

## MINUTES

**State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission  
Winthrop Rockefeller Institute  
Morrilton, Arkansas  
May 21, 2009**

### **Commissioners Present**

Chairman, Danny Ford	Vice Chairman, Montine McNulty
Debbie Haak	Steve Arrison
Billy Lindsey	Jim Gaston
Bob Knight	Bill Barnes
Mike Mills	Darin Gray
Jay Bunyard	Tom Schueck
Jim Shamburger	Cindy Smith

### **Commissioners Absent**

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### **Department Staff Present**

Richard W. Davies, Executive Director  
Gloria Robins, Executive Assistant  
Cynthia Dunlap, Director of Administration  
Greg Butts, Director, Arkansas State Parks  
Joe David Rice, Tourism Director  
Nancy Clark, Assistant Tourism Director  
Mac Balkman, Operations Manager  
Stan Graves, Planning & Development Manager  
Joseph Jacobs, Marketing & Revenue Manager  
Joan Ellison, Parks Public Information Officer  
Dena Woerner, Communications Manager  
Renee Robison, Group Travel Manager  
Joanne Hinson, Research & Information Services Manager  
Donna Perrin, Tourism Development Manager  
Marcel Hanzlik, Region III Supervisor  
Jon Brown, Region I Supervisor  
Tom Stolarz, Region IV Supervisor  
Tony Perrin, Region II Supervisor  
Kathy Holt, Governor Beebe's Office  
Jill Rohrbach, Travel Writer  
Kris Richardson, Administrative Assistant  
Tiffany Knox, Administrative Assistant

**Guests**

Brenda Lubeke, Little Rock Convention and Visitor's Bureau  
Bob Purvis, Pine Bluff Convention and Visitor's Bureau  
Meryl Koeth, Van Buren Advertising and Promotion  
Claude Legris, Fort Smith Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Kalene Griffith, Bentonville Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Ron Blome, Ron Blome Productions  
Kelly Linck, Ozark Mountain Region Tourist Association  
Dick Starr, ERA/Longwoods  
Michael Erdman, ERA/Longwoods  
Wally Scherrey, Superintendent, Petit Jean State Park  
David Caldwell, Assistant Superintendent at Petit Jean  
Chris Snodgrass, Superintendent, DeGray Lake Resort State Park  
Jack McNulty, Pine Bluff

**CJRW**

Wayne Woods	Shelby Woods
Karen Mullikin	Phillip Adams
Carrie Orahoad	Brandi Hinkle
Ross Cranford	Amy Childress
Chance Woods	Amy Frazier
Nancy Ferrara	Chuck Robertson

**Aristotle**

Jonathan Eudy

**Roll Call**

Chairman Danny Ford called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m., Thursday, May 21, 2009.  
Gloria Robins called the roll.

**Approval of Agenda**

**Jim Gaston moved to approve the agenda as presented. Bob Knight seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

**Jim Shamburger moved to approve the Minutes for the April 2009 meeting. Jay Bunyard seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Recognition of Guests**

Chairman Danny Ford recognized all the guests present at the meeting.

### **Financial Report**

Cynthia Dunlap presented the financial report for the fiscal year-to-date period ended April 30, 2009. Expenditures were: Parks Division, \$59,945,815; Tourism Division, \$12,278,282; Keep Arkansas Beautiful, \$468,760; Administration Division, \$2,486,105; and History Commission, \$1,388,655. Expenditures for the Department totaled \$76,567,617, which included construction and grants. Fiscal year-to-date operating revenue for the Parks Division totaled \$17,550,268, an increase of 1.8% over last year's total.

**Steve Arrison moved to approve the Financial Report for April 2009. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Welcome**

Chairman Danny Ford thanked the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute for hosting the dinner on Wednesday evening. He announced that Kris Allen, from Conway, Arkansas, won American Idol the previous night.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Richard Davies reported that Joe David Rice, Tourism Director made a presentation to the Mississippi River Commission in Vicksburg on April 1. His key point was the value of recreation in addition to the importance of power and flood control. Mr. Rice was the first person to be invited by the Commission to discuss the value of recreation. As a result some members of the commission visited Arkansas in May. Staff was directed to send a letter to the Mississippi River Commission voicing the State Parks, Travel and Recreation Commission's support for recreation on the Corps of Engineers lakes.

Mr. Davies reported that Arkansas State Parks Director Greg Butts has been named by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to its Outdoor Hall of Fame.

He also reported that Governor Mike Beebe has approved monies from the general improvement fund to be used by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism to buy a new printing press.

