November 2018

Gunnison County Commissioners,

The Gunnison Country Chamber of Commerce appreciates the opportunity to present to the BOCC at your November 13, 2018 meeting. The Chamber Board of Directors is grateful for the funding awarded during the past several years and is asking BOCC to consider funding the Chamber again for 2019.

Attached please find the chamber's draft 2019 business plan that will be presented to our board for adoption at the next Chamber Board of Directors meeting scheduled for the morning of November 27. The Chamber is requesting funds from Gunnison County to be used for general operations of the Gunnison Country Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center. Attached as well please find a quick overview of this past year's visitor services information.

Celeste Helminski
Director

2019 Business Plan
Gunnison Country Chamber of Commerce

The Gunnison Country Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center has been in existence since 1925 and is housed in the current location at 500 East Tomichi Avenue.

We are an information source for local business as well as visitors seeking area information either in person, via the telephone and or electronically.

> *Our Mission*: The Gunnison Country Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to creating an environment in which businesses can succeed and providing visitor services which positively impact Gunnison's tourism economy.
>
> *Our Vision:* The Gunnison Chamber's vision is to promote the community, work together to build a strong local economy, provide business networking and educational opportunities and to represent our businesses interests.

The Gunnison Country Chamber of Commerce is a membership-based organization funded by membership dues, specific fundraisers throughout the year that assist in providing programming, the City of Gunnison, Gunnison County, private Sponsorships, and from additional strategic partners.

We deliver value through three main focus areas;

- Membership Services
- Events
- Visitor Services

## Membership Services

As a member driven organization we serve local businesses. In 2019 we will deliver:

- Ten Business After Hours to support networking opportunities
- Weekly Member's Only Informational News and Shares
- Collaboration of a minimum of (4) four learning & engaging opportunities geared towards small business owners/operators
- Business representation within Visitor Center & outreach

- Representation on the official Gunnison Country Chamber Website that is member directed.
    - i.e. Opportunities to offer 'hot deals' to community
- Member highlights on social media

We aim to fulfill each deliverable with utilizing community, staff, and board capacities.

**Business After Hours**

Host Recruitment & Scheduling:

- Director Lead – board members can promote opportunity and encourage sign-ups
- Listed on webpage, newsletter, word of mouth
    - Open invitation to members of the Chamber
    - Hosts are schedule as first come first serve
    - Currently scheduled through April 2019

Host Orientations:

- Facilitated by Director
- Includes marketing ad reviews
- Review of BAH Instructions – director & host
    - Host Responsibilities:
        - Invite network
        - Plan event
        - Provide food & drink
        - Present Staff
        - Overall, facilitate a fun event
    - Chamber Responsibilities:
        - Promote event in print, radio, newsletter & online marketing
            - Facebook Event creation and Promotion
        - Facilitate the event with a brief pre-established program and timing

At the BAH:

- Establish an attendees table and sign-in area
- Facilitate Member Introduction and Highlight, Upcoming Events Share, and Chamber Promotion – (drawings perhaps?)
- Chamber Board Presence
- Share experience and encourage attendance with social media posts

After BAH

- Director send thank you note to hosting member
- Follow up postings on Social Media and submit photos to new outlets

**Weekly Member's Only Informational News and Shares**

- Director edits, publishes and curates' weekly information shares.
- Published through Chamber's Website Service utilizing Chamber email listings.
- Information published comes through community outlets and highlights community events, business opportunities, engagement & network opportunities and things of local &/or business interest.
- Evaluation of newsletter is currently from word of mouth and information share requests.

**Collaboration of a minimum of (4) four learning & engaging opportunities**

- Director coordinates with strategic partners and facilitates accordingly
- Current Partners include, and are not limited to;
    - Crested Butte/Mt CB Chamber
    - Ice Lab
    - West Central Small Business Development Center
    - Region 10
    - Colorado Lending Source
    - City of Gunnison
    - Gunnison County
    - National Park Service
    - Western State Colorado University
- Collaborative Opportunities are scheduled 3-months in advance to help promote and facilitate logistics.
    - Unique opportunities that arise may be facilitated within this time frame on very special occasions at the judgment of the Director based on capacities and schedules.
    - Learning and Engaging Opportunities are connected to the health and well-being of rural small business success.

