



C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor

Jeffery Sayer, Director

**IDAHO TRAVEL COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Hunt Lodge & Jug Mountain Resort, McCall, Idaho**  
**October 8-9, 2013**

**Idaho Travel Council Members:**

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

**Commerce:**

Jeff Sayer, Director  
Peg Owens, Tourism Development Specialist  
ReNea Nelson, Grants/Contracts Operations Analyst  
Amy Rajkovich, Administrative Assistant

**Guests:**

Scotty Davenport, Cascade & McCall Chamber Board  
Lorraine Hawes, McCall Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau  
Wolfe Ashcraft, Tamarack Resort  
Jared Montague, Brundage  
Woody Woodworth, McCall Chamber  
April Whitney, McCall Chamber  
Belinda Provancher, Midas Gold  
John May, IOGA  
Bobbie Patterson, IRVCA  
Rick Certaino  
McKenzie Christensen, McCall Chamber  
Shelly DeMoss, Crawford Olson Real Estate  
Rachel Diaz, Salmon Rapids Lodge  
Donna Veal, Best Western McCall  
Carol Cayh, City of McCall  
Tom Stebbins, Vision Marketing  
Warren Busse, Grand Prix Association of Meridian  
Mike DeBoer, InIdaho.com  
Mike McCaughlin, McCall Chamber & Bear Creek Lodge  
Delta James, Payette River Scenic Byway

Ronn Julian, Midas Gold  
Bill Drake, Drake Cooper  
Kathryn Lamott, Drake Cooper

**Day 1 – Tuesday, October 8, 2013**  
**Hunt Lodge, McCall ID**

**9:06AM meeting called to order by Chairman J.J. Jaeger**

J.J. welcomes and thanks Tamarack, Blackhawk, and Rupert's.

Round table introductions of council members and guests.

Bill motions to approve previous minutes.

Diane seconds. **Motion approved.**

**Welcome to Area – Outdoor Recreation Research (see attachment)**

- Woodie Woodworth (McCall Chamber)- Welcomes council, shares that McCall had a pretty good summer, aided by the fires that brought travelers to McCall as opposed to elsewhere in the state.
- Woodie introduces Rick and the McCall Area Winter Survey. Rick covers history of survey, explaining that this was a method to pull resources from across the industry to collaboratively administer the survey. Had a lot of participation from various industries, but could not get everyone to take part. A lot of volunteer hours went into this program. Results showed that people do not come to McCall for any one reason. McCall had a high recommendation on friendliness and helpfulness, but did have issues in collecting names and contact information from participants; something to work on in the future.
- McKenzie (McCall Chamber)- Emphasis on making sure the survey is utilized; looking to have an annual meeting to translate survey results to local businesses. Also looking to translate this into summer research; want to grow and build these efforts; hoping it will accelerate.

**Idaho Outriggers and Guides Association – John May**

John started October 1<sup>st</sup> with Outriggers and Guides, a key component to the economic system of the state. Grant (former Director) will act as the government liaison this coming session. John looks forward to the suggestions and ideas from his peers.

**Break 9:36am**

**Called to Order 9:56am**

**Department of Commerce Update – Jeff Sayer**

- Director Sayer spoke to the changes made at Commerce the week prior. He saw it necessary to focus on the core mission of Commerce. While there is a lot of energy and passion at Commerce, what drove the change was operating

on old assumptions, and a lack of team alignment. At the request of the Governor's office to perform a "gut check" on who we are and how we are spending our resources, Jeff took the once-in-a-decade opportunity to reframe Commerce to be at its most effective. Commerce took its six departments and merged them into two: Business Creation and Business Expansion. Business Creation focuses on bringing new opportunity to Idaho, and Tourism will fall under Creation. Commerce will hire an Administrator for this position. Business Expansion supports existing communities and organizations. In order to make this happen, we had to eliminate the Tourism and International Administrator positions, which are now absorbed into other categories at the Manager level.

- Jeff would like to challenge the team: If we are going to be viable and current with other states, we need to adapt now. Most successful businesses never stop changing; they are always growing. What needs to be focused on? Are we providing our highest level or return?
- The changes were not made based on performance. This decision was not a reflection of our investment on tourism. Tourism is one of the most important make-ups of the State. Commerce believes, however, that the goals can be met better, faster, and with less. How does the council suggest this can be done?
- There will be a brainstorming session this afternoon with the council to address this question.

