

**Council Members Present**

J.J. Jaeger, Region I  
Frances Conklin, Region II  
John May, Region III  
Diane Newman, Region IV  
Bill Code, Region V  
Courtney Ferguson, Region VI  
Dick Anderson, Region VII  
Paul Norton, Member at-Large

**Guests Present**

Bill Drake, Drake Cooper  
Josh Mercaldo, Drake Cooper  
Jamie Cooper, Drake Cooper  
John Drake, Drake Cooper  
Katherine Barker, Drake Cooper  
John Jauregui, Garden Valley Chamber  
Eric Anderson, Idaho State Legislature  
Adam Rubin, Jack Rabbit Systems

**Commerce Staff Present**

Karen Ballard, Tourism Administrator  
Peg Owens, Film Office  
ReNea Nelson, Tourism  
Laurie McConnell, Tourism  
Mitch Knothe, Tourism  
Nancy Richardson, Tourism  
Laurie Zuckerman, Tourism  
Quinn MacDonald, Tourism

**Guests Present - Continued**

Randy Fortes, Jack Rabbit Systems  
Rick Certano, McCall CC, Brundage, ISSA  
Tom Stebbins, Idaho Ski Area Association  
Karen Stebbins, Idaho Ski Area Association  
Anne Chambers, IRVCA  
Cathy Ford, Idaho Dept. of Transportation  
Dave Kulis, Schweitzer Mountain  
Bobby Patterson, Boise CVB

**Thursday 12 January 2012**

**Welcome and Introductions,** Frances Conklin, ITC Chair, Audio File "ITC Jan 2012 (1) Thu Introduction"

Meeting called to order by Chair Frances Conklin. (0:00:00)

Members and guests introduced themselves. Bill Code will be delayed.

**Approval of Minutes** - It was moved (Andersen) and seconded (Newman) that the minutes of the 12 October 2011 meeting be approved *with the handouts from the meeting attached online*. Motion passed. (0:14:00)

**Budget and Collections Update**- Karen Ballard, Tourism Administrator, Audio File "ITC Jan 2012 (2) Budget and Work Plan Review"

Presentation handouts are available at <http://commerce.idaho.gov/business/idaho-travel-council.aspx>. Comments on the presentation are listed below.

The growth is still robust even with June being wet. Although we are still in recovery mode, it appears that we are moving into growth mode. Ballard is comfortable with 5% growth projection. (0:00:00)

Ballard reviewed line items on budget sheet. (0:02:00)

Fulfillment shows large decline in requests for Travel Guides and calls to 800 line; we may not need to hire professional services for fulfillment. We can only hire Margot Woods as a temporary contractor for a limited time; a new position must be approved by legislature next year in order to hire her in a permanent position. Currently Woods is processing web

requests, providing customer outreach, and inviting businesses to move to Idaho. Once advertising campaign begins, it may be difficult for Woods to keep up with lines; however, front desk staff and tourism staff are currently able to help. (0:04:30)

Media Advertising spending is on track. Drake answered Andersen and Conklin's question that funds are left in the winter budget because invoices have yet to be sent. (0:09:15)

Ballard explained that Commerce might work with other companies for public relation needs. Public Relation funds are in flux at the moment with new director, Jeff Sayer, and Public Information Officer, Megan Ronk. (0:11:00)

Director Sayer is sympathetic to Ballard's and ITC's objections that Tourism funds pay for Idaho foreign office support, and Ballard believes this situation will be remedied by next year. (0:12:00)

Because \$50,000 is not enough to cover social media marketing for Canadian marketing, some of the social media marketing for Canada could come from the public relations element. (0:15:00)

Ballard briefly discussed other publications. Brochures like the 43<sup>rd</sup> State brochure will cost less because Tourism can republish using Flip Books. InstantFlipBooks.com costs about \$59/set of brochure versus \$1,000 for Zmags. May suggested that grantees be shown Flipbooks at Grant Summit. Nelson confirmed that this is part of Summit. Ballard suggested a Flipbooks exhibit at ICORT. (0:17:00)

