

**Utah Office of Tourism  
Board Meeting  
Friday, January 8, 2021  
Online ZOOM Meeting**

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**Members Present:** Lance Syrett, Greg Miller, Glen Overton, Mike Taylor, Kym Buttschardt, Jim Powell, Sara Toliver, Shayne Wittwer, Brian Merrill, Dean Cox, Dirk Clayson, Elaine Gizler, Nathan Rafferty

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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,

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**Visitors:** Dan Hemmert, Adam Whalen, Ben Hart, Breck Dockstader, Camille Taylor, Carrie Cox, Cody Draper, Hannah Saunders, Jason Marden, Jeremy Chase, Johnathan Smithgall, Joyce Kelly, Judy Cullen, Justin Anderson, Kevin Lewis, Kylie Kullack, Marissa Mallory, Martin Stoll, Megan Griffin, Molly O’Niell, Monique Beeley, Nancy Volmer, Raelene Davis, Rita Vigor, Robert Stephenson, Randy Rhodes, Sara Otto, Sean Brownell, Sydnie Furton, Tina Henrie, Tom Love, Kamron Dalton, Eric Thompson, Jared Tomlinson, Audrey Niedenbach

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**WELCOME**

Lance Syrett called the meeting to order.

**MINUTES**

**MOTION: MIKE TAYLOR MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 11, 2020 MEETING THAT WAS HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM. BRIAN MERRILL SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

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

- Governor-Elect Spencer Cox transition off to a good start.
- Unified Command – Allocated \$13.5M in CARES Funding in order to be responsive to the convention districts in the state. There is another working group that was organized by the Leavitt Group to help facilitate the recovery of the industry.

## MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT

- **Marketing Committee Report**

- Ski+ Campaign update - Jonathan Smithgall, Vice President Digital Marketing and Media, Love Communications  
Andrew Gillman, Tourism Creative and Content Director, Utah Office of Tourism ([Presentation](#))
  - Emerging Travel Trends:
    - 52.6% of people are excited to learn about new travel experiences or destinations.
    - 46.7% of people will not travel until vaccines are made widely available.
    - 27.1% of people are currently planning a future trip in anticipation of the COVID-19 vaccine being widely available.
  - Ski Vacation Searches: Google Trends
    - Looking at keywords compared to last year, you can see that search intent for ski vacations have not reached the same frequency that they had reached last year.
  - Digital Summary
    - So far, this campaign has driven over 277k post impressions, for a total PIR of .43%.
    - There have been an estimated 2.9M hotel searches amounting to a total estimated hotel revenue of \$36M.
    - Our CTV campaign has already tracked an additional 85k pageviews to VisitUtah.com.
    - Native advertising is proving to be one of the most efficient drivers of hotel revenue across all media tactics.
    - Age Breakdown:
      - There has been an 8% increase in those ages 25-44 booking hotels to Utah compared to last year.
      - With a 22% decrease YOY, our target age group of 55-64 has experienced the biggest decline in bookings.
    - Booking patterns continue to evolve-
      - In the last three years, we have monitored continued decreases in book to arrival lengths, down 32% since 2018.
    - Pre-roll performance
      - Our More Mountain Time video ad is performing the strongest in both hotel bookings and post ad exposed pageviews.
    - Creative performance
      - V1 of our creative was rotated out of the campaign due to poor performance.
    - YouTube performance
      - With Ski+ we have a blend of Longform and pre-roll content. Arctic Sled Dogs is the overall best performer, but we are seeing Ski More :15 driving the most scale amongst shorter videos.
      - In total, the campaign has delivered more than 872k sessions, with a 32.5% completed view rate.
    - Website ski content performance
      - Ski content on VisitUtah.com has generated an estimated \$4.18M in hotel revenue since October 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Even with the increase in impressions delivered, our campaign performance increases significantly after 12/26/2020.
- Ski+ Update
  - More high-profile coverage headlined by Park City.
  - Paid Social now live and completing transition from Sparkloft onboarding into full strategy and implementation.
  - Ski+ search campaign our most impressed and clicked campaign.
- New content
  - In response to known traveler concerns, we're distributing a helpful ski travel checklist.
  - Diversifying winter recreation
    - Snow tubing
    - Ice fishing
    - Snowshoeing
    - Winter paragliding
    - Cross-country skiing
  - Adaptive winter recreation offerings
- Social Initiatives: What we've done so far
  - Influencers & ambassadors
  - Strategy
  - Paid Media
  - Community engagement
- Southern Utah+ Winter update - Jonathan Smithgall, Vice President Digital Marketing and Media, Love Communications  
Andrew Gillman, Tourism Creative and Content Director, Utah Office of Tourism ([Presentation](#)):
  - Digital Summary:
    - So far, this campaign has driven over 93k post-impressions, this is an increase compared to last year by more than 18k.
    - We have tracked an estimated \$9.5M in hotel revenue, which is now ahead of the pace established last year. Our ADR is also up compared to last year by about \$10 a day.
  - Age Breakdown
    - There has been a 60% reduction in hotel purchases from travelers aged 65+.
  - Display Performance
    - Our Dark Skies creative has been the most efficient driver of post-ad exposed pageviews.
  - Pre-roll Performance
    - Robbers Roost remained the lowest performer pre-roll asset. This is similar to what we monitored in last year's campaign wrap.
  - Custom Audience Performance
    - As widely predicted across multiple research studies, targeting potential repeat visitors has been our most efficient driver of bookings.
  - YouTube Performance
    - We have seen the strongest performance from the Slot Canyons video, with the highest completed view rate and the most post impressions delivered in campaign.
    - In total the campaign has delivered more than 704k sessions, with a 22.3% completed view rate.
  - Website Winter in Southern Utah Content Performance

