

Governor's Council on Travel and Tourism  
Minutes August 6, 2021 9:00 AM – 12:00 AM  
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Council Members in Attendance: Kevin Fern, Karen Hibbard, Bridgette Jobe, Chuck Magerl, Rosa Cavazos, Janet McRae, Mary Madden, Donna Price, Susie Coleman, Mary Ware., Nadia Reimer, Jason Probst

Kansas Tourism staff in Attendance: Jaimee Salalac, Kelli Hilliard, Taylor Hartshorn

Kansas Department of Commerce: Lieutenant Governor Toland

The meeting was held virtually on Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 9:01 AM by Bridgette Jobe

Bridgette Jobe announced that she will lead the meeting today in Chairman Barnes absence.

Bridgette announced that there are a few seats open for Legislators that they are working on getting appointed. They are also working with KDOT to fill the open seat for Ex-Officio for KDOT. Chuck Magerl is working with the Kansas Restaurant and Hospitality Association to hopefully fill the lodging seat. Secretary Brad Loveless has appointed Nadia Reimer, Chief of Public Affairs and Engagement Officer as the member representing Kansas Dept of Wildlife and Parks.

Bridgette announced that Mary Madden with the Kansas Historical Society will be retiring in September and this will be her last meeting with the council. Mary has been a fantastic member and partner to Kansas Tourism and will be greatly missed. Bridgette will work with Mary for her replacement to the council.

Council members made introductions

There was a motion to approve minutes from May 7, 2021 by Karen Hibbard, Donna Price seconded. Passed unanimously.

There was no one who requested to make public comments.

Bridgette presented the Kansas Tourism update. She reported that Kansas Tourism has officially moved and is now a division of the Department of Commerce as of July 1 and shared a video walk through of Kansas Tourism's new office space. The plan is to host an open house in the future once all renovations are complete. Bridgette commended the Kansas Tourism Team on the amazing job they did with the move, accepting change and staying positive. Bridgette thanked Secretary Loveless and Lt Gov Toland for their cooperation and support through the reorganization. She also thanked Jan Kessinger, special projects coordinator for the Dept of Commerce who helped make the transition smooth. She shared the new logo for Kansas Tourism.

Bridgette announced that the Agritourism and Byways Manager had retired in June. That position has now been split into two positions due to a FY22 budget addition for the Agritourism program. Bridgette thanked Representative Ken Corbet for his efforts in making this happen. The new Kansas Agritourism Manager and Kansas Byways & Signage Manger positions have been posted and Bridgette is currently conducting interviews.

Lieutenant Governor Toland joined the meeting and thanked our partners in the Legislator for their budgetary support for the Agritourism program. LG Toland's goals are to make a process that is friendly to our partners across the state, and that we are taking advantage of all the opportunities that exist for the Kansas Byways & Signage Program.

Bridgette reviewed the EDA American Rescue plan that has designated funds to support the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industry. This will be the topic of the next tourism industry virtual Huddle on Wednesday, August 11 from 1:00 pm to 2:00pm where Dan Lara, Kansas EDA will be explaining the programs.

Bridgette shared that Colby Sharples- Terry, PR & Communication Manager for Kansas Tourism has 3 FAM Trips scheduled for this fall focusing on different parts of the state. There will be a full report on these FAM trips during our next Council meeting.

Bridgette announced that for the first time ever Kansas Tourism is a finalist for an ESTO Mercury Award in the Social Media Category for the 21 Kansas Day Campaign. The winner of the contest will be announced at the ESTO Conference Awards Dinner presented by US Travel. Bridgette and a few team members will be attending the conference.

Taylor Hartshorn, Fiscal, Grant and Research Manger for Kansas Tourism reported on the recently awarded FY2021 Attraction Development Grants. Kansas Tourism was able to award 7 applicants with a total of \$150, 956.00. The Tourism Marketing Grant deadline was August 1, 2021 and ended with 6 applicants. Applications will be reviewed over the next few weeks and awarded by the end of October.

There was a presentation on the Santa Fe Trail 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events presented by Deb Goodrich and Dave Kendall.

