

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, July 18 from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM**

Location: Gardiner Chamber of Commerce

Purpose: Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Agenda:

1. Chamber Business

1.1. Roll Call & Introductions

Anna Holloway, Edwin Johnson, Mike Skelton, Terese Petcoff, Neala Siegle, Neli Karamfilova, Kelly Burns

Excused: Mike Keller

Absent: Leslie Everett

1.2 Approval of Prior Month's Meeting Minutes

Minutes from June 20, 2019

Motion to approve by Edwin Johnson. Mike Skelton seconds. Motion passes.

2. Committee Updates

2.1 US Forest Service – Robert – District Ranger Forest Service

Robert reported on the following Forest Service Campgrounds: Tom Miner has not been full and there is a person on post every other weekend, Eagle Creek is continually full, and Canyon has been full. Next year they will hopefully put a person on weekend post duty at Canyon.

They are working with a contractor that will be putting up road signs here in Gardiner, up Jardine Road, and in Cooke City.

Trails have been cleared at Slough Creek, Hell Roaring, and Knox Lake (which has been receiving a lot of wind that will block the trail).

Finally, there is a Bear Education demonstration July 25th from 10 am – 2 pm in Cooke City and additionally July 26th time TBA at the Mammoth visitor center.

2.2 Yellowstone NPS – Mary Wilson – National Park Service

Mary reported that park visitation stats are up 1.7% to date and up 4.6% since 2015 and that all hotel and campgrounds are full. She reminded us to tell visitors to “Pack their patience and give wildlife a break.” She reported that the Mount Washburn trailhead will be closed from August 6th – August 27th and that the Mt. Holmes fire lookout was struck by lightning and burnt down on July 16th. Remind visitors that when afternoon thunderstorms start and the lightning begins to seek shelter if they are outside. The Soda Butte Creek reopening celebration was July 18th. Lastly, the Mammoth hotel reopening celebration will be August 30th time TBA.

2.3 Director’s Report – Neala Siegle

Neala reported two new members joined: **Blue Bison and Youth Arts In Action**. Youth In Action nonprofit focuses on bringing arts to the community and has several shows lined up including the Yellowstone International Arts Festival at Sage Lodge.

She reported that over two days this month Terese and herself distributed travel guides and walking maps to area hotels and connected with members about their business this season. They found that the general consensus is that the **vacation rentals and cabins/cottages are having a great season** but the larger **box hotels are struggling to fill rooms**. She reported that a few other members have expressed that their business is down and have suggested we may want to consider **marketing the summer season**. She encouraged members to create vacation packages and to utilize the Chamber as an advertising source to market flash sales. Upon reporting this there was discussion about hotels reaching a price cap which could account for the lag in business.

The Visitor Center is **up in June by 9%** compared to last June with 5,900 visitors this year and 5,400 last year. Additionally the staff is now set up with direct deposit.

Financial speaking we are in great shape, membership revenue is at 89%, newsletter revenue is at 76%, Visitor Center donations is at 83%, banner ads is at 300. However, we are over budget for office equipment and will continue to monitor this.

She reported that the CVB just launched their first Google ads campaign targeting people who are planning a fall trip to Yellowstone. It will display ads with wildlife and fall imagery. While it is a little early to tell engagement has been good with ads costing .75 cents per click.

2.4 Office Manager Report – Terese Petcoff – Properties & Facilities

Terese reported that the VIC is still fully staffed and that next week they are welcoming a new member, Fran, to the team.

She reported the following on properties and facilities: the door counter was installed in the Visitor Center and within the week there will be one installed in the vestibule, the front display case now has fabric behind posted community events to make it more welcoming, the tracking lighting in the back hall has been replaced, and staff has been picking up Park Street trash in down time. Jeff mentioned that the siding on the side of the building has been put aside until the fall when visitation lowers to accommodate a lift. Additionally, the Chamber is in line to get a bear safe trash can to place in the alley to help with the overflow of trash they have been receiving this year.

She reported that the Fourth of July overall went well even with the change of guests not being able to light fireworks at the Rodeo Grounds, due to insurance. It was then discussed if the Chamber should request resort tax funds to put on a professional firework display and buy insurance for next year. She also reported that Casey will likely not sell fireworks at the rodeo grounds next year.

3. Park County Emergency Management

Greg Coleman

Absent

4. Outstanding Business

4.1 New board member approval – Kelly Burns

Vote: Trina motions to add Kelly Burns to the board. Mike Skelton seconds. Kelly is voted in unanimously.

Kelly is an employee from Xanterra in their Employee Marketing Recruitment program.

4.2 Rodeo grounds repairs update

Sue Johnson will be presenting on the Rodeo Grounds resort tax ask the Chamber will be requesting this fall at the August meeting. So far she has a contractor lined up and is currently working on project details, which she plans to outline in August.

5. Public Comment

Anna Holloway followed up on how other small towns use their Rodeo Grounds. She reported that most towns use it as their towns event center hosting farmer's markets, weddings, demolition derbies, and other events of that nature. It was discussed that Gardiner is different because Arch Park is typically used to host these types of events. Other uses were dry RV sites, 4-H events, horse clinics, and car pooling, which could be possibilities for the Chamber in the future.

7. Date of Next Meeting

August 15, 12pm – 1pm