- Southern Utah Winter content on VisitUtah.com has generated an estimated \$536k in hotel revenue since December 1<sup>st</sup>.
- WiSU/Southern Utah Update
  - Great coverage keeps rolling in
  - Strong search interest in winter national park and activity keywords with existing and new content telling our story.
  - Paid social now live
  - Holiday Blitz 12/26 to 1/2 complements CTV, highlights new content and tests new audience.
- International Trade and PR Update – Rachel Bremer, Tourism Global Markets Director, Utah Office of Tourism ([presentation](#)):
  - International Forecasts
    - 2019-2024 projected international visitor growth:
      - -4.4% Utah
      - -4% US
  - Travel Trade
    - Walker Tracker
      - October 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup>
      - Canada
        - 331 walkers
        - 49 teams
        - 124 million steps recorded
        - 25 independent articles
      - Australia/New Zealand
        - 501 walkers
        - 87 teams
        - 185 million steps recorded
        - 22 independent articles
    - Book IN Utah
      - \$200k CARES Act Funding
        - \$25,000 Canada
        - \$25,000 Australia
        - \$50,000 UK
        - \$50,000 France
        - \$50,000 Germany
      - Booking periods for agents – November 30, 2020 – June 30, 2021
      - Travel period for consumers – April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022
    - Public Relations
      - FY21 PR
        - Trends
          - Wilderness Tourism: Celestial Escapes
          - Nomadic Tourism: Glampervan Journeys
          - Eco Tourism: Cultivations
          - Authentic Tourism: Community Immersion
          - Wellness Tourism: Longevity Retreats
          - Mindful Tourism: Coworking Camps

- Public Relations Update – Anna Loughridge, Public Relations Manager, Utah Office of Tourism; Marissa Mallory, Senior Director, JPR; Audrey Niedenbach, Account Supervisor, JPR ([Presentation](#))
  - 2020 Key Messages: Pivoting Amidst a Pandemic
    - Explore Utah From Home: Virtual Experiences to Inspire Wanderlust
    - The Return of the Great American Road Trip
    - Remote Respite & Glamping Experiences
    - How Hospitality is Helping Stories From Utah’s Small Business Heroes
    - Forever Mighty/Responsible Visitation
    - Here we Heal: The Healing Power of Utah
  - Utah Itineraries & Experiences
    - Utah’s Urban Culinary Corridor (Salt Lake City, Ogden)
    - Mighty 5 National Parks
    - The Great American Road Trip Through Southern Utah
    - The Best State Parks in America (Green Valley/Moab)
    - Solitude Season/Off-Season Exploration
    - Gone Glamping (Escalante, Kanab, Moab)
    - Dark Skies Travel (Kodachrome Basin, Tropic)
  - Generated 79 total print/online and social impressions
  - Coverage included 16 print placements
  - 57 online placements
  - 100% of all coverage was in a KPI outlet in key regional and national publications and media outlets
  - Utah U Online 2020: A Virtual Education
    - JPR and UOT also pivoted our “Utah U” campaign to create a virtual “Utah U Online” distance learning experience that enabled media to ‘meet’ and learn from Utah’s local chefs, chocolate makers, brewers, artisans, Park Rangers, experts and more over Zoom.
  - 2021 Trend Outlook
    - Inspiration travel content overpowers the “travel now” stories.
    - Hyper-trend focused content. Trends first, hotels and destinations come second.
    - Bye-bye in-flights. Suspension of multiple in-flight magazines from Delta Sky to South by Southwest to Alaska Beyond.
    - Philanthropy and sustainability stories see more published real estate, alongside hospitality-focused community empowering stories.
    - Navigating the New Normal
      - The great outdoors – opting for outside dining, spa and recreation.
      - Privacy please. Solo experiences soar and road trips resurge.
      - Family Matters. And don’t forget about Fido.
      - Put it in Drive: Tourism recovery begins locally with domestic travel.
    - 2021 Wellness Trends
      - Creative outdoor dining and small group venues.
      - Emphasis on no-touch spa treatments: reiki, chakra balancing, energy and sound work.
      - Spa, fitness and mindfulness all offered outside in nature in perfect harmony.

- Spa programs shift to focus on healing. Sleep enhancements. Detoxifying treatments.

## **UTAH TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION UPDATE**

Sara Toliver, UTIA Executive Board member, gave the following update:

- Natalie Randall has been named the new executive director of UTIA. She was previously the tourism and economic development director for San Juan County and the Chair of UADMO. Her first day will be January 19, 2021. Sara thanked the hiring committee for their time and consideration in finding the right candidate to represent the industry.
- Tourism Day on the Hill 2021 has been rescheduled for February 10, 2021. The event will be held online, and you can register to participate at [utahtourism.org](http://utahtourism.org).

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Nathan Rafferty – Ski resorts are out-performing what was originally anticipated during COVID-19.
- Jeremy Chase – Excited to work with the Utah Office of Tourism again.

## **MEETING ADJOURNED**