

Minutes  
NEW MEXICO TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING  
La Fonda on the Plaza, Santa Fe Room  
100 E. San Francisco Street, Santa Fe, NM 87501  
Monday, January 29, 2018  
2:00 p.m.

Interim Chairman Chris Stagg called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.

**Roll Call**

**Commissioners present:**

Interim Chairman Chris Stagg  
Commissioner John Garcia  
Commissioner Jennifer Kimball  
Commissioner George A. Brooks  
Commissioner Scott Hutton  
Commissioner Belia Alvarez  
Commissioner Emerson R. Vallo

**Commissioners not present:**

None

**Introduction of Guests:**

Chairman Stagg asked everyone attending the meeting to introduce themselves and to state the district or organization they represent.

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion was made by Chairman Stagg to approve the January 29, 2018, agenda and passed.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion was made by Chairman Stagg to approve the November 30, 2017, minutes and passed.

- **New Mexico Tourism Department Update – Cabinet Secretary Rebecca Latham**
- Secretary Latham welcomed everyone, thanking Commissioner Kimball for hosting today, and also the New Mexico Hospitality Association for arranging the room for this meeting and the earlier meeting with the regional marketing boards.
- She said the department staff will provide information on what the department is doing during each quarter's meeting, so today we will do a deeper dive into New Mexico Magazine. At the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter meeting, you'll hear from our Administrative Services Department about our budget situation heading into FY19. At the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter meeting, our Marketing Department will discuss the overall plan for marketing New Mexico True in FY19.

- Legislative session update: the Secretary thanked our commission members and members of the tourism industry who've been able to join and support the department at the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committee hearings.
- San Francisco market: she's become more optimistic about the plan to add \$3.5M to the budget to add San Francisco as a target market for New Mexico True (NMT) brand advertising. San Francisco is a very strong fit with our consumer target and a solid market for us for leisure travel.
- Access is phenomenal with six non-stop flights daily from the Bay Area into New Mexico, and their economic climate is wonderful as well.
- Compared with the U.S. average, San Francisco has a lower unemployment rate, a higher future job-growth rate, and their per-capita income is through the roof.
- We've reminded the legislature that it has already approved this plan. Prior to the 2016 session, the Jobs Council unanimously agreed to support NMT going into SF, but between that interim meeting and the start of the session, the bottom dropped out of the economy, and we ended up with \$2.3M that we put into Texas markets. There is no bad money spent in Texas, she said; however, the opportunity is too great to continue to look only at Texas and continue to ignore San Francisco.
- How we determine what markets are right for NMT: current markets are DFW, Houston, Denver, Phoenix, Chicago, San Diego, and Austin – the most recently added market. The seasonal presence in New York City was dropped in favor of a more consistent presence in Austin.
- To determine our market - venturesome travelers - we ask questions of consumers to determine the kind of traveler they are. We use this data to determine the “venturesome index” of a market.
- Flights: we look at non-stop flights and growth of those non-stop flights – to Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Roswell, adding Hobbs for its nonstop service into Dallas, and El Paso as an important airport for the south. We look at travel times for non-stop flights and economic performance.
- What are our points of difference are from these markets: what different and desirable assets does New Mexico have for certain markets, and our seasonal appeal. For Salt Lake City and Chicago, there's little draw to NM in winter.
- We also look at the media cost. The senate finance members asked why the cost of going into San Francisco is so much higher - why \$3.5M for San Francisco, when other markets together total about \$9.8M. San Francisco's media is much more expensive, and to break into a new market is also expensive.
- We reminded legislators that NMT delivers 7-1 ROI at the tax-based level, which means that for every \$1 of general fund spent on NMT brand advertising, \$7 comes back in as local and state tax revenue.
- Impact of ad frequency – we still have room for growth: at some point, we will see a lower ROI, but we're nowhere near optimal as yet. Each year that we've received an increase in our general fund budget, we've been able to put more money towards marketing and promotion, from \$13.5M, to now at about \$12.5M, the percentage put towards advertising and promotion has continued to grow. Multi-source evidence (figures from Rocky Mountain Lodgers, Department of Workforce Solutions, U.S. Bureau of Labor, Tax and Revenue Department, and third-party research vendors) all shows continued increases in tourism growth. How we relate to competitors: we're closing in on \$10M – take top DMOs in our competitive states – Colorado now spends nearly \$40M, Arizona is losing \$1M this year.

