

**TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING DRAFT MINUTES
OCTOBER 4-5, 2011
ENNIS, MT**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Rhonda Fitzgerald, Chair—Whitefish	Kim Holzer—Stanford	Gail Richardson—Bozeman
Cyndy Andrus, Vice Chair—Bozeman	Bill McGladdery—Butte	Amber Wood-Jensen—Butte
Ed DesRosier—East Glacier Park	Meg O'Leary—Big Sky	Jackie Yellowtail—Crow Agency
Bev Harbaugh—Jordan	Stan Ozark—Glasgow	

COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Michelle Robinson—Billings Paul Tuss—Havre

MONTANA OFFICE of TOURISM STAFF

Jeri Duran—Division Administrator	Sarah Lawlor—Public Information Officer
Victor Bjornberg—Tourism Development Coordinator	Anna Marie Moe—Industry Services & Operations Manager
Bev Clancey—Publications Manager	Tobie Ohlin—IT/Network Administrator
Thurston Elfstrom—Sr. Interactive Manager	Katy Peterson—Consumer Marketing Manager
Pam Gosink—Marketing Program Manager	Barb Sanem—Industry Program/Compliance Specialist
Corrie Hahn—Information Systems Manager	Donnie Sexton—Publicity Manager
Carmen Levick—Administrative Assistant	

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2011

CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Council Chair, Ed DesRosier called the meeting of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) to order at 8:30 a.m.

Ed announced that he, Meg O'Leary, Gail Richardson, Paul Tuss and Amber Wood-Jensen have been reappointed to the Council, and he thanked Ramona Holt and Dolores Plumage for their service on the TAC. He also introduced the new Butte CVB director, Cindy Perdue-Dolan. Introductions of Council members, Montana Office of Tourism (MTOT) staff and the audience followed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Action Items:

- Approval of June 7-8, 2011 TAC Meeting Minutes
- Approval of June 30, 2011 TAC Special Meeting Minutes

With no requests to remove an item from the consent agenda, the consent agenda was adopted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Rhonda Fitzgerald gave a brief overview of the TAC retreat held October 2-3 in Virginia City. The Council discussed the brand and what the next steps should be. They came up with three goals for expanding the brand initiative:

1. Marketing: work with individual business to educate them about the brand for effective marketing
2. Create more product: do outreach to smaller communities to enhance things that bring visitors to their area
3. Respect: develop an understanding and importance of the impact of tourism in Montana

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT/ELECTION OF OFFICERS—Stan Ozark, Chair

Stan and Nominating Committee member Bill McGladdery recommended the nomination of Rhonda Fitzgerald for the Chair position and Cyndy Andrus for the Vice Chair position. Kim Holzer nominated Amber Wood-Jensen for the Vice Chair position.

Ed DesRosier called for a vote. Rhonda Fitzgerald was elected chair and Cyndy Andrus was elected vice chair.

Stan thanked Ed DesRosier for his contribution while in the chair position.

MONTANA OFFICE of TOURISM (MTOT) UPDATE—Jeri Duran, Division Administrator

Montana Office of Tourism (MTOT) and Montana Film Office (MFO) updates were given along with the lodging tax revenue reports. Highlights noted were that the MFO has recently received three awards; MTOT marketing has recently received two awards; MTOT hosted a post RMI FAM trip; and based on Smith Travel Research, Montana was second in the nation for lodging occupancy in July and August coming in slightly below North Dakota.

Revenue Reports

- *1st Quarter—(January-March 2011)*—Statewide collections were up 11% over 2010
- *2nd Quarter—(April-June 2011)*—Statewide collections were up 2% over 2010

CONSUMER ADVERTISING—Katy Peterson, Consumer Marketing Manager

A preview of the winter season campaigns including national, key markets (Minneapolis, Seattle and Chicago), and the "Get Lost (in Montana)" in-state campaign were shown.

BRAND/MARKETING WORKSHOP UPDATE —Pam Gosink, Marketing Manager

Pam reported that MTOT is working with MercuryCSC on finalizing the brand marketing workshop presentations.

DISCUSSION WITH AREA LEGISLATORS

Representative Bob Wagner from Harrison attended.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Yellowstone Winter Use: Yellowstone National Park will open for winter use on December 15, 2011 using the same rules as the previous two years.

Whitefish Mobile Application: A mobile application for the city of Whitefish is available for Droid smartphones.

Publications: A suggestion was made that "official" state travel guides and brochures produced by the Regions/CVBs have something that identifies them as such. One comment was that the "Get Lost (in Montana)" logo be used.

Brand Books: Pam Gosink reported that 7,500 Brand Books are being printed with some photo changes.

Small Communities: Jeff Welch acknowledged Ennis and said it was nice to meet in smaller communities because they are appreciative to have attendees in their area. He thanked the Site Selection Task Force for choosing Ennis.