**Motion** - It was moved (May) and seconded (Andersen) to approve the budget and collection report. Motion passed. (0:21:00)

Ballard handed Lodging Tax Collections and Recovery sheet to council members. This is research that Cathy Bourner gathered and graphed. The chart helps illustrate that collections do not always come to the state at the same time rooms are booked. May pointed out that the Tax Commission may now be more attentive to collecting delinquent taxes. (0:22:00)

Jaeger requested more frequent reports by region. Ballard explained that due to the Fiscal Division's work load and communication with Tax Commission, this has been difficult to do. (0:27:00)

**Tourism Grant Program Updates**, ReNea Nelson Commerce Staff, Audio File "ITC Jan 2012 (3) Grant Program Nelson"

For FY 11, sixteen of the twenty two grants are closed. One has an extension to 12 February. Fifteen have paperwork pending. FY12 first quarter narrative reports are available online. Only eight are missing. (0:00:00)

Stanley Sawtooth Chamber of Commerce funds will be dispersed upon IRS approval of their nonprofit status. They are moving forward with marketing. (0:02:00)

Nelson has added the *Grant Funding Sources* document has been added to the website. This documents lists alternative funding sources. (0:03:30)

Nelson reviewed the Grant Summit tentative agenda. The program runs 31 January through 1 February. Director Sayer will attend, meet grantees, and speak. This year's focus is to have more networking opportunities for grantees. May will attend during the morning to represent ITC. (0:04:30)

Nelson encouraged council members to promote attendance at the NW Chamber Leaders Conference to be held 10 - 12 March in Coeur d'Alene. It is a summit for professional chamber staff and volunteer board directors. The agenda consists of a variety of activities that encourage networking, problem solving, and discussion of issues that are common among attendees. (0:7:30)

SWITA has requested an amendment to shift balance of funds. May has approved. Anderson, Norton, and Conklin approved. (0:08:30)

Boise CVB would like to have the \$25,000 cap on Admin/Fulfillment, guideline 12, raised. Nelson forwarded a document to the Council from Bobby Patterson which explained that for large grantees this cap limits their Admin/Fulfillment funds to 4% as opposed to small grantees' 10%. (0:10:45)

May recalled that the council continues to revisit this item. He believes the current guideline was established to streamline cumbersome documentation submission/review process for the fulfillment element. He would like to keep the focus on marketing, and he is not in favor of raising the cap. (0:13:00)

Norton and Jaeger agree with May and point out that fulfillment costs are going down. The only opposing opinion Conklin could see is that she does not want people to market simply for the sake of marketing. (0:15:30)

Rick Cerano asked the council to consider how the distinction between administration/fulfillment and marketing is blurred. Less funding is used for direct mail and more is needed for social media done by an "administrator". (0:18:00)

The Council elected to keep the cap. (0:21:33)

Nelson partnered with McCall CVB to send a certified letter with response deadline to Valley County CVB. Ballard also contacted Rhonda Sandmeyer regarding spending funds for Kelly's Whitewater Park. (0:22:00)

Ballard stated one of Valley County CVB's concerns is the requirement that their call to action list McCall Chamber's contact information. Ballard requested that the council waive the requirement that Valley County list McCall Chamber's logo, website, and phone number for their call to action and be allowed to list Valley County's website and phone number. (0:23:00)

**Motion-** May made a motion to remove the requirement that McCall call to action be placed on Valley County materials. Jaeger seconded. Discussion ensued with a question from Paul Norton asking if there was any precedence for this action. Ballard advised that there has been precedent where a grantee has wanted to have the call to action be an attraction and not the

grantee and this has been denied as having the required call to action is non-competitive between the entities. This situation is unique in that there is an intrinsic conflict and it is counterintuitive to the intent of their advertising. May concurred that had he realized the stipulation he would have released them from the requirement in the original award. Motion passed. Ballard will communicate results to Sandmeyer. (0:27:00 and 0:34:30)