## **TOURISM DIVISION**

### **Advertising Committee Meeting**

Joe David Rice reported on the Advertising Committee Meeting being held on June 17, 2009 in El Dorado. The discussion will include social networking, display booths, vacation planning kits, etc.

### **Tourism Development**

Donna Perrin reported on the Tourism Development Section. The 26<sup>th</sup> annual Tourism Week was May 9-17. The web Site, [www.arkansas.com/national-tourism-week](http://www.arkansas.com/national-tourism-week) was updated for industry leaders to help with planning for the week's events. Included on the Site were marketing ideas, key messages, fun facts, and other information including links to Tourism Economic Reports, Governor Beebe's proclamation naming this week Tourism Week, and a news release announcing statewide events.

### **Group Travel**

Renee Robison reported on the Group Travel Section. The Group Travel tracking report reflects 460 inquiries in April of 2009 vs. 429 in April of 2008. There has been a slight decrease in the magazine inquiries in April. In 2008, there were four messages that were alternated between Motorcoach marketing vs. two messages in the advertising campaign for Spring 2009. Twenty of the inquiries in 2008 were from the convention and meeting planner marketing campaign which is not featured in the 2009 Spring campaign. The tracking on tradeshow will continue to increase because the section is attending more tradeshow in 2009 vs. 2008 due to staffing the group travel division.

Ms. Robison also reported on the success of numerous travel shows she has attended in the last month.

### **Communications Section**

Dena Woerner, Communications Manager, gave a presentation on last month's film crew that visited Arkansas to film a 90-minute documentary on rice farming, agriculture, and rice production in the United States with a side focus on agri-tourism. The group was NPI: Japanese Public Broadcasting Network and the title of the documentary is "Filling the Stomach of the

World.” The crew, a student, and a reporter were in and out of the state from April 16-May 7. A part of the filming took place along the Mississippi River from New Orleans to Arkansas.

Ms. Woerner reported that a change in the dissemination of the Arkansas Travelin’, a monthly release on events in the state, has increased the media pick up of the piece.

### **Research & Information Services Section**

Joanne Hinson, Research & Information Services Manager reported that the section had processed 102,078 requests for information during April 2009. The year-to-date total is 169,606, up 38.8 percent compared to the same period in 2008. April requests for retirement/relocation information were 1,384, an increase of 17 percent from April 2008. Year-to-date, retirement/relocation inquiries are down 1.4 percent.

Ms. Hinson attended the focus group session conducted April 21-23 in Missouri and Texas. She participated in the April Advisory Board meeting of the Hospitality and Restaurant Management Program of the University of Arkansas. She was elected to serve on the Board of the Southeast Travel and Tourism Research Association.

Arkansas State Welcome Center visitation was 59,000 in April, up 8 percent from April 2008. January-April visitation is 193,135, up 6.2 percent.

### **Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods (CJRW)**

#### **2009-2010 Fall/Winter Budget Request**

Michael Erdman with Longwoods International gave a presentation on the results of the focus group sessions held in April to evaluate the state’s current advertising campaign. The focus groups were held in St. Louis, Kansas City and Dallas. Two groups in each city were asked to evaluate Arkansas’s 2009 spring/summer television and print ads against Arkansas’s touch states. The groups were also shown spec ad ideas for developing the 2010 ad campaign.

The overall reactions when compared with other states were that Arkansas tied with Louisiana, was better than Texas, and held a huge advantage over Mississippi and Missouri.

The positive descriptors used by members of the group after seeing the ads were: emotional connection; variety; something for everyone; scenic; good for families and adults; outdoor activities; modern/upscale amenities; relaxing; friendly; food. People also thought the ads showed there was: a lot to see and do, interesting terrain/mountains, urban and rural offerings, modern and upscale amenities. The groups also liked The Natural State slogan and what it evokes.

Some of the negative reactions were that the ads showed uninteresting scenery, content that was not unique (close-ups of people or buildings vs. the setting; uninteresting scenery, absence of activity). Focus group members also wanted more detail on specific places and activities. There was a low level of criticism with no comprehension problems and minimal credibility concerns.

The current campaign performed extremely well with high scores for appeal/motivation and excellent standing against competitor ads. The campaign has a very strong message of variety of things to do in Arkansas, appeal for everyone, and fun things to do.

He recommended extending the campaign into the fall with minor tinkering regarding some of the photographs. He also recommended keeping the Welcome sign seen in the ads and The Natural State slogan.

