

Governor's Council on Travel and Tourism  
Minutes February 5, 2021 9:00 AM – 12:00 AM  
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Council Members in Attendance: Suzan Barnes, Kevin Fern, Karen Hibbard, Bridgette Jobe, Chuck Magerl, Mimi Meredith, Rosa Cavazos, Mary Ware, Janet McRae, Mary Madden, Donna Price, Jason Probst, Susie Coleman, Ken Corbett, Charlotte Esau

Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism staff in Attendance: Secretary Brad Loveless, Jordan Roerman, Jaimee Salalac, Kelli Hilliard, Sue Stringer, Taylor Hartshorn

Kansas Department of Commerce staff in attendance: Lt Governor David Toland, David Soffer

The meeting was held virtually on Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 9.01 AM by Chair Suzan Barnes

Council members made introductions

There was a motion to approve minutes from December 4, 2020 by Kevin Fern, Karen Hibbard seconded. Passed unanimously.

There were no requests for public comment.

Lt Governor Toland gave an update on the Executive Reorganization Order (ERO) to move Kansas Tourism to the Kansas Dept of Commerce. He reported that there has been positive support from tourism industry members across the state.

David Soffer, Legislative Director with the Department of Commerce presented details pertaining to the ERO. The next 3-4 weeks will be the vital on whether the ERO goes through. The tourism budget within the FY22 Commerce budget has been discussed this week in committee. The committee approved the budget and it will now be sent to House Appropriation for review. Senate Commerce is set to hear the budget next Thursday, which will be an opportunity for the industry to weigh in publicly. The industry is encouraged to either send in written testimony, contact your legislator, appear virtually or publicly to support the ERO. If the ERO is not disapproved by either chamber, it will go into effect July 1, 2021.

Lt Governor Toland opened the meeting for any questions or discussion on the ERO.

There was discussion between the council with several members expressing their support.

Suzan Barnes welcomed Charlotte Esau as a new member on the council.

Bridgette Jobe presented the 2020 Year in Review for Tourism and a report on upcoming projects for 2021. She reminded Council members that each year, Kansas Tourism commissions an Economic Impact of Tourism in Kansas study from Tourism Economics, an Oxford Economics company. It is important for Kansas Tourism to do this research each year to show the impact of travel on our economy, and to show travel trends. Bridgette shared key findings on visitation, visitor spending, spending markets and tourism supported employment. In 2019, visitation to Kansas grew by 2.8% for a total of 36.5 million visitors: the largest growth seen since 2013. Visitor spending was \$7.3 billion in 2019. Over 66,000 jobs in Kansas are supported by visitor spending with Tourism being the 9<sup>th</sup> largest employer in Kansas. The 2019 Economic Impact report supports that Kansas Tourism industry had a strong decade leading up to early 2020. In 2020, Kansas Tourism started using a company called See Source that helps to monitor the visitor activity in Kansas. Bridgette reported on the graphs and data from See Source that showed a strong start in travel for 2020 which dropped off significantly in mid-May and started picking back up throughout the summer with mostly in state travel. The STR Report provides data that tracks hotel data worldwide. Bridgette reported that April 2020 was the worst month for hotels in US history according to STR. 2021 will be there year of rebuilding and strong growth in the future.

Bridgette then shared the 2020 highlights from Kansas Tourism marketing and presented on what projects they are working on for 2021. Projects priorities include a perception study, launch of the new travelks.com website, growing the To The Stars Campaign, and expanding diversity in our marketing.

Bridgette opened meeting for questions and discussion.

Jordan Roerman then reported on Kansas Day activities from Kansas Tourism. On January 29, 2021 Kansas turned 160 years old. Kansas Tourism took this day to encourage residents and visitors to "salute" what makes Kansas special on social media using the "To The \_\_\_\_" format. Kansas Tourism launched the new brand anthem video on that day and received great feedback. We also had special social media advertising and posts using the #ToTheStarsKS hashtag for tracking and engagement, additional ads to display

video and encourage salute participation. Kansas Tourism reached out to the DMO's, local and state organizations, businesses, and attractions to post their salute to Kansas and reshare fun/unique salutes to Facebook and Instagram stories. Jordan presented on the overwhelming positive responses, the results of the campaign and what's next to keep the Kansas Day spirit alive.

#### Council Industry Members updates

- Ken Corbett, Kansas Sport Hunting Association- No report
- Suzan Barnes, Travel Industry Association of KS- TIAK- The TIAK Board Meeting was held virtually yesterday. The meeting was focused on topics from today and 2021 Destination State House. Destination State House will be presented virtually this year in 2 parts. The first meeting was held on January 13, 2021 and included topics on Virtual lobbying 101 and Statehouse updates. The next meeting will be held on February 10, 2021 at 1:00PM covering updates and information from Legislative Leadership and staff.
- Susie Coleman, Petroleum Marketing Association- The organization is monitoring a few bills that are in the house. There are concerns with the minimum wage increase to \$17.25 over the next 10 years, House Bill 20-18, and House Bill 20-33 that increases minimum wage to \$15.00 over the next 6 years. A big concern for business owners is employees and the high turnover ratio that is steadily increasing. They are also monitoring House Bill 20-61 which increases minimum age to purchase cigarettes and tobacco products from 18 to 21, a freedom that they would like to see.
- Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association-Lodging – Seat open.
- Chuck Magerl, Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association- A bright spot for the restaurant and hospitality industry is the next round of support from the federal government; round two of the PPE Program which acknowledged the impact on the hospitality industry that suffered from the results of the restrictions due to the pandemic. The program is moving slowly but should eliminate some of the fraud activity that has occurred in the program in the first round. The industry is staying cautiously optimistic that as the funds come through it will help a lot of businesses to stay open and ready to go once people are confident in getting back out. Those restaurants who have continued to offer carry-out, drive-thru and delivery services have stayed strong and those offering dine in services only have continued to struggle.

#### Ex-Officio Reports

- Mary Madden, Kansas Historical Society- offered a virtual Kansas Day for grades K-12. They have been very successful with virtual tours and Kansas Day programs have been very successful, so they will continue virtual programming. They have launched a new virtual program to get K-12 students to realize that Kansas has a lot to offer. The museum is still closed, and they do not have a date that it will reopen at this time. Fort Hays, Lecompton and Goodnow Historic Sites are open.
- Kansas Dept of Commerce- Seat Open
- Jeanny Sharp, Kansas Dept of Transportation- Seat open

Suzan Barnes announced the next 2021 meeting dates are May 7, Aug 6, Nov 5. at 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The location will be announced at a later date.

There was a motion to adjourn by Mimi Meredith, Donna Price seconded. Passed Unanimously.  
The meeting was adjourned.