Ballard explained that Valley County thought that 10% of their award goes to McCall for administration but that she assured Ronda that the 10% is above the grant award. Nonetheless there is heartburn to the additional award of 10% of their grant award amount going to the McCall Chamber for McCall's administration and fulfillment costs. Ballard discussed with Rick Certano yesterday and suggested that Valley County document their fulfillment expenditures and submit them to the McCall Chamber for reimbursement. May and the council agreed that it was acceptable for the McCall Chamber to reimburse Valley County for fulfillment costs provided Valley County submit proper documentation. (0:24:30 0:34:30)

Ballard suggested that funds for Valley County be given through SWITA in the future because of the sense of competition between Donnelly/Cascade and McCall. May chronicled his attempts to help all groups in Region Three cooperate and his continued concern that the Valley County CVB is not a currently eligible entity to receive funds outright. Ballard reported to the council that she has advised Sandmeyer that Tourism would revert their funds if VCCVB did not take action prior to the March ITC meeting. (0:25:30, 0:36:00)

Rick Certano stated the need for Valley County Chamber and McCall Chamber to work together and chronicled attempts his team has made to work with Valley County CVB. Certano cautioned council against working with people who don't want to work with others. (0:31:00)

After lengthy correspondence with John May and tourism staff this quarter, Ballard, May and Nelson held a meeting with a meeting with the Boise County Job Creation/Retention Council. May and Ballard reiterated eligibility guidelines of the program, reconfirming the importance of partnering with the regional organization, and providing numerous resources that could assist with the organization reaching their goals. Their questions have been answered for the moment. (0:39:00)

Ballard suggested that council members tell the organizations in their regions that do have legitimate tourism roles to include tourism element in their by-laws. May elaborated that these smaller organizations can and should partner with larger grantees in their region and be an element in the larger grantees' elements. (0:42:00)

Nelson requested Council's input on Council Choice Awards. Conklin believes this is important to do but will not be working on them this year due to time constraints. Prior to the meeting, Conklin asked Newman to work with Nelson on this award. May affirmed that Newman would do a good job. Newman accepted the role. Nelson gave council members packets with this year's nominations. (0:51:00)

**International Trends**, Nancy Richardson and Mitch Knothe, Audio file "ITC Jan 2012 (4) International Trends"

Nancy Richardson stated that trip reports (the amount of product represented in printed materials) in Europe is up 31% due mainly to the Italian market. This fiscal year Idaho is still up 3%. Germany and the United Kingdom are down due to their political situations. She believes Idaho will continue to see growth. She already has one FAM tour planned. (0:00:00)

Richardson will be attending Go West in February. Tourism hosted Go West last year which was extremely successful. Tourism also hosted Mega Fam with 39 travel professionals which was also successful. She attended Roundup with 31 overseas tour operators; next year it will be held in Idaho. (0:03:15)

As a result of these activities, attendees published forty-eight articles internationally for an ad value of \$206,500. Tourism did not pay for these articles. RMI's annual report is available online at [www.rockymtnintl.com](http://www.rockymtnintl.com) (0:07:15)

At May's request, Richardson listed events she attended: RMI Roundup, ITB, French Press/Trade Sales Mission, Idaho Governor's Conference, Pow Wow, RMI Mega Fam, TTG Incontri, WTM (World Travel Market), and UK Training. She will attend: ITB, French Press/Trade Sales Mission, Pow Wow, Summit Meeting, RMI Roundup, and Idaho Governor's Conference. (0:08:00)

Knothe explained that RMI's emerging markets include Scandinavia with particular concentration on Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. They have also done a few shows in Finland. North Dakota joins RMI on these trips. His trips included shows in all three countries. There is a lot of oil and energy money in these countries, and the people have time to travel. (0:10:30)

Australia is an extremely strong market with over one million visiting the US. There are three gateways from Australia, two of which have direct flights to Boise, Sun Valley, and Spokane. Idaho is a layover to Yellowstone. (0:13:00)

Scandinavian travel writers published six articles valued at \$120,000. Australian travel writers published six articles valued at \$500,000. (0:15:00)

