

TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 6-7, 2014
MILES CITY, MT

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Amber Wood-Jensen, Chair—Butte	Rhonda Fitzgerald—Whitefish	Stan Ozark—Glasgow
Bill McGladdery, Vice Chair—Butte	Bev Harbaugh—Jordan	Dude Tyler—Livingston
Mark Anderlik—Missoula	Kim Holzer—Stanford	Steve Wahrlich—Billings
Matt Ellis—Missoula	Glenniss Indreland—Big Sky	

COUNCIL MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Cyndy Andrus—Bozeman
Dan Austin—Billings
Lark Paz—Crow Agency

MONTANA OFFICE of TOURISM STAFF

Jeri Duran—Division Administrator	Dan Iverson—Public Information Officer
Riana Davidson—Consumer Marketing Manager	Marlee Iverson—Travel Trade Manager
Thurston Elfstrom—Digital Marketing Manager	Carmen Levick—Executive Assistant
Pam Gosink—Sales & Constituent Services Manager	Jennifer Pelej—Chief of Marketing
Nik Griffith—Public Relations & Multimedia Coordinator	Barb Sanem—Industry Program/Compliance Specialist
Caitlin Hassler—Social Media Coordinator	

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2014

CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS

Council Chair, Amber Wood-Jensen called the meeting of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) to order at 8:00 a.m. Introductions of Council members, Montana Office of Tourism (MTOT) staff and the audience followed.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no requests to make changes to the agenda.

ITRR UPDATE—Dr. Norma Nickerson

Norma gave an overview of completed, ongoing and upcoming research projects. For more information, visit <http://itr.umn.edu/>.

MARKETING SUMMIT

Marketing Vision Overview—Jennifer Pelej, Chief of Marketing, MTOT

Jennifer gave an overview of MTOT's vision for marketing. MTOT is focusing on integration, both internal and external for increasing efficiency, effectiveness and shared resources working together toward the common goal of increasing visitation to the state. The presentations covered systems that MTOT has invested in and put in place to facilitate integration (VisitMT.com redesign, WedDAM, business update tool, partnership with MFO, extending the co-op advertising program, sharing of expertise, research and KPI dashboard). Ultimately, MTOT aims to boost the Montana brand across all platforms and highlighted key cooperative opportunities to do so.

Consumer Marketing—Riana Davidson, Consumer Marketing Manager, MTOT

The consumer marketing report unveiled the new campaign concept for fiscal year 2015, while previewing creative deliverables for the winter campaign. The presentation also included how each program within the marketing team will be incorporating the new concept in the upcoming year. It concluded with showcasing the 2015 Warren Miller Entertainment partnership and video. Maclaren Latta from Mercury CSC gave a brief overview of the research resources that are utilized by MTOT.

International Marketing—Marlee Iverson, Travel Trade Manager, MTOT

The International Marketing presentation consisted of an overview of the international markets we have offices in, why we work with tour operators as well as an overview of our past and current projects with Brand USA/Discover America and Orbitz.

VISITMT.com Web Re-Design—Thurston Elfstrom, Digital Marketing Manager, MTOT

Thurston presented the redesigned visitmt.com website. He followed that up with an overview of <http://business.visitmt.com/> which is the new business resource tool that allows Montana tourism constituents to update their own listings on visitmt.com

Montana Film Office—Nik Griffith, Public Relations & Multimedia Coordinator, MFO

The Montana Film Office and Montana Office of Tourism are focusing on providing quality, engaging video content through a number of platforms. Focusing on YouTube as the #1 video-on-demand delivery platform, we have identified strategies used by top brands to ensure results and conversions for regions, CVBs, and brands. In addition to these strategies, the Montana Film Office and Office of Tourism can provide backing for projects through staff support and grant opportunities.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OF CO-OP NEEDS

Discussion regarding co-op opportunities with MTOT with input from the Regions and CVBs took place. Information for these opportunities can be found at <http://montanaturismcoops.com/>.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE DISCUSSION

Rhonda Fitzgerald reminded the TAC members that they may not testify for or against legislation as a Council member unless the Council has taken a formal position, transmitted its intention to the Director of the Department of Commerce and the request has been approved by the Governor's Office. Council members may however testify as a private citizen.

