

**Elko Convention & Visitors Authority
Lodging Committee Meeting
Ledgestone Hotel
2585 E. Jennings Way
Elko, NV 89801
Wednesday, March 23, 2016
6:00 PM.
MINUTES**

Committee Members Present: Barry Bhakta, Rodeway Inn
Jolene Stone, Ledgestone Hotel
Jairah Ramirez, Hilton Garden Inn
Dallas Johnson, Stockmens
Callie Tregidga, Stockmens
Jacqueline Ramirez, Stockmens
Spencer Gendron, Best Western
Michelli Leedy, Holiday Inn Express
Dan Bhakta, Holiday Motel
Sam Bhakta, American Inn
Mahendra Bhakta, Budget Inn
Chuck Lal, Days Inn
Paul Bhakta, Mid Town Motel
Mike Bhakta, Stampede Motel
John Carpenter, Cimarron West
Matt McCarty, Townplace Suites

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

Visitors Present: Dr. Scott Gavorsky
Dr. Mark Curtis

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

Lodging Committee Chairman, Mr. Barry Bhakta, called the meeting to order at 6:01 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.

None at this time.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the Special Session December 9, 2015 meeting – **Action Item (public comment)**

Mrs. Jolene Stone made a motion to approve the December 9, 2015 Lodging Committee Minutes, Mr. Mike Bhakta seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Presentation by Gregory Brorby of the Great Basin Foundation regarding the Virtual Humanities Center – **Non-Action Item**

Mr. Matt McCarty stated that Gregory Brorby was unable to make to meeting today so he would not be the one presenting on behalf of the Virtual Humanities Center. He then introduced Dr. Gavorsky and Dr. Curtis of the Virtual Humanities Center (VHC) and explained that they had received a grant with a contingent that they raise matching funds. He then brought up the recent support the Lodging Committee has provided various events such as the Cowboy Poetry Gathering and stated he hopes they will consider doing something similar for the VHC. He stated that he feels it is something that will greatly benefit our community and in turn that will greatly benefit the lodging community. Mr. McCarty then stated that he apologizes but he was unable to stay for the presentation due to a prior engagement.

Mr. Matt McCarty excused himself at 6:07pm.

Dr. Curtis introduced himself and then stated that around 3 years ago Great Basin College received a National Endowment for the Humanities Grant for \$500,000 with the provision that they raise at least \$1,000,000 themselves making it a \$1,500,000 endowment. They would then take the interest off of that and use it to support the VHC. He stated that every 2 weeks on Friday 10-20 faculty members meet to plan and develop the Virtual Humanities Center. Dr. Gravorsky has been one of the driving force behind this. He then explained that even though Great Basin College is located here in Elko they cover 86,000 square miles of rural Nevada with campuses in Winnemucca, Battle Mountain, Ely and Pahrump as well as having 20 other locations with interactive video sites where they can reach out to smaller groups of students.

With that thought in mind they realized that they needed something virtual to reach out to these various places.

Dr. Gravorsky introduced himself to the Lodging Committee. He stated that the basic mission statement of the Virtual Humanities Center is to collect, curate and cultivate the humanities for rural Nevada. Dr. Gravorsky then showed the committee a PowerPoint presentation comprised of data pertaining to the VHC and their mission. Dr. Gravorsky completed his PowerPoint presentation and then asked if the committee had any questions.

Mr. John Carpenter asked if they were able to use any of the \$500,000 now or if they had to wait until they had raised the entire \$1,000,000.

Dr. Gavorsky explained that there is a "step release" so they received some of it already. He stated that of the \$1,000,000 they have raised about \$610,000 and when they reach certain milestones funds are released.

Mrs. Michelli Leady asked if there was a time limit that they had to raise the funds in.

Dr. Gavorsky stated that it is 5 years for the total amount but as he explained they have received some of the funds at certain milestones. He stated they are looking at 2018 as being the hard limit for raising the complete \$1,000,000.

Mr. Barry Bhakta asked if the VHC would need a new facility or if they were based out of the current Great Basin College Facility.

Dr. Gavorsky explained that the VHC is all online and they are actually able to store it all on GBC's server space so it is accessible to everyone via the internet.

Mrs. Leady asked if they would be using this to funding to expand into a wider range of degree programs available.

Dr. Gavorsky stated that yes that is part of the goal.

Mrs. Leady asked if they would be able to then build on those degrees with advanced or masters degrees.

Dr. Curtis stated that GBC is still designated as a community college and since 1999 they have been able to offer limited bachelor's degrees. They are hoping to expand on this in the future and be able to offer a 50/50 of associates and bachelors degrees. He stated that state colleges are able to offer a limited masters degrees.

Mr. Carpenter asked if becoming a state college would help with funding.

Dr. Curtis stated that yes it would because in the upper division classes they charge more. But they do not want to put that state college cost onto their traditional

community college students. So what they will do is continue to charge traditional rates for their certificate and associates degrees. He stated that it will also help dramatically with marketing which will in turn help with funding.

