



Mammoth Lakes Tourism Monthly Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

Call in # (310) 372-7549 - Participant Code 934985 - Host Code 3838

1:00 – 3:00pm MLT Conference Room

Meeting Minutes

1. **Call Meeting to Order at 1:04pm** – John Morris, Board Chair
2. **Roll Call** – John Morris, Brent Truax, Paul Rudder, Sean Turner, Kirk Schaubmayer, Michael Ledesma, Michael Raimondo
3. **Board Member Comments/Reports/Agenda Additions**

Michael Ledesma – Hell 2 Heaven: There's a potential golf event June 12th/13th in Mammoth Lakes with participants playing at Furnace Creek (the lowest golf course in the US) in the morning then coming to Sierra Star (the highest in CA) to play in the afternoon.

- John Urdi – Asks if the Sierra Star course will be open. Could be a big story if so.
- Lara Kaylor – Says the organizer (golf writer/photographer for PGA events) came last year and did a trial run with his son. He wrote several articles about it on his website.

John Morris – Quality of life ordinance says a loft without an egress can't be used as lodging. Potential for lost revenue if people can't rent that space, brings in less TOT, hurts town. It might concern thousands of properties.

4. **Public Comment**
 - Rich Boccia with MLR – Winter recreation summit is coming up March 18-19. Keynote speaker Luis Benitez, Director of the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office, will talk about how recreation drives the economy. Other speakers will address what happens without snow. MLR has raised almost \$6000 to match with in-kind funds.
 - Other updates: Discussing outdoor performing arts venue at Town Council meeting on 3/2. MLR working on allocations strategy and will bring an updated draft to MLR in first week of April then to Town Council in May. Also looking at 5-year strategic plan, operating plan, etc.
 - John Urdi – Welcome to new MLT/MLCC Marketing Assistant Jessica Kennedy, former marketing coordinator for Delaware North in Yosemite National Park.
5. **Minutes** – John Morris motions, Michael Raimondo seconds, passes unanimously.
6. **MLT Team Presentation Schedule – 30 minutes including Q&A time**

New Website (Christie Osborne) – Introduction to beta version of new website, update on progress/launch

- Vision – Primary goal to inspire people to visit with visual representation of the area. Each page is built to move web visitor from inspiration and funnel them down into active evaluation and booking options. Simultaneous goal is to showcase local businesses/events. Designed mobile-first then built out to desktop version. Goals are to increase web visitor's time on site, increase page views per visit and decrease bounce rate.
- Side by side comparisons with old website – New version highlights destinations and has trip ideas to get them planning and highlight local businesses. More than 400 blog posts have "related businesses" linked to them. Ability to filter businesses by certain amenities.
- Will eventually have businesses manage their own listings. Use photos instead of logos. Related events and deals are populated automatically on business listings.

- Targeting – Using Get Smart to give custom content to people. Geotargeting fly markets (show them things to do), drive markets (show them weather info/last minute deals and direct them to the blog), international visitors (show them “The California Vacation” and give high level things to do). Eventually will be able to deliver content based on keyword searches.
- Next Steps – Launching April 15 if not sooner. Content audit, recommendations/usability studies and brand voice guidelines will be addressed this summer. Integrate Mammoth Lakes Crib. Translate portions of website into six different languages for international visitors.
- Sean Turner – Asks how “related businesses” are chosen.
 - Christie – Random
- Brent Truax – Asks if still using Vacation Roost to book via VisitMammoth.com
 - Christie – Still evaluating
- John Urdi – It’s not just a project of the last year, it has been in the works for the last 5 years. Worked with media company from Florida who has built websites for major destinations around the country. This website has to be really good since all of our marketing materials direct here.
- Paul Rudder/Sean Turner – Asks if MLT has gotten feedback on the line drawing imagery.
 - John Urdi – Reasons for it: 1) Gives visual cues for people who arrive at website from our paid No Small Adventure campaign with the line drawing imagery. 2) It makes us stand out from other ski resort ad campaigns.
- Sean Turner – Asks about total price tag.
 - Christie – Around \$130k including pre-launch usability, SEO baseline, post-launch usability and custom-coded website and data engine. Paid for by MLT.

7. Department Updates – A brief recap of past, current and future efforts of each department

1. Marketing – John Urdi on behalf of Whitney Lennon

- Tradeshows – Travel shows end 3rd week of March, will report back then. John and Josh are in Long Beach this weekend, Whitney at travel shows through the end of March. John and Whitney will attend Destination Capitol Hill in March.
- Winter Ad Awareness Campaign – Exceeded goal of raising people’s understanding and getting ML on their radar. Kept people’s attention on 30-second video. Winter Inspiration Campaign was re-launched after Jan. 1 with revised creative for a much better click through rate (exceeded goal). Paid search strategy to support awareness/inspiration for winter 2015-16 ended just under goal but got a lot of clicks so still successful. John will send more info via email.