This year's Australia trip will include visits to Melba, Brisbane, Sydney and Adelaide. Knothe will present to 300 to 600 travel writers at each event. (0:16:15)

Ballard described her trade mission to Mexico and Brazil. Brazil is a strong potential market as their vacation times are December and January which is Idaho's prime ski time. Idaho Tourism could work with English as a second language programs. (0:18:00)

**Cycling Market**, Mitch Knothe, Audio file "ITC Jan 2012 (5) Cycling Market"

Over last six months there has been more interest within the state in promoting Idaho as a destination for biking. Tourism is working with Downtown Boise Association to declare July as Idaho Bike month. This could include Twilight Criterion in Boise, Mountain Bike National Championships in Sun Valley, and other events. (0:00:00)

Tourism will attend two consumer bicycling shows during March in Portland and Seattle. Tourism will have large booths and partner with ROW Adventures, SWITA, Moscow Chamber

and possibly Sun Valley Chamber. Other Idaho vendors will have booths beside Tourism's booth (0:01:30)

**Public Relations and Pitches**, Laurie McConnell, Audio File "ITC Jan 2012 (6) Public Relations and Pitches"

Tourism pitched 200 stories and approximately 50% were printed by regional, national and international media. This would be worth \$16,560,622. (0:00:00)

McConnell sent out *Tour News* (Industry News) four times to 1,128 tourism industry members. *Adventures in Living* was sent out monthly to 19,000 consumers. (0:01:00)

The Media Room provides access to video assets and over 6,000 high resolution images. 6,669 images were downloaded to promote the state. (0:02:00)

McConnell and Diane Norton will be traveling to the International Food and Wine and Travel Writers Association meeting. (0:03:15)

Conklin asked status on HARO, *Help a Reporter Out*. McConnell received good response on packages other than skiing. There is usually a response from Idaho industry leaders. (0:04:30)

**ICORT, Scenic Byways, and Tourism Industry Report**, Karen Ballard, Audio File "ITC Jan 2012 (7) ICORT, Scenic Byways, and Call Center"

ICORT (0:00:00)

ICORT is May 8 - 10, 2012 which coincides with National Tourism Week May 5 -13. Ballard requested that council members notify Tourism Division of any events that chambers or CVBs will be holding in their regions to celebrate National Tourism Week. (0:00:00)

ICORT will be held at the Coeur d'Alene Resort. Grant presentations will be Tuesday 8 May. Council members are invited to the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion for the Idaho Travel Council Monday 7 May. Ballard requested that council members help to update the list of previous council members. (0:01:00)

Early Bird Registration lasts through March 2 and is \$150.00. Between March 2 and April 15, registration is \$175. After April 15, registration is \$200. Online registration will be live by the end of January. Registration is being run by the same north Idaho company that runs the North Idaho Summit. (0:02:00)

Ballard listed the following ICORT partners. North Idaho Tourism Summit will be merging their event with ICORT this year. The Idaho Bed and Breakfast Association will run their annual meeting during ICORT and will use some of their grant dollars to help pay for one of the keynote speakers. The Idaho Lodging and Restaurant Association will hold their annual meeting during ICORT and will help run the golf tournament. Idaho Scenic Byways will hold their meeting after ICORT like last year. IRTI, Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative, will be

present. Department of Tourism has requested the Forestry Service fund the key note speaker for Thursday morning. (0:02:30)

Ballard told Travel Council members to keep updated on ICORT news using these methods: (0:04:00)

- Text ICORT to 90210 (text updates will be delivered to your phone)
- Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/icort>
- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/idahoconference>
- Linked In: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/icort>

Ballard displayed the new ICORT logo which was created by Ward Hooper. (0:05:00)

#### **Idaho Scenic Byways Update (0:07:30)**

Jeff Straton, public information contact for Idaho Transportation Department, advised Ballard that the 30 rest areas around the state need new signage. Through the Scenic Byway program, these signs could be funded with a federal grant. Tourism would need to pay 20% match or about \$20,000 instead of 50% of the cost. The council will see this as a budget item next year. (0:07:30)

