

Mammoth Lakes Tourism

DMO Board Meeting
Wednesday, September 7, 2011
2-4 PM
Tourism Conference Room

1. Call Meeting to Order – Teri Stehlik called the meeting to order at 2:15pm.
2. Roll Call –Matthew Lehman, Howard Pickett, Teri Stehlik, Eric Wasserman and Cheryl Witherill. John Urdi was also in attendance. John Morris and Michael Raimondo were unable to attend.
3. Approval of Minutes from July 27th, 2011. A motion was made by Eric to approve the minutes from, 7/272011. Seconded by Teri. Approved 6-0.
4. Financial Report
 - a. P&L – emailed prior.
 - b. Bank Balance- The MLT account balance right now is over \$1M. FDIC will cover a limit of \$250k. We need to discuss turning some of this money over into CD's or an option that is more protected. Eric reported that he has had some time to come up with a few ideas. There is approx. \$1M that is “truly reserve”. This could be higher when the true up comes in which could be \$40-50k. This is outside the monthly expenses budgeted. John is expecting June, July, August TOT anytime which would cover operating expenses. Teri asked if there are any marketing opportunities that we can use some of these funds now for future marketing. Winter is coming so we can beef up the winter promotions as well. The possibility of prepaying some marketing could be one option. John U would like to use these funds as “rainy day” funds with the lawsuit on the table. We have discussed the track project in the past; John U. feels that this could be a “loan” to the project and setup a contract to be paid back by a certain date. This is a big opportunity for MLT. Teri stated that there could be a “sage grass nesting” issue that could carry this project into two seasons and the start date pushed back.

Eric's recommendations: In the “guaranteed” world, interest rates are nothing. US Treasury is .06% right now and CD Rates 3 months are .25%. Up to five years would be higher but we are not sure what the term is on this issue. We need to know what our “spending number” is vs. our “reserve fund”.

Eric produced a “hypothetical Portfolio Illustration” for these funds to be invested (attach for minutes). Teri stated that if there is any potential for loss at all, we cannot risk investing these funds? Eric explained that there is no “guarantee” with risk. CD’s would be the least risk and a little of gain. This portfolio option would be a low list with the possibility of a little more gain.

The Board discussed that as we have no idea what the outcome of the lawsuit will be, we should go with a CD plan. Until we know more, we should go with the least amount of risk possible. This will be Board direction. John U. will meet with Dave Wilbrecht as the town will have the final say in this plan as this is their contribution.

5. New Business

- a. Research Reporting: John U. met with the CFO of US Travel and people with Long Woods Travel about our situation. They are working with John on building statistics, case studies, etc. in support of Tourism and to help with our exposure with the lawsuit or bankruptcy. As 90% of our business is tourism, can they really take money from what keeps us going? John will continue to gather data and impact detail so we are prepared. The Long Wood studies are expensive, may be worth the investment. The cost of what they have would be close to \$60k. ROI studies on what we are spending on marketing will also be important. John is still working with AMEX on reports/surveys to gather spending detail. They have over 2,600 people that have purchased flights with AMEX. This sample is larger than originally thought. This will be great information. The mountain is paying for ½ of this study, MLT is covering the balance. They are also doing a study for 93546 which will show local info as well. They have previous year’s data so that they can report year over year. It is possible that local business or events can also track where their guests are spending money. John U. has put out surveys with lodging, airport, rental car places, cabs, event tents, etc. This is going very well. This detail will be put into a data base by staff.
- b. Track Project Discussion: See above. The discussion follows the potential of investing money into this project as it could be a huge marketing tool down the road. John will continue to look into this opportunity.
- c. Geothermal Plant Support: John U. has been talking to Dave Harvey about status; he has introduced him to someone that could be a great CEO for our location. He is looking for support of MLT with their visitor bureau. Potential for college tours, visitors, etc. Could be something to build into the website for tours, etc. We could even help down the road for staffing of the VB. There are only 2 other geothermal VB’s in the world. This one is very easy to get to. There is an event on the 24th of this month as a meet and greet for involved individuals. The Board is a “dream team” of

geothermal and science. This is another big opportunity. Timing of the VB is next summer.

