

**Travel Information Council
Quarterly Meeting
Geiser Grand Hotel, Baker City
Thursday, September 30, 2010**

Council Participating:

David Porter, Public Member
George Forbes, Lodging Industry
Drew Roslund, Hospitality Industry
Mike Drennan, Public Member
Ed Fischer, ODOT
Sandra Flicker, Public Member

Rod Miles, Outdoor Advertising Industry
Steve Petersen, Public Member
Maria Ponzi, Public Member
Bob Russell, Vehicular Services

Absent:

Tom Loun, Electrical Sign Industry

TIC Staff Participating:

Cheryl Gribskov, Chief Executive Officer
Tim Pickett, Chief Business Officer
Jim Renner, Chief Operations Officer
Annie von Domitz, Chief Community Assets Officer

Heather Swanson, Executive Assistant
Craig Campbell, Consultant

Guests:

Sam Bass, Baker City Councilor
Janet Dodson, Union County Tourism
Kyle Jansson, Oregon Heritage Commission

Tom Strandberg, Oregon Department of
Transportation
Alice Trindle, Eastern Oregon Visitors Association

David Porter called the meeting of the Travel Information Council to order at 8:10 AM.

INTRODUCTIONS

David Porter welcomed staff and council members to the quarterly meeting of the Travel Information Council, and introduced our guests.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – EXECUTIVE REPORTS

A. Approval of June 4, 2010 Council minutes

George Forbes moved that the June minutes be approved. Ed Fischer seconded the motion. The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

B. CEO Report

Cheryl Gribskov spoke about the work done by Cappelli Miles Spring regarding what TIC will look like at the end of the year. Other changes and work ahead include: some organizational changes within the rest area program, a closer look at the kiosk program, and assuring that TIC is operating in a state of excellence. Cheryl, Annie von Domitz, Jim Renner, and Darrell Hackworth all traveled to Louisville Kentucky to attend the Motorist Information Services Association (MISA) and National Safety Rest Area (NSRA) Conferences. At the NSRA conference, Darrell presented information regarding our rest areas and how we are moving forward in a sustainable direction. Cheryl spoke about the Baldock homeless and all state coalition building, which resulted in a large positive response. Cheryl formed a national coalition whose goal is to find a model for all states to have sustainable operational rest areas.

As part of the move toward organizational excellence, each TIC program will develop performance measures by January. Rod Miles will work with Tim Pickett on Sales, George Forbes will work with

Annie von Domitz on Heritage Programs, Steve Peterson will work with Jim Renner and Cheryl on Rest Area Programs, and Ed Fischer will work with Jim Renner on the Sign Programs measures.

Cheryl expressed great appreciation to the Council for their support and trust that allowed TIC to take on rest area management. She also wanted to thank Tim Pickett for his high level of professionalism and team approach to managing the difficult internal structural changes.

David Porter stated that the new officers and committee selections will be coming up soon, and encouraged Councilors to consider serving in those positions.

C. TIC Financials

Mike Drennan reviewed and highlighted selected areas of the balance sheet and results of operations for the 13 months of the biennium that ended August 31, 2010. The finance committee is keeping a close eye on the cash position, as it was lowered last month. Accounts receivables are improving due to a seriously delinquent account coming current. We are current on all of our accounts payable. Total equity is good, as is TIC debt to income ratio. The finance committee reviews the contractor services costs at each of its meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Baldock Rest Area Zoning/Solar Panels

Bob Russell explained ODOT's goal of installing 6.4 acres of solar panels at the Northbound Baldock Rest Area. The Baldock Rest Area Coalition has a different vision for the rest area. No common ground was found at the joint Baldock Coalition meeting at which ODOT presented its Solar Panel Project. A subsequent presentation was made to the Senate Transportation committee with Jim Whitty representing ODOT and Bob Russell representing TIC. Bob suggested a collaborative discussion leading to a positive solution for both parties. ODOT is planning a meeting to get all parties together for a discussion.

B. QR Tags

Annie von Domitz proposed the exploration of QR codes as a new concept. They are a printed hyperlink that are becoming more common in advertising to direct people to websites for additional information or promotional materials. Smartphones can download a free QR reader application, take a photo of the QR code and be linked to the code's information. They are small and inexpensive to create, and can be used in many different forms. Annie's first thoughts for TIC use are within the brochures for sales, Heritage Trees, and Historical Marker programs. QR codes can be linked to coupons or special offers, and have many potential applications. David Porter asked about the access to a consumers' personal information in having their phone swiped by a store scanner, and suggested exploring all available platforms. Cheryl Gribskov sees this as a potential way to track economic development generated from rest areas.

C. Next Meeting Date/Location

David Porter stated that the next meeting location will be TIC's new office in Salem. The date will be December 10th with a reception preceding on Thursday, December 9th. A presentation of the new brand will be included.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Rebranding

Rod Miles presented the research that Cappelli Miles Spring has done towards the TIC rebranding process. They have talked to all of the Councilors, staff, 200 sign customers, and 200 motorists to accumulate data. The Cappelli Miles Spring rebranding process follows four steps: delve, unmask, create, and declare. Delve is the research step that has just been completed, unmask puts together the purposes and promises of an organization, and create involves playing with graphics. Last is the declare

stage, which will be presented in December, to be unleashed in January.

