for their marketing and they can add their videos to ours.

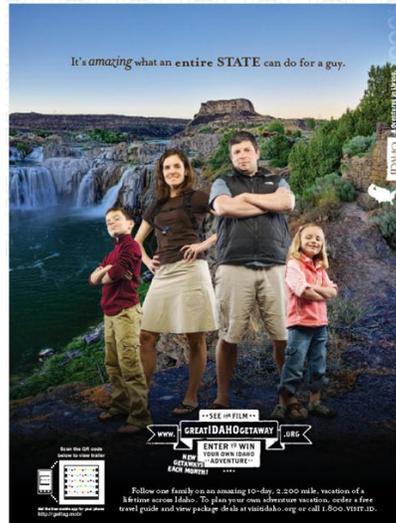
### **New Visit Idaho**



## GIG Creative.



## GIG Creative.



### FY 12 Overview

The national travel and tourism marketplace is: Showing signs of economic recovery, but global issues remain:

- Disasters in Japan
- Mideast instability, increased gas prices
- Job and housing markets unstable

Social media has created hyper-targeted marketing platforms.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- You Tube
- Apps
- TEXT

Current trends include:

- Fierce retail competition
  - Deals, discounts, loyalty programs
- Competitive states and DMOs are moving fast into immersive media
- Viral aspect of social media in marketing, entertainment and communications
- Mobile/smart phone use continue to show astonishing growth
- Tablet market – dominated by Apple
- Consumer media consumption patterns are changing (TV, mobile, web)
- Millennial Movement and Boomer Power
- Video video video

## Marketing Opportunities abound:

For travel and tourism, it's:

- More important to stand out from the crowd
- Wise to not fall behind in technology or levels of customization
- Digital environments allow consumers to follow passions, resulting in a widening number of affinity groups
- 12-16 months from now, digital convergence will be even greater

## **FY 12 Plan Guidelines**

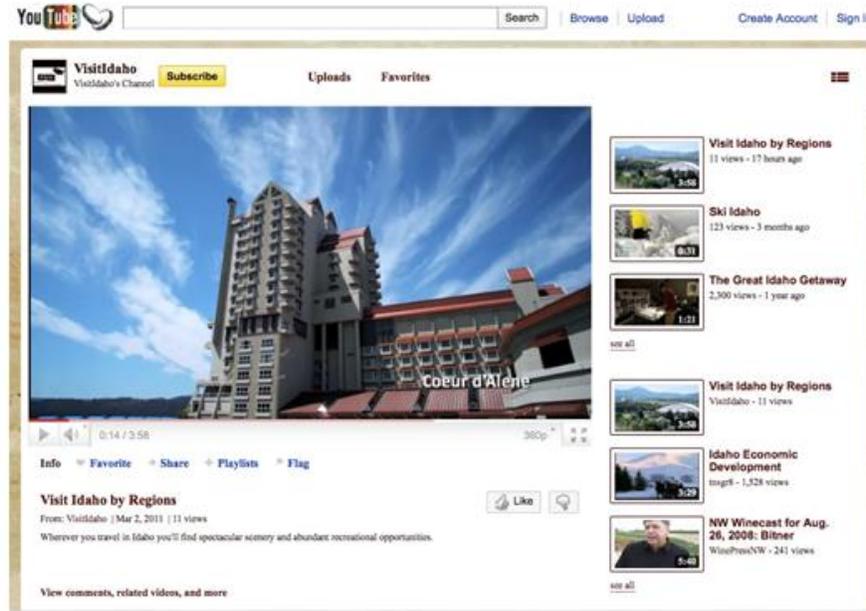
- Heads in beds strategy, with focus on tax collections and ROI
- Natural/logical extension of GIG campaign
- Be consistent with Adventures in Living brand
- Concentration on media and digital outreach, less on production
- Showcase more of Idaho (attractions, activities), not just primary destinations
- Optimized brand touch points (media, PR, social, web, blog, Travel Guide, co-op programs, grants)
- Focus on balanced mix of attention & engagement
- Be appropriate for a state government to sponsor
- Multi-month shelf life (prime + winter)
- Capitalize on self publishing trends
- Synergistic relationships with other state programs (ITD, byways)

## **FY12 Recommendations**

### Two-point program for 2012

1. Continued web video enhancements using GIG assets and footage
  2. Expanding GIG and Adventures in Living to the next level
- Four concepts were presented to Staff. All focused on attention (mass media) and engagement (digital media). One was selected for the presentation.

## **Visit Idaho In Motion, VisitIDYou Tube**



Elevate current channel to be a more offense-minded tool to move visitors closer to booking. We will achieve this through quick/dramatic videos, intuitive organization and focused curation.

#### YouTube Recommendations:

1. Edit new "hero" videos
2. Create playlists
3. Enhance page design

#### Other Considerations:

1. Enhance Facebook video tab
2. Consider CGC video push on Facebook
3. Explore YouTube Partner Program

**Example of YouTube Wireframe Enhancements**



:45 hero video

- visually stunning
- full state snapshot
- GIG imagery
- adventures in living!



- SEO copy
- Call-to-action copy
- Open comments and dialog

[ only desirable footage, doesn't have to be constantly updated like other social channels, strong call-to-action for Travel Guide ]

Playlists



Activities

- Key Idaho adventures



Attractions

- Idaho's most beautiful attractions



Destinations

- Particularly for drive market: encourage +1 overnight



Promotions & Ads

- Sweepstakes, ads, etc.