- Tourism Day: we're grateful for the NM Hospitality Association partnership in this on Wednesday morning. Commissioners, and any others who can go over on Wednesday morning, please express our gratitude to the Legislators - especially Senate Finance - and House Appropriations, for their support of the Tourism Department. It's our privilege to be a faction that can put a smile on their faces.
- **Community outreach** - Secretary Latham said this is where we've been traveling the state in the past few months:
  - We visited Spaceport (*shows photo at Spaceport*) when we went down to visit Truth or Consequences and Sierra County for a NM True Tour. Other recent True Tours were in Clayton/Union County and Tucumcari.
  - Rural Pathways, cultural heritage, Clean & Beautiful, tourism development, True Certified, and region meetings. Dan has been sent out to collect photo and video assets from quite a few stops around the state. She and Audrey have been busy with media, ribbon cuttings, and such. And the True Traveler has had a presence at Balloon Fiesta and the New Mexico Bowl.
  - She would like to see more communities in the True Tour category – there are so many great things going on in communities all across the state, she said, and Tourism does the best job of promoting these things when we see them first-hand. She encouraged the Commissioners and community members to contact us for any special things happening in their districts.
- Audrey Herrera-Castillo, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, NMTD
  - Regional Marketing Boards are in full swing, she said. They've assessed the current membership and added a few new members. Jordan Guenther has joined the Central board, and Linda Seebantz is back on the North Central board. We just finished a very positive meeting with those board members and will be meeting at the Inn of the Mountain Gods, following the Governor's Conference in May.
  - Audrey said she's working closely with our communications and public relations teams to help tap members of the regional boards to provide information about what's going on in their individual communities. We've asked the regional boards to plan for the host region to provide an update at each of these commission meetings. Today we'll hear from the North Central Region, and Kelly Stewart will give the update.

Chairman Stagg indicated that Kelly should proceed with her update.

➤ **North Central Regional Marketing Board Update**

- Kelly Stewart told the group that they've had a lot of changes on their board, and are happy to have Linda Seebantz back. Linda is the new Sales and Marketing Director for the Abiquiu Inn. Linda said the Abiquiu Inn is building a new 4700 sq.ft. structure for the visitor center, though the name has not been confirmed yet. It will be in the heart of Abiquiu, and the grand opening is planned for May 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Kelly said this provides an opportunity to re-group on our North Central brand, which is "Georgia O'Keeffe Country," and how everything that inspired her is continuing to inspire others.
- Their board is: Taking inventory of their Dark Sky assets and star parties; Getting ready to participate in IPW (International Pow Wow); Putting together Native American asset itineraries;

Considering bringing back an annual tourism mixer, where they invite all their tourism and hospitality businesses to come after hours to connect, get excited about what we're all doing, and become ambassadors for our region, Kelly said.

Chairman Stagg thanked Kelly for attending and informing the group.

- Tourism Development Update – David Griscom
  - At the Silver City meeting, David updated the Commission on the Rural Pathways Project, which is a capacity-building grant with the opportunity to apply for a financial grant at the end of it. Since the beginning of the program, he said, the department has funded the guided and unguided tours of 19 historic buildings in downtown Silver City.
  - In the second cycle, this grant funded NEEDO, the North East Economic Development Organization, to look at their historic trails and how to market them. They're putting together a tourism product that involves a pocket map and an online component to raise awareness about the touch-points where travelers can go to see the Santa Fe Trail, the Goodnight-Loving Trail, and others.
  - For the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle, the grant funded The Lowrider Coalition in Espanola. The department's portion of the investment is for the lowrider museum, which is to be part of a much larger development in the downtown area. It expects to bring in breweries, music space, and more. It will be housed in the old Hunter Ford Building, located close to the fiber-art center and the old theater, he said, in response to a question from Commissioner Garcia.
  - The Rural Pathways Project is wrapped up, and thanks to our development coordinator, Suzy Lawrence, it was a very successful program, he said. We look forward to launching it again in July for FY19.
  - The Clean & Beautiful Grant - an annual grant funded with money we get from NM motor vehicle registrations (50 cents per every \$1). This money gets put into a fund that we grant out for cleanup, recycling and beautification projects throughout the state. David said the FY19 cycle will be open sometime in March. The announcement of that date will be soon, and they will use an online platform by Survey Monkey.
  - Dark Skies is moving forward, and we've chosen April for the roll-out. We'll have different categories:
    - Those that are International Dark Skies Association certified (gold, silver, etc.)
    - Communities that are pursuing international certification, or have some kind of Dark Skies program – partnering with an astronomy club, holding star parties on a regular basis
    - Observatories
    - Those communities who have some kind of ordinance to protect their dark skies. He reminded the group that New Mexico is the first state to pass a Dark Skies Act, in 1999, to protect our dark skies by law.
- Public Relations Update – Aimee Awonohopay
  - Secretary Latham said she'd like to re-introduce Aimee Awonohopay – when they met Aimee in Silver City, she was our Cultural Heritage Coordinator. She has since evolved into our Public & Industry Relations Director and is balancing and growing her cultural heritage program, as well.