CONSUMER ADVERTISING—Katy Peterson, Consumer Marketing Manager

Key Performance Indicators & Metrics—In 2010, statewide visitation to Montana up 5.5% (down 0.10% in 2009) Katy compared the number of vacationer groups, by quarter, noting that information for the first and second quarters of 2011 is not yet available.

- 3rd quarter (July-September) 2010, 1,052,000 groups—up 6% from the same quarter in 2009
- 4th quarter (October-December) 2010, 188,000 groups—up 20% from the same quarter in 2009

2011 Branding Awareness Study Results— Katy reviewed the study that is being done by Leisure Trends Group. In 2011, awareness of advertising more than doubled in Seattle, quadrupled in Minneapolis and increased by five times in Chicago following the campaign. The study shows that in 2011, the target audience is 45% more likely to travel to Montana if they are aware of the advertising.

MONTANA HERITAGE COMMISSION UPDATE—Marilyn Ross, Chair

Marilyn talked about some recent projects underway by the Montana Heritage Commission. They have recently redone the fencing around Nevada City to help protect the museum. They have also created off-highway parking for the Nevada City Museum. They are hoping to have a train running between Virginia and Nevada cities by the summer of 2012.

ITRR RESEARCH PROJECTS UPDATE

—Dr. Norma Nickerson, ITRR Director —Neala Fugere, ITRR intern student

—Evan Tipton, ITRR intern student —Dr. Christine Oschell, ITRR Assistant Director

Visitors from Designated Marketing Areas: A look at 2010—Norma reviewed a study on visitors from designated marketing areas.

MT Nonresident Visitor Information Center Use—Neala reviewed a study of how non-residents use of visitor centers in Montana.

Hunter Access on MT Private Lands: Landowner Response to Initiative 161—Evan reviewed a study on the landowner concerns and ideas about hunting on their private property as it relates to the passage of Initiative 161.

Resident Travel: Update & Preliminary July 2011 Numbers—Christine reviewed the preliminary resident traveler information. The study showed that of the 484 respondents, 78% spent nights away from home on their trips. The top three activities were fishing, shopping, scenic driving and 76% of the respondents reported hearing and/or seeing promotional material.

PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR) UPDATE

—Donnie Sexton, Public Relations Manager/Staff Photographer

—Mike Harrelson, Public Relations Director, MercuryCSC

Donnie gave an update on MTOT's public relations efforts. In FY11, the state garnered about \$37.5 million in travel-related publicity, compared to \$16 million in FY09 and \$30 million in FY10.

Mike showed an example of working with a single media outlet - Backcountry magazine - resulting in an article in the February 2012 issue featuring skiing in Glacier National Park.

MONTANA iPad APPLICATION SNEAK PEEK —Bev Clancey, Publications Manager

Bev gave a brief preview of the Montana iPad application. It is anticipated the application will launch in mid-December.

MEETING RECESSED

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2011

Rhonda Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. She thanked the reception sponsors, the hotel staff and the Ennis Chamber of Commerce for their hospitality.

TRIBAL TOURISM UPDATE

Ed DesRosier and Jackie Yellowtail gave a brief overview of the AIANTA (American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association) Conference that they recently attended in New Mexico. They also announced that the 2012 AIANTA conference will be in Billings September 23-27, 2012. She thanked the Billings CVB and Custer Country for their support in bringing this conference to Montana.

COMMITTEE REPORTS BY RESPECTIVE CHAIRS

TIIP Grants Task Force—Kim Holzer, Chair

Kim reported there were 30 grant applications received, and the committee is recommending full funding for seven projects and partial funding for five projects for a total amount of \$530,000.

It was asked if TIIP Grant recipients report how grant funds are spent and how the funding impacts the community. It was suggested recipients get assistance to help improve marketing efforts. The assistance could include education and funding.

Stan Ozark moved to approve the TIIP grant application recommendations of the committee and they be sent for approval to Commerce Director Schwinden. Gail Richardson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Tourism Awards Task Force—Stan Ozark

The Tourism Award Task Force had nothing to report.

Tourism Awareness/Public Awareness Committee—Bill McGladdery, Chair

Bill reported that the Research Committee received 27 requests for projects for FY13 and narrowed it down to six. The committee recommended that Norma provide the cost for each of the projects and bring the information to the February 2012 TAC meeting for final approval.

Site Selection Task Force—Meg O'Leary, Chair

The Site Selection Task Force is working on scoring criteria for bids on meeting locations. The committee is finalizing the score sheet and hopes to have it complete for final approval at the February 2012 TAC meeting. The committee is also recommending that the TAC reach out to smaller communities and work with them on hosting the October TAC meetings. The Site Selection Task Force asked the Regions and CVBs to have a list of viable communities at the February 2012 TAC meeting for the committee to review.

Regulations Committee—Amber Wood-Jensen, Chair

The Regulations Committee did not meet, but reported the revisions to the regulations are in the process of being adopted into administrative rule.

Audits & Applications Committee—Amber Wood-Jensen, Chair

New Project Recommendations:

Great Falls CVB: The Audits & Applications Committee recommended final approval as submitted for an internet advertising and website updates creative project for \$3,500.

