



Advisory Board Meeting  
Thursday, February 28, 2019  
9:00 am

**Members Present:** Craig Massey – NM Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum  
Vince Vaccaro – Lorenzo’s Restaurant  
Belia Alvarez – Heritage Hotels

**Members Absent:** Ana Berrun – Townplace Suites  
Debra Marks – Las Cruces Symphony Association

**Others Present:** Jennifer Bales (CVB), Rochelle Miller-Hernandez (CVB), Jamila Gilbert (CVB), Chris Faivre (CVB) Leslie Gabaldon (CVB), Phil San Filippo (ED), and Kathleen McAlpine (LCCC).

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Ms. Alvarez.

#### **II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 31, 2019**

Ms. Alvarez called for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 31, 2019 Advisory Board Meeting. Mr. Vaccaro moved to approve the motion. Mr. Massey seconded. All members were in favor. Passed 4-0.

#### **III. PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS**

##### **Executive Directors Report – Jennifer Bales**

We are looking to begin a series on the “Legends of Las Cruces,” focusing on local legends, including Mark Madoff, Barbara Hubbard, Gary Carruthers, Mary Kay Papen, Mary Helen Garcia, John Paul Taylor, Heather Pollard, and others. We are open to ideas and hope to have some diversity in these legends as well. We’re looking at like a 30-minute video.

We are kicking off A2D in full force today. A2D is our Arrival “2” Departure customer service training, which is an online course followed by a live, in-person session. Considering everything that’s starting to gear up with Virgin, we need to kind of get that out there. We have a handful of City employees going through this right now, as well as someone from Virgin, who may start pushing it through their community.

Val Snow and Peggy Bendel, our graphic designer and our PR person, are in town right now. They work with both CVB and Economic Development and we’re going to start working on the Virgin Galactic launch, whenever that will be.

Over the past year, we’ve been working to build a relationship with White Sands, and they came up with an idea to do a relay race. That was not doable, due to security issues and issues with animal habitats. Now, we’re looking at doing a Spartan Race. The Spartan organization has a deal with the US Army that we may be able to get in on. This could draw an influx of between five and ten thousand people to Las Cruces. This would be hopefully in November. We do have to find a location, as this event requires a lot of acreage.

Virgin Galactic has another successful test flight. We're still planning on doing the Economic Development events for the final launch, depending on when that is. New Mexico Hospitality Associate has requested a million dollars extra in their budget for the Virgin Galactic flight. Senator Mary Kay Papen is taking that bill around.

There are going to be two Plaza events this spring put on by Economic Development and CVB will be helping. The first one is April 26, a Selena tribute. And then on May 10, we're having the "Royal Graduation," which is a Prince and Queen tribute. Tickets are on sale now on Eventbrite.

The State of the City Address will be today at 12:30.

House Bill 106, which was the bill regarding Airbnb, has passed and will go into effect in January. We're still waiting to see what happens with the bill regarding the Hospitality Fee.

This is Vince's last meeting, he was presented with a plaque of appreciation for his six years of service.

### **Sales Report – Rochelle Miller-Hernandez**

From January of last year, Occupancy was down 3.6%, from 52.23% to 50.3%. For the past running 12 months, it was up 3.2%. From January of last year, ADR was up 4.4%, from 68.75% to 71.75%. For the past running 12 months, it was up 4.7%. From January of last year, RevPar was up 0.6%, from 35.86% to 36.08%. For the past running 12 months, it was up 1.5%.

For the Society of American Travel Writers event that is coming up, we are going to do a pre- and a post- FAM tour and several day tours during the conference. We're looking to get a bunch of travel writers to our area.

The "For the Love of Art month" hotel packages were a big success with 79 packages sold. The hotels that put the packages on their corporate web site and didn't just rely on us did the best. So we'll be pushing for that in the future. We're looking at a Space Festival package and the hotels will be putting that on their corporate website.

We're still working on "Explore to Stay," the idea being that people who typically are going to relocate to a new area will visit that area 3-4 times. We are creating packages to capitalize on that. The first packages will be during the Homebuilders Showcase of Homes.

The sales team is working on a cross-market FAM, which will be the last weekend of April and will bring tourism and conventions meeting planners and tour developers.

