

MAIN STREET MONTANA PROJECT

A BUSINESS PLAN *For Montana by Montanans*

Tourism KIN Meeting Minutes

February 9th, 2015

10:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Helena, Montana

Prepared by Michaela Wolfinger, Mary Craigle, Jeri Duran

Co-Chairs

Rhonda Fitzgerald, Garden Wall Inn

Taylor Middleton, Big Sky Resort

KIN Members Present

Bill Berg, Coolworks

Bill McGladdery, Town Pump

Colin Davis, Chico Hot Springs

Darrell Norman, Lodgepole Gallery/ Tipi Village

Eric Becker, Geysers Whitewater

Marc Ducharme, Xanterra Glacier

Mike Scholz, Buck's T4

Nick Polumbus, Whitefish Mountain Resort

Sharon Walker, Canyon Ferry KOA

Stacey Schnebel, Stonefly Lounge

Steve Wahrlich, Best Western Plus

Clocktower Inn

Peter Donau, Delaware North

KIN Members Present Via Phone

Sheila Matt, KwaTaqNuk Resort

Evan Bowser, Bowser Brewing

KIN Members Absent

Andrew Wilcox, National/Alamo

Cindy Ognjanov, Glacier Park, Inc.

Cris Coughlin, Glacier Guides

Dan Vermillion, Sweetwater Travel

Hillary Folkvord, Sacajawea Hotel

Jim Devine, Beaver Creek Brewery

Melissa Alder/ Kelli Hart, Freeheel &

Wheel

Pat Carloss, Tupelo Grille/Haskill Station

Staff/Public

Mary Craigle, Montana Department of Commerce

Michaela Wolfinger, Montana Department of Commerce

Jeri Duran, Montana Department of Commerce

Carmen Levick, Montana Department of Commerce

Jim Molloy, Governor's Office

- 10:00 AM Meeting starts with welcome and introductions from Co-Chairs
- 10:15 AM Governor Bullock welcomes members, gives overview and answered questions
- 10:40 AM KIN members break into small groups – after discussion three initial prioritized action areas were identified for the KIN to work on initially.

Action Items deferred to future discussions are:

- Working Group #2 Rules, Regulations, Infrastructure, Other Policy Matters
- Working Group #3 Sustainable Tourism; Increasing Resident Travel
- Working Group #6 Financing for growth and start-up for innovative tourism related businesses; Research

Working Group #1 Work with MT PK-20 Education System

Action A) Workforce development through sustained effort starting at the 4th – 5th grade to realize opportunities and appreciate MT uniqueness vs. elsewhere

How this action could be carried out:

- Multi-year program that provides and maintains a vision of job in industry/ in classrooms
- Outreach to studies on MT culture and amenities through activities and materials - geocaching, media, apps – appropriate through high school...
- Campaign of “no child left indoors”

These materials could be developed somewhat generically so that other industry sectors could customize and use

(NOTE: Since our meeting a new national program has been announced: <http://www.nationalparks.org/ook/every-kid-in-a-park>)

Why take this action:

- Would increase resident travel
- Would increase available workforce for businesses which spurs the economy
- Gives kids a context of the industry
- Gives kids hope and excitement about their future;
- Energize these young minds
- Is fun for kids to participate so they are motivated
- Would keep students here after graduations due to interest in the industry and appreciation for Montana's attributes
- Works with OPI / MUS Pathway goals; 21st prep

Who: MTOT, MUS, OPI, DLI, MT School Board, school boards and HS representatives, progressive teachers, Tribal Colleges, student clubs (DECA for example), Tourism KIN and possibly other KIN representatives

Working Group #1 Work with MT PK-20 Education System (continued)

Action B) Change College Schedule to late September to June (also High School)

How this action could be carried out:

- Representatives from Tourism and other KINS interested in changing schedule would meet with OPI / MUS

Why take this action:

- Allows for longer summer jobs for teachers
- Students could earn more money for school
- Makes workforce available longer for tourism, ag, other KINS