Mike Garcia from Voices of Montana Tourism gave an overview of the work that Voices of Montana Tourism is doing in preparation for the 2015 legislative session to protect funding for tourism.

MEETING RECESSED

TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2014

Amber Wood-Jensen called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. She thanked the reception sponsors and hotel staff for their hospitality.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Approval of June 2-3, 2014 TAC Meeting Minutes
 - Approval of June 30, 2014 TAC Meeting Minutes
- Stan Ozark moved to approve the minutes. Kim Holzer seconded. Motion passed.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Wahrlich: Steve commented about an email sent out from the Coalition of Montana Chambers which is made up of the seven largest Chambers of Commerce in Montana (Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell and Missoula). The e-mail was written by a person that is not part of the coalition and was fabricated and made to look like the chambers were against looking at the opportunity of taking all or part of the 3% lodging tax and utilizing it for tourism related matters. He stated that this is in opposition of what the Billings Chamber of Commerce agreed upon. While the topic was discussed by the coalition, they were not in 100% agreement. He asked that people take time to verify information that they receive in this world of "instant" news and information.

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.

COMMITTEE REPORTS BY RESPECTIVE CHAIRS

Executive Committee—Amber Wood-Jensen, Chair

Amber said that the Executive Committee had a brief meeting on Sunday, October 5, 2014. They talked about TAC committee structure. She stated that while the Marketing/Audits Committee and the Research Committee will continue, they will be re-evaluating the ad-hoc committees.

Rhonda Fitzgerald gave a brief overview of the Main Street Montana Project which is Governor Bullock's business plan for economic development for Montana. The plan talks about growing the economy statewide and identifies 12 industries in Montana that drive the economy, with tourism being one of them. Rhonda is the co-chair for the Tourism KIN (Key Industry Network) that is made up of business leaders that will meet over the next year to brainstorm on how to build the economy not only for their specific industry but to also work with other industries and collaborate to work together. For more information on the Main Street Montana Project business plan, visit <http://www.mainstreetmontanaproject.com/>.

Another topic discussed by the Executive Committee discussed was the TAC member job descriptions. She said that it is in final draft form and asked for a motion to approve it. The Council will ask that this document be placed on the Governor's website for council applications to give a better understanding as to what the responsibilities of a TAC member are. The document reads:

Montana Tourism Advisory Council Member Job Description

Our Vision: To increase visitation and improve the visitor experience while preserving Montana community values and protecting our unique places.

Responsibilities of a TAC member:

1. Regularly attends Council meetings and important related meetings. The TAC meets 4 times a year and holds an annual retreat.
2. Makes serious commitment to participate actively in Council work.
3. Has a clear understanding of the Rules & Regulations for use of the Montana Lodging Use Tax Revenue.
4. Volunteers for and willingly accepts assignments and completes them thoroughly and on time.
5. Stays informed about Council matters, prepares themselves well for meetings, and reviews and comments on minutes and reports.
6. Gets to know other Council members and builds a collegial working relationship that contributes to consensus.
7. Is an active participant in the Council's annual retreat and planning efforts.
8. Attends at least 1 meeting of the Region which you represent and 2 CVB meetings each year.

Objectives for the TAC:

1. Commit to the “Geotraveler” by bringing the concept to life with our industry partners, regions and other stakeholders.
2. Test a “borderless” approach to promoting Montana breaking down geographic and political boundaries one-step at a time.
3. Set vision, goals and objectives from within.
4. Measure success and monitor progress to guide in setting and meeting expectations.
5. Build a more rewarding working environment by being dedicated to getting more out of our team and ourselves.

