

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 September 16, 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, Deborah Mackey, Sarah Ondrus, Sabina Strauss, Mike Skelton, Mike Keller

1.2 Approval of May Board Meeting Minutes

Deweese made a motion to approve the August Board Meeting Minutes. Ondrus seconded. Minutes approved without discussion.

1.3 Previous Action taken by the Board

Discussion of Board of Director Term Limits

Skelton open the discussion with regarding the Board of Directors Term limits. Current term limits of two terms of two years per Board Member is not conducive to what the Chamber needs. The change Skelton proposed to term limits would be to extend term limits to six years, three terms of two years per term. After discussion, the consensus by the Board was in favor of these changes. These changes will need to be implemented into the bylaws and put to a vote.

Committee Updates

2.1 Mary Wilson – Yellowstone NPS Visitation

July and August were the most-visited July and August on record. Previously, the busiest August on record was in 2017, the year of the solar eclipse.

Parkwide vehicle entries through the Labor Day weekend showed a 21% increase over the same weekend in 2019. Average North Entrance visitation increase was 24.5% over the holiday weekend.

NOTE: as we enter autumn visitation season, Wilson encouraged the Board to remind visitors to check the park's website for updates on seasonal closures, changing hours of operation and availability of services – especially food and lodging – weather forecasts, etc. Next Monday's forecast calls for rain and snow with a high of 43F at Mammoth. Please remind visitors to be prepared with winter clothing, gear, and any necessities before venturing into the park.

Current Fishing Closures (lifted 8/20/21)

The park reminds anglers to not play hooked trout to exhaustion. Gently handle and release them quickly after they have revived.

Wildlife Safety and Autumn Elk Rut

Elk Rut is in full swing and area closures are in effect to maximize employee, visitor, and elk safety. Please advise visitors to follow signs and ranger instructions for their safety and others.

Wilson asked the Board to continue to emphasize to visitors the 25 yd minimum (all wildlife except bears and wolves) / 100 yd minimum (bears and wolves) required distances from wildlife. They are seeing a number of visitors approaching wildlife too closely (even surrounding elk and trying to pet them) and endangering themselves, other visitors, and the animals.

Naturalization Ceremony at Arch Park

The park provided support to the USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) with this event last Wednesday at Arch Park. The forty-nine applicants were from all around the world (and WY, MT, and ID). The event was conducted with COVID-19 precautions (masks and social distancing).

Missing Person Alert

Grand Teton National Park issued a missing person alert (I sent the link to the chamber):

Gabby Petito
Age: 22
Height: 5'5"
Hair: Blonde
Eyes: Blue

Gabby has "Let it be" tattooed on her right arm and a tattoo of a triangle with flowers on her left arm.

Last seen: Petito was believed to have been in Grand Teton National Park at the time of her last contact with her family.

Contact: Anyone with information on Gabby Petito's whereabouts is encouraged to call the FBI tip line at 1-800-CALLFBI (225-5324).

Steamboat Geyser

Its last eruption was Saturday, September 11, the first eruption since July at an interval of 65 making it the longest interval between eruptions since its resurgence March of 2018.

2.2 Adam Wasbeck – USFS

Campground use in the district has increased during the month. Tom Miner Campground will likely close in the next couple of weeks. Next season Eagle Creek Campground will become reservation only and will no longer be first come - first serve camping.

Terese Petcoff – Executive Director's Report

New Members

Cabin on the Yellowstone River #4, Beehive Espresso, & The Raven's Nest Cabins.

Recreate Responsibly Purchases

Street Banners have arrived we are just searching for a lift. Jeff has volunteered an employee to help in the installation/running of the lift for the banner installation.

Purchased all the original items but have funds remaining.

- Legal Posters
- 5 X 7 Table Tent Displays

- Gardiner Commitment w/ postcard
- Gardiner Map Postcard
- Stickers

We will stock up on our most popular materials (postcards & stickers) but am open to suggestions on other swag items: window decals, business window decal, etc.