Of the motorists interviewed, a very large percentage uses rest areas regularly, and their top priority is available clean restroom facilities. When asked if there was anything they'd like to see in the rest areas that they don't see now, sixty-seven percent responded 'no.' Security was suggested by five percent of respondents, and coffee was suggested by four percent. Eighty-six percent of motorists were aware of the blue signs, and ninety-four percent found them helpful. Fifty-seven percent didn't know who sells the blue signs.

Of current sign customers, ninety-one percent found the signs effective, and eighty percent have a very good or excellent overall view of TIC. Sixty percent were unaware that TIC manages rest areas, sixty-one percent were unaware of TIC's management of the Historical Markers, and eighty-six percent were unaware of TIC's management of the Heritage Tree Program. A suggestion was made to ask about awareness of the tree and marker programs in general. David Porter suggested that many people would not know about TIC's management of these programs because they do not know that the programs exist. Staff and Councilors both felt that TIC is best known for its blue signs, eighty-six and ninety percent respectively. Both groups also felt that TIC's biggest strengths were in responsiveness, flexibility and staff, and its largest weakness is in technology.

Rod was very impressed with the staff's positive attitude and openness.

DIVISION UPDATES

A. Sales

Rod Miles reported that the sales efforts are in transition. Sales are now more accountable and efforts are being tracked and measured. The sales team is working hard on kiosks, hitting the streets, mailings, and looking forward to a better fall season. Tim has been working on framing the sales reports for easy understanding. Maria Ponzi and Mike Drennan expressed concerns for kiosk sales given that the kiosk program is currently being reviewed. David Porter pointed out that based on survey results, it seems that motorists do not pull into rest areas to acquire information.

B. Heritage Program Report

George Forbes reported on the Heritage Tree Committee's upcoming 10th Mountain Division tree dedication on Saturday October 2nd near North Plains on Highway 26. These trees memorialize the soldiers and their families that were trained to fight on skis in World War Two. There was a July dedication of the Aspen Arborglyph trees in the Steens Mountains. These trees were carved by the Basque sheepherders that occupied the area in the early to mid 20th century. There will be an upcoming dedication at Harry & David in Medford.

The Historical Marker Committee will have their first Regional Marker dedication on Tuesday, October 19th at 4pm in Roseburg. Annie von Domitz reported that it was a very long collaborative process and the City of Roseburg is proud to have the first Regional Marker. The Yachats Regional Marker has been approved, and is in production. George Forbes stated that the Historical Marker Committee held their August meeting in Coos Bay, toured the area and visited with the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians.

The tree and marker audio tour is debuting soon and sign crews began audio sign installation last week. Annie von Domitz spoke about her trip to the 22nd annual MISA meeting in Louisville Kentucky. It had smaller attendance than usual due to budgetary travel restrictions, but was a very enthusiastic and quality meeting. It was a joint meeting with the Safety Rest Area Conference, which provided great interaction.

C. Rest Areas

a. Coffee Program

Annie von Domitz showed everyone the photo of the rest area trailer improvements, which will help

accommodate their use in coffee service. Annie and Cheryl Gribskov will be contacting potential nonprofit groups to increase program education and participation. Annie is working with Greg Leo and Carole Astley of Travel Oregon to offer Q Training to those coffee providers.

b. Mike Barnes Review

Jim Renner explained that Mike Barnes was hired to assess how TIC's Safety Rest Area Supervisors and Assistant Supervisors are doing, how they perceive the central organization, and how they see themselves fitting into that organization. The goal is for TIC to position itself with a flexible organizational structure for possible rest area operations expansion. Mike interviewed the rest area staff to find out that a better connection to our main office is needed. Inclusiveness and empowerment will be the two main themes moving forward, because some Safety Rest Area Supervisors and Assistant Supervisors feel more confident in leadership and management than others do. Mike will be implementing a four step tools and training process: opportunities for improvement, tactics that can be developed and implemented, resources to support those, and an organization structure to support rest areas. The desired result is that all employees will understand the mission, vision, values, and goals of TIC. An understanding of their relationships to coalitions, agency communications, job training, performance measures, and budgeting will also be developed.

We are currently reissuing bids for janitorial and landscaping contracts, and those costs will be analyzed against the possibility of adding staff. George Forbes suggested that using TIC staff to perform work would allow for better control and more visitor interaction.

D. Business Services

a. New Biennial Budget

Tim Pickett stated that after 15 months, TIC is producing accrual financial statements to the Finance Committee. We are currently launching the budget process for the new biennium, and moving the process from accounting to management. Templates will be provided to managers for feedback.

b. Information System

Tim Pickett explained that an external accounting firm confirms TIC's progress, but identifies gaps in our information systems. Software providers are being explored to provide an integrated information base that will support forward growth.

E. Signs/Ed Fischer

Jim Renner offered a story about Bud George, a former State Traffic Engineer. In 1998 Ed Fischer joined TIC's Council and went on to become the second longest serving State Traffic Engineer since Bud George. TIC has been honored by having Ed serve on the Council. We are happy to have him with us in Baker City on his last official day of employment with ODOT, and congratulate him on his retirement. Jim recommends that TIC establish an Ed Fischer day, either on Ed's birthday of April 8th, or his retirement day of September 30th.

David Porter thanked and commended Ed for his extensive knowledge and assistance with technical issues, and his Council service. Cheryl Gribskov thanked Ed, said he is the model of a collaborative leader, and looks forward to celebrating Ed Fischer day each year. Ed stated that he was proud and honored to be a part of TIC's growth over the last twelve years.

ADJOURNMENT

David Porter adjourned the standard meeting at 10:17 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Drew Roslund

Council Secretary – Travel Information Council