

**Arkansas State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission  
Agriculture Center Four States Fair  
Texarkana, Arkansas  
October 15, 2009**

**Commissioners Present**

Steve Arrison  
Bill Barnes  
Jay Bunyard  
Debbie Haak  
Mike Mills  
Jim Shamburger  
Cindy Smith  
Jim Gaston  
Darin Gray  
Bob Knight  
Tom Schueck

**Commissions Absent**

Danny Ford, Chairman  
Montine McNulty, Vice-Chairman  
Ness Sechrest  
Billy Lindsey

**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, State Parks Operations Manager  
Stan Graves, State Parks Planning and Development Manager  
Joe Jacobs, State Parks Marketing and Revenue Manager  
Dena Woerner, Tourism Communications Manager  
Joanne Hinson, Tourism Research and Information Services Manager  
Donna Perrin, Tourism Development Manager  
Dottie Boyles, Tourism Administrative Specialist  
Kris Richardson, State Parks Administrative Specialist  
Justin Dorsey, Superintendent, Crater of Diamonds State Park  
Paula Warren, Manager, Texarkana Welcome Center

**CJRW**

Wayne Woods  
Shelby Woods  
Karen Mullikin  
Chance Woods

**Aristotle**

Marla Johnson Norris  
Jonathan Eudy

**Guests**

Kathy Holt, Governor's Office  
Jeff Sanford, President and CEO, Texarkana Chamber of Commerce  
Ross Cowling, Parks & Recreation Superintendent, City of Texarkana  
Honorable Steve Harrelson, State Representative  
Honorable Horace Shipp, Mayor of Texarkana  
Jim McCall, Executive Director, Arkansas Broadcasters Association  
Dwight Duncan, President, Four States Fairgrounds

**Roll Call**

State Parks Committee Chairman Debbie Haak called the meeting to order at 8:42 a.m. on Thursday, October 15, 2009. Gloria Robins called the roll.

**Presentation of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

**Bob Knight moved to approve the Minutes from the September 2009 meeting. Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

**Welcome**

Honorable Horace Shipp, Mayor of Texarkana, welcomed the members of the Arkansas State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission and guests to Texarkana. Jeff Sanford, President and CEO of the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce extended a welcome to the Commission as well.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Cynthia Dunlap presented the financial report for the month of September. Expenditures were: Parks Division, \$17,654,968; Tourism Division, \$3,864,504; Keep Arkansas Beautiful, \$90,841; Administration Division, \$830,096; and History Commission, \$404,867. Expenditures for the Department totaled \$22,845,276, which included construction and grants. Fiscal year-to-date operating revenue for the Parks Division totaled \$7,343,811, an increase of 3% over last year's total.

**Jay Bunyard moved to approve the Financial Report as presented.  
Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Executive Assistant Gloria Robins reported that this was the first official paperless Commission meeting. Commissioners were provided computers with agenda items and support documents.

Executive Director Richard W. Davies reported that in 2008, Arkansas hosted a delegation from Italy as part of a reciprocal learning program between the University of Arkansas School of Landscape Architecture, Fay Jones School of Architecture, the Department of Parks and Tourism, the Monti Simbruini Park, the University of Arkansas School of Architecture in Rome, and Regione Lazio. A delegation from Parks and Tourism and the University of Arkansas Architecture Department will travel to Italy in November to exchange project ideas on bio-diversity, environmental management, and tourism and park development within protected areas.

### **TOURISM DIVISION**

#### **Travel Promotion Act of 2009**

Tourism Director Joe David Rice reported that the Travel Promotion Act of 2009 (S. 1023) passed in the House but must now return to the Senate. He reported that new supporters to the Act include Senator Blanche Lincoln and Congressman Vic Snyder. This legislation will be a joint venture between the industry and government and matched dollar per dollar by the private sector. This act should help the U.S. attract international visitors.

#### **Endless Feast Report**

Assistant Director of Tourism, Nancy Clark, reported on the Endless Feast held at Whitton Farms. The event hosted 120 guests at Whitton Farms in Tyronza, Arkansas. PBS filmed a one hour segment for its television show, Endless Feast. This event will provide excellent exposure for the Delta.