Activities Email

Last week an email was sent to all activity operators (tour guides, whitewater rafting, & horseback riding) to be in contact about their availability transitioning into the fall/winter season. The response received was fantastic

After connecting with Sara, we would like to continue something like the hotel availability list but for tour operators beginning next spring. Send out weekly reoccurring email with link to a short two question survey. Petcoff will keep the board in the loop as ideas progress.

October Meeting – Budget Discussion

At the next meeting the first budget proposal will be due. I will connect with GRAD in the beginning/Mid October about an estimate on funds

CVB

MT State

New VisitMT.com launching October w/ new look.

MT State Joint Ventures

The state of Montana released their joint venture opportunities for the upcoming winter season, and Petcoff signed up Gardiner for two winter ventures and another “warm season” venture. The Chamber has never participated in any of these ventures/partners, and she is looking forward to seeing how they perform.

Sojern – Digital programmatic partner with direct access to first party, real-time travel data from 100+ large travel companies. Their Campaign utilize real-time and historical travel data to reach highest-value target audiences. Data partners include American Airlines, Best Western, Trivago, Choice Hotels, & Flight Network.

- Display & Native Display (**sponsored posts on websites**. E.G. New York Times article, sponsored by the shoe company Allbirds. This ad is an In Feed/In Content ad that was promoted on the platform's regular newsfeed with a sponsored tag.)
- Audience: Winter Enthusiast defined as participated in downhill skiing, cross country skiing, snowboarding or snowmobiling in the last 12 mos.
- Display + Native (est. impressions 917K - 500K display & 417K native) – \$2,500

On the Snow – Provides the active affluent audience with ski trip planning resources including snow conditions, resort profiles and tailored content. Has largest endemic audience of skiers with 9.2 million skiers annually (76% of all North American skiers). Has new website launching soon.

- Display Banners on website for one month. Went for lowest package cost since we have participated with this JV/partner before. (est. 100,000 impressions).
- Next package cost is \$2,500 Display + Mobile Scroller ad (est. 244,048 impressions)?

Parents Inspiration Guidebook – *Warm Season* All available packages have sold out every year from FY18 on.

- ½ page ad w/ image & copy in insert.
- Insert into March 2022 Parents Magazine which has a 16-state distribution and est. 582K circulation.
- We provide image(s) & talking points.
- Cost \$2.87K

Digital Campaigns Update – Camping

We have completed our 3-month run for our Google Key Words Camping Campaign. Key highlights are

JUNE

Cities where ads were clicked: 1) Gardiner, Bozeman, West Yellowstone, Red Lodge, Cody, and Livingston.

Clicks: 587 Impressions: 15,052 w/ 3.9% CTR

Main demographic was females ages 45-55.

JULY

Cities where ads were clicked: 1) Gardiner, Bozeman, West Yellowstone, Red Lodge, Big Sky, Cody, and Saint Anthony, ID.

Clicks: 451 (-23.17%) Impressions 18,033 (+19.80%) w/ 2.5% CTR (-35.90%)

Main demographic was females the ages 24-34.

AUGUST

Cities where ads were clicked: 1) Gardiner, Unknown, West Yellowstone, Unknown, Unknown, Bozeman, **New York** → ?Expanded audience, trip planning?

Clicks:1,602 (+6.37%) Impressions: 185,756 (+39.19%) w/ .86% CTR (-23.89%)

CHANGE: Main demographic age in the 65+ age bracket. Yet, it was 50/50 with both males and females interacting with the ads.

* The ad was shown well on Mondays in the afternoon, and all day on Sundays. Which would reflect people planning a trip for the upcoming weekends.

2.3 Sara Fleming – Office Manager

Visitation Stats

August Numbers

During our hours of operation, not including the overnight vestibule numbers, we served 12,769 visitors.

