

**TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 2-3, 2017  
HELENA, MT**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT**

Bill McGladdery, Chair—Butte	Rachel Gregg—Missoula	Brian Sprenger—Belgrade
Glenniss Indreland, Vice Chair—Big Sky	Katie Grice—Big Sky	Alger Swingley—Great Falls
Tami Burke—Glasgow	Kim Holzer—Stanford	Steve Wahrlich—Billings
Rhonda Fitzgerald—Whitefish	Patricia McGlynn—Kalispell	

**COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Lindzy Roth—Kalispell

**DEPT. of COMMERCE (DOC) and MT OFFICE OF TOURISM & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (MOTBD) STAFF**

Pam Haxby-Cote—Director, DOC	Jenny Pelej—Bureau Chief, Marketing
Sean Becker—Administrator, MOTBD	Joe Ramler—Senior Economist
Jan Stoddard—Bureau Chief, Industry Services & Outreach	Barb Sanem—Compliance Specialist
Raylee Honeycutt—Consumer Marketing Manager	Heather Sobrepena—Section Manager
Dan Iverson—Communications Manager	Lonie Stimac—Made in Montana Manager
Marlee Iverson—International Travel Trade Manager	Allison Whitmer—Film Commissioner
Carmen Levick—Tourism Outreach Coordinator	

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2017**

**CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS, NEW BUSINESS**

Council Chair, Bill McGladdery called the meeting of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) to order at 1:00 p.m. Introductions of Council members, Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development (MOTBD) staff and the audience followed.

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- June 6-7, 2017 TAC Meeting Minutes  
Brian Sprenger moved to approve the minutes. Glenniss Indreland seconded. Motion passed.

**TAC MEMBER ROUNDTABLE**

Updates and information of happenings in Montana were given by TAC members. Discussion included:

- Big Sky had their 2<sup>nd</sup> busiest summer with occupancy and revenue up.
- Overall air service is up across Montana.
- Billings occupancy rate was up in March and May, but down in July and August.
- Missoula had a successful summer concert season with two new outdoor venues.
- Take Flight Missoula is a new partnership formed to help Missoula grow and maintain flight service.
- All of Butte's summer festivals grew in 2017 with the Montana Folk Festival achieving record numbers.
- Big Sky will be open until April 22 for ski season.
- Fort Peck had a very busy and successful season.
- Northeast Montana is working to expand on bicycle tourism business
- Fire season had a huge impact across Montana through the summer and early fall.
- Glacier Park visitation numbers were high.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS BY RESPECTIVE CHAIRS

### Executive Committee—Bill McGladdery, Chair

Bill thanked everyone for participating and attending the TAC retreat which was held prior to the full Council meeting.

Topics of discussion included:

- TAC member roles and responsibilities
- Building a more cohesive and collaborative relationship with MOTBD, Regions and CVBs
- Overview of documents including the TAC Operating Policy, Tourism Charter, Tourism Region/CVB Rules and Regulations, Strategic Plan for Tourism & Recreation
- Better process for new TAC member orientation

### Marketing Committee/Audits—Glenniss Indreland, Chair

The Marketing Committee recommended final approval for the following audits:

Central MT (FY17): Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$0.15.

**Steve Wahrlich moved to approve the recommendation. Kim Holzer seconded. Motion passed.**

Missouri River Country (FY17): Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$11.65.

**Alger Swingley moved to approve the recommendation. Katie Grice seconded. Motion passed.**

Southeast MT (FY17): Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$34.41.

**Tami Burke moved to approve the recommendation. Patricia McGlynn seconded. Motion passed.**

Yellowstone Country (FY17): Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$369.90

**Rachel Gregg moved to approve the recommendation. Alger Swingley seconded. Motion passed.**

Big Sky CVB (FY17): Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$487.80.

**Steve Wahrlich moved to approve the recommendation. Brian Sprenger seconded. Glenniss Indreland abstained. Motion passed.**

Billings CVB (FY17): Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$0.00.

**Kim Holzer moved to approve the recommendation. Tami Burke seconded. Motion passed.**

Butte CVB (FY17): Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$154.98.

**Steve Wahrlich moved to approve the recommendation. Patricia McGlynn seconded. Motion passed.**

Gardiner CVB (FY17): Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$657.89.

**Brian Sprenger moved to approve the recommendation. Katie Grice seconded. Motion passed.**

Glendive CVB (FY17): Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$21,691.15.

**Brian Sprenger moved to approve the recommendation. Rhonda Fitzgerald seconded. Motion passed.**

Glendive CVB (FY18 Closeout): The responsibility to administer the Glendive CVB lodging tax funds has moved to the Glendive Chamber of Commerce. The remaining Cash on Hand of \$22,388.15 has been transferred to the Glendive Chamber of Commerce and is part of the FY18 Marketing Plan Budget. Recommendation was for approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$22,388.15.

**Steve Wahrlich moved to approve the recommendation. Alger Swingley seconded. Motion passed.**

Helena CVB (FY17): Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$74.45.

