

**Utah Board of Tourism Development**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
Friday, June 9, 2023  
Bryce Canyon City, UT

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Board Members Present      Lance Syrett, Nathan Rafferty, Lesha Coltharp, Glen Overton, Jordan Smith, Mike Taylor, Sara Toliver, Jennifer Wesselhoff, Shayne Wittwer

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Board Members Excused      Jared Berrett, Kym Buttschardt, Commissioner Victor Iverson, Brian Merrill, Greg Miller

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UOT Staff      Tera Atwood, Jody Blaney, Rachel Bremer, Ben Cook, Lorraine Daly, Zach Fyne, Camille Johnson, Denise Jordan, Becky Keeney, Celina Sinclair, Vicki Varela, David Williams, Heather Zang

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Public      Des Barker, Stacie Boney, Judy Cullen, Megan DeAngelis, Sydnie Furton, Rosie Gochnour, Susan Hayward, Todd Jensen, Ethan Kohler, Kylie Kullack, Tom Love, Rep. Phil Lyman, Becky McRae, Natalie Randall, Jonathan Smithgall, Deven Stephens, Commissioner Jerry Taylor, Commissioner David Tebbs, Maria Twitchell, Nancy Volmer

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**WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

**Chair Lance Syrett** called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and asked for introductions.

Garfield County Commissioners Jerry Taylor and David Tebbs welcomed the group and recognized Lance Syrett for his years of service on the Utah Board of Tourism Development.

**MINUTES**

**MOTION: Mike Taylor motioned to approve the May 11, minutes from the meeting that was held in Midway, UT. Glen Overton seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.**

**MANAGING DIRECTOR REPORT**

**Vicki Varela**, Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism

- Recognized and thanked outgoing board members - Lance Syrett, Glen Overton, Mike Taylor, Sara Toliver, Brian Merrill and Greg Miller.
- Acknowledged UOT staff changes as Celina Sinclair is departing, have hired Melissa Stock to assist on the website staff and Sydney Sappenfield to work in Research. Camille is in the process of hiring for three positions.
- Vicki and Rachel will be traveling with the Governor's Paris and London Trade Mission in late June.

## **INTERNATIONAL UPDATE**

**Rachel Bremer**, Tourism Global Markets Director, Utah Office of Tourism

- Very busy and productive Spring having hosted 15 FAMs/international press groups.
- Highlighted accessibility research and tour with Gerda van 't land of Buitengewoon Reizen from the Netherlands.
- Partnership with Tree Utah ties into responsible visitation. We launched a campaign with a tour operator in Germany. When visitors book through this operator, a portion of the cost goes to Tree Utah and the efforts to plant more trees. We've had more than 5,000 bookings so it has worked well. Our staff experienced the tree planting in May in Hansville and Torrey.
- Our staff and Vicki attended IPW, the largest travel trade show of the year, where we met with media and buyers from all over the world.
- We launched the B2B Agent Training Program in April and currently have 257 certified Utah specialists.
- Hosted an international market readiness workshop for local vendors and partners in Summit County.
- The busy spring produced a great amount of earned media and public relations with full feature pieces in international publications.
- In July, Rachel and Zach will travel to Korea and Japan with Brand USA. We are working hard on the Asian markets as they have been slower to recover. Incheon International Airport in Seoul, South Korea, is a major access point for key areas. We work closely with Nancy Vohlmer and team at SLC airport to stay present and continue conversations for future direct flights from Salt Lake to Incheon.
- Nancy recognized Rachel's hard work and assistance in bringing international visitors to Salt Lake as it is very important for the airport.

## **MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **Ski+ 2022/2023 Campaign Report**

**Ben Cook**, Director of Communications & Marketing

**Jonathan Smithgall**, Vice President of Digital Marketing & Media, Love Communications

- This was the second year of this creative and it performed very well.
- We reached 6.7M target households this season at a cost of \$0.43 per household. SMARI's benchmark is \$0.54 so this was a very efficient campaign.
- SMARI estimates that we influenced just under half a million ski trips which is an economic impact of \$1.17B.
- Utah was the second highest state that came to mind when surveyors are asked what state first comes to mind for skiing.
- With the tag *The Greatest Snow on Earth*<sup>®</sup>, 22 percent of people did connect that to Utah. However, 61 percent did not have an answer so there is room for us to lean in on brand awareness.
- Nathan Rafferty announced Utah skier numbers increased 22 percent to 7.1M - an all-time high.
- Colorado also had an all-time record of ski visitors (14M), too, but they are so much bigger than Utah. So Utah should race its own race and shouldn't compare ourselves to Colorado. Utah does very well with our 15 public ski resorts. Colorado has more than 30 ski areas.
- Looking at the effectiveness of this campaign, it performed very well. The advertising inspired a higher than average number of people to want to learn more and want to visit.
- Paid advertising ad views increased 10 percent from last year.
- Connected television was the biggest tactic used in this initiative, we saw the most website traffic from our campaign coming from California and second highest was from Chicago.
- We are retargeting people that have already said they are coming to Utah for a ski vacation. The messaging is about preparing them for the visit.

- Media buying has evolved and we partnered with Expedia this season. If they hit their revenue goals with expedia ads within our campaign, they would make a charitable donation. The Park City Community Foundation received a check for \$11.5K.
- Paid search advertising also increased this year 30 percent.
- Earned media strategies and public relation plans were successful with more than 505M print/online/social media impressions.
- Key takeaways are this campaign has performed extremely well, improving in year two.
- Goals include working to own The Greatest Snow on Earth which will naturally increase our top of mind numbers.
- Many opportunities to attract new and diverse audiences to ski and Utah.

### **UTIA UPDATE**

**Sara Toliver**, President, Utah Tourism Industry Association

**Natalie Randall**, Executive Director, Utah Tourism Industry Association

- Sara announced the 2023 Tourism Hall of Fame Class - Joan Hammer from Box Elder County; Kelly Day, former UOT employee that worked tirelessly on the Co-op; Mike Deaver, also formerly with UOT who worked to put together the original TMPF budget and launch of Life Elevated campaign; and, posthumous honoree, James “Jim” Cannon, UOT Director in 1963. He coined the term *The Greatest Snow on Earth* and worked tirelessly to get the Utah tourism industry established.
- Reminded all that the Tourism Conference is Sept. 26-29 in St. George.
- Sara thanked Lance for hosting the UTIA board in Bryce Canyon this week along with the many Centennial events.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Nathan Rafferty presented letters of appreciation from Governor Spencer Cox to the outgoing board members.

### **MEETING ADJOURNED**

*The next board meeting will be held on Friday, August 11 in Salt Lake City.*