In 2020 we served 5532 visitors, and in 2019 we served 9646 visitors. Comparing 2021 to 2019, our visitation has increased by 32%. The park's same comparisons show a 12% increase of visitation from 2019-2021. We'll take this as good news that visitors are recognizing a need to be offered help and advice for experiencing the area.

Top Three states visitors are from during the summer months:

August: 1: Minnesota

2: Illinois

3: Washington

July: 1: California

2: Texas

3: Minnesota

June: 1: California

2: Texas

3: North Carolina

Visitor Trends and FAQ's so far for September

What is there to eat? Last minute lodging recommendations? Where's the wildlife?

We have seen the normal increase of a last minute, no plans, higher maintenance visitor trend. We're guessing this could be due to the type of demographic traveling now that may not rely on technology as much for their travel planning.

Staffing

Joyce will conclude her seasonal employment on September 1st.

Survivors Party

We will have an open house gathering on October 21st. The Board concluded that the best time would be for the gathering to begin at 5pm following the Board Meeting.

Social Media thoughts

Terese produced the great idea of developing stories to increase our engagement, and they have been highly successful. We will continue to develop stories that inform visitors of valuable information in an engaging way.

Outstanding Business

3.1 GRAD Update

Petcoff is continuing to develop the GRAD request for funds to supply Garbage Canisters around Gardiner. Fleming is developing a request to purchase and supply an AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) at the Chamber facility.

3.2 Chamber Policy & Procedures Manual and Employee & HR Manual

Employee & HR Manual

Skelton opened the discussion with addressing previous questions and discussion the Board has had via email exchange regarding updates and changes. Questions that were addressed included the status of employee's access to Workers Comp information, to which Petcoff listed multiple locations in the facility at which that information is posted. Another question that was raised regarded the previous staff position which was a Marketing Director and why that position was still there. No objections were raised by the Board. Hours of Operation were discussed regarding the issues of closing at 4pm during the winter. Skelton believes the need for adjusted hours no longer exists. The Board was all in favor of maintaining of having the hours stay from 9am to 5pm.

Policy & Procedures Manual

Committee roles and leadership were discussed. The discussion agreed that all committee members need to be Chamber Members in good standing, Chairpersons of these committees should be current Board Members, and that all involved should be in good standing with their membership. Discussion continued and then it was placed to a vote by the Board to change Article 7, Section 1 of the Bylaws, the following changes were made and reflected in red.

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

-ARTICLE 7-

COMMITTEES

Section 1.

All members of committees shall be appointed by the President, subject to vote by the Board of Directors and the members of the committees shall be subject to removal by the President and shall serve for a term of one (1) year. Each committee shall perform such duties as may be defined at the time of its creation. Each committee shall investigate and make recommendations regarding the subject for which they are appointed and report to the Board of Directors, and shall have the power to take such action as may be specifically delegated at the time by the Board of Directors.

ARRROVED ARTICLE CHANGE 9.16.21

-ARTICLE 7-

COMMITTEES

Section 1.

All members of committees must be members in good standing of the Gardiner Chamber of Commerce, shall be appointed by the President and subject to a confirmation vote by the Board of Directors. Members of the committees shall serve for a term of one (1) year. Each committee shall perform such duties as may be defined at the time of its creation. **Committee Chairpersons must be a member of the current Chamber Board of Directors.** Each committee shall investigate and make recommendations regarding the subject for which they are appointed and report to the Board of Directors. The members of the committees shall be subject to removal by the President. Committees may be established or dissolved as necessary, at the direction of the President.

Keller made the motion to approve the adopted changes to the Bylaws, Ondrus seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mackey made the motion to adopt the proposed changes to both the Employee & HR Manual and the Policy & Procedures Manual, and Ondrus seconded. Motion was passed.

Meeting Adjourned.

Date of Next Meeting: October 21, 2021, 3:00pm – 4:00pm