May thought that this could be a good time to shift funds from foreign offices. Ballard suggested that the council eventually elect to pay for part of the foreign offices as they do good job representing Idaho tourism overseas. (0:10:00)

In 2009 Idaho Department of Transportation received an \$81,200 federal grant from FHWA National Scenic Byway Program for statewide video project. Due to late spring, Idaho Public Television was unable to complete this project for Tourism's 2012 campaign but will complete it for 2013. (0:11:00)

The Sesquicentennial (150<sup>th</sup>) Celebration of Idaho becoming a territory is in 2013. The Idaho Historical Society is pushing a strong agenda in the legislature, and Tourism will support these efforts. (0:12:00)

Funding for the Statewide Byway Videos is as follows: \$81,200 from the federal government, \$14,000 from the state, and \$6,300 from local governments. The total available funding is \$101,500. It will be an hour long show in March or April 2013. (0:13:00)

#### **ESMI & Dept of Tourism Industry Study (0:14:00)**

This tool costs Tourism \$6,000 per year for a subscription to have current data from the US Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis. The data is filtered through national standards of the tourism taxonomy. As some data is underreported, it would be helpful for local communities to analyze the report and send corrections to Department of Labor and ESMI.

Drake answered May's question that it takes about a year for data to be reported. Conklin, May, and Ballard suggested this data be reported at ICORT and local chambers. (0:18:00)

Patterson stated that this data needs to be presented to local governments and elected officials so they better appreciate the importance of the hospitality industry to local jobs and economy. (0:21:00)

Ballard elaborated on the tourism industry employing front line employees. On average, an individual that starts at a low wage in the hospitality industry makes a higher wage twelve years down the road than an individual who starts with a higher wage job in manufacturing. Hospitality is the training ground that develops great employees. Furthermore, tourism employs some people who cannot be employed elsewhere. Tourism accounts for approximately 5% of the workforce and 2% of the wages in the state. (0:22:00)

The tourism industry does not get credit for the multiplier effect. For example, Sun Valley is the largest consumer of Idaho power. (0:24:00)

Patterson elaborated on the importance of front line employees to make a guest's visit both pleasant and successful. Ballard suggested awards that honor frontline workers during tourism week. (0:25:00)

Richardson suggested that hospitality employees wear some kind of identifier during Idaho Tourism Week with a statement like, "I am an Idaho Gem". This would be a conversation starter for employees to present tourism's message. (0:28:00)

Patterson explained how Arizona honors front line workers. We need to educate workers to understand their importance as well as career opportunities. (0:29:00)

Ballard and May pointed to the Idaho Lodging and Restaurant Association's awards as an example. Ballard suggested working with Idaho Public TV to collect stories about nominees similar to the Ira Glass contest. These are compelling stories as well as possibly career changing. Conklin believes this would be newsworthy. (0:30:00)

May suggested lining up one person for each of the different jobs that are connected to hospitality to illustrate the variety. Ballard invited ITC members to attend Up-Beat Breakfast on the morning of ITC meeting in Coeur d'Alene. Norton mentioned the Silverwood Employee Customer Service track. Patterson suggested sending a questionnaire to every CEO in Idaho or previous ITC members (Conklin) asking about their first jobs. She also suggested including teachers who work in hospitality during the summer and college graduates (who are) unable to find work (in their area of specialty) and now work in the hospitality industry to be included in the story. (0:32:30)

**Drake Cooper Agency Updates**, Bill Drake and Josh Mercaldo, Audio file "ITC Jan 2012 (8) Drake Cooper"

Summary of presentation is available at <http://commerce.idaho.gov/business/idaho-travel-council.aspx>. Comments on the presentation are listed below.

Bill Drake introduced Drake Cooper staff members who were present. (0:00:00)



**Media Update (0:02:00)**

Bill Drake and Josh Mercaldo presented.

