



C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor

Jeffery Sayer, Director

**IDAHO TRAVEL COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Idaho Department of Commerce, Boise, Idaho**  
**January 22, 2014**

**Idaho Travel Council Members:**

Lara Smith, Region II  
Jim Manion, Region III  
Diane Newman, Region IV  
Bill Code (Chair), Region V  
Courtney Ferguson, Region VI  
Dick Andersen, Region VII  
Paul Norton, At-Large

**Commerce:**

Jeff Sayer, Director  
Diane Norton, Tourism Manager  
Cindy Lee, Grants & Contracts Officer  
Jill Eden, Grant Analyst  
Cheryl Hickey, Administrative Assistant

**Guests:**

Bill Drake, Drake Cooper  
Jamie Cooper, Drake Cooper  
Josh Mercaldo, Drake Cooper  
Kathryn Lamott, Drake Cooper  
John Drake, Drake Cooper  
Eva Lee Hill, Aura Soma Lava  
Jared Montague, Brundage Mountain  
Tom Stebbins, Ski Idaho  
Amy Stahl, Boise Parks and Rec

**8:00AM meeting called to order by Chairman Bill Code**

Bill welcomes and thanks the council members for coming.  
There is a round table introduction of council members and guests.

Bill asks for a motion to approve previous minutes.  
Dick makes a motion and Jim seconds. **Motion unanimously approved.**

Diane Norton, the new Tourism Manager at Commerce, is introduced by Bill.

- For the next meeting in March, Diane would like to discuss how we can look to see how we can promote the state. She would also like to talk about how social media, blogs, etc., can be used within each region.
- Jim recalled when the director had a town hall format to discuss RMI, and asked if there has been any update. Diane replied that there was an email sent out that the contract has been extended.
- Bill comments that he is excited about Director Sayers vision for Commerce and feels we have a breath of fresh air.
- Jim offers his congratulations to Diane and asks how it has been so far. Diane replies that this is her dream job and is excited with the challenge. Commerce has the capability to partner more to make the regions shine. When the new Administrators are hired, that will be a key component to put a strategic plan together with Drake Cooper. Diane welcomes any type of questions the council has.

### **Welcome and Updates – Director Jeff Sayer**

The Director welcomes everyone and thanks them for their service. He says that Diane will fill the council in with a lot of the updates. Commerce has taken on some tough issues but they are looking at a fresh way of looking at this. Diane has done a phenomenal job already. Director Sayer is excited to work with Drake Cooper and says that they have great ideas already. Commerce has finally made offers towards the two Administrator positions, and they have been accepted. Heading up Business Development and Marketing is Matt Borud from Ballyhoo. He has experience in the technology industry. Overseeing economic Development is Chrissy Bowers from Scentsy. The main reason we hired her is that she has a presence larger than life.

He continues that we have been through a challenging time and some decisions we've made haven't been popular, but we are excited about the steps we are taking to be the best partner.

The international contract with RMI has been extended through June (the end of the fiscal year). We promised RMI not to pull the rug out from underneath them. There are questions we have to ask ourselves: What is the appropriate amount to invest in international marketing? What is the amount and how are we going to spend it? What countries? What is the best way to do it? How do we work closely with the regions that are dependent on RMI types? We are trying to be careful and smart, but don't want to wait. We've got the team in place to do that. The director finishes speaking and says he will stand for questions.

- Jim asked if there has been any progress on an appointment to Region I. Director Sayer replied that it is the Governor's call and that a decision has been made but it would be inappropriate to say.
- Bill thanks Director Sayer for his support and comments that tourism is a viable industry.

### **Staff Introductions and Updates – Diane Norton, Tourism Manager**

- Diane introduces Commerce staff members Peg Owens, Mitch Knothe, Nancy Richardson, Laurie McConnell, Cathy Bourner, Tina Caviness, Cindy Lee, and Jill Eden.
- Diane hands out the Idaho Department of Commerce/Idaho Travel Council FY2014 Statewide Program Budget which includes an FY2014 Monthly Status Report and a FY2013 Idaho 2% Lodging Taxes Collected (Monthly). **(see attachment)**
- Dick and Courtney ask questions about particular lines in the budget. Diane replies that she will find out, and also circle back to the Council about staff, travel, visitors center, and Canada. She asks if the region totals handout is typically included and if the council would like to see comparison numbers from year to year. Bill responds that they would like that.

### **Grant Program Update – Jill Eden, Grant Analyst and Cindy Lee, Grants and Contracts Officer**

- Today Cindy will be speaking for her and Jill, but in the future it will be Jill.
- The graph handed out is a quick context of funding from the grantee to the date it's paid out through fiscal, and grantee reimbursements. It's a snapshot of July through December. She says that they are not doing a very good job. They have an internal timeline of 20 days or less but there have been several problems: training, website problems, changes in staff, and grantees not submitting required documentation. FAM trips pose one of the biggest problems in reconciling. They take a lot of time to go through and have a lot of unallowable costs that they have to re-do. We have plans to walk the grantees through the process.

