AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

Agenda Item: Gunnison Country Chamber Update

Action Requested:

Parties to the Agreement:

Term Begins: **Term Ends:** **Grant Contract #:**

Summary:

In addition to the attached letter, printed brochure material will be provided at the meeting.

Fiscal Impact:

Submitted by: Katherine Haase **Submitter's Email Address:** khaase@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: Discharge Date:

County Attorney Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reveiwed by: Discharge Date: Certificate of Insurance Required

Yes ○ No ○

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mbirnie Discharge Date: 11/6/2020

○ Consent Agenda ○ Regular Agenda ○ Worksession Time Allotted: 15

Agenda Date: 11/10/2020

Revised April 2015

Gunnison Country
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

November 3, 2020

Dear County Commissioners,

Once a year, the County Commissioners invite the Gunnison Country Chamber of Commerce to visit and provide an update. The Gunnison Country Chamber is very thankful to Gunnison County for annual funding and support. The Gunnison Visitor Center could not do all that we do without both the county funding and the funding received from the City of Gunnison. This year, I asked our Information Specialist to write up a little something if they wanted to share since visiting a county meeting in person is not so easy to do! This season saw six of our past Information Specialists return for another wonderful visitor season. Here are a few staff comments that they wrote up for your review.

> "What an interesting summer in the Gunnison Country! First of all, a huge thank you for your support of this summer season.
> Like everything else so far in 2020, we had no idea what to expect pertaining to visitors coming to our area. If anyone was worried about no one showing up this summer, these fears were quickly assuaged. In June, I was able to meet many folks from around the state. I heard a lot from people wanting to see parts of Colorado that they had not visited recently or at all. Quite a few came from the Denver Area, but there was a good representation across the state.
> In July, there was a definite up-tick in people from a broader US region (possibly escaping the heat). The 4th of July celebration was a huge draw to our area. Visitors showed up that weekend and the influx of vacationers never seemed to slow down. The slogan "Gunnison County is Wide Open" hit the mark and the end of July through August saw visitors from all across the country. I personally met with people from Washington to Connecticut.
> Time and again, people are grateful that the visitor's center is open. Also, people are impressed with the quantity and quality of the information housed here."
> **Jeanene Nelson – 4th year Info Lady**

> Jody here; Great Saturday! Comments today included the following: "What a beautiful town!" "You have wonderful HOT water in the bathrooms and they are so clean." "You have so much information here." "I may have to move to the Western Slope!" "Thank you for being open."
> **Jody Coleman – 2nd year Info Lady**

> My name is MJ Schauer and I have just completed my second summer of working at the Visitors Center. I truly look forward to my days at the center. The folks who come in are friendly, not in a rush, and are interested in what Gunnison County has to offer. Since I love the area, I love talking about all of our treasures. One of my favorite stories is when I ran into a couple out on a hiking trail after a few days I had told them about it. It was great to see them and we both recognized each other right away. Another couple called me a day after they had been in to thank me for all the recommendations I had made. I think one of the reasons I enjoy my job is because of all the positive comments the center receives. Gunnison really is a special place and I love sharing that with all who visit.
> **MJ Schauer – 2nd year Info Lady**

This is Ed & Sharon from Sunnyvale, California and they shared with me, "Most useful stop on our trip!" August 27, 2020

And here are typical visitors being helped by Sandy Jackson - September 30, 2020

Last year the Gunnison Country Chamber of Commerce/Visitor Center greeted just shy of 12,000 guests.
As of Oct 31, of this year, the visitor center has welcomed 5980 and that is with two and half month of 2020 completely closed to folks being allowed into the center. The numbers were slightly down but not as much as one might have thought they would be when shut down occurred. The Information Specialists field 15 to 20 calls a day answering any sort of question you might imagine and they send out 12 to 15 packets of information a week during the height of the season. The Visitor Center specialists sends out packets of information (via mail and email) answering questions on anything from lodging, dining, national parks, relocation, activities and beyond. From June until the end of September, the visitor center is open seven days a week offering assistance. We have now stepped back into the fall-winter hours of being open and are available Monday thru Friday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Again, all of this great work that gets accomplished on behalf of the valley business community, on behalf of the valley activity, recreation options, on behalf of all valley municipalities and on behalf of the whole of the county could not happen without the financial support of the City of Gunnison and Gunnison County.

Funding received from both the county and the city go directly to visitor services. This year, the chamber/visitor services were able to reprint the Gunnison County Day Hiking Guide, the Gunnison Basin Public Lands Camping & Day Use map, and create and print a new Gunnison County Overview & City of Gunnison map. All of these printed pieces are highly used year-round. The city/county map this year was given to every student moving in at Western – 950 of them! We held off on printing an off-road vehicle map this year to reserve funds and cut back on spending in a time of uncertainty. A true off-road vehicle map is very needed.

The most frequent questions received in person at the visitor center are:

Where can we go for dispersed camping (we don't want to see anyone)
Any camping questions
Where can we ride our four-wheeler
How do we get to the Black Canyon
What day will the leaves be at their best
Are the wildflowers out yet – what day should I be there
What is the best hike to take
Can I drive over Schofield Pass, How do I get to Marble, I want to see Crystal Mill
Do you have a state map, do you have a county map, where is the dump station

And so many more questions. The Information Specialists bring a wealth of knowledge and many years of personal experience and do a tremendous job at sharing with and guiding our visitors. This year, all of our Information Specialists completed the Office of Colorado Tourism certification and are now recognized as an official Colorado Concierge.

Continued funding from the county allows the visitor center to continued operation and provides assistance to the many visitors who look to the center for help and information.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we are grateful to County of Gunnison, County Commissioners.

Sincerely,

Celeste Helminski
Director

Chamber Board of Directors

Paula Swenson, President • AJ Mani, Vice President • Jim Harriss, Treasurer • Jennifer Kermode, Secretary • Ken Henry • Dani Crist • Wendy Boardman • Erica Rasmussen

Printed examples attached