**Business Representation within Visitor Services and Outreach**

- Director attends business oriented events to promote small business and membership whenever possible and applicable.
    - Attendance occurs at the judgment of the Director based on capacity and priorities.
- Businesses are invited to promote their services within Visitor Center with brochures in brochure racks.
    - All Information Specialists are trained and knowledgeable on local businesses and share with visitors as applicable.
- Director oversees and manages Visitor Services Manager
    - Conducts hire/fire/training

    - Conducts seasonal reviews
    - Conducts weekly goal set and review meetings

**Representation on the official Gunnison Country Chamber Website**

- When businesses are accepted as a Member, the Chamber Website Host creates an active profile based on application information.
    - Members can access their profile anytime to update and further promotion.
- Chamber Master (Chamber's Host) is administrated by Director and staff.
    - Invoicing occurs through host
    - Newsletter and email broadcasts occur through host
    - Event posting, community calendar updates, and information updates are coordinated through host
- Chamber Master bills monthly and is utilized as Chamber's Main Customer Relation Management Software

Membership Services are supported and grown overtime by the Membership Services Committee – the committee is comprised by Chamber Board Members and Business Members.

*Membership Services Committee*

2019 Deliverables include:

- Increase membership by 10%
- Increase collected membership dues by 20%
- Develop Ambassador Program to visit new members and new businesses throughout year

➢ Increase Membership by 10%

- Plan, organize, and execute an Annual Membership Drive
- Present Membership Opportunities at BAHs and applicable events

➢ Increase membership dues by 20%

- Develop communications plan to facilitate one on one conversations
- Conduct at minimum, one membership survey to measure value and seek member input

➢ Develop Ambassador Program

- Recruit 4-6 Ambassadors to expand current group
- Plan visits with ambassadors
    - Committee Chair receives new member and new business information from Director and plans visit within 2-weeks of initial notice.

# Events

Events are intended to meet three out of the five following criteria:

- Board Support & Involvement (must be included in all)
- Brand Awareness
- Heads in Beds
- Member Benefit
- Raise Significant Funds for increasing Chamber's Capacities

*2019 Event Deliverables Include:*

- Facilitate (4) Four Community Events that impact our membership retailers and community.
  - Gunni Gras – Mardi Gras
  - Fourth of July
  - Halloween Trick or Treat Business District
  - Night of Lights/Holiday Greenback Exchange
- Facilitate (1) One Fundraising Event to net $10,000 or more
  - Golf Outing?
- Host the Banquet Celebration of Business
  - Celebrate Business with an after-summer season event that highlights business and celebrates the small business owner
- Facilitate Holiday and Spring Greenback events to stimulate and promote local shopping supporting both community with a discount buy rate and local businesses
- Continue to plan and target a viable winter event for 2020 with the goal of heads in beds

**Facilitate (4) Community Events**

- Through a collaboration of the Director and the Events Committee – events are coordinated
- Event committee secures applicable sponsorships
- Director attends all committee meeting
- Director writes and submits all pertinent grant requests and permit applications as needed
- Director secures and follows up on insurances as needed
- Director is tasked with logistics coordination management
- Event committee supplies person power before, during, and after each event

**Facilitate One Fundraising Event**

- Events Committee Secures Applicable Sponsorships

- Director secures permits, applications, insurances, communicates with agencies as needed, and coordinates resources
- Advertising and invitation coordinated by Director and committee
- Events committee supplies person power before, during, and after each event

**Host the Banquet Celebration of Business**

- Committee Facilitates Awards Ceremony
- Director organizes vendors
- Committee generates donations for silent auction
- Director collaborates with Shopper for business highlights

- People's Choice:

    - Board reviews criteria for People's Choice Categories
        - Board communicates and publishes criteria – defining the reason behind the choices and delineate the objectiveness of categories and transparency of 'fun' program.
    - Shopper coordinates all advertisements and voting logistics.
        - 3rd Party counter is responsible for collecting voting information
        - This information and details is to be kept private within the 3rd Party counter and only final results shared with Chamber & Shopper for development of award certificates and announcements.
    - The intention is 'fun.' It's a small way to promote local business and 'fun' competition of those who wish to join in the event. All communications are to be directed to supporting small businesses and to promote the light air of the program.

**Facilitate Holiday and Spring Greenback Sales Event**

- Offer Holiday Greenbacks at a discounted rate for sale after the Night of Lights to promote shop local and stimulate holiday shopping season. The same model will be repeated in Spring in a traditional slower time of the year to again promote shop local and stimulate economic growth.
- Greenbacks are available year-round for any one to purchase encouraging shopping in the City of Gunnison

## Visitor Services

The chamber provides visitor services which positively impact Gunnison's tourism economy and economic development.

