

Governor's Council on Travel and Tourism
Minutes: November 6, 2020 9:00 AM – 12:00 AM
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Council Members in Attendance: Suzan Barnes, Kevin Fern, Karen Hibbard, Susie Coleman, Jan Kessinger, Shannon Francis, Bridgette Jobe, Chuck Magerl, Mimi Meredith, Rosa Cavazos, Alex Rice, Mary Ware, Janet McRae

Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism staff in Attendance: Secretary Brad Loveless, Jordan Hildebrand, Jaimee Salalac, Kelli Hilliard, , Andrea Etzel, Sue Stringer, Colby Sharples-Terry, Taylor Hartshorn

The meeting was held virtually on Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 9.02 AM by Chair Suzan Barnes

Council members made introductions

Suzan Barnes welcomed and announced the new Council Members appointed by Governor Laura Kelly- Donna Price, Mimi Meredith, Rosa Cavazos, and Janet McRae. She thanked the four former members, Shonda Atwater, Kate Goad, Diane Robinson and Jennifer Haugh for their input and willingness to serve on the council. With the recent election we will have some changes with Legislative members which will be discussed in the December meeting.

Suzan Barnes commended Bridgette Jobe and staff on the remarkable job that they've been doing. We've all had to pivot in the way we conduct meetings, conferences and travel plans due to circumstances beyond our control. Kansas Tourism has done outstanding job pivoting!

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

Bridgette introduced Chris Pike, Director of Impact Studies with Tourism Economics. Kansas Tourism has worked with Tourism Economics for many years and receives an annual report on the Economic Impact of Tourism in Kansas. The information provided from Tourism Economics is very valuable to Kansas Tourism to be able to track the growth of the tourism industry and the effects it has on our economy. Chris Pike presented and answered questions on the 2019 analysis on the Economic Impact of Tourism in Kansas, work that they are doing on the pandemic, 2020 and moving forward.

Bridgette reported on the annual Kansas Tourism Conference was to be held in Liberal this year in October 19-21. After several meetings and discussions, a decision was made to hold the conference virtually this year. Sally Fuller and her team from the Liberal CVB did an amazing job adjusting and displaying true leadership through all the changes that needed to take place to host the conference virtually. Liberal will still be the host for the 2021 annual Tourism Conference. The conference was conducted through a Zoom webinar platform for 2 hours every Wednesday afternoon in the Month of October. The agenda each week had a different theme including Inspiration and Information, Data and Details, Kansas Tourism updates, and Moving Forward. Some of the presenters included US Travel, STR, See Source, TIAK and the Kansas Tourism Division. There were 4 Kansas Tourism Team Members to complete the requirements to receive their Kansas Destination Specialist Award. They were Alice Cress, Andrea Etzel, Kelli Hilliard and Brenda Smith. Governor Laura Kelly announced the 2020 Kansas Governor's Tourism Award through a video and Bridgette was able to travel to Salina to present the much-deserved award to Sylvia Rice, Director for Visit Salina. TIAK presented Marketing awards on the final day of the conference. A survey was sent to all who registered to ask for feedback on the sessions.

Some key take aways from the 2020 Kansas Tourism Conference:

- 296 Registered
- Average participation 160
- Many new names and faces
- Partnership with TIAK strengthened
- Spurred good discussion on how on how to continue providing education/inspiration to industry
- We really miss meeting in person

Bridgette announced that during the recent IRMA conference, KANSAS! Magazine was presented five awards: 3 Golds and 2 Silvers for outstanding work from contributing writers and photographers for the magazine. Andrea Etzel does a fantastic job overseeing the magazine as the editor and Kansas Tourism Publications Manager. She always looks for ways to make it better each year which is part of our strategic plan. The new 2021 Travel guide has been approved and is currently being printed and should be available soon.

Bridgette explained that during future meetings, it is her intent to share details on specific projects and how they relate back to the strategic plan. For the first such presentation, Kelli Hilliard presented on one of the Focus Area of the Strategic Plan: Strengthen Engagement with and provide support to Tourism Industry Partners. Kelli Hilliard is now the Industry Relations Manager, a new position created to have a dedicated industry relations staff person as a point of contact to communicate and support the Tourism Industry. Kelli responsibilities include attending all six regional meetings, attending all partner coalition meetings, providing support and training to industry members, and to keeping the tourism staff updated on industry happenings. Kelli also oversees the Kansas Tourism Travel Talk, monthly and weekly industry newsletters. She is currently in the process of creating online tutorials and Industry Relations guides to assist our partners. Jordan Roemer then discussed how we have refined the Industry Co-op Marketing Opportunities and the way that they are promoted to our partners. It is now an online booklet that is updated and revised as needed.

Public Comment. No one was in attendance to provide public comment.

Council Industry Members updates:

- Ken Corbett, Kansas Sport Hunting Association- did not have a report
- Suzan Barnes, Travel Industry Association of KS- Kansas Tourism and TIAK pulled off a great conference complete with interactive participation, great speakers, destination analysis, awards and a cocktail hour. Officers were elected for 2021, financial statement given, heard from Marketing Partner Bajillion on social media and ad campaigns and industry partner reports at the regular Board Meeting. Next TIAK Board Meeting will be held on December 10th, 2020. The 2021 Kansas Tourism Conference will be held in Liberal. Destination State House is scheduled for February 3, 2021.
- Susie Coleman, Petroleum Marketing Association- There has been a new name change to the Petroleum Marketing Association. They are now known as Fuel True The Independent Energy and Convivence Organization. They have also hired Bajillion Agency. Gas prices are low, and refiners aren't making any money. Good news is low gas prices means people travel in Kansas and sales are up.
- Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association-Lodging – Seat open.
- Chuck Magerl, Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association- Restaurants continue to see a hit from COVID. The restaurants that offer carry out and delivery are able to do a little better. It's the local Café's and Mom and Pop Restaurants that continue to struggle. A lot of relief has come through the CARES Program, State and Counties so operations are seeing some level of relief.

Ex-Officio Reports

- Mary Madden, Kansas Historical Society- The Kansas Museum of History remains closed due to the high COVID rate in Shawnee County. The research center is open by appointment only. Most of the Historic Sites in Kansas are closed for the season. They are actively working to provide more resources for families and educators that can be accessed through their website. They have virtual classroom activities, videos on historic topics, virtual tours, after hours virtual lecture series and working on Kansas Day Activities for January 29, 2021. Working on new exhibits at Kaw Mission and the Last Chance Store in Council Grove in preparation of the 200th Anniversary of the Santa Fe Trail.
- Alex Rice, Kansas Dept of Commerce- Things are starting to return to normal at the Kansas Dept of Commerce. A lot of the focus is on the distribution of Federal CARES Act funds in the past several months. We are wrapping up the first round of SPARK grant funding; there was about 35 million dollars that was allocated for small business capital relief. The perimeters of that program were loose, but the intention was to get the money to business that were struggling and hadn't received a lot of prior assistance. There were 27 entertainment venues that were funded through that program, 1.8 million. 350 restaurant and hospitality businesses that were funded 6.8 million from the 5 million as part of the HIRE fund. The team is currently working on allocating 20 million that was granted by the Recovery office in the last week or two. The new Website was launched in mid-September which has great ties to Tourism. Going to be working with Site Selection Magazine in January to produce as special edition Kansas publication that will go out to their subscribers highlighting Kansas.
- Jeanny Sharp, Kansas Dept of Transportation- No report.

Suzan Barnes announced the next meeting date is December 4, 2020, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The location will be announced later.

There was a motion to adjourn by Kevin Fern, Susie Coleman seconded. Passed Unanimously.
The meeting was adjourned.