Friends & Fans

- User submitted
- Inter Dept

**Key Next Steps**

1. Take inventory on current Visit Idaho video content
2. Establish budget for editing, design, moderate curation activity
3. Approval of video tone and content
4. Begin editing and design

**MY ID, Put yourself in the adventure**

(Please see attached presentation for illustrations.)

In 2010, we brought one lucky family to stay and play in Idaho.

Now, we take that up a level and invite the whole world to **create their own Idaho adventure.**

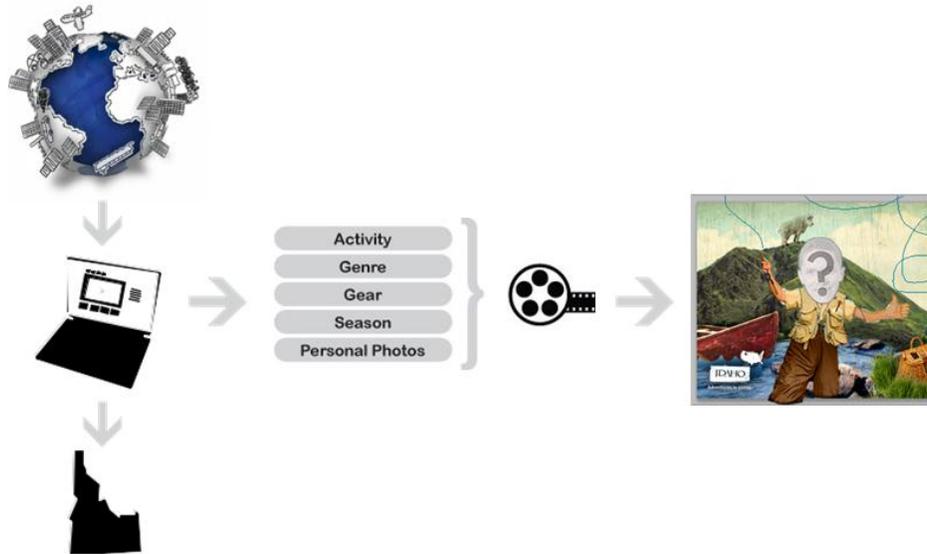
How MY ID works

The 2012 campaign is a digital engagement campaign based on user-generated "sendables." These personalized experiences allow people to upload their images and merge with existing content to create unique videos to share with others. By putting themselves in the adventure, VisitIdaho.org users become brand ambassadors. In this role, they demonstrate that Idaho really is what you make of it.

Bill Drake stated that we are in post PC world. We are moving to pads & smart phones. Mercado demonstrated The Adventure Loop which will feature JibJab technology and offer booking after they create their personalized video.

Jib Jab #1 <http://sendables.jibjab.com/view/I2nF3fqYyazjhOIN>

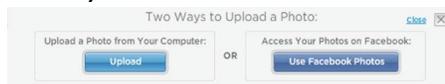
Jib Jab #2 <http://sendables.jibjab.com/view/9t21bCq0nGmzuZgQ>



2012: Mad Lib Style: Choose your own adventure



Upload pictures of yourself and your adventure mates



Create your own Idaho adventure and share it with friends



The Adventure Loop

People immerse themselves in the visitidaho.org experience, create a video, enter to win sweepstakes, share with others, order a travel guide, and book a trip. All the while, we gather user data based on behavior and preferences. This is followed-up with targeted content – be it offers, promotions, e-newsletter sign-ups, etc. Concept is nimble, flexible and allows us to make adjustments in real-time, add new content and scale up. Offers could be tied to forwarding-to-a-friend and even a “one more day” concept. Reinvigorates GIG through high level of personalization.

**Sun Valley Marketing Alliance** – Candice Pace (Audio 4 ITC Mar 2011 SVMA)

Candice Pace from the Sun Valley Marketing Alliance gave a presentation. Presentation can be obtained by contacting Laurie Zuckerman at the Department of Commerce.

**Chairman updates** -- Chairman May (Audio 5 ITC Mar 2011 Closing)

May requested clarification regarding information council would like to have prior to meeting, agenda and itinerary. Laurie will send itinerary & agenda in separate documents.

1. Laurie will send travel arrangement proposals to council members.
2. Members will email travel choices to Laurie
3. Laurie will submit travel request.
4. Once approved, Laurie will contact council members with approval confirmation. Each council member will communicate to Laurie whether he/she or Laurie will make individual travel arrangements.
5. If flights are involved and council members are booking their own flights, they will email airline itinerary with costs to Laurie. This itinerary must clearly show it is from the airline.
6. Laurie will send out Itinerary to Travel Council members one week prior to council meeting. Council members will confirm travel plans so that Laurie can create each expense report.

On Wednesday 16 March at the Pioneer Travel Council meeting, the Pocatello Chamber advised that they join Pioneer Travel Council for their ITC grants. Also, at that meeting, Pocatello Chamber members were under the impression that they were directed to use Drake Cooper for their advertising. Nelson has since reviewed minutes and audio from the August meeting for clarification. May and Nelson verified that grantees are not required to use Drake Cooper. Code had only recommended them to look at Drake Cooper for coop activities. (15 min)

May reminded all that by 25 April the initial grant requests must be submitted.

Next meeting is May 3 in Lewiston. ICORT is 4, 5 May. Council will need to arrive Mon 2 May. During the day Council will hear presentations for grants worth \$50,000 or more. Smaller grants may request to present. Other items can addressed evening Mon 2 May.

The following meeting will be August 2 and 3. Zuckerman will send out RFPs for August meeting. Conklin will look into locations as well.

Code and May extended gratitude to region five for hospitality.

**Motion.** Code motioned and Jaeger seconded to adjourn meeting all voted aye.