

**Elko Convention & Visitors Authority  
Lodging Committee Meeting  
Elko Convention & Visitors Authority  
700 Moren Way  
Elko, NV 89801  
Wednesday, September 23, 2015  
6:00 PM.  
MINUTES**

**1. Welcome & Introductions; Barry Bhakta, Chairman**

**Committee Members Present:** Laurie Nelson, Best Western  
Jolene Stone, Best Western, Holiday Inn, Thunderbird  
Hannah Morrison, Holiday Inn Express  
Michelli Leedy, Holiday Inn Express  
Ashley Libro, Red Lion  
Lenny Martinez, Red Lion  
Mike Patel, Scottish Inns  
Mahesh Bhakta, Stampede Motel  
Pamela Rand, Motel 6  
Michelle Mota, Comfort Inn  
Chuck Lal, Days Inn  
Mahendra Bahakta, Budget Inn  
Danny Bhakta, Centre Motel  
Hari Patel, Travelers Motel  
Shefali Bhakta, Rodeway Inn  
Henry Bhakta, Rodeway Inn, Super 8  
Sam Bhakta, American Inn  
Paul Bhakta, Mid Town Motel  
Bob Bhakta, Esquire Inn  
Dhilan Bhakta, Super 8 Travelodge  
Lisa Fogle, Super 8 Travelodge  
Dan Bhakta, Holiday Motel  
Ike Bhakta, Manor Motor Lodge

**ECVA Staff Present:** Juli Nelson, Marketing Coordinator  
Tom Lester, Tourism & Convention Coordinator  
Kandiss Fallowfield, Events Coordinator  
Amber Merz, Administrative Assistant  
Kim Longely, Facility & Catering Coordinator

Mr. Barry Bhakta called the meeting to order at 5:51 pm. Introductions were made around the room.

2. **Public Comments** – Non-Action Item

Pursuant to N.R.S. 241.020, 2 (c) (3) this time is devoted to comments by the general public, if any, and discussion of those comments. No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this item on the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on a successive agenda and identified to be an action item.

Mr. Tom Lester stated that he would like to thank whoever prepared the food for the meeting.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the March 25, 2015 meeting – **Action Item (public comment)**

*Mrs. Jolene Stone made a motion to approve the March 25, 2015 Lodging Committee Minutes, Mrs. Laurie Nelson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*

4. Review of ECVA Activities and Room Tax Update - **Non-Action Item**

Mr. Bhakta stated that Mr. Newman was not able to attend today's meeting but that he did include a report on Room Tax and Facility Revenues. If you have any questions on the report you are welcome to call him at the ECVA office on Monday.

5. Review of ECVA Marketing Activities – **Non-Action Item**

Mrs. Juli Nelson stated that her report outlines everything she has been working on. She stated that there is one thing that she wants to touch on. Nevada Magazine does a contest called Tour Around Nevada where people vote on their favorite city and this time Elko was voted for and won. Elko will be featured in the November/December edition of Nevada Magazine and we will be presented with an award, most likely during the Festival of Trees.

6. Review of ECVA Event Activities – **Non-Action Item**

Mrs. Kandiss Fallowfield stated that her 1 year anniversary with the ECVA is coming up in October and this will be the first Lodging meeting she has been able to attend, so it is good to finally be here. The Elko Classic Car Show went very well. We had 220 registered cars this year, it was up nearly 30 from last year. We were also up in vendors this year with 21

in total. We had a lot of really great sponsors this year as well. She stated that Festival of Trees is the next event she is working on and that it will be the first event in the new building. It will go from November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 2<sup>nd</sup> and the theme this year will be 25 Days of Christmas. We have already started to receive letters of interest from potential charity partners, we have not selected them yet but we will soon. She is very excited to say that we will have The Nutcracker during the Festival of Trees this year.