The 2019 Visitor Services Deliverables include:

- Staff Hours of Operation that can service 13,000 physical visitors or more:
    - Seasonal hourly employees and year-round Visitor Services Manager

    - A function of being able to serve 13,000 physical visitors plus thousands through additional mailings, telephone calls, emails, and other service avenues
    - Provide a clean and inviting visitor center that is easy to use by a visitor with optimal information
- Invest $10,000 in improvements that enhance visitor experiences

**Staff Hours of Operation that can serve more than 13,000 physical visitors**

- Hiring of appropriate number of employees
- Training of seasonal staff
- Working with partners to have on hand adequate information in multi-medias
- Maintain facility to allow for ease of use and cleanliness

**Invest $10,000 in improvements that enhance visitor experiences**

- Evaluate and prioritize needs
- Work with vendors to accomplish tasks in timely manner

*Visitor Services Committee*
2019 Deliverables include:

- Evaluate the improvement needs and assign a priority list – establishing a solid plan for execution by December 2018 and complete the plan by September 2019.
- Recruit two new committee members for the 2019 term
- Meet with funding partners when appropriate

In 2018, (as of September 15, 2018) we saw 10,288 physical visitors while answering calls, seeing website traffic, and sending out multiple mailings to interested folks.

The Visitor Center hours of operation are scheduled from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm during May – August, 7 days a week and 9:00 am – 4:00 pm during September. This assisted the services for our guests in the following ways:

- Easy access to area information with a one-on-one live person capability
- Ability to respond to phone calls with a live Information Specialist

We invested approximately $21,000 in our capital improvements. The improvements include:

- $25.42 metal bulletin board
- $213.44 exterior blade flags
- $910.01 hiking guide
- $1017.93 roof maintenance
- To be completed in 2018
    - Back parking lot resurface estimated at $16,000 – Now will be partially completed in 2018 and asphalt completed in 2019
    - Water refill station install estimated around $3,000
    - Replacement of small water heater that services the Visitor Center bathrooms estimated at $550

These items are important for bolstering our visitor services:

- Ease of Display
- Visibility
- Area Information
- Health & well being

The 2018 approved budget and 2019 (drafted) budget are attached. The Chamber allocated the budgeted City of Gunnison funding, for 2018, based upon the city council budget approvals in the following manner.

In 2019, the Chamber is requesting $67,000 from the City of Gunnison to accomplish the following budgetary considerations. This amount is predicated on the assumption that the Gunnison Country Chamber will again be funded by various sources.

| | City of Gunnison Funding 2019 |
|---|---|
| Payroll | 54,000.00 |
| Workman's comp | 244.00 |
| Colorado Unemployment Tax | 562.00 |
| Medicare Expense | 783.00 |
| Social Security | 3348.00 |
| Internet Phone Equipment | 180.00 |
| Postage | 2000.00 |
| Professional Fees (accounting) | 3500.00 |
| Repairs & Maintenance | 1500.00 |
| Electric/water/sewer | 1000.00 |
| Heating | 150.00 |
| | |
| total | 67,267.00 |

How the 2018 funding was met and spent per report to city in 2018

A. Hours of Operation to begin Memorial weekend - May 26, 2018
   Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Completed
   Saturday and Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Completed
   We will maintain 7 days a week through September then reduce hours to Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and evaluate weekends opening.

B. Projects that are on the "wish list" to be completed based on available funding
   a. Exterior Improvements
      i. Parking lot Improvements - to be completed October 2018
      ii. Re-Order blade flags that have faded - Completed

iii. Remove old Western Signage about W Mountain or update – Conversation has begun with Western staff
iv. Prune tree in front of building - Completed
v. Final decision on statue outside to keep or remove – Conversation begun with City of Gunnison staff
vi. Vent on roof – evaluate and replace if need be - Completed
vii. Back door roof line – major ice problems (photos attached) – to re-evaluate after the parking lot drainage has been addressed
viii. Have roof assessed by professional contractor – waiting for contractor to deliver assessment to chamber

b. Interior Improvements
   i. Water re-fill station - have quote and waiting on installation date – Nov 2018 projected
   ii. Printed Hiking Guides - Completed
   iii. Metal bulletin board for magnets - Completed
   iv. Annual carpet cleaning - Completed
   v. Computer and interactive informational kiosk inside the center and possibly one for after-hours availability – have three quotes need further discussion

c. Personal/Staffing for 2018 Operations
   i. To staff 7 days a week with extended hours, more seasonal information specialist will be required. - Completed
   ii. Implement staff training on area knowledge - Completed

C. Measurable results to be achieved in the coming year
   a. Visitor numbers – a comparison to 2017 will be completed at the end of 2018. Ongoing comparison month-to-month reports can be requested at any time.
   b. Website traffic – Website visitor reports can be requested at any time.
   c. Increase the online reviews and online presence including social media presence. -Have implemented successful increase of social media presence

D. Overall Building and Maintenance Division
   a. Percentage of building for capital improvements as follows: 57% Visitor Center / 43% Chamber of Commerce
   b. The Chamber received $25,000 for fiscal year 2018 from Gunnison County to be used for operational expenses. The Chamber is anticipating income around $80,000 during 2018. The Chamber received approx. $65,000 from the City of Gunnison in 2018.
   c. The Chamber receives funding through the membership and various fundraisers that go toward operations and chamber programming.