May asked when the council would be comfortable making a decision on committing to projected growth and spending on Drake Cooper's budget. Ballard believes March would be a good date. Drake explained how campaigns would be trimmed if collections don't grow by 5%. (0:23:45)

Drake explained importance of marketing to Washington state. Mercaldo added thoughts about co-op sites. Drake explained that eleven western state markets include northern California, Las Vegas, and Salt Lake City. (0:26:00)

**Winter Marketing (0:32:30)**

May asked Ballard to explain the low numbers of opted-ins at the Seattle show. Ballard explained that she was there for a different event and that Tourism didn't have any cost. Ballard focused on sending people to other Idaho booths. Tom Stebbins added that they sold over \$20,000 of product. (0:39:00)

Conklin asked about the response to the winter newsletter. Karen Stebbins said that people are reading the whole letter and coming back to reread a week later. It goes to 30,000 people. Drake and ISSA sync their email lists so that people only get one email. (0:43:40)

**Travel Guide and Prime Season Media Plan (0:53:29)**

"This will probably be the last time we see a book like this," Bill Drake said. This is the fifth year in a row of decline. See "2012 Financial Summary" in presentation summary.

Drake answered May's question that they have been printing 140,000 for last five years, but that customers are going online for information. (0:58:00)

Drake described various types of guides used in neighboring states. (1:00:00)

Andersen requested cost for a smaller guide. Drake does not know yet but estimates around \$30 -40,000 versus current \$180,000. (1:08:00)

Drake answered Certano's question that a new sizzle piece travel guide would not go out-of-date and could be easily reprinted. A smaller piece would drive people to regions for regional guides. (1:09:00)

Conklin restated that a mobile app could sell advertisements or grid space. Mercaldo added that pages would have interactive components. Ballard stated that we will be getting an app regardless of what happens with the Travel Guide. Knothe explained why Tourism will still need a print piece for trade shows. (1:11:00)

May reminded members that ITC has been considering what to do with travel guide for years. He prefers moving to a small piece without advertising and encouraging those who want to advertise to do so in an electronic version. (1:15:00)

Ferguson agreed that ITC needs to focus on an electronic piece. Mercaldo and Ballard said that the electronic flip guide got 221,930 page views up 12.5% from 2010 to 2012. (1:17:30)

Drake explained that for the FY12 travel guide, Drake Cooper would like a six week development cycle and would give a full report at the March ITC meeting. Ballard asked for a tablet but is not interested in app because of lack of connectivity in the state. (1:22:00)

Conklin asked each council member if they want a print piece. Jaeger, Code, Newman, and Ferguson want a smaller piece. May does not want a sizzle piece. Norton and Conklin want a print piece. (1:25:00)

**Online Reservation System**, Randy Fortes, Jackrabbit Executive Vice President, Audio file "ITC Jan 2012 (9), Online Reservation System"

Randy Fortes introduced his coworker Adam Rubens. Fortes was proposing a lodging solution. Fortes gave a brief history of company. Jack Rabbit has 200 destination partnerships. Their technology now includes lodging, events, attractions, special offers, packaging, mobile and Facebook apps. Their company is not a travel agent but a technology company. (0:00:00)

Their DMO (Destination Marketing Organization) mission is to drive economic success and enhance quality of life in one's community as well as maximize tax revenue. They have lower cost alternatives to OTAs (Online Travel Agent). Fortes stated that 84% of consumers want to compare rates, 57% want activity selection, and 52% want to book lodging online. (0:04:00)

Jack Rabbit redirects consumers to lodging sites to book direct. Fortes answered Ballard's question that, because consumers end on lodging sites, consumers can use promotional codes (event, membership, etc). On the backend, Jack Rabbit pulls or *indexes* rates and availabilities from lodgings every four hours. Jackrabbit gives small business like B&B's access to their site to index any size property, large and small. Small B&B's would have access to Jack Rabbit's free web based solution. (0:08:00)

Fortes gave some revenue projection. State of Idaho could save \$180,444 in OTA merchant commissions. They see 2.15% conversion rate. Some businesses consider Jackrabbit a marketing cost. (0:13:00)