- Aimee introduced our recently-hired Industry Relations Coordinator, Brianna Gallegos, who works with industry sources and writers, and reports on information she's gathered from the regional boards.
  - Aimee said they are working with the industry partners, with Audrey's guidance, reaching out to learn about their assets, and making sure we have their voices in mind when pitching to travel writers.
  - Aimee attended the International Media Marketplace, in New York City, where she pitched New Mexico assets to 23 travel writers. In addition she spoke to National Geographic Traveler, and they plan to work with NMTD in the next couple of months.
  - Working with our partners to keep updated on their news to keep New Mexico in the forefront of media coverage
  - Working on trip conversions, especially in the international market
  - IPW (International Pow Wow) – this is her first foray into travel trade in the international market; she said IPW is the largest generator of travel in the U.S. Many native communities attend, knowing how lucrative this market is. She said New Mexico is perfectly situated for authentic Native American-oriented travel.
  - The PR group is planning for a webinar soon on how to work with tour operators and how our industry partners can leverage that resource.
- Marketing Update - Erin Ladd, Marketing Director
    - For the Spring/Summer session - upcoming creative that was shot last September includes print ads that go through the end of the year in fly- and drive-market magazines: *American Airlines, Southwest Airlines, Texas Monthly, and D-Magazine*. Shots were from White Sands, Ski Apache, Inn of the Mountain Gods, and the Ruidoso area, and they mostly have a family orientation.
    - Food – obviously a very popular imagery for us
    - 30-second broadcasts for spring-summer travel includes family spots and Millennial spots, showing couples and singles - both broad and diverse elements - for television and social media. They should run in March.
    - True Stories– video assets to cover unique history and stories that make New Mexico singular in the U.S. This one, #13, is on Taos Earthships (shows video). It will launch next week. The great thing about this is that it's interactive – it is the biggest spot on the page on our website. It shows the story behind earthships, about renting them, and shows what else is in the area for visitors. Sec. Latham said we have it on good authority that Millennials are interested in these types of things – a greater sense of purpose – so this is a new avenue to reach them.

Secretary Latham said she wanted to mention an exciting collaborative project with the NM Department of Public Education that uses NMT in a “Teacher Leaders” video. It's out of PED's budget, but Tourism has the data, so we partnered to show how NMT can influence people to move to New Mexico. We provide creative direction and assets. Publication is today, so you should see the ad soon, she said.

➤ **Report from New Mexico Magazine – Carolyn Graham, CEO**

- The new Adventure Guide will be out February 15; it has been reorganized a bit, she said.
- Has 2 covers: winter and summer

- Last year, they piloted sales with Barnes & Noble, and have now added Books-A-Million, in the southeast U.S. and in Chicago. We've printed 500,000 copies for them.
  - Revenues are up 6% for the Guides
  - They are distributed via direct mail
  - Guides are placed in 19,000 hotel rooms
  - We're shooting for a January drop next year
  - Our new art director, John McCauley, has been hired from Outside Magazine. Prior to that, he worked for Boston Magazine.
  - It is important to evolve the magazine; they're looking to grow it for a young audience
  - The 2018 theme for the magazine is "coming home."
  - Kate Nelson said she is finishing the April issue this week. They expanded the "Go/See/Do" section. She said these are the type of improvements that we would like to hear from our industry partners about, to make sure the magazine is a better product and reflects information useful to them.
- **April Issue** –H&G issue: Taos Modern home; Spanish Colonial Craftsman in Cloudcroft; Trip to Santa Rosa
  - **May Issue** –Outdoor issue: Continental Divide Trail; Scenic Drives; Catron County; Harding County; Farmington Art Scene
  - **June Issue** – Summer Adventure issue: Family-friendly Hikes in Capulin, Tent Rocks, and Sitting Bull Falls; Anniversary of Bosque Redondo
  - **July Issue** – Hidden Gems issue: Little Beavers Fest in Dulce; Puebloan – River Guide & Feast; Clayton; Abiquiu Art Project
  - **August Issue** – History issue: Old hotels; Raton photo project; Archeo-Astronomy; Mountainair Story; Gallup Art Scene
  - **Sept. Issue** – Made in New Mexico issue: Features New Mexico makers or places where people can learn to craft; Fun things to do in Carlsbad; Corrales Coming Home story
  - **Oct. Issue** -- Great Getaways issue: Dragonfly Festival in Carlsbad; Leaf peaking; Trails; Cowboy Stories
  - **November Issue** – Any ideas are welcome
  - **December Issue** – Gift Guide issue, and Family fun

