

**Utah Office of Tourism  
Board Meeting  
Friday, May 9, 2020  
Online ZOOM Meeting**

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

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**Members Excused:**

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**Staff:** Vicki Varela, Dave Williams, Julia Barnhouse, Lorraine Daly, Becky Keeney, Celina Sinclair, Jody Blaney, Andrew Dash Gillman, Bianca Lyon, Denise Jordan, Emma Checketts, Kelly Day, Melissa Kinney, Rachel Bremer, Sandra Salvas, Haley Rodgers

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**Visitors:** Jonathan Smithgall, Sean Brownell, Cody Draper, Sara Lehman, Kevin Lewis, Sandy Olney, Cody Adent, Nate Lavin, Ezra Calvert, Lee Banov, Adam Whalen, Colin Greenberg, Eric Thompson, Hannah Saunders, Jason Marden, Jessy Wall, Jordan Judd, Kaitlin Eskelson, Kylie Kullack, Megan Griffin, Monique Beeley,

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**WELCOME**

Lance Syrett called the meeting to order.

**MINUTES**

**MOTION: MIKE TAYLOR MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 10, 2020 MEETING THAT WAS HELD ONLINE THROUGH ZOOM. SARA TOLIVER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

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

- Mighty 5® ads are being updated and will likely be ready to air by the end of May 2020.
- Mighty Main Street – KSL Radio, Visit Salt Lake and UOT are collaborating on this radio segment to drive retail, hotel and restaurant visibility during the current economic hardships many of these industries are facing due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Small but Mighty ads are running in regional areas of the state.
- There is a potential state budget deficit of \$700M - \$2B. UOT is working to protect our current budget and are making proposals for legislators for 2% - 5% budget decreases to our department. The budget proposal for the next fiscal year was scheduled to be presented to the Tourism Board at this meeting but has been postponed in light of these changes. A new proposal will be presented once budget cuts are known and finalized.
- GOED is launching an economic marketing campaign which will help businesses establish best practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT

- **Marketing Committee Report**
  - **COVID-19 Metrics and Campaign Performance Update - Jonathan Smithgall, Media Buyer, Love Communications ([Presentation](#)):**
    - What we're monitoring:
      - What will be our KPI's to indicate that it's time to return to advertising?
        - State by state monitoring of when active cases peak.
        - There must be a sustained 14 day flattening of new cases state by state, resulting in reduced government regulations.
        - Consumer optimism begins to increase.
        - Page views via TripAdvisor, Expedia and VisitUtah sustain an upward trend.
      - Current Campaign Performance Slide
      - Third Party Search Trends Slide
      - VisitUtah.com Website Trends Slide
      - Market Performance VisitUtah.com Slide
    - Consumer Mindset
      - 70.6% of American travelers agree that they miss traveling and can't wait to get out and travel again.
      - Global Web Index: Levels of Optimism Slide
      - Global Web Index: Expected Length of Outbreak Slide
        - Family audiences once again show a more pessimistic outlook on the expected length of the outbreak.
      - Global Web Index: Audience Measurement Slide
        - All audiences have seen an increase in delaying vacations and flights from the last wave of research.
      - Destination Analysts: Top Destinations Discussed as COVID-19 Hotspots
        - Out of 112 locations, Utah ranks 63<sup>rd</sup> in destinations that have been discussed as COVID-19 hotspots. It is critical that we don't become one of these top destinations as in a previous study, we found that 47.7% of people plan to avoid areas hit hardest by coronavirus.
      - Destinations Analysts: Willingness to Drive for Travel Current Environment
        - We see that Boomers and people in Western states are more likely to travel further distances for their next vacation.
      - Destination Analysts: Willingness to Drive for Travel Next Leisure Trip
        - When the question is adjusted to ask about the travelers next leisure trip, we see that willingness to travel further distances increases significantly up to an average of 686 miles.
      - Destination Analysts: Next Flight on an Airline
        - We continue to see that the majority of people are not expecting to take a flight this summer.
      - Destination Analysts: Looking Back
        - We have seen significant shifts over the last four weeks in perceived safety for Road Trips, Outdoor Recreation, Staying at a Hotel and Dining in a restaurant.