Ballard asked Andersen and May how much they are currently paying to OTAs, and, if the state diminished that cost, how much would they save. Discussion ensued. (0:19:00)

May asked how Jackrabbit is going to prevent consumers from going to OTAs and instead to Jack Rabbit. The consumer simply wants to get best deal. Fortes said the average consumer goes to 26 sites before booking. (0:23:00)

Ballard said that Jackrabbit can scrape packages without Tourism doing it. It would be clear to consumers that they are leaving the Idaho site to book with the lodging site. Patterson

said leisure travelers will go to DMOs' sites to shop. Business travelers might go to CVBs' sites. Patterson requested lodging management to have consistent rates. Discussion continued. (0:26:00)

Cervanto asked how the transition works between previous business with Orbis or Expedia to Jack Rabbit? Ballard said that if there are a million visitors on visitidaho.org, they will see packages and jump to Jack Rabbit then to lodging sites to book. Patterson added that hoteliers need to have attractive websites for booking. (0:33:00)

Fortes said that ITC would be charged a setup fee of \$15,000 and a \$37,500 subscription cost. Idaho would need at least five DMOs/CVBs. This decreases cost to DMO by 47% off open rate or \$7,500. Fortes would like to teach CVBs how to defray cost by generating more income. Some partners use Jack Rabbit like a co-op to offset costs. Others use a pay per click model. Ballard said that ITC would need five DMOs to offset costs in Idaho. Discussion to offset costs ensued. (0:37:00)

Ballard clarified that all 2% collecting entities would be given the option use Jack Rabbit on state site. (0:48:00)

Fortes answered Ballard's question regarding metrics that Jack Rabbit would provide: number of searches initiated and number of referrals to lodging. It would not include number of reservations. He also discussed qualified leads, search engine efficiencies, and ability to remarket to customers. (0:52:30)

Patterson, Fortes, and May conversed about how Jack Rabbit would market and merchandise events and packages like Iron Man. (0:57:00)

Ferguson asked about the index process. Fortes said it is random although some pay for position. Andersen and Ballard suggested ITC members view Las Vegas and Park City sites. (1:00:00)

Ballard said that although this presentation is primarily informational, four grants did allocate dollars in their grant application for Jackrabbit. Ballard would need to go to RFP if the council chooses to allocate funds for a service like Jackrabbit. Fortes said that, if Jackrabbit won the RFP, Jackrabbit could have their services running in 60 days. Fortes answered May's question that Jackrabbit would serve the state even if the state doesn't have five DMOs. (1:04:00)

ITC members discussed how Jack Rabbit would work with their sites. Conversation will continue at the Grant Summit and March ITC meeting. (1:09:00)

**Invasive Species**, Amy Ferriter, Invasive Species Coordinator, Audio File "ITC Jan 2012 (10) Invasive Species"

Presentation handouts are available at <http://commerce.idaho.gov/business/idaho-travel-council.aspx>. Comments on the presentation are listed below.

Amy Ferriter, Invasive Species Coordinator at the Idaho Department of Agriculture, introduced Representative Eric Anderson. Ferriter showed pictures and described history of and damage due to zebra or quagga mussel invasion. (0:00:00)

In 2008 Idaho began the invasive species law to protect environment, hydropower, and agriculture from quagga mussel. The program is funded through a sticker program. The strategy is to position inspection stations to intercept boats coming from infested waters. Ferriter chronicled interceptions to date and program evolution. (0:05:00)

Drake Cooper has been helpful with this and other invasive species campaigns. Ferriter showed some of the program's literature. (0:12:00)

Ballard explained Ferriter's involvement with IRTI (Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative) and how Tourism can help provide information to visitors. (0:13:30)

Representative Anderson said that the legislature will quarantine any body of water in Idaho if quagga mussels are found and will close Idaho border to outside boats. Each mussel is capable of reproducing 100,000 off spring. Great Lakes have lost 90% of their fish population. Ferriter added that they filter feed; then the food web collapses. She asked council to image what would happen to salmon ladders and runs if they invade. So far, humans have not found a way to get rid of them. (0:16:00)