Karen Mullikin presented the Recommendations for the Fall/Winter Campaign. Amy Frazier and Brandy Childress presented the Media recommendations. Chuck Robertson, Ross Cranford and Nancy Ferrara presented the Creative. Karen Mullikin, Carrie Orahod and Jennifer Morgan presented the Research and Public Relations.

Ms. Mullikin reported that the 2% tax collections are holding steady and the industry seems to be pretty upbeat. The budget will be at about the same level as last year. CJRW conducts year-round research in order to create these recommendations and they have a really good picture of whom the audience will be before starting to plan.

CJRW is recommending a second year in Longwoods Annual Travel USA, which contains the demographics and expenditures. Also including a Longwoods "R.O.Eye" Study, measuring awareness in the new markets where Arkansas advertised for the first time in Spring/Summer 2009: Austin, Bryan/College Station, Temple, Waco and Victoria, Texas.

Media recommendations include magazine, television, radio, newspaper, online and out-of-home media. Demographic targets are adults 25-64 with emphasis on women. Geographic targets are Arkansas, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas. The objective is to continue to target new markets that were identified by ERA/Longwoods research as growth markets for Arkansas tourism. The magazine recommendation represents the largest part of the budget. The media budget allocation recommends: 16% Online, 30% Magazine, 10% Newspaper, 8% Out-of-Home, 27% Television and 9% Radio, with a Consumer Media Total of \$2,257,412.00.

For Creative, only minor changes were made to the print ads. The background texture on the print ads now reflect the autumn season. For television, one 30-second spot was produced and two 15-second spots to extend our frequency and continuously remind viewers of the

Arkansas tourism message. These spots continue the “Welcome Sign” concept from the Spring/Summer campaign. The supplemental Rural Radio campaign takes listeners on an audible tour of Arkansas as the announcer mentions several prominent fall attractions and activities. Cinema advertising, Checkout TV and Mobile Marketing will be included as well. The production total is \$132,160.00.

CJRW recommends continuing the co-op project with the 2010 Arkansas Tour Guide, printing 600,000 copies. They also recommend continuing to offer the interactive tour guide, many publicity programs, a new social media plan, niche marketing-motorcycling, bicycling, birding, the “Let’s Ride” brochure, the Birding and Watchable Wildlife brochure, Spanish Brochure, the new partner in tourism, Blanchard Springs Caverns, Window Decals for businesses, Lock-In Arkansas hotel/motel key cards, See Arkansas First RV/Radio, Trail of Holiday Lights, The Natural State Golf Trail-partnership with Fairways Gold Travel “Fairways and Greens” Saturday morning radio program, Motorcoach Development and newcomers campaign to target retirees.

**2009-2010 Fall/Winter Budget Summary**

Research		\$225,888.00
National Publicity and Communications		\$25,726.00
In-State Publicity and Communications		\$9,100.00
Partners in Tourism		\$86,138.00
Media		\$2,257,412.00
Newspaper	\$244,397.00	
In-State Print Partnerships	\$33,000.00	
Radio	\$195,000.00	
Television	\$592,909.00	
Magazine	\$644,024.00	
Out of Home (Cinema, Checkout TV, etc.)	\$189,082.00	
Online	\$359,000.00	
See Arkansas First*		\$17,856.00
The Natural State Golf Trail		\$75,231.00
Trail of Holiday Lights		\$49,980.00
Group Travel Marketing		\$79,914.00
Creative/Production		\$132,160.00
Photography		\$13,000.00
2010 Arkansas Tour Guide		\$584,500.00
Contingency		\$50,000.00
Earned Discounts**		\$-10,000.00

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,596,194.00</b>
Newcomers Campaign	\$69,110.00
TOTAL Including Newcomers	\$3,665,304.00

\*Does not include media.

\*\*A benefit of the contract between Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods and the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism is a one percent discount on all media placement after the expenditure of one million dollars and a two percent discount after the second million.

**Steve Arrison moved to approve the 2009-2010 Fall/Winter Advertising Budget at \$3,665,304.00. Debbie Haak seconded and the motion carried.**

CJRW proposed a partnership concept between *The Oxford American* Magazine and the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism for *The OA's* annual Southern Music issue. The 2009 edition has an on-sale date of November 2009. The total cost for this proposal is \$33,000.00

**Jim Gaston moved to approve *The Oxford American* Magazine advertising proposal, at \$33,000.00. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.**