Deb Goodrich presented on the history of Santa Fe Trail, the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events, marketing, and the Santa Fe Landmark Driving Tour. Deb reported that they are partnering with Dave Kendall with Prairie Hollow Productions in producing a series of videos. Dave Kendall shared a 5-minute clip from his documentary on the Santa Fe Trail and thanked Kansas Tourism for their help with funding the production. The documentary

premieres Friday, September 24<sup>th</sup> in Kansas City on KCPT at 8:00 pm and will be distributed to PBS stations around the country and on the PBS streaming site.

Jim Ogle, Executive Director of Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area, provided an update on the work of FFNHA. He shared information on a new App that they have recently launched promoting FFNHA sites and gave an update on the process of gaining reauthorization through Congress as a national heritage area. Jim welcomed the support from the council in the process.

Bridgette shared that Kansas Tourism has written a letter to all Kansas Members of Congress supporting the reauthorization of Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area with both Secretary Loveless and Secretary Toland's full support. There was a motion by Kevin Fern that the council send out a letter of support for the reauthorization of Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area. Donna Price seconded. The council voted unanimously in favor of a support letter. Bridgette will send a draft to all members for their approval before sending it.

Bridgette reported that Suzan Barnes has served as Chair of this Council for two years and will be stepping aside to allow someone else to take that position. Kevin Fern volunteered to become Chair of the Council. There was a motion by Rosa Cavazos to elect Kevin Fern as the chair and Ken Corbet to continue as Vice Chair of the council, Karen Hibbard seconded. The council voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

#### Council Industry Members updates

- Ken Corbett, Kansas Sport Hunting Association- The Annual Convention was held recently in Salina at the zoo. All bird producers are taking great orders and expect a great season. The goal is to beat South Dakota and make Kansas the most hunted state in the country.
- Suzan Barnes, Travel Industry Association of KS- TIAK- Bridgette reported for Suzan. The Kansas Tourism Conference is October 18-20 in Liberal and the council is invited to attend.
- Susie Coleman, World Fuel Services- Susie reported that gallon sales in Kansas have hit the pre pandemic levels of 2019 and are growing stronger every month. She expressed that there is a significant labor shortage in the convenience stores. Businesses are having to close on certain days due to shortage of workers. They are looking at more fuel, E15, which is a hot product and cost less. Reducing mileage is a big concern with E15 fuel and they hope that it is not pushed along with the electrical vehicles (EV). The cost of electrical vehicles and for a site to add an EV outlet is very expensive. Their annual convention is at the end of August in Manhattan.
- Chuck Magerl, Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association- Chuck reported that hiring is a struggle in just about every industry in the United States. Data received this morning reports that we are still 5 million workers below where we were pre pandemic. Cisco one of two major suppliers for restaurants and food suppliers had to cut off 100 customers due to staffing shortage. Food cost is up 5.6% compared to last year which is taking a burden on a lot of operations.
- Mary Madden, Kansas Historical Society- Mary reported while the Museum was closed, they created 25 new YouTube videos on Kansas history. Six of the videos featured the Santa Fe Trail. They are continuing to add videos as requested by teachers. The museum participated in the Sunflower Summer program through the Kansas Department of Education and is hopeful that this program will continue. Bridgette added that Kansas Tourism assisted the Kansas Department of Education with identifying some of the sites, contacts and sharing of information with partners throughout the state. After Council discussion Bridgette suggested for the November's Agenda that someone come give an update on the program and what the future of the program is.
- Nadia Reimer, Wildlife & Parks- Nadia reported that the State Parks also participated in the Sunflower Summer program. There were about 22 families with students that were able to come visit and camp at the state parks. Nadia introduced herself to the council. Wildlife & Parks just closed out one of the best fiscal years to date ever. The park fee fund was up 21%, visitation was huge, cabin revenue was up 50% and the wildlife fee fund was up 8% over last year. Wildlife and Parks leverage a lot of federal dollars through grants and excise taxes. The US Fish and Wildlife Services is broadening how those dollars can be leveraged to include public relations activities which opens opportunity to promote outdoor recreation, programs, and services in a broader scale. Nadia reported Bridgette has established and continued regular marketing meetings with public affairs which have been valuable. Wildlife & Parks is currently going through rebranding since tourism has moved to the Department of Commerce. Wildlife & Parks for the first time ever has hired a full time Marketing Manager.

Bridgette announced the next meeting date is Nov 5. at 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The location will be announced at a later date.

The meeting was adjourned.