Board Terms: The Council is composed of not less than 12 members appointed by the Governor from Montana's private sector travel industry and includes at least one member from Indian tribal governments, with representation from each tourism region initially established by executive order of the Governor. Members of the council serve staggered 3-year terms, subject to replacement at the discretion of the governor.

Kim Holzer moved to approve the final draft of the TAC member job descriptions. Bev Harbaugh seconded. Motion passed.

Marketing Committee/Audits—Stan Ozark, Chair

The Marketing Committee recommended final approval for the following FY14 audits:

Billings CVB: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$71,639.69.

Bill McGladdery moved to approve the recommendation. Dude Tyler seconded. Motion passed.

Central Montana: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$0.84.

Glenniss Indreland moved to approve the recommendation. Mark Anderlik seconded. Motion passed.

Glacier Country: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$316.61.

Dude Tyler moved to approve the recommendation. Bev Harbaugh seconded. Motion passed.

Miles City: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$17,715.69.

Bev Harbaugh moved to approve the recommendation. Matt Ellis seconded. Motion passed.

Missouri River Country: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$.06.

Mark Anderlik moved to approve the recommendation. Bill McGladdery seconded. Motion passed.

Southeast Montana: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$171,531.83.

Dude Tyler moved to approve the recommendation. Glenniss Indreland seconded. Motion passed.

Whitefish CVB: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$16,282.46.

Bill McGladdery moved to approve the recommendation. Bev Harbaugh seconded. Rhonda Fitzgerald abstained. Motion passed.

Yellowstone Country: Approval as submitted with uncommitted funds on hand of \$173.35.

Glenniss Indreland moved to approve the recommendation. Kim Holzer seconded. Motion passed.

Research Committee—Bill McGladdery, Chair

Bill said that there were 25 research projects proposed for FY16. The Committee met and narrowed that down to about 8 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 at the February 2015 TAC meeting.

Community Outreach—Kim Holzer, Chair

Kim reviewed community outreach projects and resources that are currently in place. They include:

- **"Coming Together To Expand Montana's Tourism Story" Workshops**—MTOT is continuing to do tourism workshops across the state. The Montana Main Street Program/Department of Commerce has included in their membership requirements that the community applying has held, or has set a date to hold a "Coming Together to Expand Montana's Tourism Story" workshop. Any community, civic organization or association that is interested in scheduling a workshop can call the Office of Tourism at 841-2870.
- **MTOT Electronic Marketing Listings**—The Montana Office of Tourism has launched a tool for tourism industry stakeholders to optimize their listings at VisitMT.com. Creating and updating a listing on VisitMT.com is completely free and listing owners can now update their own information at their convenience. Updating is fast and easy with the new tool. Listing owners are being asked to review their information at least once per year to ensure it's up to date, but listings can be updated as often as you'd like. Bookmark business.visitmt.com to access this great added value tool for promoting your business online with VisitMT.com. Make a note that the Office of Tourism will only send paper based survey forms out upon request.
- **Co-Op Marketing Program: Consumer Marketing & Electronic Marketing**—Co-operative marketing opportunities with the Montana Office of Tourism are now available at www.montanatourismcoops.com. The cooperative marketing program enables Montana's tourism partners to buy into premium advertising opportunities with high-profile brands like Orbitz, TripAdvisor and National Geographic Traveler at significantly lower rates. Some options qualify for a dollar-for-dollar match. Visit their website for more information on sharing resources to promote Montana.
- **Region/CVB Meetings**—It is the goal of the TAC Members to attend Region and/or CVB meetings in January or February annually. While attending local area meetings, it is also being encouraged that TAC members visit areas outside of their regions to get a better perspective of what is going on in those areas that they may not be familiar with.
- **E-Learning-U Webinars**—The Montana Office of Tourism's eLearningU webinars are presented every Thursday from noon to 1 p.m. and are free to MTOT partners. Webinars also are recorded and may be viewed later if you're unable to attend the live sessions. To receive weekly eLearningU webinar invites, please contact MTOT Development and Education Manager Victor Bjornberg at 841-2795.
- **Montana Superhost**—A statewide tourism and hospitality program, Montana Superhost is custom designed for Montana hospitality providers; traveling to your communities and delivered directly to your computer. To become a certified Montana Superhost Business or Community, visit their website at www.montanasuperhost.com or contact Jodi Smith at 756-3374 or Victor Bjornberg.
- **Montana Main Street Program**—The Department of Commerce Community Development Division will begin accepting Montana Main Street membership applications for the 2015 application cycle on October 1, 2014. The Montana Main Street Program membership application and guidelines can be accessed on our website: <http://mtmainstreet.mt.gov>. If you have questions regarding the application process contact the Montana Main Street staff at 841-2770.