6. Review of ECVA Convention and Tourism Activities – **Non-Action Item**

Mr. Tom Lester stated he is getting ready to start traveling again soon. He will be going to Small Market Meetings at the end of the month where he has 25 scheduled meetings with meeting planners. When he gets back Amber will be sending out a leads report to the Hoteliers with requested information from his meetings. The Governor's Conference on Tourism will be in Las Vegas and if any of the Lodging partners would like to attend they are welcome to. He will have leads from that conference as well and everyone should keep any eye out for them in November. Mr. Lester stated that the tri fold brochures that he and Juli worked on have been distributed through Certified Folders. That has gone very well, since May 1st they have distributed roughly 13,000 in the Reno area, 14,000 in Salt Lake, 6,300 in Northeastern Nevada and 4,600 in the Evanston/Rocksprings area. This was funded through a grant from the NCOT and he will be writing another grant to hopefully continue this funding. He stated that he working on the 2016 Visitors Guide, he is adding a birding section and updating the dining section as well to make sure it is more specific. We have also hired RAD Strategies out of Reno, they will be helping to move us up in Google searches and send us the stats on the searches. They have been hired on a 6 month trial basis, so it will be interesting to see what kind of results we get.

7. Discussion of lodging related opportunities or issues – **Non-Action Item**

Mr. Barry Bhakta stated that he just wants to talk a little bit about the new building and why it's being built. The ECVA had a few million dollars in reserve money sitting in the bank not earning and interest or making any money. The ECVA was able to get the building funded with only about 2% interest for the first 10 years. The land that the building is being built on is owned by the ECVA and the building is built and owned by a company that he believes is based out of Arizona. When it came down to the decision to build the building the ECVA had nothing to lose since the ECVA still owns the property that the building is built on. If for any reason they default on the payments there was not much that could be done, the foundation would most likely just sign the building over to the ECVA as they own the land it sits on.

Mr. Lester stated that the main reason the building was build was due to the fact that we have to turn away a lot of business because our building is always full. He stated that Mrs. Kim Longley would be the best person to speak on this matter as she is the one who handles the booking of the facility.

Mrs. Longley stated that on average she was turning away about 5 or 6 bookings a month, it is hard to estimate how much money that is as there are many different variables. She stated that she has already started taking bookings for the new facility in December.

Mr. Bhakta stated that the ECVA still has plenty of money in reserve after putting the 3 million down on the Conference Center.

Mr. Lester stated that it will be good because many of the events held here have outgrown our facility and there isn't another facility in Elko that can hold any events larger than the ECVA. He stated that air service does pose a problem when trying to book conferences in Elko as there are only 2 flights a day and they are so much more expensive than flying into other airports. He stated that we are looking at getting the Nevada Realtors Association, OCTA and Rural Water Association, so he is going out there and showcasing what Elko has to offer. He stated we can also offer incentives to offset the cost of airfare such as motor coach service.

Mr. Chuck Bhakta asked what the cost of the new facility was.

Mr. Barry Bhakta stated that it was roughly 12 million dollars.

Further discussion on the cost of the facility took place.

Mr. Bhakta stated that he would like to thank Lenny and Ashley of the Red Lion for their help with the Volleyball Tournament, it went very well. He then stated that the next meeting would fall on the day before Thanksgiving so we may be canceling it or moving it a week earlier.

Further discussion on the next meeting date took place.

Mr. Bhakta stated that we will move the next meeting to November 18th.

Mr. Ike Bhakta asked if any additional airlines are looking at coming to Elko.

Mr. Lester stated that years ago they had money set aside for rural flights but as soon and the grant funding went away so did the flights. He stated that there have been talks of Via Airlines meeting with Mr. Gibbs about flights to Elko.

Further discussion on air service took place.

Mr. Lester stated at the end of the day all we have here is a building, we have to all work together to get these events into Elko. He stated that transportation in Elko is an issue is an

issue, not just the air service, look at the Amtrak station. He stated that he has tried to set up trips into Elko on the train but the station really turns people off.

Mrs. Laurie Nelson stated that she agrees with Mr. Lester, if they want to make it better than they need to come together and show that the lodging community cares just as much about the beatification on Elko and Train Station as anyone.

Mr. Lester stated that he is not against the ballfields either but he feels they are going to have a hard time recouping their room tax dollars from people coming into town for the use of the fields.

9. Next Lodging Committee meeting: **November 18, 2015.**

10. **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 6:28 pm.



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Don Newman  
Executive Director