**Jeff addressing questions from the council and crowd:**

- This is not an attempt to take funds from Tourism and absorb them in other areas of Commerce; there are statutory limitations on the funds.
- The Governor's office told us we had to use the money from our unfilled personnel positions by the end of the year or they would be swept. We pulled three unfilled Full Time Employee (FTE) position's funding and spread it over the remaining team to make wages more competitive with the private sector.

**Drake Cooper Agency Updates - Bill Drake & Kathryn Lamott (see attachment)**

- Focus on winter marketing: how do we get individuals to stick around Boise and such other places during their winter skiing vacations?
  - Commerce will have presence in Seattle ski market (Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>)
- Importance of snowmobiling to this state and surrounding states should not be ignored. Yellowstone is the key destination because it lies between three partnering states.
- Sojern: Josh Yonushonis; Sojern studies the behaviors and trends in travel by studying data feeds. They use technology as a means to learn consumer's patterns. They can find our travel audience by studying data partnerships with airlines and booking searches.
  - Highlights of the study: 8,000 people were driven to the Visit Idaho homepage through the strategic ad placing. 2,000 travel guides were downloaded off our page. There was a bit of return users. 200,000 flight searches were to Idaho were made after seeing the ad, and 4,999 flights were booked. A 21 to 1 return on ad spent. Most flight searches

to Idaho came from California. New York, Illinois, and Virginia showed an interest as well. Note: this would not reflect the Spokane, Wa. airport, which hosts most travelers to northern Idaho. 77% of bookings happened after they visited the Visit Idaho website. It might be in our interest to focus on national marketing campaigns based on the data.

### **Lunch Break 11:50am**

### **Called to Order 1:38pm**

### **Diamond Cup Update – JJ Jaeger**

Overall, people thought it was a really successful event. It increased occupancy in hotels, and they have hired an accounting crew to go through and get a real number. It was probably a loss, but with more support it can be a success.

### **Grand Prix of Meridian – Warren Busse (see attachment)**

- Worked with the people at Nascar to brainstorm about the event
- This would be a nationally and internationally advertised event
- Baltimore hosted a similar event, and studies showed it raised \$3million in tax revenues for the community, and 41% of attendees were from out of state
- Has had meeting with the City of Meridian, Meridian Police, the State, and Ada County Highway District.
- Home Owners Associations are worried about noise, but they are working on the issue
- This is a nonprofit organization hosting the event, hoping to put \$4million a year back into the community
- Nascar will promote this event
- 2015 tentative date

### **Idaho Golf Trail Discussion – Open Discussion**

- Mike DeBoer and Tom Stebbins: Have seen a big swing in reservations due to promoting. The number of requests were down this year (15,000) from a high of 23,000 in year 2006. It's a hard process to book an out-of-state golf trip, especially if booking more than one course. 14 courses make up the trail. They want to focus on the stay and play factor (partnering lodges with courses).
- ITC: suggest focusing on promoting signature courses as opposed to promoting all of them; center energies
- There is a lack of communication between the courses and the Trail
- Is it in the best interest of the trail team to get the courses to pay to be a part of the program so they have a vested commitment in responding/cooperating?
- The council will meet with course staff and trail team to come up with a suggestion for this problem at the January meeting

### **Sandpoint Community Review – ReNea Nelson (see attachment)**

ReNea has been working with the Idaho Rural Partnership staff to conduct this community review. Rural communities apply for the program and they go in and identify the needs of the community.

- They were their own worst competition, the community is fractured in their ideas towards vitalization
- Areas of focus: parking, signage, infrastructure, year-round vitality, and connectivity
- Conclusion: space only becomes place when you get to know it better and you endow it with value. Second home owners in the area can be a huge asset.

### **Second Home Rental Update – Dick Anderson**

- Worried just-taxes are not being collected through online short-term rentals
- Ketchum, Id. worked with ITC to collect data; only 40% of rental owners were collecting taxes properly in Sun Valley
- Homeowners act as if they didn't know they were doing anything wrong, but were understanding and complied
- We need to look at options to make people aware/remind them of this issue
  - suggestions: send out a questioner in utility billing, seek permission from city to rent, etc.