Project wish list for 2019

- Up-graded telephone system / Antiquated system is currently in place and there are no technicians available in our area to service this system, the system does not always function as it should and we miss calls when the voicemail system fails
- Interior fan in main Visitor Center area / would be nice to move air in summer months
- Roof repair / to be determined based on evaluation report
- Exterior blade signage / based on experience to replace once a year due to wear and tear
- City of Gunnison printed maps / need a good resource to have on hand for visitors
- Printed information on ATV-Off Road Vehicles/increase of usage have proven a need for clear user information
- Printed Forest Service-NPS camping information / the US Forest Service no longer provides this as printed material. One of the most common questions asked of Information Specialists
- Assessment of heat in interior bathrooms/ overall heating system evaluation – have technician scheduled for late December

# GUNNISON COUNTRY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
# VISITOR SERVICES 2018

Gunnison Country CHAMBER of COMMERCE

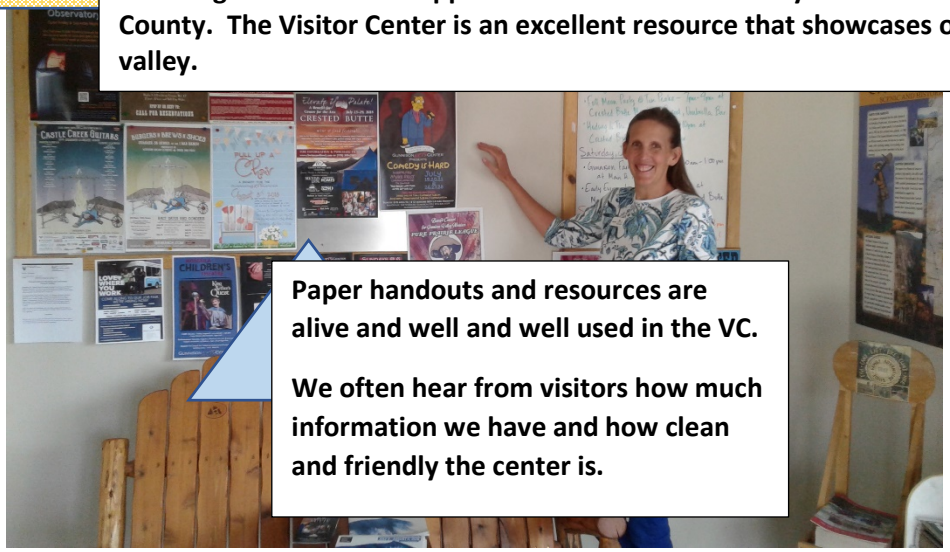
So far this year the Information Specialist have helped 11,000 physical visitors at the center. The highest visitation month being 3069 during July. We estimate an average of spending 10 minutes per person – looking at approximately 1158 hours of chatting during July, August & September alone !

During the height of season, Visitor Services averages 15.75 phone calls a day requesting area information during a typical July week.

Questions we receive range from where to dine, where to hike, how to get to the Black Canyon, when do the aspen leaves change….

Visitor Services mails out an average of 10 inquiry packages a week covering questions from camping, lodging, real estate, housing, events, relocation information and much more.

The center is currently open 6 days a week from the hours of 9:00 am until 5:00 pm offering brochures, business cards, poster displays, menus, and chamber created lodging, shopping and dining guides. During the summer and most of fall the center is open 7 days a week.
The focus is local as well as regional and Colorado state tourism information.
Seven part-time employees have been engaged for this summer and all bring their individual wealth of knowledge and excellent customer service. I am proud to work with such amazing people and I learn from them every day.
We are grateful for the support we receive from the City of Gunnison and Gunnison County. The Visitor Center is an excellent resource that showcases our incredible valley.




Paper handouts and resources are alive and well and well used in the VC.

We often hear from visitors how much information we have and how clean and friendly the center is.

Visitors are all ages and come from everywhere; from locals picking up information for guests and supplying handouts for their VRBO's to Swiss, French, German, Spanish and just this Saturday two from Tokyo. It is highly likely that we have chatted with all 50 states this year.