Stan Ozark moved to approve the recommendation. Bev Harbaugh seconded. Motion passed.

Glacier Country: The Audits & Applications Committee recommended final approval as submitted for a group marketing project for \$31,000.

Bill McGladdery moved to approve the recommendation. **Jackie Yellowtail** seconded. Motion passed.

Audits:

The Audits & Applications Committee recommended final approval for the following FY11 audits:

Custer Country: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$456.39.

Stan Ozark moved to approve. **Bill McGladdery** seconded. Motion passed.

Glacier Country: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$177,739.99.

Cyndy Andrus moved to approve. **Bev Harbaugh** seconded. Motion passed.

Russell Country: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$54,433.38.

Gail Richardson moved to approve. **Jackie Yellowtail** seconded. Motion passed.

Yellowstone Country: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$124,471.62.

Bill McGladdery moved to approve. **Bev Harbaugh** seconded. Motion passed.

Billings CVB: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$77,761.22.

Kim Holzer moved to approve. **Gail Richardson** seconded. Motion passed.

Bozeman CVB: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$62,751.79.

Cyndy Andrus moved to approve. **Bev Harbaugh** seconded. Motion passed.

Great Falls CVB: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$90,955.20.

Bev Harbaugh moved to approve. **Cyndy Andrus** seconded. Motion passed.

Havre CVB: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$4,633.07.

Gail Richardson moved to approve. **Bill McGladdery** seconded. Motion passed.

Helena CVB: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$6,971.80.

Kim Holzer moved to approve. **Cyndy Andrus** seconded. Motion passed.

Custer Country: The Audits & Applications Committee recommended approval for formal recognition of Montana's Custer Country as the organization to receive and administer the Custer Country lodging facility use tax funds.

Stan Ozark moved to approve. **Kim Holzer** seconded. Motion passed.

MTRI—Amber Wood-Jensen, TAC Representative

There is nothing new to report for MTRI at this time.

Wayfinding Task Force—Cyndy Andrus, Chair

Cyndy said that the Wayfinding Task Force will have something to report at the February 2012 TAC meeting.

WEBSITE CAMPAIGN UPDATE—Thurston Elfstrom, Senior Interactive Manager

Thurston gave a preview of the newly updated websites for MTOT. They are working to match the current advertising campaigns with the copy and photos so there is consistency amongst all consumer-facing elements from MTOT.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT—Rhonda Fitzgerald, TAC Chair

Legislation—The Economics Affairs Committee is reviewing the TAC as part of HB 142, which is a bill requiring a review of all advisory councils and a recommendation on whether to sunset them.

Additional Funding—Several projects have moved forward due to funds that MTOT has available from previous years.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Continued)

Department of Revenue—Jim McKeon from the Montana Department of Revenue manages the lodging taxes for the State of Montana. He reminded attendees that he is available for questions regarding the lodging tax and can be reached at 406-444-1940 or by e-mail at jmckeon@mt.gov. He said if there are concerns about lodging tax collections in their communities to please contact him.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT UPDATE—Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator

Southeast Montana Regional Tourism Planning Project—MTOT's Development & Education program is participating in a \$110,000 Planning Grant Project funded by the U.S. Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration (EDA) along with tourism and economic development entities in four states. Project will look at the tourism development needs of a four state region involving SE Montana (Custer Country), NE Wyoming, and western South and North Dakota. The plan will look at the opportunity and potential benefit for regional promotion efforts, use of existing marketing organizations and/or the creation of a 4-state regional group to work on tourism development and promotions.

2013-2017 Strategic Plan—MTOT is beginning to plan for development of the 2013-2017 Strategic Plan. Council members discussed ideas for the goals and scope of the plan at their retreat prior to the TAC meeting. Three points came from the discussion:

- Build from the last two strategic plans, don't recreate them.
- Be inclusive, but narrow the focus of the plan on key stakeholders who are committed and actively involved in achieving the goals, strategies, and actions of the plan. Previous plans may have been too broad and included too many actions.
- Have a five year planning window, but following review on progress and accomplishments update the plan's actions in shorter time frames - two years was mentioned.
- Broad goals to structure the plan around could include: Marketing through the lens of The Montana Brand; Product enhancement across the state with particular focus on the state's rural areas; Respect for the MT Tourism & Recreation Industry and its work.

Victor will review the notes from the retreat, visit with Mercury's facilitators, and gather input from other stakeholders to assist in the development of the process for the next plan. Right now, no specific timeline is in place, but assume that the process would get underway in early 2012 and be completed by the beginning of 2013.

NEW BUSINESS

Future Speaker Suggestions

- Suggestion was made to invite Bill Bryan from "Off the Beaten Path" to speak at a future meeting.

UPCOMING TAC MEETINGS

- **February 6-8, 2012**—Big Horn Resort, Billings
- **June 4-6, 2012**—UM—Western, Dillon

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.