

MINUTES

Western Nebraska Tourism Coalition (WNTC) Meeting

May 18, 2021 – Peg Leg Brewery in North Platte (Meeting also available via Zoom)

In Attendance: Lisa Burke (North Platte/Lincoln County Visitors Bureau), Karla Scott (Keith County Chamber), Karla Niedan-Streeks (Gering Visitors Bureau), Jean Norman (Our Heritage Guest Ranch & Sioux County Travel Bureau), Kerri Rempp (Dawes County & Northwest NE), Karen Kollars (Nebraska Tourism Commission), Kevin Howard (Sidney/Cheyenne County), Jessica Rocha & Juan Rocha (Kimball County Visitors Center), Jack Berg (Morrill County Visitors Committee), Steve Maly (Maly Marketing), Regina Osburn (Cherry County Tourism), Kirsten Parker (Golden Spike Tower), Alli Stoppkotte (Golden Spike Tower), Patti & Mitch Glidden (Sandhills Motel & Glidden Canoe Rentals), Mike-Owner of Peg Leg Brewery, Jeni Mattern (City of Terrytown) in attendance via Zoom, and Hal Enevoldsen (Point of Rocks Campground) in attendance via Zoom.

Call to Order. Chairman Kerri Rempp called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. Self-introductions were made by those in attendance and community updates shared with all in attendance.

Approval of Agenda: It was M/Jessica Rocha, 2/Kevin Howard to approve the agenda for the May 18, 2021 meeting. Motion carried.

Minutes: It was M/Lisa Burke, 2/Kirsten Parker to approve the “amended” minutes of the March 18, 2021 WNTC meeting. Motion carried.

Financial Reports: Treasurer Kirsten Parker handed out and presented update financial reports for WNTC including budget vs. actual, statement of financial position, AP aging detail and the proposed 2021-2022 WNTC budget. Kirsten advised the membership that total carry forward for FY 2021-2022 will be slightly less than \$10,000 as originally discussed and closer to \$8,200.00. Following review; the May financial statements were filed for record pending audit.

Following discussion; it was M/Karla Niedan-Streeks, 2/Jessica Rocha to approve and adopt the 2021-2022 WNTC Budget as presented; new fiscal year for the Coalition begins on July 1, 2021 and runs through June 30, 2021. Motion carried.

Support Services: Contractor Brenda Leisy was unable to attend today’s meeting; no formal report other than leads sent out indicate increased visitor requests over the last 30 days. Membership discussed status of recommendation on keeping or discontinuing the 800 number for WNTC. It was M/Karla Scott, 2/Karla Niedan-Streeks to table the discussion on whether or not to get rid of the 800 number until the next meeting; and to get additional information to present on options that include an on-line phone and costs. Motion carried.

Marketing Committee: Marketing Committee Chairman Lisa Burke introduced Steve Maly from Maly Marketing who presented a written report on Facebook/Instagram Total Ad Spends and top performing ads as well as overview of website traffic numbers. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

Karla Niedan-Streeks reported that all 25,000 Destination Western Nebraska Travel Guides with the new cover date of 2020-2021 Travel Guide have been printed and are delivered to Grand Island for tomorrow’s swap and to be taken home by the distribution locations. Wood River High School students have been hired to assist with loading pallets of guides into trailers and individual vehicles. Karla reported that Omaha Magazine has been an excellent partner in this reprint process; negotiating

the best possible print and paper rates and in fact taking on an increase themselves when a spike in paper costs hit the same day as reprint was ordered.

Omaha Magazine will begin advertising sales later in the summer (July most likely) for the new 2022 Destination Western Nebraska Travel Guide that will be released in January of 2022. Timing of advertising sales will be delayed to mid-summer to allow members and advertisers time for summer revenues to be coming in and recovery going well in order to insure a successful advertising sales campaign.

Website: Regina Osburn will take over as "Webmaster" for WNTC with Kevin Howard assisting as needed along with the committee. Members will need to go to the WNTC website to look at their listings and send any update/revisions/changes directly to Regina. Karla will draft a letter to the WNTC Membership to ask them to do so and get Executive Committee approval on the communication to send to the membership.

Facebook: Kirsten reported the Facebook Committee has been busy with weekly postings; she reminded members to like and share the posts to boost exposure.

WNTC Travel Guide Supplies: Reported supplies of WNTC Travel Guides on hand are: Chadron-0, Gering-0, North Platte-130 boxes, Kimball-10 boxes, Sidney-1 ½ boxes, Morrill County-2 boxes, Valentine-0, Ogallala-2 boxes and Thedford-40 boxes.

Morrill County Tourism Presentation: Jack Berg from Morrill County reported on improvements made at Jail and Courthouse Rock site in Bridgeport that include expansion of the parking lot areas, road improvements and bench seating for visitors. Morrill County has additional projects planned for the site and has received early commitments of funding for these additional projects; however, they have met with resistance from History Nebraska who owns the site. Following discussion; it was M/Kevin Howard, 2/Karla Niedan-Streeks to have WNTC send a letter of support to History Nebraska Director and Board Members and copying State Senators on the value of improvements made to date and importance of additional improvements for registration and information distribution boxes, potential lighting of the rocks, etc. to tell additional visitors about the important history of the site and to measure and track visitation numbers. Motion carried. Karla will draft a letter of support and send to the Executive Committee for review.

WNTC Membership Committee: Kerri Rempp reported to date no member has stepped forward to assume duties as the new Chairman of the Membership Committee. Following discussion, it was M/Karla Niedan-Streeks, 2/Kirstin Parker to nominate Brenda Leisy as Chair. Her experience as Past Chairman of the Coalition together with tenure as Support Services she has all the expertise and tools to lead the Membership recruitment and retention efforts and lead the committee. Motion carried.

Professional Services Contract: Karla Niedan-Streeks reported on behalf of the WNTC Executive Committee who heard proposals from two bidders for the new contract of services for WNTC: Chadron Chamber of Commerce and Golden Spike Tower. Both bidders made excellent presentations and were comparable in the bid amounts per month to fulfill the contract of services. During the discussions; the WNTC Executive Committee felt it was important to recommend a bidder that would consider a longer than 2-year contract in the future and has a good understanding of WNTC and its marketing missions. Following discussion; it was M/Karla Niedan-Streeks, 2/Kevin Howard to recommend awarding the WNTC Contract of Services to Golden Spike Tower. Motion carried unanimously.

Nebraska Tourism Commissioner Report: Commissioner Starr Lehl was unable to attend today's meeting; no report.

Nebraska Tourism Commission Report: Karen Kollars reported the dates for the National Western Stock Show 2022 are January 8-23, 2022 and that she/Commission will have additional information on the state's booth at the next meeting. The 2022 Nebraska Travel Conference will be in Grand Island October 19-21, 2021; and the conference will combine the Agri-Tourism Conference events. Next Commission webinar will focus on the EDA grants.

Next Meeting Locations: The September 2021 WNTC meeting will be held in Valentine and the November 2021 meeting will be held on Ogallala.

There being no further business, the May WNTC meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karla Niedan-Streeks, Secretary of WNTC
May 18, 2021