

**National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
December 18, 2003**

| Board Members | Federal Officials |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Bill Gast | Dave Henderson, DFO |
| Gene Stackle | Sarah LeCompte, Center Manager |
| Marv Sumner | Debbie Lyons, Facilitator |
| Fred Warner, Jr | Peggy Diegan, Notetaker |
| Kurt Wiedenmann, F S | |
| <i>Absent Members</i> | <i>Guests</i> |
| <i>Peggi Timm</i> | Dave Noble Baker County Unlimited(BCU)- Chamber and Visitor Center |
| <i>Daryl Whiteley</i> | Gary Koy, Project Manager |

OBJECTIVES AND AGENDA REVIEW

Debbie Lyons

- Self introductions
- Minutes: OK as written.
- Handout of a Federal FACA database report that Pam Robbins, OR State Office RAC Coordinator, created.
 - Will track Performance Measures in the minutes.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

Debbie Lyons

- **Addition to Goal 2 A. “By October 31 each year the Center Manager will send a personal letter/newsletter to each of the donors, current Congressional contacts, and other interested parties, with a progress update of the Center’s activities and accomplishments, report to include a signature page at the end of letter/newsletter”.**
 - Sarah LeCompte will prepare the 2003 letter/newsletter.
 - Letter/newsletter content is not specifically to ask for money but to report on the Center’s activities and accomplishments.
 - Marv Sumner will provide Sarah with the list of original donors by February 1, 2004.

CENTER UPDATE-handouts

Sarah LeCompte

- Special events list for 2004.
- Holiday open house, approximately 450 persons attended.
- Geiser Grande Holiday Tea party very successful.
 - Lots of folks attended from out of town.
 - Good event with good community teamwork.
- Reviewed the Annual Work Plan highlights.

2004 MARKETING PLAN-DRAFT

Gary Koy

- Long term marketing plan taken from the strategic plan.
- Economically the Center has generated dollars for the entire area.
- NHOTIC sets a standard for other Visitor Centers to follow.
- The Centers Mission is education.
- Website is getting 7000 hits per month.
 - Important to have a quality product.
- Trail Tenders is a good marketing tool that includes special events or specials at the gift shop.
- School budgets are tight and budgets have decreased.
 - Need to let the schools know about the special events.
- Center shows and performances are included in the admission price.
- Need to market the whole package that includes not only the Center but also local Baker City, County, Hells Canyon, and Scenic Byways.
- Use television and radio to advertise what events are going on each week.
- Need to work as closely as possible with partners.
- Getting the folks to Eastern Oregon is hard to do.
- Cultural traveler will come here.
- Strategize advertising dollars through partnerships.
 - Could promote a regional trip to visit all five centers on a vehicle tour.
 - Need to make this center special as having something the other centers do not have.
 - One of our best marketing tools is the fellow at the gas station telling about the center.
- Need to more aggressively use the comment cards
- Gary would like to also know what folks in town think of the center.
- Board thought the plan was great and a good effort.

Assignment: Board to get comments back about the Marketing Plan to Gary Koy or Sarah LeCompte by January 7. Gary Koy to get the revised Marketing Plan done by January 15, 2004, then, Sarah LeCompte, and the NHOTIC Advisory Board Visitation Committee will review, make any changes and mail out the final plan to the Advisory Board by the February 1, 2004.

WINTER FEE SCHEDULE-handout

Sarah LeCompte

- Reduced Service Season rate from December 1-January 31 is \$1.
- Sarah presented a range of alternatives to the current seasonal rate plan.

Recommendation: Select Sarah LeCompte proposal (b) which is “Continue same fee schedule year round, but offer more free fee days in December and January. Supplement interpretive program schedule with videos and temporary hands-on activities for visitors that could include workshops to attract locals”. Board would like to add that dollars earned during this time be used to market special events and the center programs would be promoted as a good value for entertainment in the local community.

ROUNDTABLE:

Gene Stackle

- Is excited about having Gary Koy on board with his marketing plan
- A special thank you to Vern Pritchard for doing an excellent job facilitating a meeting in Baker.

Sarah LeCompte

- Shared a draft of a new NHOTIC brochure.
 - State office will be printing it for the Center.
 - Timeline is to get to the State Office for approval/printing in January and printed by April.
- 2003 Center achievement highlights-information could be included in newsletter.

Marv Sumner

- Also glad that Gary Koy is here and taking the lead on the marketing plan.

Bill Gast

- Currently there is good communication between the Advisory Board and the BLM.
- The BLM is getting input and recommendations.
- He too is glad that Gary Koy is on board and that 50% of his time will be spent on marketing.
- Gary's draft marketing plan is great.

Dave Henderson

- Asked for clarification on how the Board wants to make decisions. Do they want to continue as they are doing or would they like to make decisions more formal.
- **Bill Gast** procedure suggestions.
 - Strategic plan need formal approval.
 - Day to day type items not need be as formal.
 - Marketing plan is important enough to formalize the support and input into the plan.
 - Discussion on fee schedule, just have a recommendation in the minutes.
 - Other stuff may need a letter to the BLM with recommendations

Kurt Wiedenmann

- He is on a learning curve and will be looking at partnership opportunities.

Gary Koy

- Happy to be here and anxious to get involved and communicate with the community leaders.

Dave Henderson

- BLM values input from this Advisory Board.
- BLM is going to reprogram funds to support the Wild Horse and Burro program.
 - This is to be a permanent reprogramming of funds from other programs.
 - 1.1 million dollars in Oregon will be reprogrammed.

- OR BLM has advised the Washington Office where they want these dollars to come from.
- We do not know what programs will be affected and until we do we will not be able to lock dollars into any programs, including recreation. We can't say for sure what effect on Trail Center will be.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Bill Gast nominated Gene Stackle for Chair and Marv Sumner seconded the motion.

Gene Stackle nominated Bill Gast for Vice Chair and Marv Sumner seconded the motion. Both Passed

PUBLIC COMMENT-DAVID NOBLE-Executive Director of Baker County Unlimited (BCU)(Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center)

- BCU has a good relationship with Interpretative Center.
- He too is excited with Gary Koy being here.
- He is into history and enjoys the center so much.
 - He sees something new each time he goes to the Center.
- Hopes that he and Gary can find the right marketing tools to feature the historic theme and bring more tourists to Baker County.
- Need to address the concerns of good signs to loop tourists around town and up to the Interpretive Center and back.
- Somehow tie in the Scenic Byways access in to include the Interpretive Center and Baker City.

MEETING DATE ADDED TO COVER FULL CALENDER YEAR

- **December 7, 2004 meeting.**