

**Utah Office of Tourism
Board Meeting
Friday, February 12, 2021
Online ZOOM Meeting**

Members Present:	Lance Syrett, Greg Miller, Shayne Wittwer, Sara Toliver, Kym Buttschardt, Glen Overton, Brian Merrill, Dean Cox, Dirk Clayson, Elaine Gizler, Mike Taylor, Nathan Rafferty, Jim Powell
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Members Excused:	
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Staff:	Vicki Varela, Julia Barnhouse, Becky Keeney, Lorraine Daly, Dave Williams, Andrew Gillman, Anna Loughridge, Rachel Bremer, Bianca Lyon, Celina Sinclair, Denise Jordan, Emma Checketts, Flint Timmins, Haley Rodgers, Jody Blaney, Kelly Day, Melissa Kinney, Rosie Serago
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Visitors:	Jonathan Smithgall, Chris Newton, Ethan Koehler, Gavin Bohne, Rita Vigor, Hannah Saunders, Joan Hammer, Justin Anderson, Kylie Kullack, Lee Banov, Lizzy Duffy, Maria Twitchell, Martin Stoll, Megan Griffin, Molly O’Neil, Monique Beeley, Nancy Volmer, Natalie Randall, Nicole Parara, Raelene Davis, Robert Stephenson, Ryan Starks, Samantha Browing, Sara Otto, Stacie Boney, Sydnie Furton, Tina Henrie, Tom Love, Trevin Roberts, Scott Sorenson, Kamron Dalton, Liv Moffat, Chip Haskell, Tommy Joe Lucia

WELCOME

Lance Syrett called the meeting to order.

MINUTES

MOTION: MIKE TAYLOR MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 8, 2021 MEETING THAT WAS HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM. SARA TOLIVER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Vicki Varela, Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism (UOT), reported on the following items:

- Legislative Session – Good outlook for the tourism industry this year. Thanked Natalie Randall with UTIA for driving good policy.
- Economic Development Commission - There is a bill to create an economic development commission which will not create any major change to tourism, but will continue to evolve throughout the session. The tourism industry may be asked to provide input on the broader plan.
- Tourism Day on the Hill - Held virtually this year. Utah is performing better than other western states and the nation thanks to the continued support from the Utah Legislature.
- Meet in Utah – highly productive program that has saved many hotels in the state. Congratulated to the 8 convention districts in the state to innovate and bring small groups to the state.

- EDA Grant – Recognized Bianca Lyon for her leadership that she has shown on the Forever Mighty responsible visitation strategy. She also thanked Flint for his leadership in securing \$1 million in economic development money.

MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT

- **Marketing Committee Report**

- Partner Relations and Forever Mighty Update – Bianca Lyon, Director of Community and Partner Relations, Utah Office of Tourism ([presentation](#)):
 - What's New:
 - Partner Relations Updates
 - New EDA grant
 - Forever Mighty
 - Destination Development
 - Partner Relations Activities
 - Providing info, support, guidance and resources throughout pandemic assistance programs
 - Coordinating PPE to state parks and distressed national park gateway communities
 - Identifying and supporting operational needs with CARES Act dollars
 - Creating and supporting regional collaboration to address challenges
 - Tourism Economic Recovery Task Force
 - Destination Development Programs
 - Identifying cross collaboration opportunities within GOED and other state agencies to better support. Partners
 - Main Street America Pilot Program
 - Identifying partnership opportunities under Forever Mighty
 - Economic Development Grant
 - \$1 million awarded to the Utah Office of Tourism
 - 2020 Part of 2020 CARES Act to address lasting impacts on the coronavirus pandemic
 - Allowed for “travel and tourism related marketing campaigns”
 - Projects must encourage creation or retention of high skill/high pay jobs
 - Industry Training
 - 18-month training program for DMO’s tourism and hospitality businesses and local governments and stakeholders
 - Webinar based program with option for some in-person trainings
 - Focus on critical topics to support economic recovery and resilience
 - Develop high quality content, resources and information
 - Destination recovery
 - 8 week planning workshops for destinations with Corragio Group
 - Cohort based planning to regionally strategize and improve collaboration
 - Scenario based strategic documents that will help the industry recover economically and better plan for the future
 - Marketing Campaign
 - 8 month in-state campaign that encourages residents to visit Utah responsibly

