

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

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<b>Members Present:</b>	Lance Syrett, Kym Buttschardt, Glen Overton, Jim Powell, Dean Cox, Brian Merrill, Mike Taylor, Nathan Rafferty, Sara Toliver, Shayne Wittwer
<b>Members Excused:</b>	Greg Miller, Dirk Clayson, Elaine Gizler
<b>Staff:</b>	Vicki Varela, Julia Barnhouse, Becky Keeney, Lorraine Daly, Andrew Gillman, Bianca Lyon, Celina Sinclair, Denise Jordan, Emma Checketts, Haley Rodgers, Jody Blaney, Kelly Day, Rachel Bremer, Rosie Serago
<b>Visitors:</b>	Adam Whalen, Alison Garner, Chris Buhrmann, Ethan Koehler, Joan Hammer, Grant Werner, Jonathan Smithgall, Joyce Kelly, Kevin Lewis, Lee Banov, Megan Griffin, Molly O’Neill, Monique Beeley, Nancy Volmer, Nate Lavin, Randy Rhodes, Robert Stephenson, Sara Otto, Scott Sorenson, Sydnie Furton, Tom Love, Hannah Saunders

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**WELCOME**

Lance Syrett called the meeting to order.

**MINUTES**

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

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

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

- East Zion Gateway Initiative – confident that it will be the signature national parks initiative for the next ten years.
- Shop in Utah grant – There are limited resources available. \$55 million has already been allocated and there are an estimated 700 applications in the queue that won’t receive funding. GOED is working to reallocate funds to assist more applications.
- Convention districts are starting to book rooms thanks to the CARES funding that they received.

**MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT**

- **Marketing Committee Report**
  - Review of 2019 visitor profile report – Denise Jordan, Marketing Analytics & Research Manager, Utah Office of Tourism (presentation):
    - 2019 Study Insights:
      - Utah’s visitor volume benefits from increased in-state travel
      - First quarter visitation experienced largest gain, but third quarter accounts for largest portion of visitor volume.
      - In 2019 travelers spent \$10B resulting in \$1.3B in tax revenues.

- Average per trip spending in Utah increased nearly 15% year-over-year
- Average trip spend is greatest for overnight, out-of-state leisure trips.
- Overnight, out-of-state leisure visitors stay an average of 4 nights.
- Utah visitors tend to participate more in outdoor and nature activities than overall U.S. domestic travelers.
- Top origin state highlights Utah visitors' proximity preference – California, Nevada, Idaho, Arizona and Colorado.
- 2020 Study Insights:
  - Visitor volume over prior year; April – June 2020:
    - Utah: -32%
    - Mtn. West: -42%
    - West: -52%
    - U.S.: -44%
    - Full report can be found at [travel.utah.gov](http://travel.utah.gov).
- Metrics Related to COVID-19 and Southern Utah+ Campaign Performance – Jonathan Smithgall ([presentation](#)):
  - What We're Monitoring
    - State-by-state monitoring of:
      - Hospital capacity: bed capacity %, ICU capacity %
      - Risk level: 14-day trend of COVID-19 growth, Positive Test Rate
      - Community Spread: Rate of Transmission
      - State-by-state travel restrictions
    - Consumer Optimism
    - Pageviews/searches via TripAdvisor, Expedia, VisitUtah.com
  - Destination Analysts: Expected Severity:
    - We are seeing an increase in travelers' perceptions that the Coronavirus situation will get worse.
  - Destination Analysts: Top Destinations Discussed as COVID-19 hotspots
    - Out of 112 locations, Utah ranks 27<sup>th</sup> in destinations discussed as COVID-19 hotspots. This is important as in the most recent wave of research, 32% of travelers plan to avoid future trips to destinations due to their current COVID-19 situation.
  - Utah Hotel Searches via Expedia
    - Our COVID-19 response page has continued its momentum as well. This page is estimated to have generated \$1.32M in hotel revenue since it launched in August.
  - 53% of the traveling population plans to avoid travel until the Coronavirus situation is resolved.
  - Things Needed Before They Will Travel:
    - An effective vaccine that is widely distributed – 56.6%
    - An effective vaccine is released – 52.3%
    - COVID-19 is mostly eliminated – 50.3%
    - The CDC announces that it is safe to travel – 48.9%
    - COVID-19 is completely eliminated – 34.4%
    - Airlines improve their COVID-19 safety protocols – 33.9%
    - Hotels improve their COVID-19 safety protocols – 30.1%
    - Cruise lines improve their COVID-19 safety protocols – 17.0%
    - My friends/relatives begin traveling safely and having fun- 14.9%