### **Drake Cooper Agency Updates - Bill Drake & Josh Mercado (see attachment)**

- Bill Drake is happy that Drake Cooper won the bid and says that Commerce is their flagship client. They are feeling very good about Jeff's vision.
- Josh presents a slideshow. He focused on the Winter Program, the media program for spring, primary campaign and business goals.
- Another Drake Cooper update is to develop all new statewide rest stop signage. Dick asked what our financial obligation to rest stop signs are, and Diane said that the Federal funding is 80%. Josh said ITD is picking up all the other costs. The goal is to get this up and running. Courtney asked if they are indoor or outdoor. They could be both but the challenge is not to have a business featured, but an area featured (or example, a scenic background).

### **Idaho Lodging and Restaurant Association – Pam Eaton**

- Pam explains that the Idaho Lodging and Restaurant Association is a statewide membership based association. Essentially they deal with legislative issues, but over the last few years they have realized that the commerce aspect of the businesses are important to them. They have a conference in conjunction with ICOURT, and hold a golf tournament every year to benefit the Larry S. May Scholarship Fund. It goes to an Idaho student, or a college student that is involved with anything hospitality related. Jim said that there has been a shortage of applications for that scholarship and suggested that we get the word out to the industry about the scholarship.
- CWI has a culinary program so Idaho Lodging and Restaurant Association is reaching out on how they can build the culinary industry profession in Idaho. They are also working on bringing the National Restaurant Association Educational Association program ProStart to Idaho. It's not really advertised so they are looking at how to promote Idaho for that.
- The number one focus of Idaho Lodging and Restaurant Association is legislative, so when the members come to Pam commenting that there are some laws affecting them, they play defense.
- Pam has heard some buzz on the street about potential new lodging coming in to Idaho.

### **Boise Airport Discussion - Rebecca Hupp, Airport Director (see attachment)**

- In 2000, there were ten major carriers – today there are 4. Most have merged. Not counting seasonal service, the airport has service by six airlines to 17 non-stop destinations. There isn't one dominant carrier so there's a strong competitive environment.
- Boise exceeds all comparison markets except Spokane.

### **Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association - John May, Executive Director**

- John recently returned from a sportsman show in Denver. Idaho Outfitters and Guides partnered with the Boise Convention & Visitors Bureau. They decided to go together to save costs. They brought some other brochures (Ski Association, Idaho Visitors Guides, Idaho maps, etc.) and a lot of them were picked up even though it was a sportsman show. They went through a box of ski brochures, a box and a half of the visitor's guides, and all of the Boise Visitors Guides. It showed us that there is a lot of opportunity at these shows. People asked about elk, whitewater rafting, and trophy hunting. People also asked about having family reunions in the state.
- IOGA went to one show last year, but this year they will be going to 6 shows for the same value due to partnerships.
- IOGA had their annual meeting in December and Director Sayer spoke. It was the first time they had a director attend one of those meetings, and it meant a lot to have the director and Diane there.
- They are just about to roll out new branding for the raft side of their industry and will share that with us soon.

### **Idaho Ski Area Association – Tom Stebbins, Executive Director**

- Tom reports that they attended the Ski Dazzle show in Seattle in November and worked with Idaho Preferred. They had a very successful media event. Diane also attended Ski Dazzle and said the media event was a huge hit.
- The Idaho Ski Area Association is up to 4,400 followers on Twitter. They try hard to give good feeds to media and good service to the ski areas. Their website views are up, and they've talked about adding a 30 second spot to the state YouTube channel.

### **Boise Parks and Recreation – Tom Governale, Superintendent (see attachment)**

- Boise River Update – Tom explained the history behind Friends of Parks. He gave an update on the Esther Simplot Park, and also handed out a new Greenbelt map that was re-done this year.
- Kelly's Whitewater Park is not ready to host events until the spectator area and changing rooms are ready.
- The key to hosting festivals, community events, and sports events – the Far West Soccer event brings in enough people to sell out of hotel rooms all the way to Ontario – is to have well-maintained, safe parks.

### **Meeting Wrap-up**

- Courtney Ferguson: When we were in McCall, we suspended the Teton Valley Chamber of Commerce grant. They came to Renee, had a 3 hour training session that really opened their eyes, and they're trying to get things going. He made a motion that they lift that suspension. Jim seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Dates for the next ITC meeting in March were discussed. It will be confirmed soon. The 24<sup>th</sup> looks best for most people. Diane Newman is working with the Hampton in by the Rim in Twin Falls.
- Diane Norton reminded everyone that ICOURT is May 6-8 in Sun Valley.

### **Meeting Adjourns**

