

Gardiner Chamber of Commerce

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The Gardiner Chamber of Commerce serves our community through developing local tourism while endorsing stewardship of the Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Meeting date: **Thursday August 19, 2021, from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM**

Location: Gardiner Chamber of Commerce 216 Park St. Gardiner, MT & Virtual via Zoom

Purpose: Regularly Scheduled Monthly Board of Directors Meeting

Agenda:

Chamber Business

1.1. Roll Call & Introductions

Kelly Burns, Chelsea Deweese, Amanda Hagerty, Deborah Mackey, Sarah Ondrus, Alex Roberts, Sabina Strauss, Mike Skelton, Mike Keller

1.2 Approval of May Board Meeting Minutes

Roberts made a motion to approve the June Board Meeting Minutes. Keller seconded. Minutes approved without discussion.

1.3 Previous Action taken by the Board

Recreate Responsibly Grant Budget Approval

Previously, Petcoff developed a budget for the grant funding designated to the Gardiner Chamber by the Montana Department of Tourism for the Recreate Responsibly Campaign. The budget was sent to the Board of Directors for an email vote, and it was passed.

Gardiner Travel Guide Reprint

The Gardiner Travel Guide reprint was approved by the Board of Directors via an email vote. Skelton spoke to the decision and the details leading up to the necessity of having the guide reprinted.

Committee Updates

2.1 Mary Wilson – Yellowstone NPS

YNP is continuing to disseminate COVID-19 safety messaging, and the requirements to wear masks in all federal buildings and crowded outdoor areas.

YNP has implemented Hoot Owl fishing restrictions due to warm water temperatures that lead to high fish mortality rates. This will be in place while the water in the rivers maintain warmer temperatures.

The winter snowmobile lottery has begun and will be continue until August 31, 2021.

The elk rut is soon approaching, and YNP values the continued messaging to remind visitors to keep a safe distance from wildlife. Unfortunately, this season has been full of incidents in which visitors have behaved poorly and have encroached on wildlife.

Visitors need continued messaging geared towards planning for road closures regarding the road between Towe Fall and Canyon.

Visitors can be referred to 307.344.2109 to get better service than going to the Park's main switchboard.

July 8, 2021 was the last time Steamboat Geyser erupted.

2.2 Terese Petcoff – Executive Director's Report

QuickBooks update

Chamber Members and customers can now pay for their invoices online via QuickBooks. It was simple to set up and should help retain members and ensure payments such as Newsletter ads are received in a timely manner.

Recreate Responsibly Grant Progress

Petcoff thanked the Board for approving the budget. Purchases have been underway, including the street pole banners that should hopefully be in by the end of August. Progress has been made to have messaging also printed on posters, postcards, and a postcard with a Recreate Responsibly pledge reminder.

Resort Tax Asks

In the same manner the request was made in 2017, the Chamber will be submitting a request for additional bear proof canisters in the Gardiner area to meet the increased demand. Petcoff explained the research and progress made on developing this plan so far and will continue to update the Board as needed.

The Chamber may also submit a request to purchase and house an AED in the Visitor Center.

CVB

Lodging Tax collections for Q2 (April – June) 2021 are up 204% statewide compared to 2020 and up 32.36% compared to 2019. For a calendar year 2021 they are up 99% statewide compared to 2020 and up 27.26% when compared to 2019.

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Yellowstone Country:	+267%	+39%
Belgrade:	+231%	+59%
Bozeman:	+268%	+45%
Big Sky:	+393%	+118%
Gardiner:	+369%	+16%
Livingston:	+274%	+53%
Red Lodge:	+191%	+112%
West Yellowstone:	+326%	-2.36%

2.3 Sara Fleming – Office Manager

Fleming opened her report with providing visitation statistics for the months of July and August in the Visitor Center, which revealed an exponential increase from previous years.

Due to staffing, the Chamber will revert to Fall/Winter hours of operation starting on Monday, August 23, 2021.

Social Media performance has been waning to what Fleming assumes is a change in algorithms. She will continue to research how to get engagement up and improved. The Recreate Responsibly posts have had very successful engagement so far.

The Chamber will be planning on throwing an Open House on Thursday, October 21, 2021 as has been done in prior years.

Fleming ended the report with reminding Board members that brochures are in high demand, and to feel welcomed to drop any off for their businesses.

Outstanding Business

3.1 Yellowstone Revealed: Marybeth Morand - Mountain Time Arts

Morand introduced herself and the mission of Mountain Time Arts, an organization that produces inventive public art projects and enliven history, culture, and environment of the Rocky Mountain region. The ideas have not been confirmed yet, but the organization has communicated with and partnered with Yellowstone National Park NPS for ways to potentially commemorate the tribes associated with Yellowstone for the 150th anniversary of the park's inception. Discussion and questions from the Board followed.

3.2 Chamber Policy & Procedures Manual and Employee & HR Manual

The Policy & Procedures Manual is still being edited. It should be ready to email to the Board sometime next week.

The Board discussed what was known about plans for the 150th anniversary so far. To the best of the Chamber staff's knowledge, YNP does not intend on doing a big event like what was done in 2016, but rather more of a virtual ongoing event.

Public Comment

Meeting Adjourned.

Date of Next Meeting: September 16, 2021, 12:00pm – 1:00pm