- Utah Intent Survey
  - In an ongoing custom survey that launched back in June we are seeing that 22% of people surveyed plan to visit Utah in the next three months. This is the highest intent we have since the launch of the survey.
  - Out of 405 destinations, Utah currently ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in the most desired destinations.
- What is and isn't live
  - What is live:
    - TripAdvisor
    - Conversant
    - PulsePoint
  - What has ended:
    - ConnectedTV
    - National Cable
    - Out-of-home
    - Expedia
  - What's going live:
    - Winter in Southern Utah: 11/1/2020
    - Ski+: 11/1/2020
  - VisitUtah.com Website Trends
    - Since June, daily average sessions have remained above last year's average. This momentum has generated an additional 1.36M sessions over the same time period last year.
    - When you look at CTV markets specifically, you will see an even stronger YOY increase of 124% in sessions.
    - Our COVID-19 response page has continued its momentum as well. This page is estimated to have generated \$1.32M in hotel revenue since it launched in August.
  - Top Booking Markets
    - We have tracked \$9.3M in hotel revenue since the launch of this campaign. This is an increase from last year's 3-season campaign by more than \$200k.
  - Southern Utah+ (Winter)
    - The Goals:
      - Enhance the accessibility of Southern Utah as a winter destination with inspirations content and planning information.
      - Grow room nights in Southern Utah's gateway communicates during the winter months (November – February)
      - Increase interest in guided winter experiences, which help create critical offseason income and jobs.
    - The Opportunities
      - Covid-19 has led to an increased interest in traveling to open outdoor spaces, especially national parks.
      - From St. George to Moab to Bryce, Winter in Southern Utah offers an appealing diversity of climates, experiences and scenery.
    - The Challenges
      - COVID-19 uncertainties

- Demand for outdoors and national parks: we need to ensure that people travel thoughtfully to stay safe in winter weather and avoid overwhelming the parks and surrounding communities.
- Fewer airline travelers: our messaging will focus on in-state and regional drive travelers
- Short booking windows, short stays: we'll need to think through changes to media and suggested itineraries.
- Preparedness: fewer hotels, restaurants, and other amenities are open in southern Utah in the winter, so we'll need to find ways to inform travelers about what to know before they go.
- The Audiences
  - Non-skiing achievers, explorers and repeat visitors – living in Utah and in regional drive markets – interested in getting off the beaten path and escaping the crowds.
- The Message
  - Main campaign message themes:
    - Experience Utah in a new, quieter, “otherworldly” way
    - How to see Southern Utah in the winter
  - Supporting messages:
    - COVID-19 safety information, park openings/closings/capacity
    - The value of guided experiences
    - Distributing visitation: traveling during the week and on non-holiday weekends, visiting off-the-beaten path destinations
- Southern Utah+ Winter FY2020/2021 Integrated Marketing Campaign Plan Review ([presentations](#)):
  - Goals and Creative Strategies – Molly O’Neill, Strategist & Scott Sorenson, Creative Director, STRUCK:
    - Given the high performance of last year’s inaugural “Winter in Southern Utah” campaign, we’ll run the same FY20 creative, continuing to drive brand awareness of Southern Utah as a winter designation for achievers and explorers.
  - Review of \$450,000 CARES funding Media Buy – Jonathan Smithgall, Vice President Digital Marketing and Media, Love Communications:
    - A look back at 2019/2020
      - 2019/2020 was the first time that Utah office of Tourism ran a Southern Utah campaign during the Winter
      - The campaign observed \$2.03M in hotel revenue an estimated \$30M in hotel revenue.
      - Post-ad exposed page views reached their peak toward the end of the campaign and resulted in a halo effect for the launch of out Southern Utah+ campaign which generated over \$1M in the first month of the campaign.
    - Media Plan: Digital Marketing
      - Flight Dates: November 1, 2020 – January 30, 2021
      - Target markets