- d. Events/Second Summer Derby: Events have been going well. The tent has been busy. The main goal is to answer questions and to capture surveys. We have collected some great data. Fishing coalition looking at pushing the shoulder season. They have done an Eastern Sierra Second Summer Derby for fishing. Western Outdoors is participating with a give a way. They have tagged fish for a contest. The raffle tickets that are being sold for the boat give away will be put back into fish stocking. Raffle tickets being sold at all the fishing and retail stores. Derby is through November 15th. Only Lake Mary is participating with the tagged fish. Silver Lake has a program where if you catch any fish, you get a gift. MLT will send this to Lodging to share this weekend.
- e. Branding Update: John U. handed out some “welcome/thank you” door stickers. The Chamber would be a great way to get these out to local businesses. They also extended the original sticker to include “California” at the bottom. John has created floor/door mats for businesses. These would be for sale to other businesses. John has been talking about trademarking logo through the town; MLT will be the licensing agent. MLT will take over the banners on Main Street as well. John is working with the town on this now as far as seasonal, events, etc. MLT has also taken over the trolley signs to promote flight.
- f. Air Update: Howard is hoping that all detail will be loaded for United flights by the 16th of this month. April was up 45% year over year for April. 18% for May. 33% for June, 45% for July and 45% for August; all year over year. Enplanements up 500 for August. Sept is on pace for last year’s numbers. Sprung structure is on hold. There was an article in the paper that we were told we could not put this up. The meeting yesterday showed that the attorneys are ok with this. The update is that there is another meeting tomorrow. Dave W. talked to the attorney general who said there is no issue. Dave W. will be talking to council on this subject this evening in closed session. Howard asked where we are with the County on the subsidy. There is no contract as of now. The AMEX studies will be very helpful in these negotiations as it will show that people are spending money throughout the county.
- g. PR: John U. is thrilled with what is happening with Lyman. The “Crib” has been very successful.
- h. Event Coalition: Are there any plans to continue to meet for next summer. They are already talking to get dates in Planner, brochures, etc. They would like to get this out by February. Howard talked about getting a venue put into place. John U. is looking at a location behind Mammoth

Creek Inn. Land is town owned and Forest Service. John thinks it could seat about 8,000. The access for the village is great for “after” into the village, eating, etc., by using Sam’s or Canyon Lodge. Teri mentioned that there was surprise that events went around the coalition and went to council for additional funding. Where is the group on this issue? The mobility team was added to get an event “bus/trolley” involved. This year’s events were far more successful and we spent more money in total than would have been handed out in the past. Bottom line is that the event should be handled as a business.

- i. Interactive: End of Sept is the launch date for the revamp of the site.
- j. International Update: We are signed on with Mountain for Mexico City and in Brazil for marketing those areas.
- k. High Altitude Update: Idea of working with someone for a “sweep stakes” event to get “you and 20 of your friends” here to train. There was discussion about the NIKE store successes and goal of having this return next summer. Meb is now sponsored by Sketchers.

6. Board Member Comments/Report

- a. Eric: Brent is new Chamber President. Brent would like to take the position on MLT as of next meeting as this is a Chamber appointed position. Eric thanked the board and was excited about what has been accomplished.
- b. Discussion of Bylaws and when changes can take place and process should be included. Board will need to relook at Bylaws on this issue. Add to next agenda.
- c. Howard talked about signage project and the process and status. They have toured the airport, 395, Caltrans, Forest Service, etc. The walk through included the people that needed to be there. Timing? Will it be done before winter? Thought from John U. is no. Do we have the ability to put something temporary in place? In some cases, John feels we can get some of it done prioritize the needs. Some in town signage could be done by winter; John will give us an update; It may be Spring.
- d. Howard; RFID, Air, Levy Food, Sledz bought by Mountain, and will reopen...all is coming as news from the MTN.
- e. Howard: Lift and Lodging. Should this go to Lodging or go to MLT as a money generated product for MLT. Would like this to a marketing tool. Howard would like to give this to MLT as an exchange with coop marketing and administrating. Average of a 23% discount.
- f. TOT Update – letters stuffed today by volunteers, should be mailed this week.
- g. Teri: Council Meetings - importance of having someone at each meeting from MLT

- h. 360' tour – amazing shots! Great promotion for meeting with County on participation.

7. Next Meeting Date will be Wednesday, at the MLT offices.

Meeting was adjourned at 4pm and went into Executive Session.