Dr. Gavorsky stated that all of the information they have presented is available online at their website www.humanities.gbcnv.edu.

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

Mr. Barry Bhakta stated that Don Newman is not present but there is a room tax spreadsheet included in the packet for them to look over. He stated that room tax was down about 6 or 7 percent.

Discussion regarding the room tax activity took place.

Mr. Bhakta asked how the Stockmans remodel was going.

Mrs. Jackie Ramirez stated that it went very well, they are all complete and they just found out that they are going to become a Flag property under Ramada.

Further discussion took place.

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

Mrs. Juli Nelson stated that she is staying very busy working on promoting the new facility. She stated that the Conference Center has been great, it has stayed consistently busy since it opened. She then passed around the various ads she has been working on. She just returned from a show that she and Tom worked in Salt Lake called the International Sportsman's Expo. There is a lot of interest in this area for recreation because of the open public land. She then stated that everyone is starting to get busy with Mining Expo, she is helping Kandiss by gathering sponsorships and selling advertising. She stated that the packet contains her report with all of her current projects and updates for them to read over.

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

Mrs. Kandiss Fallowfield stated that she is very busy working on the Mining Expo which is taking place from June 6th through the 10th this year. She was a little bit worried at first because some of the vendors were reporting that they were not able to come back due to business being down this year but she has been able to start filling those spaces with companies from the waiting list. She stated that the golf tournament sold out in 2 hours this year which is a record. They held their first golf committee meeting and are looking at having a band come in for the golf bbq. She has sold about 270 tickets to the opening reception, that event had to be moved to the Red lion due to the Flying Fish closing suddenly. Mrs. Fallowfield stated that the next event she is working on is the Safety Olympiad which takes place July 7-9. She already sent out

the registration packets for that so she is just waiting to hear back from mines. The event is being hosted by Barrick Goldstrike this year. She state that Don and Amber are also working on the Great Race which takes place on June 20th.

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

Mr. Tom Lester stated that his travel schedule is listed in the report. He stated that he and the ECVA staff will be attending Rural Roundup this year and everyone present is welcome to attend as well. After Rural Roundup he will be attending Spotlight, the European Trade Mission and then Travel Alliance Partners. From January to June he is focused on the leisure market and then June to November he focuses on the meetings and conventions market. Mr. Lester then stated that he just got back from Go West Summits, he stated that this is probably one of the best shows he has had in a long time. He already has some possible return business. He stated that Amber sent out the leads from that show so he told them to check their emails for those. Sparkles Tours out of Beijing was one of his promising leads from that show, they looking at bringing in a group tour. He then passed around an email from Sparkles Tours. He stated that there are about 4 different tour operators looking at bringing in tours to Elko from that show. He also recently attended the Bay Area Travel Show, which is a consumer based show. Cowboy Country has almost 2000 likes on Facebook. He is looking at writing another grant for Certified Folders, the campaign we did with them has been very successful. He is also writing another grant for the Elko Classic Car Show, the amount will decrease this year but it will help Kandiss with marketing the event outside of the area. He stated that he will be sending out an RFP for the new Meet Me in Elko Video, they will be filming during the Mining Expo as the facility is full at that time. Mr. Lester then stated that Elko was awarded the bid to host Rural Roundup in 2017. He stated that it is not listed in his report but he did put in an RFP for the Civil Air Patrol Conference and he also didn't list that he will be in Las Vegas doing sales calls. He then stated that he puts in RFPs and does the work to try and get these conferences here but the main issue he faces is the lack of air service.

Further discussion on air service took place.

Mr. Carpenter referenced the upcoming conferences portion of Mr. Lester's report and asked if we were in fact getting the OCTA conference in 2020.

Mr. Lester stated that he had spoke with them and the next time it will be available is in 2020 so he put in a bid for it but with our air service the way it is he doesn't know. He stated that it creates a lot of obstacles for him. The only reason we can get conferences like the Realtors Association and Lions Club Conference is because their presidents live in Elko, are from Elko or because they "know" someone.

Further discussion on air service took place

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

Mr. Spencer Gendron stated that he doesn't know if it will help with getting the Civil Air Patrol Conference but he is good friends with Dr. Millsbaugh who wrote their textbooks, and he will talk to him about it.

Mr. Lester stated that that may help. He then explained again that it is very difficult to get conferences in Elko due to lack of air service and cost of flights into town.

Mr. Carpenter asked why there haven't been any Casino Express flights brought to Elko.

Mr. Lester explained that the previous Casino Express flights were paid for with grants and once the funding ran out we were no longer able to afford to keep them coming.

Further discussion on air service took place.

9. Next Lodging Committee meeting: **May 25, 2016.**

10. **Adjourn**

Meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm.



Don Newman
Executive Director