Who: MTOT, MUS, OPI, DLI, Tribal Colleges, representative KIN members

Action C) Increase career opportunities in tourism industry sector at 2 and 4 year schools

How this action could be carried out:

- Career packets for career advisors in schools
- Internships in the industry
- Hospitality training

Why take this action:

- Provide career pathways for students in the industry
- Keeps MT youth in state during school and after graduation
- Provide workforce as population ages

Who: MTOT, MUS, DLI, Tribal Colleges, Tourism KIN and possibly other KIN representatives, Tourism sector business owners

Discussion Group Members

Bill Berg, Coolworks
Darrell Norman, Lodgepole Gallery/ Tipi Village
Eric Becker, Geysir Whitewater
Nick Polumbus, Whitefish Mountain Resort
Stacey Schnebel, Stonefly Lounge
Steve Wahrlich, Best Western Plus Clocktower Inn
Chris Coughlin, Glacier Wilderness Guides
Staff: Michaela Wolfinger

Working Group #4 Leverage the Brand

Action A) Incentivize using MT brand through a statewide strategy

How this action could be carried out:

- Develop multi-business co-ops and provide matching funds to increase collaboration

Why take this action:

- Increase business
- More efficient and effective use of resources across business (lodging, restaurant, guides, attractions, etc.)

Who: MTOT, Tourism KIN representatives, Convention & Visitors Bureau representatives, TAC, tourism region representatives, community representatives

Action B) Increase consistency of brand with goal of increasing the understanding by communities of the MT Brand

How this action could be carried out:

- Case studies showing success of Whitefish using brand to drive tourism
- Guidance on how to “copy success”
- Develop common materials (Visitor guides, websites) that allow some ability to individualize; continuity of brand but individuality of community

Why take this action:

- Increase business
- More efficient and effective use of resources across business (lodging, restaurant, guides, attractions, etc.)

Who: ITRR for community data, MTOT, Tourism KIN representatives, Convention & Visitors Bureau representatives, TAC, tourism region reps, community reps

Discussion Group Members

Bill McGladdery—Town Pump
Darrell Norman, Lodgepole Gallery/ Tipi Village
Marc Ducharme—Xanterra Glacier
Mike Scholz—Buck’s T-4
Nick Polumbus, Whitefish Mountain Resort
Pete Donau—Delaware North
Sharon Walker—Canyon Ferry KOA
Stacey Schnebel—Stonefly Lounge
Staff: Carmen Levick

Working Group #5 More Marketing Resources

Action A) Build and increase partnerships with entities both inside and outside tourism sector with goals (short term and long term) of infrastructure, including transportation and wayfinding, and attractions improvements and development; and protecting the brand. Also work to have the Tourism community strengthen its relationship with FWP so that FWP can continue sound management of fish and wildlife resources

How this action could be carried out:

- Review efforts in place with goal of decreasing duplication
- Forum for communications with other partners

Why take this action:

- Protect the uniqueness of the MT
- Increase coordination across tourism sector with partners

Who: TAC, tourism region representatives, FWP, historical society, arts council, Heritage commission representatives, Transportation representatives, Tourism KIN Representatives

Action B) Coordinate and consolidate spending by tourism regions and MTOT to eliminate duplication (ie: travel planners, websites, digital storage, photography) and leverage buying power. Increase participation in marketing coops.

Who: Regions, MTOT, and TAC

Discussion Group Members

Bill McGladdery, Town Pump
Colin Davis, Chico Hot Springs
Eric Becker, Geyser Whitewater
Mike Scholz, Buck's T4
Peter Donau, Delaware North
Sharon Walker, Canyon Ferry KOA
Steve Wahrlich, Best Western Plus Clocktower Inn
Dan Vermillion, Sweetwater Travel
Melissa Alder/ Kelli Hart, Freeheel & Wheel
Staff: Jeri Duran

2:30 PM Adjourned