**Steve Wahrlich moved to approve the recommendation. Kim Holzer seconded. Motion passed.**

Red Lodge CVB (FY17): Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$86.63.

**Tami Burke moved to approve the recommendation. Rachel Gregg seconded. Motion passed.**

### **Research Committee**—Rhonda Fitzgerald, Chair

Rhonda reported that there were 48 new research project requests proposed for FY19. The Committee met and narrowed that down to 11 or 12 projects that will be reviewed further by ITRR to analyze the method of research needed and an associated cost for each project. The Committee will make a recommendation for research projects to the full Council in April 2018. All research project information can be found at the ITRR website at [www.itrr.umt.edu](http://www.itrr.umt.edu).

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Visit Billings**—Alex Tyson played the new Visit Billings promotional video.

**West Yellowstone**—Wendy Swenson talked about the new OHV/ATV trail use map. This map is the result of a joint venture project that was done in conjunction with partners from their region as well as Idaho.

**Economy in Montana**—Lieutenant Governor Mike Cooney welcomed everyone to Helena and talked about the economy in Montana including the recent budget cuts. He encouraged and asked people to reach out to their local legislators if they have concerns regarding these issues.

**Meeting Structure**—Norma Nickerson asked that the TAC reconsider their meeting structure.

### **WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS**

A panel of Region and CVB directors discussed the challenges and successes of working with social media influencers. Topics discussed included costs, contracts with influencers, content produced by influencer, hashtags, etc. Some Regions/CVBs have utilized agency to help vet and recruit influencers. Most have chosen not to pay an influencer beyond covering of expenses. The panel stressed the importance of research and vetting of the influencer in advance to ensure that the influencer is a good fit for the region or activities that you have hired them to do.

### **MEETING RECESSED**

### **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2017**

Bill McGladdery called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. He thanked the reception sponsors and staff for their hospitality.

### **MARKETING COMMITTEE, CONTINUED**

Katie Grice announced some awards for the tourism Regions and CVBs for the June 2017 marketing plan presentations. She thanked everyone for their efforts in making the new presentation format a success. The winners were:

- Best Use of Technology—Kalispell CVB
- Best Adaptation to Presentation Space—Yellowstone Country
- Most Progress Straight out of Comfort Zone—Miles City CVB
- Best Use of Volunteers—Dillon CVB
- Best Table Display—Missouri River Country
- Best Use of Data—Great Falls CVB

### **MONTANA OFFICE OF TOURISM & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (MOTBD) UPDATE**—MOTBD Staff

Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development (MOTBD) updates and budget information was given. If you would like to receive the Friday Flash news and updates, please email Carmen Levick at [CLevick@mt.gov](mailto:CLevick@mt.gov).

## UPDATES AND INTRODUCTIONS

Pat Doyle—Montana State Parks: Pat gave an update on Montana State Parks. Visitation in Montana State Parks has gone up 26% over the last 5 years due to shoulder seasons in early spring and late fall. However, 2017 showed visitation down 9% due to snowfall in the spring and smoke from wildfires in the summer. Despite smoke cancellations, campground reservations stayed flat. Thanks to the online reservation system, any cancellations were picked up within 24 hours. Bike camps around the state are at capacity as bicycle tourism continues to grow.

Pat also gave an overview of projects that were able to be completed due to a slower summer season. These projects included:

- Bannack State Park flood mitigation project
- Milltown State Park opening in the spring of 2018
- Fire alarm installed at Bannack State Park
- Lighting updated in Lewis & Clark Caverns
- Road in Makoshika State Park was repaired

Rachel Vandervoort—Director, Governor's Office of Outdoor Recreation: Rachel introduced herself and said that she is looking forward to this new position working to grow the outdoor recreation industry in Montana.

## ITRR UPDATES/NEW REPORTS

Norma gave an overview of recent reports published by ITRR. She said that ITRR reports are the sixth highest downloads across all UM sites. For more information, visit <http://itr.UMT.edu/Publications/recent-findings.php>.

## VOICES OF TOURISM UPDATE

Dax gave an overview of the work and mission of Voices of Montana Tourism. They are focused on education and outreach to talk about the economic impact and the importance of tourism in Montana. For more information please visit <http://www.voicesoftourism.com/>.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The TAC thanked Bill McGladdery for his service as the TAC Chair for the last two years. The Nominating Committee recommended that Glenniss Indreland become the TAC Chair and for Katie Grice to become TAC Vice Chair.

Steve Wahrlich moved to accept the recommendation of Glenniss Indreland for the TAC Chair. Rachel Gregg seconded. Motion passed.

Bill McGladdery moved to accept the recommendation of Katie Grice for the TAC Vice-Chair. Alger Swingley seconded. Motion passed.

## UPCOMING TAC MEETINGS

- April 2018—In conjunction with the Governor's Conference on Tourism & Recreation
- June 11-12, 2018—Helena (Location TBD)

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.