Carolyn said that she'd really like to have feedback from everyone about their thoughts on the magazine.

Commissioner Vallo said he would love to see more about the Pueblos in the magazine, as Native culture is a big draw in New Mexico. Numbers have increased in visitation, he said, and as far as demographics go, we've seen that Millennials have a real interest in Native American culture. You have the organization, American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA), as resource, as well, he said.

Kate Nelson said that the Adventure Guide has several sections that focus on Indian Country, and especially about the information on visiting the Pueblos.

Chairman Stagg thanked Carolyn and Kate for the magazine update.

Commissioner Garcia thanked Carolyn for the great job on the magazine. He asked her about the subscription and distribution numbers. Carolyn said last year's numbers were good, that the enterprise fund is on track; they are about 5-10% ahead on revenues, and a big part of that is the co-op program, which is hugely supportive to the magazine, she said. This is a good year to work on increasing numbers, she said.

In answer to a question on demographics, Carolyn said the magazine currently shows 35/65 in-state/out-of-state. The top priority currently is to grow in-state numbers, she said. A new program had the magazine put into classrooms last year – the “subscription for students” program. The target is seventh-grade students. We've received grants for the program, and it's on-going, she said.

➤ **Clean & Beautiful Advisory Committee Update**

David Griscom reported to the Commission about the New Mexico Clean & Beautiful Advisory Committee. The first meeting is scheduled for February 27. The agenda will include proponents in the statute that relate to a state-wide program to evaluate the success of C&B, and also a program to evaluate the cleanliness of our towns. The agenda will include an affiliate and partner recognition program. He said he will report back to the Tourism Commission in May, at the next meeting.

➤ **National Governors Association Summer Meeting**

- Secretary Latham reported that the NGA Summer Meeting is to be held in Santa Fe, July 19-22. Attendance is expected to be about 1100 – 1300 people.
- She will be traveling to Washington, D.C., for the NGA Winter Meeting, Feb. 22-26.
- The host committee raises the money for this meeting so the state government does not have to bear the entire burden for the cost. There are many partners and administrators from Santa Fe and the state of New Mexico to assist with planning. The Santa Fe Community Foundation is our fiscal agent, which will administer all of the funds for us, in exchange for 2.5% fee. They're working closely with Tourism Santa Fe, Creative Santa Fe, and our own Economic Development Department.
- The Rhode Island meeting had a \$4M economic impact during the 3 days of the meeting they hosted in 2016. If there is money left over after the meeting, it will be allocated to non-profit groups chosen by the Governor Martinez.
- They are working with regional marketing boards to help plan itineraries for pre- and post-meeting trips.
- They are considering events, such as working with the museums on Museum Hill to showcase Native American arts and culture; they'll try to incorporate Zozobra in an event; and the film office is working with them to showcase the film industry in New Mexico.

➤ **New Mexico Hospitality Association Update**

NMHA has a board meeting, Chairman Stagg said, so they do not have an update today.

➤ **Reports from Commission Members**

**Commissioner Alvarez**

- They've had lots of excitement in Las Cruces. Due to such large crowds we've had for the annual Country Music Festival, it's being moved from downtown to the Hadley Center. The

date is also moving from April to October – even last year with the colder weather, she said, ticket sales were up 20% and the revenue was up 47% from the previous year.

- Spaceport – the southern road to Spaceport America is now being built. They must have the infrastructure completed to accommodate the wealthy visitors who will come from around the world to southern New Mexico to experience this unique opportunity for space flight.
- Downtown revitalization: Las Cruces has a new downtown plaza. Visit Las Cruces offices will be completed this year and will introduce a space festival in April. The Rio Grande Theater is being rehabbed (it will be closed through February). They're doing convention center improvements. The new Hotel Marriott is next, in the NMSU area. New additions include the Little Toad Creek Brewery & Distillery, the Dragonfly Restaurant, Zia Comics, and Mew & Company. The Farmers Market and other festival events will now be held in the new downtown plaza.
- Spaceport America has partnered with Final Frontiers.