- Regional: 15% in-state, Seattle, Wyoming, Nevada, Oregon, Arizona, Idaho, Colorado, California, New Mexico
- Return to focus on Native Advertising
- Work with partners from Ski+ campaign who can provide non-competes with our target audiences.
- Increase SOV from 12/26/2020 – 1/4/2021
- Emphasis on repeat visitors
- Leverage new Anne Kaferle videos in native articles and YouTube
- Media plan and timing (see page 32 of presentation)
- Content Strategy – Andrew Gillman, Tourism Creative and Content Director, Utah Office of Tourism ([presentation](#)):
  - Social Content Priorities
    - User-generated content via Instagram
    - “Let’s Talk Utah” Series on IGTV
    - #FindYourUtahStoke with GoPro on Instagram Reels
    - Work with content creators including influencers and ambassadors
  - Paid Social
    - Flight Dates: October 12, 2020 – February 27m 2921
    - Platforms: Facebook, Instagram (feed and story) and Pinterest.
  - Let’s Talk Utah
    - Promote authentic and personal travel experiences including Red Emerald Trip inspiration.
    - Educate on the idea of visiting a place they may not have traveled yet.
    - Instill confidence in a visitor
  - Public Relations
    - Key Media Messages:
      - National Parks/State Parks in winter
      - Advance planning/preparedness
      - Guided winter experiences
      - Peak Solitude
      - Off the Beaten Path
      - Dark Skies
    - Target Markets:
      - Regional drive markets
      - National
  - Website
    - New pages
      - National park in winter
    - Key optimizations & landing pages
      - Winter hiking, camping, and base camps
    - Paid search
      - Similar scope of current Southern Utah+ ad groups and campaigns
  - Storytelling
    - Anne Kaferle videos + articles
      - Gravity and Water: Mark Making in a Winter’s Desert with Anne Kaferle

- A Winter's Desert: Visiting Southern Utah in the Slow Months
  - Use of existing stories:
    - Across a Snow-Covered Desert: A Week-Long Winter Road Trip Itinerary through Southeastern Utah
    - The Best Winter Hiking Trails in Utah's Dixie
    - Stay warm in Southern Utah: How to Pack for a Winter Trip
  - New content opportunities:
    - Itineraries
    - Photography
    - Zion Forever
    - Invest in Performance
- Update on VisitUtah.com re-platform project – Ethan Koehler VP Digital Experience & Technology, Hanson Dodge ([presentation](#)):
  - Re-platform Imperative
    - Future proofed CMS
    - Page oriented
    - Mobile
    - Organization
    - Content connections
    - Integration with campaigns
    - Performance
    - Technical debt
  - Goals:
    - Future-proofed, marketing-centric platform
    - Usability, SEO, engagement, organization opportunities
    - Easy to maintain and enhance
    - Move toward new design vision
  - VisutUtah.Com
    - Web demo
      - Southern Utah
      - Ski/mountain
    - Behind the scenes
      - Analytics
      - Meta data
      - SEO
      - Components
    - Completed milestones:
      - 4/2/2020 – completed 4 unique rounds creative comps and wireframes
      - 5/1/2020 – finalized development requirements and planning
      - 9/22/2020 – wrapped 5<sup>th</sup> and final development sprint
    - Current Activity
      - Final development
      - Test quality and performance
      - Content migration
      - 10/22/2020 – complete content migration needed for launch. To-date, we have migrated 856 of 1,257 pages
      - 10/22/2020 – code freeze
      - 10/29/2020 site launch

- Post-launch support
- Post – launch plan
  - Monitoring, reporting and recommendations
  - Monthly releases to enhance and extend
- Future
  - Expand experience
  - Regional understanding
  - Red Emerald
  - Campaign integration
  - SEO
  - Personalization
  - Optimization
  - User insights

## **UTAH TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION UPDATE**

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

- The Tourism Conference was a success, especially with the COVID-19 restrictions. Cody Adent organized a great event this year. There were 512 total participants. All breakout sessions have been recoded and are available. Keynote presentations will be available shortly.
- The silent auction at the Tourism Conference raised \$30,000 for the Tourism Works Pact. Joan Hammer did an amazing job organizing this year.
- Utah Small Business Quarantined Employee Grant – available for businesses with less than 50 employees.
- Des Barker is continuing to lead on Tourism Industry issues on Capitol Hill.

## **MEETING ADJOURNED**