



Idaho Travel Council
January 17, 2018
Sun Valley Inn, Sage Room
1 Sun Valley Rd, Sun Valley

Idaho Travel Council Members Present:

Doug Burnett (Vice-Chair), *Region I*
Lara Smith (Chair), *Region II*
Jim Manion, *Region III*
Shawn Barigar, *Region IV*
Matt Hunter, *Region V*
Mike Fitzpatrick, *Region VII*
Rick Shaffer, *Multi-Region*

Commerce Staff Present:

Diane Norton, *Tourism Manager*
Cindy Lee, *Grants and Contracts Manager*
Laura Conilogue, *Administrative Assistant*

Call to Order & Introductions

Chairwoman Lara Smith called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Council and audience introductions.

Approval of Minutes

Shawn Barigar moved to approve the October 2017 meeting minutes. Matt Hunter seconded. All in favor. **Motion approved.**

Matt Hunter moves to approve the December 2017 meeting minutes. Rick Shaffer seconded. All in favor. **Motion approved.**

Welcome

Mike Fitzpatrick welcomes the Council and audience to Region 7.

Budget Update – Diane Norton

Diane Norton gave a presentation about Idaho bed tax collections, lodging rates and occupancy statistics.

Here are the numbers from Idaho lodging:

- Collections are trending at 11.69% year over year through December, on track to collect \$12.5 million in FY18.
- There are approximately 23,500 rooms available throughout Idaho.
- Occupancy peaked in June, July, and August at around 83%.
- The average daily rate (ADR) peaked in August at \$127.07, but during the winter months and shoulder season the rate stayed closer to \$91.

Here are numbers from Airbnb data:

- Idaho earned \$450,000 in bed tax from Airbnb for the first 11 months of 2017.
- Listings in Airbnb spiked in August, because of the eclipse, but ended November with 3,504 listings total.
- Occupancy rates peaked in July at 67.4%, but for most of the year stayed around 40%.
- ADR for Airbnb is higher than the ADR for hotels. ADR for Airbnb was the lowest in April at \$174.59, and highest in August at \$291.30.

Marketing Update – Diane Norton

The Idaho Tourism department has increased their social media presence and changed their website. The Tourism team has focused on adding more content to the website, including content produced by social media influencers. This past year the website has seen a 33% increase in users, and an 11% increase in page views. The “18 Summers” microsite has seen a 240% increase in users. Email subscribers have increased 20%, Facebook followers are up 25%, Twitter followers are up 21%, Pinterest followers are up 20%, and a 119% increase in followers on Instagram.

The top five states that requested Idaho travel guides:

1. California
2. Idaho
3. Texas
4. Oregon
5. Florida

Idaho was featured two years in a row in Vogue, plus the Dark Skies designation is bringing attention to Idaho. Idaho was featured in 242 online pieces this year with 7.3 million views.

“Plan for Vacation Day” is January 30. Idaho Tourism is putting together social teasers, will post videos of each region throughout the day, and will have a booth at Buy Idaho Day in the Capitol.

The second Idaho craft beer month is in April, there will be many events around the state.

In the first six months of FY18, Idaho earned almost as much in taxes as during the full year of FY13.

Grant Update – Cindy Lee

The Grants is waiting to see if the Division of Financial Management (DFM) will approve a new Admin policy. The Grants team is hoping to get a new policy approved by the end of January. Once it is approved, it will go into effect immediately.

Language will be added to the handbook about co-op ads, including how much the for-profit partner needs to spend.

Idaho RV Campgrounds Association (IRVCA) was awarded \$5,000 for their website, however they realized they need an entire update of the backend of their website, so they will need to move \$15,000 from their advertising budget to pay for the update. They will be foregoing one month of print advertising from each of the publications they advertise in. Timeline for launch of new website is March 20, 2018.

Jim Manion moved to approve the change in the scope of work for IRVCA. Shawn Barigar seconded. All in favor. **Motion approved.**

95% of Requests for Funds are paid under 15 days, and most are around 10 days.

The second quarterly reports can now be done in the online portal, just like the applications, which is easier for grantees and Council members. The quarterly report shows how much money the grantees have left to spend, what they are working on, and if there will potentially be a change in the scope of work.

Small changes have been made to the 2018 grant applications, including an expanded conflict of interest statement, and clarification on some questions and the budget spreadsheet. A standard cash match form was also added.

Sun Valley Economic Development - Harry Griffith

Harry Griffith gave a presentation about the power of arts in the Woodriver Valley community.

Fly Sun Valley Alliance - Carol Waller

Carol Waller gave an update about the Sun Valley Air Service.

Realtors and businesses in the community participate in the Fly Sun Valley Alliance, however they would like more participation and are discussing ways of achieving that.

Airlines are providing some traveler information, however it is limited and it isn't in real-time.

The two Saturday direct Chicago flights during the holidays were good, and the upcoming flights look full.

The Visit Sun Valley organization promotes the addition of new direct flights.

Sun Valley Marketing Alliance - Scott Fortner

Scott Fortner presented about the updates of the Sun Valley Marketing Alliance. He noted they have not done research specific to the winter visitors in contrast to summer.

Dark Skies/Dark Sky Reserve - Wade Vagias

Wade Vagias gave an update on all things National Park Service in Southern Idaho including Dark Skies. He indicated that there does not seem to be any threats to the Idaho National Parks under the current administration at this point.

The Chamber - Jeff Bacon

The Chamber is now marketing Ketchum, Hailey, and Bellevue, and has the support of over 300 members and residents. The Chamber has been focusing on promoting events outside of July and August. The Chamber also manages the Welcome Center that is open seven days a week. One new project that the Chamber is working on is creating a "taste trail" in the Wood River Valley, and getting restaurants to participate. They are also on the final stages of a website redesign.

Drake Cooper - Josh Mercaldo

Josh Mercaldo discussed the marketing projects happening with Idaho Tourism.

Tourism will focus on marketing events/activities during the shoulder seasons. Currently there are campaigns that focus on the spring and fall in Idaho and they are always adding content and videos to the website to increase information about the shoulder seasons.

Other Discussions

March Tourism Tours:

- Region 2: Lewiston; Thursday, March 1: 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Region 1: Coeur d'Alene; Friday, March 2: 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Regions 4 & 7: Twin Falls; Tuesday, March 6: 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Region 3: Boise; Thursday March 8: 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Region 6: Rexburg; Tuesday, March 13: 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Region 5: Pocatello; Wednesday, March 14: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- ITC Recap Meeting: Phone-In meeting; Thursday, March 15: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- ITD will be present at the Tourism Tours to discuss future highway construction.

ITC Grant Presentations are May 1-2 in Boise. Cindy Lee proposed that grantees submit their applications before the Grant Presentations so the Council has more time to read over the applications and can have a better conversation with the grantees. The Council agrees this would help them.

The Idaho Conference on Recreation and Tourism (ICORT) is October 16-18 in Pocatello.

The new council member for Region 6 will be appointed before the end of January.

Rick Shaffer moved to adjourn the meeting.

Shawn Barigar seconded. All in favor. **Motion approved.**

Chairwoman Lara Smith adjourns the meeting at 1:46 p.m.