

Minutes of the board of directors of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, meeting Tuesday, May 3, 2016 at the Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California

Present: Mike Caldwell, Chris Ambrosini, Gary Stone, Cari Shafer, Shailesh Patel, Sherrie Larson, Lisa Cossoletto, Emily Manfredonia, Kelly Martin.

Guests: Matt Kolbert, Cameron Tyler, Cassandra Hesseltine

The meeting was called to order at 12:10 pm, and began with introductions made by all those present.

The agenda for the day's meeting was examined and approved as-is (Caldwell/Stone/unanimous).

The minutes of the October, 2015 meeting were approved, after Gary Stone clarified that his comment about the potential of HLA sponsored signage becoming "local icons" referred specifically to gateway kiosks and signage, not to bill boards (Stone/Shafer/unanimous).

The first item of business was a campaign report delivered by Matt Kolbert and Cameron Tyler of the Misfit Agency. Mr. Kolbert began by announcing that the Follow the Magic campaign had been recognized by the association of creative agencies, beating out all other tourism brands in California. The campaign was moving on to the state-level competition for further industry recognition.

Kolbert then presented the campaign video spots that had run the previous month on Comcast Sports channel in the Bay Area, commenting that in these videos "the scenery is the star." He reported that the agency had negotiated a tremendous amount of value-added with this media buy, having paid for 14 in-game spots while we received a total of 69 spots. In addition, the "ticker" and "linescore" features provided additional exposure and impressions to the Humboldt County brand. Kolbert further explained that the intent of this advertising was to generate impressions and awareness, and in this the value-added exposure succeeded with \$150,000 worth of air time (for a spend of \$40,000) of which 94% was in-game. Total impressions was 15 million. Kolbert provided a comparison of video advertising created by Redding, which all present agreed was nowhere near as good as the Follow the Magic creative.

He went on to report on the digital campaign, which includes some banner advertising but which is primarily video based. There are three 15-second spots running at any given time, refreshed twice per year for a total of 9 videos over the course of the year. For the year, Kolbert estimated 18 million digital impressions, an increase of 65% over the previous year). He also noted a trend upward in the click-through rates generated by the digital campaign.

Kolbert finished up by showing the print ads produced for VIA magazine and the San Francisco Chronicle, stressing the value of "multiple touch points" in an image campaign. He then went on the report on the website created for www.visithumboldt.com. "The purpose of the site is to expose consumers to an experience that reshapes their perceptions of Humboldt," he said. Kolbert reported that 50,000 users had come to the site in March and April, had spent an average of 2 ½ minutes on the site and viewed an average of five pages.

In summarizing the 2016 campaign, Kolbert reported over 18 million impressions to date. He made an analogy between the broadcast and digital advertising as "air cover" in warfare, with the print and other advertising as "in the trenches" ...with the obvious conclusion that a campaign needs both.

Kolbert then said that a new video shoot was scheduled for early June. Kelly Martin asked whether they planned to use local videographers; Kolbert said they has used Malcolm deSoto in the past but now had completed their in-house video production team. Mike Caldwell said that he looks forward to seeing the plan for the 2017 campaign “so we don’t get caught behind the Eight Ball.” Kolbert said that the agency would start earlier this year. “In June we will focus on ideas to round out the 2016 campaign, then in September we will start right in on the 2017 campaign.”

Next on the agenda was a presentation by Cassandra Hesseltine, the Humboldt/Del Norte film commissioner, who gave an overview of what the Film Commission does. “We want to be in their (location scouts) brains,” she said, and went on to describe her role as part educator, part marketer. “We work with local vendors to connect them with film production. We offer our services at no charge, and find that for every direct dollar generated by film production, there are two indirect dollars generated in the local economy.” This year, there have been about 20 shoots so far, Hesseltine said, generating about \$1 million in direct spending. Among the productions were Woodshock, American Pickers and Swiss Army Man.

Hesseltine said the Film Commission website, www.filmhumboltdenorte.org, receives 1,000 views per month, and that their newsletter, sent 12 times per year, has a 29% open rate. She listed many more of the Film Commissions programs and affiliations, including membership in AFCL, LMGI and AICP, Hesseltine serving as president of FLICs (Film Locations in California), participation in the COLA awards and the California Locations Conference, a local filmmakers’ night, Movies in the Park, and their recently publishing Map of the Movies which she said is of interest to tourists. Hesseltine was encouraged to submit an official request for funding, and the Executive Committee was directed to review her request at its earliest opportunity.

Next, the board considered approval of a Letter of Engagement with Civitas, Inc. for services related to renewal of the Humboldt County Tourism Business Improvement District. Among the discussion points/comments were: there should be a fixed price for a fixed scope of work; the scope of work should be exact; the HLA needs to first decide how we want to renew the district; we need to understand the timeline of the San Diego lawsuit so we know how it may affect our renewal. With the many questions raised, this item was tabled for a future meeting.

Next, Tony Smithers gave an update on the Humboldt Concierge training that was ongoing. Gary Stone suggested that the program be tied in to a video of all the different “fam trip” points of interest. Mike Caldwell commented that there are some things we can improve upon. “We need to increase the capacity of the fams and to simplify them,” he said. “The itineraries are too ambitious for one day.” He also recommended the use of box lunches instead of the current picnic-style lunch. Regarding the Eureka itinerary, Kelly Martin recommended that participants be kept off of the Boardwalk; instead he suggested that the Marina or Hillsdale Ave. are better points of interest.

Finally, the financial report for April 2016 was presented and approved (Caldwell/Shafer/unanimous).

With no further time, the meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers