



Wyoming Tourism Board Meeting Minutes
Sunday, January 26, 2025
Cheyenne, WY

Tourism Board Members Present: Tony O'Brien (Chairman), Quintin Blair (Vice Chairman), Ken Barkey, John Johnson, Mark Tesoro, Budd Betts, Taylor Phillips, Shawn Parker, Charisse Haws.

Staff Members Present: In person – Dionne Roccaforte, Kristy Simola, Becky Ward, Jeanett Wolff, Stephen Haukaas, Daiven Francis, Jim Wollenburg, James Scoon, Sarah Reed, Piper Singer Cunningham, Glenn Gardner, Sawyer Sweckard, Amy Larsen, Kari Eakins, Diane Shober, Angelina Cisneros, Michell Howard, Becky Oswald, Blake Ward, Haley Freeman, Keith Turbitt, Lexi Mitchell, Hailey Mach. Virtual – None.

Guests Present: In person – Dan McCoy, University of Wyoming; Ryan Stolp, Jesse Ryan, Scott Paige, Helen Dodridge, Snowday Agency; Darci Bandi, Nicole Irland, Alisha Oldenburg, Victoria Simmons, BVK; Helen Wilson, Wind River; Marilyn Midhour, Ciara Morison, Steph McGrath, Verb; Thor Harris, Lauren Clark, Annemarie Colonna, Percepture; Lesley Rowbal, Madden; Megan McComas, Carbon County; Berkley Young, Young Strategies; Darren Rudloff, Rudloff Solutions; Mathias Jung, RMI; Mitch Knoth, Kim Palmer, Miles. Virtual – None.

- I. Chairman, Tony O'Brien, called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.
- II. **Consent Agenda** – Chairman Tony O'Brien presented the consent agenda. Shawn Parker moved to approve the consent agenda as presented; Taylor Phillips seconded; motion passed unanimously.
 - A. Minutes from WOT Board Meeting, October 16, 2024
 - B. Election of Officers Timeline

On January 17, 2025, the following request was made by email to the WOT Board of Directors:

Due to the timing of the upcoming in-person meeting being within 30 days of January 26, 2025, we ask that you dispense the time frame in the call for nominations by voting yes or no on the following:

Wyoming Office of Tourism Board of Directors temporarily amend the Policies for the 2025 election of officers to dispense with the 30-day advance notice and call for nominations of officers.

Please respond no later than Monday, January 20, 2025.

Chairman O'Brien has asked WOT Board Member John Johnson to serve as Nominating Committee Chairman.

Both Chairman O'Brien and Vice-Chairman Blair are eligible for to serve an additional one-year term and have indicated their willingness to do so. However, if there are others interested in being considered for either office, please submit your nominations to Mr. Johnson prior to January 24th.

The WOT Board of Directors unanimously agreed by email to temporarily amend the Policies for the 2025 election of officers to dispense with the 30-day advance notice and call for nominations of officers.

- C. Contracts
 - i. **Miles Partnership, LLLP – 2026 Official Travel Guide** – The purpose is to design, produce, and distribute the 2026 Official Travel Guide (OTG) and produce a digital inspiration guide to be hosted on travelwyoming.com. The contract will not exceed \$157,000, the same amount as the previous contract. This is a budgeted item in Brand Studio, Public Relations.



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- ii. **Zartico, Inc.** – The purpose is to continue utilizing the Destination Intelligence Platform for reporting, analysis, insights, and the location-based visualization of data related to Wyoming’s visitor economy. The contract will not exceed \$95,000, the same amount as the previous contract. This is a budgeted item in Business Operations, Research.
- iii. **Team Wyoming** – The purpose is to endorse eight (8) team Wyoming professional rodeo cowboys through the 2025 Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Patch Program, to represent Wyoming while traveling to and competing in rodeos. The total for all eight (8) contracts will not exceed \$98,750, this is an increase of \$13,050 more than last year’s combined contracts. This is a budgeted item in Business Operations, Cowboy Marketing.
 - Dusty Tuckness - \$18,000
 - Brody Cress - \$15,500
 - Cole Reiner - \$15,500
 - Nathan Jestes - \$14,000
 - Tanner Butner - \$13,500
 - Brody Wells - \$13,050
 - Chet Johnson - \$4,600
 - Seth Hardwick - \$4,600