### Aristotle

Jonathan Eudy reported the key performance indicators of the state's Web site are that visitor sessions increased 12.8 percent comparing April 2008 to April 2009. Unique visitors increased 2.9 percent comparing April 2008 to April 2009. Regarding HitWise rankings, Arkansas.com ranks No. 4 among the 50 state tourism Web sites. It ranks No. 1 among contiguous states. Arkansas.com ranks No. 263 in the Travel Category, a decrease of six positions over last month. In the Travel-Destinations and Accommodation Category, Arkansas.com ranks No. 114, a decrease of 12 positions over last month. Arkansas.com ranks No. 8,400 in All Categories, a decrease of 507 positions over last month. The "Arkansas-The Natural State" Web site received 53.76 percent of its traffic from Web sites in the Search Engines industry for the month of April, 2009. This was 16.94 percent above the average traffic received from the Search Engines industry (36.82 percent) by the Travel industry. The analytics also showed there were 372 clicks from Arkansas.com to www.freearkansasinfo.com. There were 9,658 downloads for the "Let's Ride 2008" PDF in March with a total of 23,667 downloads for the month. The top viewed video was Bike Riding Tours with 1,501 views by 562 unique users.

### **Miscellaneous**

Bill Barnes commented on a film crew from the UK visited Lake Ouachita and Lake Village. They filmed 2-one hour fishing shows that will air in the UK. They were in the state for ten days.

Nancy Clark reported that October 26-28, 2009, are the dates for the U.S. Travel Association's Marketing Outlook Forum, which will be held at the Statehouse Convention Center and Peabody Hotel. She said this is the first time the Marketing Outlook Forum will be held in Arkansas. It will feature the most up-to-date economic forecasts, "never released before" research, the latest trends, and outlooks for all sectors of the travel business. Joe David Rice is a member of the U. S. Travel Association Board, and is working very hard to make this meeting very successful. Registration opens in June, and for more information visit [www.ustravel.org/mof](http://www.ustravel.org/mof).

### **PARKS DIVISION**

#### **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Video Award Recognition**

Greg Butts introduced Ron Blome of Ron Blome Productions advising that Mr. Blome was the creative genius behind the documentary "*Arkansas State Parks: 75 Years Making Memories.*" The concept of making memories and creating a connection for Arkansans with their park system was given to Mr. Blome and he created the perfect video to showcase the park system's mission. Mr. Butts reported the video has been shown to 41,000 people so far with expectations of many more. The video is outstanding and can be used as a timeless piece for many years to come. Mr. Blome was recognized with a Gold Addy award for the production of the video. He advised that AETN has requested the video be expanded from 18.5 minutes to 25.5 minutes as a kickoff in connection with the anniversary celebration for the National Park Service. Mr. Blome commented he looks forward to working with Arkansas State Parks (ASP) again to increase the video footage. AETN will air the video in September. As part of a partnership with AETN, the documentary will be aired at no charge on a continuing basis whenever airtime allows, resulting in great value for ASP. Mr. Butts thanked Mr. Blome for the video and his creative work, it is very much appreciated.

#### **FY 10 Advertising Plan**

Jennifer Morgan with Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods (CJRW) presented the fiscal year 2010 Arkansas State Parks advertising plan to the Commission for approval with specific promotions for DeGray Lake Resort, Mount Magazine, and the Ozark Folk Center State Parks. Morgan stated as we approach fiscal year 2010, we look for new and innovative marketing tools

with traditional and non-traditional methods. New, will be the introduction of online and social media network advertising to remain competitive as the market trends change. Ms. Morgan presented the details and strategies for each category as follows:

**Total Budget Summary Fiscal Year 2010**

**Media**

Arkansas State Parks	\$ 194,317.77
DeGray Lake Resort State Park	\$ 87,342.51
Mount Magazine State Park	\$ 68,387.70
Ozark Folk Center State Park	\$ 105,004.60
Ad Production	\$ 23,142.07

**Media and Production Subtotal**

**\$ 478,195.00**

Arkansas State Parks Documentary Video	\$ 13,450.00
Parks Brochures	\$ 169,600.00
Partners in Parks	
Arkansas Broadcasters Program	\$ 135,000.00
Arkansas Press Association Program	\$ 95,000.00
	\$ 230,000.00
Travel Shows	\$ 55,000.00
Promotional Items	\$ 5,000.00
Contingency	\$ 17,000.00
Aristotle Internet (Previously Approved)	\$ 200,907.00

**Total Budget**

**\$ 1,169,152.00**

**Cindy Smith moved to approve the FY 2010 advertising budget for Arkansas State Parks totaling \$ 1,169,152.00. Bob Knight seconded and the motion carried.**

### **ABA Summer TV Spot**

Joe Jacobs stated the first flight's TV Cut # 1 spot aired in May, 2009 with the Arkansas Broadcasters Association (ABA). He requested the Commission's approval of the second flight TV Cut # 2 (30-second, new spot) "LakeandRiverStateParks.com" to begin airing in June, 2009.

