# Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting
# Gering Civic Center, Gering, NE
# October 23, 2012 – 1:00pm

Commission Chair Mike Kesselring called the meeting to order at 1:18 pm.

Commissioners and staff present at the meeting: Deb Loseke, Columbus/Platte County CVB; Mitch Glidden, Sandhills Motel in Mullen; Mike Kesselring, High Plains Homestead of Crawford; Roger Kuhn, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission; Dana Markel, Greater Omaha CVB; Kathy McKillip, Nebraska Tourism Commission; Heather Hogue, Nebraska Tourism Commission.

Audience members per the sign-in sheet: Lisa Burke, North Platte CVB; Dave Snitily, Snitily Carr; Carol Schlegel, McCook; Jeanne Davis, Hyannis; Pat Bridges; Rose Ralstin; Twila Phillips, Mullen; Tom Witt, Thedford; Kevin Howard, Alliance; Starr Lehl, Nebraska Department of Economic Development; Colette Fernandez, Chadron; Karla Niedan-Streeks, Gering CVB; Terri Licking, Thedford.

**Approval of Agenda**

Roger Kuhn motioned for approval of the meeting agenda. Deb Loseke seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Approval of September 26, 2012 Meeting Minutes**

Heather Hogue read aloud the draft of the minutes from the September 26 Commission Meeting. Mike Kesselring requested a change in the minutes to reflect that John Chapo has not been appointed to the committee creating the best practices of lodging tax dollars. That committee consists of Deb Loseke (Committee Chair), Mitch Glidden and Dana Markel. It was also noted that the Tourism Commission's contract expires with Snitily Carr 6-30-2013, rather than the date previously listed in the minutes as 12-31-2012. Dana Markel motioned to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2012 Nebraska Tourism Commission Meeting with changes noted. Roger Kuhn seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Public Comment Period Procedure**

Kathy McKillip noted the sign-in sheet made available to members of the audience. It was requested any member of the audience wishing to speak complete the sign-in sheet and note their topic of discussion. Deb Loseke motioned to allow the public comment period to proceed. Mitch Glidden seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**Strategic Plan Update/Committee Reports**

Mike Kesselring and Kathy McKillip plan to attend a training workshop for county officials in January 2013 to discuss lodging tax usage options with county officials. The best practices committee consisting of Deb Loseke, Mitch Glidden and Dana Markel plan to gather their recommendations and present them at the November or January Commission Meeting. The Commission by-laws committee consisting of Mike Kesselring, Roger Kuhn and Roger Dixon will present their by-law recommendations at the February Commission meeting. Mike Kesselring noted future meetings will take place with Jim Douglas, Game & Parks Commission Director to discuss the recommendations of the Strategic Plan. The Commission plans to collaborate with the Game & Parks Commission to address and improve the line of communications between tourism industry members and the Game & Parks Commission.

**Director's Report**

Kathy McKillip reviewed the upcoming Commission projects/programs:

- Media Tour will be hosted by Geiger and Associates in central Nebraska in March of 2013
- Will attend the Denver Stock Show in January of 2013 and currently researching additional marketing opportunities at the show
- Have applied to exhibit at the Rapid City Stock Show in 2013
- Tourism Think Tank project with UNL is moving forward, have received 8 applicants
- 2012 Nebraska Passport Program ended September 30th – group discussed program successes/possible changes for 2013
- I-80 road sign project

Kathy McKillip noted the Travel Counselor Certification program will hopefully be implemented in February 2013. Visitor counts for the staffed I-80 rest areas from 2012 were distributed. Dana Markel noted that the Omaha center, otherwise referred to as NOTIC, had the lowest visitor counts of all the centers. Mike Kesselring acknowledged the importance of this program and noted that changing this program will be a priority for the Commission in the coming months.

**Review of Executive Director's Position**

Dana Markel motioned to enter into an executive session at 2:35pm. Motioned seconded by Roger Kuhn. Commission staff and audience members exited.

Roger Kuhn motioned to adjourn the executive session at 3:11pm. Deb Loseke seconded. Motion passed. Deb Loseke motioned to table the discussion regarding the Executive Director's position until the November meeting. Dana Markel seconded. Motion passed. Dana Markel motioned to return the meeting to a public session. Roger Kuhn seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**By-Laws**

Development of the by-laws will be discussed at the January Commission meeting.

**New Business**

The Commission's Senator Luncheon will be on January 17th from 11:30am-1pm at the State Capitol. Commission meeting will likely be held that afternoon following the luncheon. The Commission's Agri/Eco Tourism Conference will be held February 5-6, 2013. Mike Kesselring asked the group to promote the upcoming conference to fellow industry members and organizations. Kathy McKillip noted that Attorney Andy Pollock has requested a discussion regarding the Commission's trade mark and it's relation to the Department of Economic Development be placed on the November agenda.

**Public Comment Period for items not on the agenda**

Kevin Howard of Alliance asked the Commission members to consider exhibiting at Cheyenne Frontier Days in July each year. Kevin Howard stated it is a well-attended event and a good target market for Nebraska. Deb Loseke motioned to close the public comment period. Dana Markel seconded. Motion passed.

**Commissioner Roundtable and Community Concern Discussions**

Deb Loseke noted that NETA has hired a new lobbyist to be announced at tomorrow's breakfast meeting in Gering. Roger Kuhn noted the Game & Parks Commission will be hosting the National State Park Directors Conference in September of 2014. Roger Kuhn also noted that even with the increased fee amount of the annual park permit, the Commission sales of park permits increased 9% this year. Dana Markel noted that

some NACVB members suggest the Tourism Commission by-laws include participation expectations for Commissioners (i.e. it should be a requirement to attend a certain number of Commission meetings each year in order to remain a Commissioner.) Mike Kesselring noted that western Nebraska has been hosting an increasing number of international visitors, many of which find information about the state on the Commission's website or through calling the main office/call center.

The next Commission meeting will be November 28th at 10am in Ogallala.
Roger Kuhn motioned to adjourn the meeting. Deb Loseke seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 3:03 pm. Respectfully submitted by Heather Hogue.