### **Canadian Snowbird Idea with UT, AZ, and Possibly MT – Peg Owens**

Should we create a cooperation between states to capture the Canadian Snowbirds traveling back and forth during seasonal travels? How do we get them to linger longer in Idaho as they move down to their winter homes?

- The council will address this in January

### **Brainstorming Session – Jeff Sayer**

- Courtney Ferguson: whoever becomes the new Manager of Tourism needs to have a deep background in the tourism industry
- Tourism and Business Creation will align, not necessarily merge, to create a coordination between industry and tourism: important in non-destination cities
- Need to look at other states and see how they measure the success of their tourism markets
- Look at administering surveys with lodging partners: purchasing STAR Report results
- If 8%-10% of our visitors are from international markets, then that same percentage should be spent in marketing ourselves to international travelers
- Is it viable to have tourism staff present in international markets: is that the best way to allocate their time
- When the economy is down, people stay closer to home and use more of their local resources
- Hotel rates are raising because supply isn't growing but demand is
- Government isn't traveling, which helps costs, but doesn't help the economy
- People are still traveling with RVs and there should still be focus on this market
- "Green" is still a key factor in the travel industry, so is "local"

**Meeting Adjourns 4:05pm**

**Day 2 – Wednesday, October 9, 2013**  
**Jug Mountain Ranch, McCall ID**

**9:10am meeting called to order by chairman JJ Jaeger**

**Grant Program Updates – ReNea Nelson (see attachments)**

- Over half of the 2012 grants have been extended and will be closing after ReNea is gone (December 30<sup>th</sup> extension date)
- October 30<sup>th</sup> is last day to close, all paperwork should be in by the end of October
- Seamless contracting due to online platform
- Teaton Valley submitted an application and was contracted in 2012 (\$70,000), did not request any money, and also submitted a 2013 application: possibly due to constant turnover of staff. They have not been attending grantee meetings. Propose for 2012 grant to be closed out. If they can pull it together, they should be granted funds through the 2013 contract. They are having a lot of issues from an administrative standpoint. They need to show some motivation towards this program, and we want to settle this issue before ReNea leaves.

Bill motions to suspend the 2013 grant until they get a handle on the 2012 funding.

Courtney seconds.

(They will be sent an e-mail, CC the council, and send the minutes to back up the decision so they know why this decision was made.)

Ayes have it. **Motion carries.**

- A glitch in the computer system was preventing 2013 grants from being reviewed, issue is being resolved
- Proposed guideline changes: very minimal, possibly changing the way requests are processed in order to streamline. Website domain name hosting eligible for one year grant cycle; wording needs to change to allow for a year of eligibility, not necessarily the granting year.
- Will discuss in January how to better work the matching element of the application: should one given grantee be allowed to have a cash cow or not?
- *Request for Funds* guide now available.
- Tentative agenda for Grant Summit: roundtable presenters have been confirmed

The council thanks ReNea for her time and dedication to this program.

**Break 9:45am**

**Called to Order 10:05am**

**Tentative dates for next meetings:**

- January: Boise, mid-week
- March: Twin Falls, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>
- May: Sun Valley, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>
- August: Teteon Springs/Burley

**Jug Mountain, Hotel McCall Update – David Carey**

- Property has been family-owned since 1980
- How do we make McCall more than a weekend visit?
- Would like to see a focus on Idaho wines and dinners
- The largest golf year they have has is 5-6 months
- Would like to see the Boise Golf Show in McCall again
- The Payette River games is growing
- Want to attract the 20-somethings to McCall to settle down and raise families
- Jug Mountain: the trail systems are the largest sales tool for the resort
- Need to focus on creating depth and credibility to McCall businesses in order to drive the larger spenders there

Courtney nominates Paul as Idaho Travel Council Chair and Bill as Vice Chair  
Jim seconds. No discussion. Ayes have it. **Motion approved.**

JJ thanks the council for a great 6 years.

**Meeting Adjourns 10:50am**