

**Utah Office of Tourism
Board Meeting
Friday, June 12, 2020
Online ZOOM Meeting**

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

Members Excused:

Staff: Vicki Varela, Dave Williams, Julia Barnhouse, Andrew Gillman, Becky Keeney, Bianca Lyon, Celina Sinclair, Denise Jordan, Haley Rodgers, Jody Blaney, Lorraine Daly, Emma Checketts, Ellen Weist, Melissa Kinney, Rachel Bremer

Visitors: Adam Whalen, Adriana Chimaras, Falyn Owens, Hannah Saunders, Jonathan Smithgall, Jordan Judd, Joyce Kelly, Judy Cullen, Kaitlin Eskelson, Kevin Lewis, Kylie Kullack, Lee Banov, Megan Griffin, Nancy Volmer, Nycole Durfey, Raelene Davis, Robert Stephenson, Scott Sorenson, Sean Brownell, Sydnie Furton, Tom Love, Val Hale, Monique Beeley, Kamron Dalton, Jason Marden, Lynne Mayer, Maria Twitchell, Tina Henrie, Molly O’Neill, Leshia Coltharp, Sara Otto, Ciera Miller

WELCOME

Lance Syrett called the meeting to order.

MINUTES

MOTION: MIKE TAYLOR MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MAY 8, 2020 MEETING THAT WAS HELD ONLINE THROUGH ZOOM. DEAN COX SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Vicki Varela, Managing Director, UOT, reported on the following items:

- Recognized UTIA’s strong foundation and financial security that Kaitlin Eskelson established and the legacy that she has left for the future of the organization.
- Special Session is scheduled for June 2020. Hopeful that TMPF will only receive a 10% cut in funding, but recent discussions have shown the potential for larger cuts. Recognized Cody Adent and Des Barker for their incredible work to keep TMPF in good standing.
- CARES Act Funding – Executive and Legislative branch are currently brainstorming ways to best utilize the federal funding that was allocated. One proposal was to offer vouchers to citizens of the state to use at hotels in-state. Another is to use the funding to hire buses as a temporary transportation measure in Zion National Park.
- EDA Funding – Bianca Lyon, Director of Community & Partner Relations, UOT, and Flint Timmins, Destination Development Specialist, UOT, are leading out on how this funding can help the tourism community.
- KSL Radio Show – Mighty Mainstreet is a new radio show in partnership with Visit Salt Lake, Utah Office of Tourism and KSL that airs every Sunday at 12:00 pm MST. Brian Merrill, Lance Syrett and Elaine Gizler have all been guests on the show.

- The budget proposals that are typically given in May will be postponed until after the special session.

MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT

- **Marketing Committee Report**

- **COVID-19 Metrics - Jonathan Smithgall, Media Buyer, Love Communications:**
 - What we're monitoring:
 - Guidelines for re-opening as monitored by CDC:
 - Hospital Capacity: Bed Capacity %, ICU Capacity %
 - Risk Level: 14-Day trend of COVID-19 growth, Positive Test Rate
 - Community Spread: Rate of Transmission
 - Community readiness to accept overnight visitors.
 - Consumer optimism levels begin to increase.
 - Page Views via TripAdvisor, Expedia, and VisitUtah.com sustain an upward trend.
 - Consumer Mindset
 - 61% of US travelers plan to drive to their next U.S. vacation destination.
 - Global web index: levels of optimism
 - Global Web Index: Expected Length of Outbreak
 - Global Web Index: Audience Measurement
 - Achievers; Explorers; Family; NP Visitors
 - Top Destinations Discussed as COVID-19 Hotspots
 - Out of 112 locations, Utah ranks 19th in destinations discussed as COVID-19 hotspots. A previous study showed 47.7% of people plan to avoid areas hit hardest by coronavirus; maintaining a safe destination remains critical.
 - We continue to see that the majority of people do not expect to take a flight this summer.
 - We have seen significant shifts over the last four weeks in perceived safety for Road Trips. Outdoor recreation, staying in a hotel and dining in a restaurant.
 - Compared to the start of the outbreak, we have seen an increase in the amount of people excited to get out and travel again.
- **Impact of COVID-19 on Current Marketing Campaigns – Jonathan Smithgall, Director of Digital Marketing, Love Communications:**
 - Highlights:
 - What has remained paused:
 - Broadcast, Programmatic Advertising, Native Advertising
 - What we have live Regionally:
 - TripAdvisor, Kayak, Expedia
 - Google Paid Search
 - Connected TV
 - VisitUtah.com Website Trends

- This week we surpassed 21K US daily sessions, our highest daily US total this year.
- Year-over-year we have seen a slight increase in sessions.
- Our CTV markets have seen an increase in sessions YOY of more than 22%.
- Utah has seen a 50% positive increase in hotel searches on expedia.com.
- To date, we have tracked \$849K in hotel revenue from May 1 – June 10.
- Next steps – What will be going live in the next month:
 - National Television, AddressableTV, and Native Advertising:
 - Creative Spots that will be live:
 - Mighty 5® (June 15th)
 - Regional
 - Renaissance
 - Campaigns that will be live:
 - Southern Utah+
 - Forever Mighty
 - Urban
 - She Travels
- **Plan and Messaging Related to COVID-19 – Kylie Kullack, Head of Client Partnership, Struck; Lee Banov, Strategist, Struck; and Scott Sorenson, Creative Director, Struck**
 - Kylie and Scott highlighted the new “Here we Heal” media which can be viewed on our [YouTube Channel](#).
 - Struck continues to work with UOT on Forever Mighty: An initiative to cultivate a deeper relationship between Utah’s visitors and the areas and communities they are visiting, through responsible visitation and stewardship.
- **Urban Content and Creative Strategies – Andrew Gillman, Tourism Creative and Content Director, Utah Office of Tourism ([presentation](#)):**
 - Search intent and organic impressions for urban destinations have seen a significant increase from May 11th through June 8th, many coming from out of the state.
 - Trends & Research
 - Terms with the most significant decrease in impressions are localized. Ex – Living room hike, Millcreek Canyon
 - Some events like Shakespeare Festival and Utah Opera terms saw a decrease in impressions.
 - Project Spotlights
 - Public relations
 - Editorial
 - Digital
 - Video
 - Social media
 - Utah U: Online Summer School
 - Utah Explorers Guide will be released with the following publications:
 - Salt Lake Tribune
 - Deseret News
 - Utah Business Magazine
 - Travel Guide Insert