- Destination Analysts: Excitement to Travel
  - Compared to the start of the outbreak, we have seen a positive increase in the amount of people excited to get out and travel again.
- Content Consumption Trends: Travel
  - Since the beginning of the outbreak, we have seen travel content consumption over indexing.
- Current Media Campaign
  - What's live, what isn't?
    - What we have paused: Broadcast, Programmatic Advertising, Expedia, Kayak
    - What is live regionally: TripAdvisor, Google Paid Search, Connected TV
- Next Steps: Recommendations
  - Meet with Marketing Committee weekly to discuss emerging trends.
  - Monitor COVID-19 re-launch KPI's
  - Re-launch native advertising
  - Launch custom survey to run every two weeks regionally.
  - Launch weekly in-market and regional market survey.
- **Entrada Insights Survey Results – Denise Jordan, Marketing Analytics and Research Manager, Utah Office of Tourism and Esra Calvert, Chief Data Advisor, Entrada Insights ([presentation](#)):**
  - Highlights
    - The suspension of non-essential business activity adversely affected the tourism industry in March 2020.
    - -51% decline in gross business revenue during March 2020 compared to prior year.
    - -37% decline in number of employees during March 2020 compared to prior year.
    - The majority of tourism businesses (72%) expect declining gross revenue through 2020, and some into 2021. Some 14% expect business revenue to flatten or increase. 15% are uncertain.
    - Cash Buffer – Half of the tourism businesses have enough funds to keep business going for up to 60 days. Only 15% can sustain operations for more than six months.
    - About 62% of tourism businesses applied for the SBA Small Business Paycheck Protection Program and 33% for the Economic Industry Disaster Loan. Not all have received funding. About 42% and 4% received funds from PPP and EIDL as of May 1, 2020.
    - Not all Utah tourism businesses benefited from support programs. Hurdles identified included depleted funding resources and unclear information. Some did not qualify, or they had concerns about funding conditions.
    - With the Tourism industry at a halt amid COVID-19, some businesses had to lay off or furlough employees. When asked about rehiring those employees, Utah tourism businesses stated they planned to rehire more than half during the last two quarters of 2020. Those who received funding through the SBA Small Business Paycheck Protection Program, Utah Leads Together Small Business Bridge Loan, or BEAR Grants

- were likely to rehire 61%, a 7-percentage point increase, or a 13% increase overall.
- The stimulus programs have improved perceived financial health of tourism businesses. However, only 17% thought of improvement as a great deal or a lot. Entities who received funding from the SBA Small Business Paycheck Protection Program, Utah Leads Together Small Business Bridge Loan, or BEAR Grants rated their financial benefit higher, from 2.2 to 3.1, a 41% increase.
  - Twelve-month tourism business confidence is low, but on an upward trajectory for the next three years.
  - 9 out of 10 tourism businesses have adopted new safety and health standards amid COVID-19. Social Distancing practices, masks, deep cleaning with disinfectants, and eliminating some business offerings have been specified as best practices. Though, businesses are frustrated with ambiguity.
  - Industry-Wide Support: funding guidance, local economic impact updates, the latest travel research for marketing and guidelines on health and sanitation are identified as the most useful information topics for Utah tourism businesses.
  - The new normal is fundamentally different. Restarting tourism call for:
    - Embracing accelerated change
    - Finding solutions through clear communications, speed & efficiency, consistent collaboration, and premium & positive storytelling.
    - Reinventing tourism management and marketing playbook.
- **Forever Mighty Activation – Bianca Lyon, Director of Community and Partner Relations, Utah Office of Tourism and Lee Banov, Strategist, Struck (presentation):**
- 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.
  - Forever is a position, an initiative and an ethic.
  - Forever Mighty is made up of two parts: education/inspiration; preservation/experience.
  - In our messaging, the priority of these two parts will shift based on the intended audience. By design, the two parts operate as cause and effect. In other words, doing A encourages B, and vice versa.
  - Pillars
    - Tourism benefits everyone. From the businesses that profit directly to Utah’s residents who enjoy tax breaks and improved school system, tourism works for everyone.
    - Utah can stay beautiful. Visitors come here for a reason – the jaw-dropping beauty of our state. We must keep it that way for generations of residents and guests to come.
    - Residents are as vital as visitors. If Forever Mighty is going to be successful, residents need to play as large a role as visitors.
    - We should stay positive. We will reach more people and have more influence if we remain positive and focus on the self-interest of the traveler.

- This is an inherent part of the Utah brand. Forever Mighty is a brand extension of the general Utah brand. As such, it's inherent in everything we do.
- Audiences
  - The Forever Mighty initiative will need to reach several audiences:
    - Domestic and international visitors
    - Utah residents
    - Large and local business partners
    - Policymakers
- Forever Mighty Next Steps
  - Content Marketing
  - Mighty Main Street KSL Radio show in partnership with Visit Salt Lake.

### **UPDATE REGARDING TRADITIONAL CO-OP PROGRAM MATCH FOR FY2020/2021**

Kym Buttschardt, Chair of Cooperative Marketing Committee, provided the following updates:

- Kelly Day, Co-Op Marketing Manager, distributed a survey to DMO's in the state to gauge interest in applications this year in light of COVID-19. She received positive feedback and all DMO's are still interested in applying this year and have the budgets to apply.
- Applications are due June 25, 2020, evaluations will take place August 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and winners will be announced on August 14, 2020.
- For the next round of funding, Round 2020, applicants will be able to include 15% of the total project cost or up to \$35,000 - whichever is greater - of in-state marketing in their application.

### **UTAH TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION UPDATE**

- UTIA report – Vicki Varela gave an update on behalf of Cody Adent, Executive Director of UTIA, because he had a conflict in his schedule:
  - Cody is currently on a call with 30 plus hoteliers regarding the survey that Entrada released and working through legislative efforts.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Sara Toliver – Sara and Visit Salt Lake are participating in a live event task force to advise the governor on how to safely bring live events back in the coming months. This task force was assembled by the Live Events Association and is comprised of venues, event holders, DMO's and other associations affiliated with producing or hosting events.
- Monique Beeley – A new issue of Discover Utah Magazine will be released in June and will focus on response tourism.

### **MEETING ADJOURNED**