

MINUTES

Western Nebraska Tourism Coalition (WNTC) Meeting

Thursday, March 16, 2023 – Bridgeport Community Center – Bridgeport

In attendance: Desiree Drane-Davison (Riverside Discovery Center), Trevor Teichroeb (YMCA Trails West Camp, Kendra Mitchell (Cheyenne County Tourism), Natasha McFaul (Kimball County Visitor Center), Lisa Burke (Visit North Platte), Kerri Rempp (Northwest Nebraska), Mike Kesselring (Sioux County), Tina Worthman (Midwest Theater), Loren Pospisil (Chimney Rock/History Nebraska), Bev Wellnitz (Sheridan County Tourism), Jack Berg (Morrill County Tourism), Karen Kollars (Nebraska Tourism Commission), Hal Enevoldsen (Point of Rocks Motel), Marlene Yeager (Morrill County Tourism), Kimberly Martin (Golden Spike Tower), Kirsten Parker (Golden Spike Tower), Jonnie Kusek (Open Plains Transit), Karla Niedan-Streeks (Gering Visitors Bureau) and Brenda Leisy (Scotts Bluff Area Visitors Bureau).

Call to Order: Chairman Kerri Rempp called the meeting to order at 11:22 a.m. Self-introductions and community updates were made by all in attendance.

Consent Agenda: It was M/Kirsten Parker, 2/Lisa Burke to approve the consent agenda for the March 16, 2023 WNTC Meeting as presented. Motion carried.

Marketing Committee: Marketing Committee Chairman Lisa Burke introduced Steve Maly from Maly Marketing. Steve presented a recap of the 2022 WNTC Marketing Plan and achieved results; the 2022 plan utilized a marketing budget of \$14,500. Steve presented the proposed 2023 WNTC Marketing Plan with a total marketing spend of \$38,000; answering questions from members and shared discussions on potential marketing endeavors beneficial to members. *A copy of the 2022 Recap and 2023 WNTC Marketing Plan is attached to these minutes as presented at the meeting.*

Webmaster Kendra Mitchell along with Bev Wellnitz, Website Committee presented WNTC analytics comparing January 2023 to January 2022; traffic is down 30%. The committee is working on updating all members listings on the website according to the current Membership List; all members are encouraged to view their own current listings and to email Kendra with any changes, updates, new photography, etc. at: director@visitsidneyne.com

Kirsten Parker reported on behalf of the Facebook committee; the team is doing a restart. WNTC currently has 5.7 thousand followers; any members with updates on their areas and/or engaging content for the WNTC Facebook page are asked to email information to Kirsten at kparker@goldenspiketower.com

Karla Niedan-Streeks reported that quantities of the 2023 Destination Travel Guide are stored at locations in North Platte, Scottsbluff, Sidney and Chadron. Members needing boxes for their areas are to contact these DMO's directly to make arrangements to pick up supplies. Beginning at the May meeting; members will be asked to bring to the meetings a count of how many boxes each have on hand at their respective businesses.

By-Law Changes: Chairman Kerri Rempp reviewed for members in attendance the recommendations from the Executive Committee on proposed by-laws revisions to the current WNTC By-Laws based on surveying and one-on-one discussions with WNTC Members. Proposed by-law revisions were emailed to the WNTC Membership prior to this meeting. Members in attendance shared discussions on by-law revisions relating to voting practices and meetings held each year in-person versus Zoom or a hybrid of meetings.

Following lengthy discussions; it was M/Mike Kesselring, 2/Hal Enevoldsen to make an amended motion to amend the WNTC By-Laws, Section 2. Board of Directors to read as follows: "The voting membership of the

Board of Directors shall consist of two people per county from those holding a membership in good standing. Each county shall be represented by one (1) public sector vote (County representative) with provisions to establish a county proxy if needed; and one (1) private sector vote per county; private sector vote at each meeting to be determined by members in good standing in attendance at each respective meeting". Motion carried unanimously.

Following discussions; it was M/Kirsten Parker, 2/Bev Wellnitz, to amend the WNTC By-Laws, Article VI, Section 2: Meetings to read as follows: "Meetings of the Coalition will be held in September, November, January, March and May. Three (3) meetings will be held in-person at designated locations in the months to be established by the Executive Committee; and two (2) meetings will be held through use of electronic meeting services that support voting and support visible displays identifying those participating, identifying those seeking recognition to speak, showing (or permitting the retrieval of) the text of pending motions, and showing results of votes. All members shall receive notice as to the location, date and time of meeting a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the meeting". Motion carried with two nay votes.

Discussion on Ideas for Content of Future Meetings: Include education at in-person meetings; Marketing 101, Marketing Trends, How to Use the Destination Travel Guide, Search Engine Optimization, Applying for Grants, How do WNTC Members piggy-back on WNTC Marketing plans, General Tourism Trends, Fun Facts About Each WNTC Member.

Membership Chairman: Discussion that WNTC Membership Chairman position is key and vital to Membership Retention and Membership Recruitment; the Chairman will lead the charge to membership efforts. Following discussion; it was M/Karla Niedan-Streeks, 2/Brenda Leisy to amend the WNTC By-Laws to add the Membership Chairman duties to description of duties for the Vice-Chairman of WNTC to read as follows: Article V, Officers, Section 3. "The Vice-Chair shall act for the Chair in his/her absence. The Vice-Chair shall also have duties that include, but are not limited to, all WNTC membership retention and recruitment efforts as outlined by the membership committee". Motion carried.

Nebraska Tourism Commission Western Region Representative: At direction of the Executive Committee, Chair Kerri Rempp visited with Hal Enevoldsen regarding his interest in putting his name in consideration to the Governor for appointment. Hal respectfully declined; Karla Niedan-Streeks name was put to the floor; she also respectfully declined due to time constraints. Tina Worthman is new to WNTC and the area but has experience serving in similar capacity in Wyoming and would be willing to come forward to consideration. Following discussion; Chairman Kerri Rempp will send an email communication to the WNTC Membership requesting any member or affiliate person in our tourism industry with interest to submit their name, and a brief statement of why they would like consideration to serve to Kerri Rempp by the end of March.

Nebraska Tourism Commission Update: Presented by Karen Kollars; recapped the 2022 National Western Stock Show numbers with the 4th highest attendance in stock show history of 702,697 and advised members of the 2024 National Western Stock Show dates of January 6-21, 2024. WNTC Members discussed bags for the 2024 show; Karen said the Commission will not produce bags for 2024; all in agreement that the Marketing Committee will establish a pay to play option for 12 members to have their logos included on bags produced for 2024 NWSS. Karen shared record-setting numbers for lodging tax collections; January 2023 set an all-time record. Dates for the 2023 Nebraska Tourism Conference will be October 17-19, 2023 in Gering.

Next Meetings: Next WNTC Meeting will be held in North Platte on May 16, 2023 at 11:00 CST immediately prior to the 2023 Brochure Swap to be held in Kearney May 16-17, 2023. Location in North Platte to be determined and announced to the WNTC membership.

There being no further business, the March WNTC meeting adjourned at 2:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karla Niedan-Streeks
WNTC Secretary
March 16, 2023