### **Commissioner Brooks**

- Ski New Mexico update: We have snow and we're making snow, he said. About 80% of the trails are available to ski on. There are lots of activities now and upcoming.
- The Ski NM Board passed two resolutions last week: the first unanimously supports the increased Tourism Department budget of \$3.5M. The second resolution that passed is that we're solidly behind (in this administration and future administrations) the New Mexico True brand – the board encourages everyone to push for its support; they feel very strongly about it.
- The Governor announced that it is "Learn Another Sport Month," and it is a good time for kids to take up skiing and hiking in the mountains.

### **Commissioner Garcia**

- He announced a new position for Jim Garcia, who is now a vice president at the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce.
- This weekend is the UNM Ski Team's home meet this year; they'll have a slalom course at Red River, which is really fun for everyone. He said he appreciates all the support they've received for the ski team.
- The big event opening Spaceport America will be coming soon, and he urges everyone to think about promotions for it and to be ready for it.

### **Commissioner Vallo**

- This weekend, Feb. 3-4, is Feast Day at Acoma – he asked that everyone consider visiting.
- AIANTA – offers a cultural heritage tourism certificate program for tribal members to gain skills and experience in tourism programming for their businesses, he said. They can sign-up. AIANTA also had an international marketing program to Italy and the UK, a 2-day training open to the public, which probably will be offered again next year.

### **Commissioner Hutton**

- We are so proud of the NM True brand – the content, strategy, and programs the department is creating are fabulous, awesome. It is vitally important, he said, to keep the brand through the next administration.
- For Santa Fe and northern New Mexico – we will soon have 3 direct flights to Denver every day.



- Take advantage of all the things to do in New Mexico – you can ski in the morning and golf in the afternoon!
- Meow Wolf has expansions - their Denver and Las Vegas locations will be opening soon.

### **Commissioner Kimball**

Had no updates

### **Chairman Stagg**

- They have good skiing up top right now, he said; now is the best time to come for the learn-to-ski programs
- This weekend, the Taos Winter Wine Festival starts Wednesday and ends Sunday. See the events listed on the website.
- Taos Ski Valley is the only “Benefits-Corporation” ski area in the world. On Feb. 8, TSV will be hosting the annual meeting of “B-Corp.” They find good projects to do that benefit people and the planet.
- Airlines in Santa Fe – lots of positive things are going forward, like looking at completing the access road and making terminal improvements to handle more people. They are looking to find a way to improve baggage clearance. For northern New Mexico, being able to get from the Santa Fe Airport to TSV is about 1.5 hours, plus a 40-min. check-in, is much less time than traveling through the Albuquerque Airport. As awesome as the Sunport is, it is not as convenient for northern New Mexico.
- They’re doing a several million dollar renovation of the Children’s Center at TSV. The future of skiing is with the kids, and they want somewhere great for kids to play. They have a climbing wall, slack line, and a jungle gym; while the parents are getting tickets, etc., the kids can have a great athletic experience.
- He said the Blake Hotel is now a year old; they opened February 1<sup>st</sup> last year. They also just hung 3 more Georgia O’Keeffe works in the hallway at the hotel.

Chairman Stagg asked the group for questions or comments.

### **Next Meeting**

Chairman Stagg said the next meeting will be held in Mescalero during the Governor’s Conference on Tourism.

Secretary Latham said the Governor’s Conference officially starts Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, and she said perhaps it would work to have the Commission Meeting on Wednesday morning, May 9<sup>th</sup>, followed by the Regional Marketing Board Meeting. All agreed that timing will work.

### **Public Comment**

Colleen (Silver City) – commented that there has been a significant drop in the numbers of Mexican tourists to southern New Mexico. The feeling is that national policies have probably affected the flow of Mexican tourists. This summer, she said, they’ll be holding a Clay Festival, and will be focusing on “building bridges” with clay. They will be bringing in artists from Mexico, Navajo,

and Zuni, as well as Anglo artists, in the middle of July. She would like to show the governors that Mexico is still our neighbor, and we still want them to visit.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 3:47 p.m.

Interim Chairman, Chris Stagg \_\_\_\_\_

Cabinet Secretary Rebecca Latham \_\_\_\_\_