D. Information Only

- i. **Miles Partnership, LLLP – 2026 Official Travel Guide Ad Sales** – The purpose is to develop and secure advertising and placements for the 2026 OTG, the official consumer website, www.travelwyoming.com, sponsored content, events and listings, the monthly e-newsletter, and a lead generation program for industry partners. Additionally, it aims to establish the Wyoming Office of Tourism’s (WOT) advertising revenue share from advertising sales. Revenue share percentages will be credited to WOT as outlined.

Product Share	Share %
Email	
\$1-\$29,999	0.0%
\$30,000-\$75,000	5.0%
\$75,001+	8.0%
OTG	2.0%
Travelwyoming.com	
\$1-\$174,900	0.0%
\$175,000-\$225,000	5.0%
\$225,001+	8.0%

III. Financials – Senior Accounting Manager, Dionne Roccaforte, presented the financials. John Johnson moved to approve the financials as presented; Ken Barkey seconded; motion passed unanimously.

- A. Year-to-Date Financials as of December 31, 2024
- B. Statewide Lodging Tax Collections Report as of December 31, 2024

IV. Director’s Reports

A. Business Operations – Director, Strategy and Business Operations, Kari Eakins, introduced Daiven Francis, Data Analyst, who was brought on board WOT in November. Kari also presented the 2024 Year in Review which includes preliminary information from the Dean Runyan and Associates Economic Impact of Travel report. Renovations at



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the Southeast and Northeast Wyoming Welcome Centers will begin in six weeks with renovations being done by Kaser Designs/exhibits and True Omni/digital upgrades. Other highlights of the Business Operations Department include the upcoming Spring Welcome Center Familiarization tour in May 2025 and the Destination Management Specialist Exam which was approved by the National Council of State Tourism Directors. Both opportunities will be available to welcome center staff throughout Wyoming this spring.

- B. Global Partnerships** – Global Partnerships Director, James Scoon, provided a recap of the international market report he gave at October's WOT Board Meeting. James highlighted statistics from the Great American West Regional Program (GAW) Program including 512 international tour operators selling Wyoming; overall bookings to the GAW region (South Dakota, North Dakota, Idaho, and Wyoming) are up 14% YOY; and the top three markets are Germany, UK, and Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg).

Brand USA saw a 35% increase in impressions, with room nights rising from 836 to 2,600 and Expedia hotel revenue reaching \$515,000. The top markets engaging with Brand USA and attending shows are France, Germany, Canada, Brazil, and Mexico.

James announced that new CEO, Fred Dixon, Sr Vice President of Industry Partnerships and Engagement and Chief Development Officer Angie Briggs, and Senior Manager of Partner Engagement, Maya Howell, were present.

The Price Travel Program in the Mexican market resulted in big growth from 2019 to 2025 with room nights increasing from 23 to 204; an increase in passenger count; and triple the number of bookings. The program reached 12M impressions with total bookings of \$51,000 thus far. James announced that 29 Wyoming suppliers will attend the 2025 Rocky Mountain International Roundup in Rapid City, SD from May 6-9, 2025. WOT will host a post-conference familiarization tour including Devils Tower, Gillette, Buffalo, Sheridan, and Cody. The 2026 International Round Up will be in Medora, ND. Several other trade shows are also planned for 2025.

Global Partnerships Senior Manager, Jim Wollenburg provided an update on the domestic market noting a 7% increase in room nights from last year, 40 new itineraries showcasing various areas of the state and event-based tours are growing. The Destination Development program has received 20 applications from Wyoming partners which total about \$46M accounted for of the program's \$5M budget. Jim also introduced Sawyer Sweckard, Partner Activation Manager. Sawyer will oversee the North Wyoming region including Crook, Weston and Park counties will work closely with partners in WOT's Partner Portal system.