- Purpose is to increase spending in Utah and support leisure and hospitality jobs
- Campaign will focus messaging on Forever Mighty Principles
- Forever Mighty
 - Pillars
 - Tourism Benefits Everyone
 - Utah Can Stay Beautiful
 - Residents Are As Vital As Visitors
 - A Utah For Everyone
 - We Should Stay Positive
 - Forever Mighty Is Inherent To the Utah Brand
 - Next Steps
 - Website enhancements
 - In-state media outreach
 - Partner Resources
 - Treat Lightly partnership
 - Utah Symphony partnership
 - Dark Skies
 - Looking Forward
 - Greater Forever Mighty presence through our website, social media engagement, partnerships and campaigns
 - Recovery programs through trainings, destination planning and responsible travel campaign
 - Enhanced partnership outreach through new partner relations hire, resources and tools and communications
- Destination Development Update – Flint Timmins, Destination Development Specialist, Utah Office of Tourism ([presentation](#)):
 - Mission: to empower Utah communities to become viable, welcoming, and High-quality destinations for tourism.
 - Timeline
 - 2014 – Tourism
 - 2019 – Destination Development Pilot
 - 2020 – Destination Development Round 1
 - March 5, 2021 – Round 2 Applications Due
 - Process: Community Assessment, Strategy Planning, and Brand Marketing
 - Next steps
 - Announce awards on March 8, 2021
 - Schedule projects for the remainder of 2021
 - Support implementation
 - Conduct outreach
- VisitUtah.com Update – Rosie Serago, Content Strategist, Utah Office of Tourism and Ethan Koehler, VP Digital Experience & Technology, Hanson Dodge ([presentation](#)):
 - The Team
 - Hanson Dodge – web development, design, strategy & Analytics
 - Love Communications – SEO & PPC strategy
 - Visit Utah – Content creation and layout, business strategy, live chat
 - Performance Highlights
 - +36% website session growth

- +35% growth in sessions lasting 4+ minutes
 - +80% growth in travel guide downloads
 - 98 million tracked bookings
 - 48% increase year over year
 - 4.6 million site visitors
 - 10 million pages visited
- Southern Utah+ FY20/21update – Molly O’Neil, Strategist, Struck; Jonathan Smithgall, Vice President Digital Marketing and Media, Love Communications; Andrew Gillman, Tourism Creative and Content Director, Utah Office of Tourism ([presentation](#)):
 - Obstacles/Opportunities
 - Demand Considerations
 - Possible decreased demand due to competition from other travel options
 - Lack of group and international travel
 - Congestion and overcrowding in high demand areas at specific times
 - Flight markets coming back, expanding past regional drive markets
 - Popularity of vacation rentals in place of hotels
 - Uncertainties
 - Economic conditions
 - Uncertainty around whether national parks will be back to operating at full capacity
 - Uncertainty around whether large group events including festivals, group gatherings, theater, or concerts will be back
 - Effects of constant Covid-19 news
 - Grand County advertising/promotional policy resolution implications
 - Goals & Objectives
 - Increase length of stay and spend per trip compared to last year
 - Distribute visitation
 - Encourage quality visitation
 - Grow guided travel add-ons to national and state park experiences
 - Create a funnel for Forever Mighty-oriented responsible travelers, combined with in-market, community-based Forever Mighty buy-in and action
 - Audiences
 - Explorers
 - Achievers
 - Families
 - Micro Audiences (women, tbd)
 - Key Message Themes
 - Regional travel: National Park-anchored trips with Red Emerald destinations added on
 - Utah as the ideal pandemic-recovery destination
 - Forever Mighty: supporting local communicates and traveling responsibly
 - Advertising Creative
 - Campaign Plan

- Launch with Regional Travel creative == Mighty 5 and Park Regions
 - Continue to run top-performing Between digital assets
 - Add in emotional, inspirational Renaissance assets
- Endemic Partners: Adjusted Media Plan
 - Activation rules
 - All created content must be usable by Utah Office of Tourism post campaign for a minimum of at least one year
 - All campaigns must include a custom Lift study to monitor if we are driving an increase in desirable visitation, an increase in length of stay, etc.
 - Afar
 - 71% of our audience is looking to travel by car in the next 6 months, driving an average of 410 miles from home on their next road trip
 - Will tailor four unique and regional focused road trip itineraries
 - First-to-Market Interactive journey map
 - TripAdvisor
 - Always On Implementation
 - Curated Guides: Showcase the best of Utah and drive Red Emerald itineraries, with an opportunity for Support Local messaging
 - Social Media Activation (platforms TBD)
 - Outside Online
 - In 2020, there were more than 800k pageviews on Utah content within Outside Online
 - In December alone, there were 5 editorial posts that were focused on Utah.
 - Outside Online's continual engagement with Utah is a great foundation to continually educate through Forever Mighty responsible visitation messaging
 - Affluent medial HHI is \$102k
 - Median age is 42
 - Reach both genders almost equally
 - California, Texas and Denver make up 25% of their entire web audience, which are key markets for Southern Utah+
 - Program Overview: Beyond the Parks
 - Investment \$217,000
 - Custom interactive experience
 - The best outdoor attractions
 - Local restaurants and accommodations
 - Expert local recommendations
 - Social promotion on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
- Social Media
 - Objectives
 - Increase awareness of campaign using ad spots and mantras