PR/Media – Lara Kaylor

- Hosted several domestic FAM trips in February – Forbes, SF Chronicle, Peter Greenburg Travel, East Bay Newspaper Group’s Happy Wanderer
- Prepping for Society for American Travel Writers visit in June – the conference chair is coming to do a site visit the 2nd week of March (mostly people attending from central states)
- The ML Crib opens April 1st, still getting some national media interest. No MTC athletes qualified for trials but others are training here. LA Times and NYT have us on their radar.
- ML did not win a Poppy Award – up against Yosemite, Huntington Beach and others. Huntington Beach won for 66 people on one surfboard.

2. International – Michael Vanderhurst

- Back to back travel and trade FAM trips and media trips, all MLT hands on board to show them around town (Australia, Brazil, Mexico, UK)
- MLT is in the final stages of producing a new vacation planner – these are distributed internationally to introduce traveler to destination and push them to come here rather than Whistler, Vail, etc. Will be done by end of March. Branded like new website.
 - Goal of new vacation planner: encourage international visitors to use ML as a hub to explore the Eastern Sierra and encourage multiple-night stays.

3. Air Service – John Urdi

- YTD pacing 1000 passengers ahead of LY total. LA and San Diego up, SF and Denver down.
 - Might make SF flight 5 days a week

- Investigating potential for new markets – high on list were Seattle and Phoenix
- Pacing 50% on where we were last year on the subsidy – now \$331k, last year \$661k. Have been able to minimize risk but still maximize people coming through.
- Service to SFO ends 4/3, SAN ends 4/3, DEN ends 3/19
- Paul Rudder – Asks if we have a marketing program in San Francisco.
- John Urdi – Yes. Air messaging didn't result in people booking flights but did make us seem more accessible. Mammoth is no longer the mountain you can't get to.
- Sean Turner – Asks about cancellation rate.
- John Urdi – 15% overall in February. SF high cancellation rate in December and January. March looks blustery – hopefully not too bad for flights.
- Sean Turner – Asks if that cancellation rate is the industry standard.
- John Urdi – Yes, but also the issue of the type of plane being flown having uncommon parts that break and need to be repaired/replaced.
- John will send more info via email about air service.

2. **Financial Reports** – An update regarding the financial health of the organization – John Urdi

1. TBID renewal discussion – meeting with Civitas in January
 - Will start building steering committee in June. Goal is to renew in the next year for 10 years. Current TBID expires September 1, 2018.
2. TOT & TBID
 - TOT
 - July to November were records last year, exceeded this year. Numbers this year beat previous record years, not just last year. YTD ahead of budget and ahead of this time last year.
 - TOT had never exceeded \$2 million but did it two months in a row. Anticipating February over \$2 million. Weekends very strong with good Sunday night occupancy.
 - TBID: \$500k ahead of projection
3. Cash flow - discussion of current bank balances
 - \$1,165,000 in Measure A Checking, \$300,000 in savings
 - \$1,391,000 in TBID checking, \$5k in savings
 - John discussed insurance options with Eastern Sierra Community Bank, who only insures up to a certain amount per Tax ID. There are CD options with foreign banks and Goldman Sachs. Would like to keep money in the Eastern Sierra.
 - Need to get Form 700s back from Board Members to get to Jamie
4. P&L Reports – no comment
5. Other
 - School calendars are posted on MLT Insider. More opportunity for summer if schools start later.
 - John Morris – LA ratified school calendar for just one year instead of five. 40% want school to start after Labor Day, so summer 2017 could be a longer travel season.

3. **MMSA Update** – Erik absent, given by John

- MMSA is on pace for 1.3 million skier visits
- Big Bear and MMSA have done well, but Mountain High (at Big Bear) closed this week from lack of snow. Hopefully doesn't hurt perception of MMSA.
- Possibility that Sierra Star might not open this summer.
- Sean Turner – Sierra Star not opening could mess with the little guys since it's a big amenity.

4. **New Business**

- John Urdi – Agenda Bill Budget Adjustment – MLT receives requests to participate in event funding. MLT supports events with marketing dollars and infrastructure funds, not good to be part of all the different pieces. MLT and MLR are going to talk about funding. Ideally there should be an MLT board member at Town Council meeting 3/2.

5. Key Takeaways

1. All-time TOT RECORD set in December (up 16% above 2010)
2. New RECORD set in January at \$2.32 (up 20% to previous record of 2008)
3. Total air subsidy owed YTD down \$335,000 to LY, which is less than half of last year's subsidy for December & January – LA flight in positive numbers

Future Meeting Dates

Next scheduled Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday, April 6th 1-3pm @ MLT Conference Room