Calendar Efficiencies—Glenniss Indreland, Chair

In an informal survey conducted in the spring of 2014, as well as at the TAC retreat in late June, the topic of the current calendar was brought up. Many felt the current calendar may not be the most efficient use of time and money. Issues were also discussed regarding the release date of the MTOT co-ops and the concept of a yearly marketing summit. At the June TAC retreat a small committee was tasked with formulating some options that might fit the current landscape better than the old model and better engage the TAC and Regions/ CVBs. This committee gathered feedback from MTOT, the TAC, Regions, and CVBs and offered three possible options for comment.

The current calendar for TAC, Region and CVB meetings is:

February- TAC meeting

March/April- Governor's Conference on Tourism with short TAC meeting

April- Region/ CVB meeting

June- TAC meeting (marketing plans due)

October- TAC retreat and meeting

November- Region/ CVB meeting

The option presented below is the alternative put together by this committee with the feedback of many others:

- January or February—TAC members attend at least 1 Region/ CVB meeting or retreat. A meeting via conference call will be held to handle any time-sensitive items (audit approvals, ITRR budget approval, etc.)
- March—Governor's Conference on Tourism with TAC meeting held on Sunday. The location of this conference will no longer be held only in Helena on odd years.
- Spring—Regions/ CVBs will have a meeting, likely via conference call, if needed. The option to have an in-person meeting at Governor's Conference would be open as well.
- June—TAC meeting (marketing plans due)
- Late July/ early August- Co-ops from MTOT are released.
- October—Day 1: TAC retreat and Region/ CVB meeting held concurrently. Day 2: TAC meeting with entire day dedicated to a marketing summit. Day 3: TAC meeting where any items such as audit approvals are handled (this is likely only a half-day meeting).

Glenniss Indreland moved to adopt the new calendar effective starting with the June 1-2, 2015 meeting. Rhonda Fitzgerald seconded. Discussion followed.

Questions were raised concerning the need for having the Region and CVB meetings on the TAC calendar. Explanation was made that it was to try and make things more efficient so that some of the meetings could be held concurrently to have less travel time and cut some of the expenses for multiple meetings. Other suggestions made were to have the meetings start at 12:00 or 1:00 so that those that live close enough to travel that morning would not have to leave the day before to get there. Clarification of the January/February meeting was asked for.

Glenniss Indreland amended to motion to change the language for the January/February meeting to read "TAC members attend at least one Region or CVB board meeting or retreat." Glenniss Indreland moved to adopt the new calendar effective starting with the June 1-2, 2015 meeting. Rhonda Fitzgerald seconded. Motion passed.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS—Stan Ozark

Stan said that the recommendation of the Nominating Committee is for the TAC Chair to be elected to a two year term. The Chair would be elected coming into a non-legislative year so that they will be in the Chair position for one year prior to serving during a legislative year. The Nominating Committee recommended the nomination of Amber Wood-Jensen to remain the TAC Chair and for Bill McGladdery to remain the TAC Vice Chair.

Stan Ozark moved to accept the recommendation of the nominating committee. Kim Holzer seconded. Motion passed.

UPCOMING TAC MEETINGS

- February 2-3, 2015—Comfort Suites/Gateway Center, Helena

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.