For Conventions, the National Association of College and University Food Services enjoyed their site visit and will be moving forward with contract negotiations with NMSU for 2021. The Southwest Kiwanis district meeting is returning after 8 years. All three sales departments have released their winter newsletters, which have been received well. Municipal League will be here in August. Next year is the Association of Counties. The year after that is Tekawitha and the National Association of College and University Food Services convention. All of these are very large conventions, so it will be a good couple of years. Albert is now on the New Mexico MPI Association Board.

For Sports, we did get the 4<sup>th</sup> of July UAAA National Youth Baseball back. We also won back the USSSA National Girls Fast Pitch. The New Mexico Senior Olympics has come back as well.

### **Media Report – Jamila Gilbert**

Tickets for Country Music Fest are officially on sale as a soft opening and the new site will be launched on March 1. We just had a travel writer come in who will be doing a series of Space Festival and Spaceport-related blogs. Last weekend, New Mexico Department of Tourism came down to shoot Slot Canyon and La Posta. We hope to continue to work more with the State and try to leverage some of their assets to highlight things locally that are going on and outdoor recreation that we have.

"For the Love of Art month" was one of our most-viewed pages, due to the hotel packages.

Overall in the month of January, there was 35,000 page views and around 27,000 of those were unique. For the first time, we have had another city bypass Las Cruces for the most site visits and that was Juarez.

Tourview Maps will be creating large fold-out maps with illustrations of Las Cruces. These will be distributed throughout the state. We will have 100,000 copies of those at no cost to Visit Las Cruces, as all revenue is through ads in the maps.

For January, we reached 4,000 people with an organic post. We've also started using images from Instagram to promote Las Cruces on Instagram and Facebook and in blog posts, crediting the artist.

Music Beyond Borders will be held Friday night at 6pm. This is a free event by the Mexican Consulate in El Paso. They are bringing 60 students from Juarez to perform with the NMSU Philharmonic.

### **Rio Grande Theatre – Chris Faivre**

February was a good month for the theater with around 20 events, including the Las Cruces International Film Festival. February kicked off with the Pat Garrett Film Festival, a partnership with the Doña Ana Historical Society. The event drew around 1400 people throughout the day and was picked up by the New York Times and the AP. We got an estimated \$12.5 million dollars of media exposure. There were 4 sell-out shows in February: Dr. Raza's magic show, two showings of the Acrocats, and "The Long Run," an Eagles tribute band.

Events coming up in March include "Lemony Snickett's A Series of Unfortunate Events" partnership with the Museums system, a two-weekend run of A Children's Theatre's "The Hobbit," Mack Goldsbury and Allan Kaplan CD release party, and a showing of the movie "Pure Country" in conjunction with the NMSU Rodeo.

Joe Lujan, a filmmaker from Las Cruces living in Los Angeles, is looking at having a premiere of his movie "Immortal Wars 2" at the theatre. He also produces the comic book that this movie is based on and is looking at doing a book signing at Zia Comics, a matinee screening of the first "Immortal Wars" movie, and a world-premiere of the second movie in the evening. This is looking to be the first Saturday in June.

The Rio Grande Theatre will be closed in July and August for repairs.

Year-to-date through January, there have been over 11,000 people in attendance for RGT events and over 130 events held.

## **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

Kathy McAlpine reported that the Las Cruces Convention Center expansion is coming along. The new water main was connected yesterday. There is a lot of excitement about the expansion and the hotel opening. It looks like everything should be completed by June so that the punch list can be started. There is work being done to tie together the fire systems. The Convention Center is in the final running for the New Mexico Infrastructure conference and should know next week.

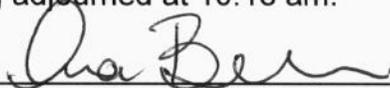
Jennifer Bales reported that there is no new update on the surrounding construction, but they poured the new parking lot yesterday.

Phil San Filippo reported that members of the Amador Foundation have expressed a desire to turn the old Amador Hotel building back into a boutique Heritage Hotel.

## **V. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 10:18 am.

Approved on: \_\_\_\_\_



Ana Berrun; Chair, Las Cruces Convention & Visitors Bureau Advisory Board