

**GATLINBURG DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM  
CONVENTION CENTER/GROUP SALES WORK GROUP MINUTES**

*October 24, 2008*

The Gatlinburg Department of Tourism Convention Center/Group Sales Work Group met on October 24, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. in the Board Room of the Convention Center. **The following members were present:** Ms. Jackelyn Schafer, Ms. Angela Wilson, Mr. Brian Meyers, Mr. Jim Davis, Ms. Sharon Rinehart, Mr. David Perella, Ms. Andrea Richey, Ms. Caroline Polakowski, Mr. David Reed, and Ms. Jackie Leatherwood.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Jackelyn Schafer called the meeting to order.

**READING/ APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion to approve Meeting Minutes was made by Ms Andrea Richey, seconded by Mr. Brian Meyers**

**TROLLEY PASS UPDATE**

Trolley Pass update included the information on the new Green Route. David Perella encouraged hotels and businesses to get information out concerning the new route and the benefits.

The Green Route helps move our visitors through town more efficiently. The Department of Tourism Sales Team will send out emails of what weekends the route will be heavily used for larger groups in the convention center.

There was discussion of Welcome Banners on the Trolleys or on the light poles for groups arriving in town. Mr. Perella would like to see this happen someday but will have to keep our budget in mind. Ms. Sharon Rinehart had developed a 'Welcome Flyer' for hotels and business owners to display or keep at their front desk. The flyer includes local information for tourists and will be emailed to business owners.

**HOUSING BUREAU**

Ms. Sharon Rinehart displayed the Housing Bureau site on the projector screen and demonstrated how the system will work once it is completed. Mr. Perella explained that his system is no different than having a group block in your regular programs; he urged that hotels simply have to monitor their inventory. The Gift Show would like to use the Housing Bureau for their 2009 show making the roll out date taking place in 4 – 6 weeks. The idea behind the Housing Bureau is to keep groups from staying outside of Gatlinburg and to use it as a customer service tool for our large groups. Ms. Sharon Rinehart will inform everyone when the system is set up and ready to begin training businesses on the program.

**CO-OP ADVERTISING**

Ms. Sharon Rinehart displayed the Co-op Advertising for Conventions South for the Group to see visually.

### **VIRTUAL TRADESHOW**

Ms. Sharon Rinehart displayed the Virtual Tradeshow and walked the group through all of the venues. She described the links and how the program works from a booth owner's point of view and how interaction happens with visitors/customers when they visit your booth for information. The work group wants to be kept informed of the virtual tradeshow.

### **WEBSITE UPDATE**

The website draft was displayed for the group to see. Mr. David Perella explained how the links at the top of the page will work and what all will be included in the final draft. A comment was made that the 'Reach Higher Ground' logo needs to be consistent throughout all of the advertising and website design (the word 'higher' needs to be raised). The target date for release of the new website is December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting is scheduled for **Friday, December 12, 2008 at 9:00** am in the **Board Room** at the convention center.