

Governor's Council on Travel and Tourism
Minutes December 8, 2023, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Kansas State Capitol, Auditorium 4-N

Council Members in Attendance: Karen Hibbard, Bridgette Jobe, Janet McRae, Suzan Barnes, Rosa Cavazos, Rep Jason Goetz, Nadia Marji, Patrick Zollner, Ken Corbet, Chuck Magerl, Sen Renee Erickson, Susie Coleman

Kansas Tourism staff in Attendance: Babette Dixon, Carrie Doud, Jordan Roerman, Jaimee Salalac, Colby Sharples-Terry, Kelsey Wendling

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Chair Karen Hibbard.

Council members and attendees made introductions.

There was a motion to approve minutes from August 4, 2023, by Suzan Barnes, Janet McRae seconded. Passed unanimously.

There were no requests for public comment to make public comments.

Bridgette Jobe presented the Directors Report. All council members received a copy of the most recent Kansas! Magazine, Kansas! 2024 wall calendar and the Kansas Official 2024 Travel Guide. The travel guide had a record year with over 1,400 paid listings. A new Byways guide is expected to come out at the beginning of 2024. All 81 of the Byway panels have been replaced with new panels and will be treated every year to increase longevity. She shared the new google translate and accessibility options on TravelKS.com. Monthly reports showing data and highlights were distributed. There was good discussion on the layout and details provided in the monthly reports. Bridgette announced that starting in January a weekly email will be sent to all Legislators with a quick highlight of what is happening with Kansas Tourism. She ended with an overview of the 2024 marketing messaging that will boldly invite visitors to Reclaim their Vacation in Kansas. Kansas Day will launch the new campaign with a new video being released.

Jordan Roerman, Marketing Manager provided an update on the Sunflower Summer program.

Colby Sharples-Terry, PR & Communications Manager provided an update on potential 2024 media plans and asked for feedback from the Council. There was discussion on the importance of providing assistance and education to local partners on how to better work with travel media. Colby announced a new partnership with WIBW called On the Road and To the Stars which kicks off on January 1, 2024. There is hope to broaden to sister stations in the future.

Bridgette reported 41 applications were received for the Fall attraction development grant, requesting \$2.4 million. \$500,000 was awarded to 14 communities. The 2nd round will open February 1, 2024. Any applications not awarded in the Fall 2023 round may reapply using their previous application.

Bridgette provided a short Legislative update. HB2324, the Tourism Technical Cleanup bill, failed to pass last legislative session. This bill is change references Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism to Commerce, will add three representatives to the Council on Travel and Tourism, and will equalize the amount allocated in the Attraction Development Grant Program to 50% for both nonprofits and public entities. The bill will be re-introduced in both the Senate Commerce and House Commerce Committees in January.

There was discussion on the current license plate designs being voted on through the Governors office.

Council Industry Members provided updates

- Ken Corbett, Kansas Sport Hunting Association – A convention was held in Manhattan. There was discussion on Hunting Rules and Regulations book. A handout was provided for the members.
- Suzan Barnes, Travel Industry Association of Kansas - The Kansas Tourism Conference was held in Dodge City October 16-18 with positive feedback on speakers and panels. TIAK Board Meeting was held October 16th, 2023, in Dodge City. Next Board Meeting is December 14th by Zoom. Suzan reported finance and membership is good and consistent. Destination Statehouse will be held at the State House, February 7, 2024, with an evening reception held at the Beacon. Destination Capitol Hill in D.C. is March 19th, 2024. An educational seminar will be hosted on April 14, 2024, in Hays and will cover weather insurance. The 2024 Kansas Tourism Conference will be in Olathe and the 2025 conference will be in Manhattan.

- Susie Coleman, Fuel Marketing Association – Workforce continues to be the largest challenge. Fuel prices have dropped, and driving is down 4 ½% nationally.
- Chuck Magerl, Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association- Chuck reported they are seeing a reduction in inflation on food cost. Workforce continues to be a major challenge. A newer trend they are seeing is some restaurants adding a credit card fee. Tips are down and more people going to fast food or conserving their money.

Ex-Officio Members provided updates

- Patrick Zollner, Kansas Historical Society – Patrick reported you can sign up for the Zephyr newsletter on the website or by the QR code. Kansas Day 2025 will be the launch for the reopening of the museum. The Historic Site in Council Grove is open.
- Nadia Marji, Wildlife & Parks – Nadia reported several members are retiring in some key positions within the agency. Ashley Beason will be filling a new legislative position and Nadia requested to add her to the next meeting agenda. Park sales open on December 8th and December 15th for reservations. A wild game cooking competition with 300 contestants and media present was held in Lawrence on November 19, 2023. They would like to hold the cook off competition next year in Spring and Fall.

Karen presented the 2024 meeting dates as February 2nd, May 3rd, August 2nd, and November 1st. There was discussion and we extended the meeting time from 9:00am-11:30am to allow plenty of time for the agenda.

Karen announced the next meeting is February 2, 2024. There was a motion to adjourn meeting by Suzan Barnes, Ken Corbet seconded. The meeting was adjourned.