- Native Content
 - Women-made wine imported to Utah, Terrestoria
 - You Are Where You Eat: The Best Latino Food Spots in SLC
 - Salt Lake's Tattoo Scene: Inclusivity is the New Frontier
 - Hike + Dine: Ogden
 - Salt Lake City's Must-See Street Art
- **Global Markets Update – Rachel Bremer, Tourism Global Markets Director, Utah Office of Tourism ([presentation](#)):**
 - FY21 Looking ahead:
 - Consumer Marketing
 - Social Media
 - Travel Trade
 - PR
 - Staff Spotlight: Jody Blaney
 - Jody Blaney has joined the Utah Office of Tourism team as a tourism markets specialist.
 - UOT Global Markets Team
 - Rachel Bremer, Global Markets Director
 - Celina Sinclair, Global Markets Specialist
 - Jody Blaney, Global Markets Specialist
 - Haley Rodgers, FAM Tour Specialist
 - In-market Rep Firms
 - Travel Link Marketing, China
 - China Luxury Advisors, China
 - Canuckiwi, AU/NZ, Canada
 - KBC, UK/Ireland
 - Rep & Co. France/Belgium
 - Harwardt Marketing – Germany/Switzerland
 - COVID-19:
 - What we are doing now:
 - Social media
 - PR/pitches & media outreach
 - Strategic partnerships/industry outreach
 - FY21 planning
 - Webinars/virtual training with: AU/NZ, CN, FR, DE/CH, IN, CA
 - Social Media International Playbook
 - User generated content library
 - Monthly reporting
 - Evergreen content library
 - Looking Ahead FY21
 - The Utah Office of Tourism International objective is to execute and lead an International strategy with the reps and DMO partners as equal contributors focused on COVID-19 recovery.
 - 4 pillars of marketing: consumer, PR, Travel Trade, Social Media
 - We will continue to focus on UK, Germany, France and Australia for our markets.

- 2020-early 2021 international booking behaviors will continue to be unprecedented compared to past years.
- We want to leverage the budget further with honing in on 1-2 partners across all markets and messaging.
- Native content will be key to educate and ensure our international travelers on Utah's situation.
- To ensure the best possible outcome, heavy up in early 2021.
- Continue to keep the 65/35, but not for each market, across the entire buy.
- Leverage Mighty 5® and the Greatest Snow on Earth® messages more directly.
- Tap into OTA tactics to target the right audiences who are ready to book an international trip to USA.
- FY21 International Marketing
 - Consumer
 - Targeted ad buys and campaigns specific to each market
 - Increasing brand awareness through thoughtfully crafted content
 - Adding native/long form content to support how to visit UT & reinforcing safety with welcoming messaging
 - Activations that support other campaigns
 - PR
 - Targeting publications that reach our target audiences
 - Messaging that supports how to visit UT & reinforces safety
 - Defining success with consistent reporting/ROI benchmarks
 - Travel Trade
 - Prioritizing focus on airline partnerships
 - Co-operative marketing campaign opportunities for partners
 - Consistent reporting/KPI's across all markets
 - Education focused on how to visit UT
 - Partner engagement via webinars and virtual events
 - Improved tools & Resources for the trade community FAM Tour Playbook, Sales Mission Playbook
 - Social Media
 - Increasing brand awareness through thoughtfully crafted content
 - Engaging a community through public and private interactions
 - Tools & Resources for our reps and better reporting for partners
 - Defining success with a consistent strategy and KPI benchmarks

- Working with influencers to support education and reach target audiences
- What we are doing now impacts next year's visitation and is vital to international visitor recovery.
- With our competitive advantage, targeted consumer marketing, refined social media & strategic partnerships, we are well positioned for a swift recovery.

UTAH TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION UPDATE

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

- UTIA's hospitality training program will be offered in the 2020/2021 school year, with 217 students already enrolled. The following high schools will be participating: South Summit, East Hollywood, Uinta, Box Elder, Monticello, Mountain View and Grand County.
- Transient room tax (TRT) is on the schedule to be reviewed in interim meetings by the political subcommittee and the revenue & tax subcommittee.
- Alcohol bill is being introduced that pertains to the airport.
- The Tourism Conference will be moved to a hybrid format which will allow virtual participation and in-person participation.
- Sara announced that Joel Racker, the current President of UTIA, has stepped down and Sara will now serve as the President. Joan Hammer will now serve as the vice president, Maria Twitchell will remain as past president and Breck Dockstader will be moving into the secretary treasurer role until the Tourism Conference.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Nathan Rafferty – Announced that skiing will return for the winter 2020/2021 season.
- Monique Beeley – A new issue of Discover Utah Magazine will be released in June and will focus on responsible tourism.

MEETING ADJOURNED