- Drive traffic to editorial on Forever Mighty, She Travels, wellness and regional travel
- Build engagement and collection of user-generated content for #SheTravelsUtah, #ForeverMighty and #Visit Utah
- Tactics
 - Campaign creative
 - Social production
 - Paid media
 - Influencers and ambassadors
- Content Creators
 - Reach strategic audiences
 - Reinforce proximity between national parks
 - Asset creation: guide influencers and ambassadors to capture photo and video content creation that extends campaign messaging in a fresh way
 - Messaging themes
 - Forever Mighty
 - Tie in responsible travel
 - Respecting the land will sustain it to heal not just us, but futures generations
 - She Travels Utah
 - Connect back to the relationships and landscapes you've been missing
 - Wellness retreats, solo adventure
- Public Relations
 - Southern Utah Tactics
 - Trends first
 - Monthly headline pitches
 - KPI messaging focus & key storylines laddering up to strategic initiative
 - In-person media hosting for first-hand experiences in Southern Utah
 - Virtual Media Experiences
- Paid Search
 - Strategy
 - Improve ad serving efficiencies
 - Grow impression share for all relevant topics
 - Lean into targeted messaging
 - Monitor quality visitation indicators, and ensure PPC is supporting the media mix
 - Tactics
 - Find new search opportunities
 - New ad copy, new landing pages
 - Audience testing
- Web Enhancements
 - Refresh priority landing pages
 - Add new Forever Mighty enhancements
 - Provide reliable COVID and responsible travel context
- Content

- Source Forever Mighty audio/quote collection by locals on pride of place and visiting with care for multi-purpose use
- Continue Field Guides series, focusing on people of color
- New informational pages and itineraries
- Build out a video/photo asset library that showcases responsible travel
- Create a visit with care, land-centric mantra video for paid distribution in own channels and with retargeting potential in the Forever Mighty space.

- Ski+ New Campaign Update – Kylie Kullack, Head of Client Partnership, Struck; Scott Sorenson, Creative Director, Struck ([presentation](#)):
 - Marketing goals
 - Responsibly drive travel to Utah’s ski resorts and communities
 - Grow Utah’s winter brand awareness and consideration to ensure Utah remains a top-of-mind ski destination
 - Increase the average length of stay and spend per trip.
 - Audiences: families, achievers, explorers, Utah Residents and repeat visitors
 - Campaign Messages
 - Utah has the most – and best – snow for skiing
 - With 10 resorts within an hour of Salt Lake, Utah’s best-in-class skiing is more accessible than anywhere else
 - Availability of non-skiing off-mountain activities
 - Content Development
 - Library Curation
 - Immediately, we are actively working to build a robust library of all Winter content-from which, we can further develop the specific creative deliverables for our paid media and channel distribution

- 2021 Days of ’47 Cowboy Games & Rodeo sponsorship request for \$150,000 ([presentation](#)) – Tommy Jo Lucia
 - Tommy Joe Lucia provided data from the 2019 Days of ’47 Rodeo and is requesting a sponsorship of \$150,000 for the 2021 Days of ’47 Rodeo.

MOTION: SHAYNE WITTEW MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE SPONSORSHIP REQUEST OF \$150,000 FOR THE 2021 DAYS OF ’47 COWBOY GAMES & RODEO. GREG MILLER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

UTAH TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION UPDATE

UTIA Executive Director, Natalie Randall, gave the following update:

- Overview of the UTIA full membership meeting
- Tourism Day on the Hill 2021
 - Sponsored Lunch held over Zoom with state legislators to provide an update on the efforts of the Tourism Industry.
- Legislative Update
 - UTIA Bill Tracker available online
 - Transient Room Tax – HB247

MEETING ADJOURNED