**Debbie Haak moved to approve the ABA 2009 summer TV second flight TV Cut #2 (30-second, new spot) "LakeandRiverStatePark.com." Bob Knight seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Jacksonport State Park**

#### a) Portfest Contract Renewal

Greg Butts presented the Portfest Contract for renewal of the Concession and Operating Agreement between ASP and the Newport Chamber of Commerce for a five year term, which has been a cooperative endeavor for 28 years. Mr. Butts recommended approval of the agreement with two revisions: an increase of the flat fee from \$ 1,900 to \$ 2,200 and permission to shoot fireworks from Jacksonport State Park. With a challenging economic climate, the Newport Chamber of Commerce would like to cut expenses by shooting fireworks closer to the event, creating a similar effect as previous years with more fireworks shot from a further distance. The fireworks company is insured and will work closely with the park superintendent to make sure all rules and regulations are followed. Staff recommends approval of the agreement with the two revisions.

**Jim Gaston moved to approve the Portfest Concession and Operating agreement between ASP and the Newport Chamber of Commerce for 5 years with the increase of fee from \$ 1,900 to \$ 2,200 and fireworks shot from Jacksonport State Park. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.**

#### b) Sewer Line Easement

Stan Graves requested approval of an easement for the construction/installation of a sewer distribution line that will enable ASP to connect the new Collection Management Facility to the City of Jacksonport Sewer Distribution System.

**Steve Arrison moved to approve an easement for the construction/installation of a sewer distribution line that will enable ASP to connect the new Collection Management Facility to the City of Jacksonport Sewer Distribution System. Debbie Haak seconded the motion and the motion carried.**

### **FY 10 ANCRC Grant Award**

Greg Butts reported that the Arkansas State Parks will receive \$5 million out of the \$13 million awarded from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council, which is a good result for a lean year due to reduced real estate tax income which funds the grant program.

### **Miscellaneous**

Greg Butts reported on miscellaneous items. DeGray Lake Resort State Park Golf Course was recognized in the Top 25 Courses in Arkansas by the ArkansasSports360.com. Withrow Spring State Park received the War Eagle Creek Steward Award for their education program to preserve water ways. There were two (2) diamond finds at the Crater of Diamonds State Park recently. Stephen Carter of Hot Springs found a 2.35 carat white diamond on May 15, 2009 and Mike Burns of Arab, Alabama found a 5.75 carat white diamond on April 28, 2009. Mr. Butts read a complimentary email received from Petit Jean State Park guests thanking ASP for the foresight to preserve the work started by the Civilian Conservation Corp and the quality of the parks and the preservation of the beauty of nature. A video presentation was shown to the Commission showcasing the Bull Shoals Dutch Oven Cook-Off captured by Jim Gaston. He reminded the Commission of the Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area dedication and grand opening scheduled for 11:00 am on May 27, 2009. Former State Senator Morriss Henry and former U.S. Senator Kaneaster Hodges will speak at the event, while Darin Gray will represent the SPRTC. Mr. Butts provided a flood report regarding the closure of Millwood, Moro Bay, and Jenkins Ferry State Parks due to flooding. Chris Snodgrass reported Lake DeGray State Park's most popular campground has flooded, expecting to re-open for the Memorial Day weekend. He estimated a loss of \$45,000 in business this month due to flooding.

Greg Butts provided an update on the progress of Village Creek Resort. The contract between Nabholz Construction Company and VCR has been signed for the construction of the cart barn, clubhouse, and infrastructure. Nabholz has proposed minor construction modifications and ASP is waiting to approve plans. Brant Enderle would like to utilize Nabholz through the design process for the resort component, which should help the design process and reduce construction costs. April golf rounds were low due to excessive rain but the course is holding up well, even with the extensive wet conditions.

Richard Davies reminded the Commissioners that the Staff Appreciation Dinner will be held at Petit Jean State Park's Mather Lodge, 6:30 pm Thursday.

The State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission meeting adjourned at 4:03 pm on May 21, 2009 at Winthrop Rockefeller Institute on Petit Jean Mountain in Morrilton.

The Commissioners and staff were impressed with the museum and staff  
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Richard W. Davies, Executive Director  
Arkansas Department of State Parks and Tourism

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Danny Ford, Chairman  
State Parks Recreation and Travel Commission