Strategic Partnerships Manager, Glenn Gardner, shared Dynamic Visualization reports from WOT's data partner, Zartico. These reports track visitor attendance, trends, and travel patterns for events. Glenn highlighted key insights from the Wyoming State Fair report and the impact this event had on Converse County. Zartico is currently contracted to provide ten of these reports with WOT.

- C. Brand Studio** – Senior Director of Brand Strategy, Michell Howard, talked about the success of the 2024 Modern Explorer and Wildly Wyoming campaigns which include video, photography, and digital. The winter advertising campaign launched in October and will run through February. As of January 20, 2025, performance is pacing well and expected to exceed goals in awareness, conversion, and engagement.

Senior Manager of Brand Integration, Becky Oswald, shared details about the Hospitality campaign, running from February to March, aimed at attracting people to start careers in Wyoming. She pointed out a new landing webpage on travelwyoming.com that contains hospitality job opportunities and educational resources. The award-winning



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Modern Explorer summer campaign will begin in March and run through September and continues to drive a lot of conversions to our state. Becky also announced Jasmine Pickner Bell, as the newest Modern Explorer, whose story embodies the spirit of adventure, cultural heritage and deep connection to the land that makes Wyoming special.

Interactive Marketing Manager, Blake Ward, announced that the work to refresh the TravelWyoming.com website and Partner Portal is ongoing. TavelWyoming.com is now powered by AI technologies including a live chatbot, search, and personalization. This technology will help streamline data management. Partner Portal, which is a central hub for all interactions with tourism partners, aims to provide partners with the ability to keep their listings up to date, view reports, and join WOT-offered marketing co-ops and programs.

Content Manager, Lexi Mitchell presented the 2025 Official Travelers Guide, drawing attention to a new accessibility page, maps highlighting key features in the national parks and extended winter content. It is also available digitally.

Creative Assets Manager, Keith Turbitt showed the Legislative Reception video which focuses on the Modern Explorers, Howdy Neighbor, and Wildly Wyoming series. The video was created alongside New Thought Digital, a.k.a. Snowday Agency, and will be presented Monday evening at the reception.

- V. Executive Director's Report** – Executive Director, Diane Shober acknowledged the great work of the WOT team, vendors and support of the board. Diane provided an update of the supplemental budget and stated the need to begin planning for fiscal year 2027-2028 biennium planning retreat.
- VI. Board Appointments** – Mark Tesoro announced he recently took the position of Manager of the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Office and will not be requesting reappointment to the board. The board and Executive Director Shober thanked him for his service. The board is awaiting confirmation from the Governor's office on appointments for the District 4, District 6 and At Large positions.
- VII. Nominating Committee** - Chairman of the Nominating Committee, John Johnson, presented the slate of nominations of Tony O'Brien for Chairman and Quintin Blair for Vice Chairman. John Johnson moved to approve the nominees as presented; Shawn Parker seconded; the motion passed unanimously.
- VIII. Old Business** – No old business.
- IX. New Business** – No new business.
- X. Public Comments** – Dan McCoy, Director of the Wyoming Outdoor Recreation, Tourism and Hospitality (WORTH) Initiative shared an update on the Jay Kemmerer WORTH Institute, renamed after a \$5M donation from Jay Kemmerer, which fully matched the program's budget. These funds will support statewide engagement, research, and workforce development. The University has appointed Doug Wachob, Head of Academic Programs, to lead a strategic plan for utilizing these resources. Dan also provided statistics on the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism degree program, which has over 70 students enrolled and 20 with a hospitality minor. The Business Management program, launched last year, is working on increasing enrollment. In summer 2024, 24 Wyoming internships were completed, and 63% of program graduates stayed in the state. A Hospitality and Tourism job fair at the College of Business is scheduled for February 13, 2025.

Berkley Young, Young Strategies, announced that representatives from Brand USA will be consulting in appointments with Young Strategies and Rudloff Solutions during the convention.



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XI. Executive Session – No executive session was held.

XII. Adjourn – Upon conclusion of the meeting Shawn Parker moved to adjourn; John Johnson seconded; motion passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 3:20 pm.