May described his experiences with inspection lines for white water rafters within the state. Ballard suggested that Tourism put information on the website explaining how to obtain a Fast Pass before boaters leave their home. (0:19:00)

Ferriter and Anderson stated that quagga mussels concentrate botulism so the mussels are not good to eat. They live four to five years. When birds eat dead quagga mussels that wash onto shore, the birds die immediately. (0:25:30)

**Visitor Centers**, Cathy Ford, Idaho Transportation Department, Audio File 2012 (11) Visitor Centers"

Presentation handouts are available at <http://commerce.idaho.gov/business/idaho-travel-council.aspx>. Comments on the presentation are listed below.

Ford chronicled her professional involvement with Idaho rest areas followed by an overview and background of the Idaho Safety Rest Area Program. (0:00:00)

Ford outlined Board and Administrative Policies. She also showed a map of center locations. (0:04:00)

Ford described three types of rest areas and ITD's safety rest area history including separate funding. (0:08:00)

Ford informed the council on the program's focus over the past six years as well as current program direction and partnerships. (0:12:00)

Ford outlined ITD's vision and described amenities using pictures of some of the rest areas. (0:19:30)

Ballard invited Ford to have discussion about the Dubois visitor center. It is easy to turn into it if heading west into Idaho. It is in middle of town. The question is how to fund and run it

now that it is built. Tourism can supply brochures and maps. Ballard is not comfortable managing this facility and handing \$25,000 to the city of DuBois to manage another remote location. Ford said ITD does not have funding to manage it even though it is needed as place to stop during winter storms when roads close. Ballard mentioned that Amy Ferriter could partner with others to manage this site since the Department of Agriculture performs inspections there three days a week. (0:27:00)

Ballard stated that Tourism does not have ability to manage visitor centers. Department of Agriculture could be a partner to make sure Huetter is being managed, or Huetter could be closed with signs pointing to the Post Falls Center. The \$25,000 is used to pay for volunteer to staff visitor center during summer business hours. (0:32:00)

Ballard asked if ITC should provide funding for the Dubois rest area. May does not recommend this. Ferguson agreed with May because ITC does not have ability to manage the site. Ford outlined the need for the Dubois rest area. (0:34:00)

Three agencies had originally funded the three gateway centers. Then Parks and Recreation had to renege on their commitment due to funding cuts. ITD is maintaining centers which are needed for driver safety. ITC funding provides staffing for visitor information during the travel season. (0:37:00)

May stated that the Department of Parks and Recreation needs to collect 2% lodging tax on their campgrounds so that Tourism can pay for visitor centers. Tourism needs to stop bailing Parks and Recreation out of their responsibilities. The state needs to stop requiring that the public sector to pay lodging tax while not collecting from visitors to government lodging. Collections from state run lodging could the state's Gateway Visitor Centers. (0:42:00)

Discussion continued. Ballard explained history and issues including Tourism's lack of infrastructure to manage remote centers. Rick Just from Parks and Recreation told Ballard that it would not be a problem to put structures into place to collect 2% lodging tax from visitors staying at the state parks. (0:49:00)

**New Business** Frances Conklin, ITC Chair, Audio file "ITC Jan 2012 (12) New Business"

There was no new business.

#### Next meetings

Ballard confirmed that next meeting will be shifted to Wednesday and Thursday, March 14 and 15 in Sun Valley with council arriving Tuesday 13 March. The Sun Valley Film Festival begins the evening Thursday 14 March.

The May meeting is in Coeur d'Alene beginning Monday 7 May in the evening with the ITC Anniversary Celebration and Tuesday 8 May with grant presentations. A table for the Wednesday 8 May breakfast has been reserved for the council.

The August meeting will be in Teton Springs. Exact dates will be determined at the March meeting.

**Motion**. It was moved (Jaeger) and (Newman) seconded that ITC meeting adjourn. Motion passed.