#### **Marketing Outlook Forum**

Tourism Director Joe David Rice reported that the Marketing Outlook Forum will be held in Little Rock at the Statehouse Convention Center Monday, Oct. 26 – Wednesday, Oct. 28. Approximately 400 attendees are registered, and last minute registrations will be accepted. Tourism partners hosting the Forum include Acxiom, Aristotle, Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. Dallas Cowboys owner, Jerry Jones, will speak at the Forum.

### **Research and Information Services Section**

The Research and Information Services Section processed 59,440 requests for information during September 2009. The year-to-date total is 364,580, down 15.3% compared to the same period in 2008. There were 1,472 requests for retirement/relocation information in September, up 264% from September 2008. January – September requests are 8,701, up 13.4%.

Arkansas State Welcome Center visitation was 73,445 in September, up 19.7% from September 2008. January – September visitation is 670,446, up 12.3%.

Joanne Hinson reported that the following indicators show increases in activity compared to 2008, both for September and year-to-date: Welcome Center visitation, National Park visitation, visits to Arkansas.com, and requests for Retirement/Relocation information.

Research and Welcome Center employees are staffing a booth at the Arkansas State Fair, which runs through October 18th.

Rain has delayed the Grand Opening of the Lake Village Welcome Center, which may now be held in late November or early December.

### **Communications Section**

Communications Manager Dena Woerner reported that the Communications Section has received an overwhelming response to Haunted Arkansas. The section is adding a related links page to the site.

Woerner introduced the social networking application, Whrrl.com, and gave examples of Whrrl stories written by the section.

Dena Woerner and Marla Johnson Norris introduced the Quick Response Code (QRC) technology to the Commission and explained how these codes will be used for tourism. Jonathan Eudy suggested a press release to announce to the media that we are using the QRC technology. QRCs will also be added to some of the new magazine ads.

### **Tourism Development Section**

As of September 25, one Tourism Attraction Feasibility Study Grant application was submitted for the second submission deadline. That grant application was later withdrawn. The grant balance for FY10 remains at \$13,838.00 for the last deadline of FY10 – November 27, 2009.

Printed Henry Awards nomination forms for the 36th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism have been mailed. The online version of the form is available at [www.arkindustryinsider.com](http://www.arkindustryinsider.com). The deadline for all submissions is Oct. 30, 2009. The Governor's Conference on Tourism is scheduled to be held in Eureka Springs, March 7-9, 2010.

The Tourism Development section worked with Aristotle to renovate the online Calendar of Events (COE). A new addition to the COE is an advanced search for event category, keyword, and all park programs and long-term events. A column of broad categories has also been added to the left side of the page to pique the interest of site visitors who may be just browsing. Broad categories include: Festivals and Fairs, Family Events, Arts and Culture, Outdoors, Sports, Free Events, and Haunted.

### **Group Travel Section**

Nancy Clark presented the Group Travel Section Report. Clark reported the Arkansas Group Travel Delegation attended the TEAMS2009 conference in New Orleans October 13-16, 2009. A cooperative effort of members of the Arkansas Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus and Group Travel Section met with top sports organizers across the nation.

Arkansas Group Travel recently teamed with Little Rock, Conway, and Fort Smith to host a FAM trip for tour operators of Red Carpet Charters Tours of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

### **Internet-Related Items**

Marla Johnson Norris, Aristotle, stated that over 500,000 people visited Arkansas.com during the month of September. This is a 12.3% increase over last year. Year-to-date, Arkansas.com has had over five million visitors. Jonathon Eudy reported that the Arkansas YouTube page is up and videos continue to be added by staff. Projects underway include [visitmyarkansas.com](http://visitmyarkansas.com), changes to [Arkansasmediaroom.com](http://Arkansasmediaroom.com), the Anniversaries page, Extreme Arkansas page, and Affordable Arkansas.

### **Advertising and Marketing**

#### **Spring/Summer Advertising and Marketing Campaign Update**

Karen Mullikin, Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods, reported that the Trail of Holiday Lights brochures are printed and the 2009 trail information is available on Arkansas.com. The brochure can be downloaded from the Web site, and is included in the vacation planning kits currently being mailed. The Trail of Holiday Lights television ad was also viewed.

**Jay Bunyard moved to approve the Holiday of Lights television creative for 2009. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.**

Mullikin reported on the ERA Longwoods benchmark study. Research showed that the regional ad campaign was successful with more than one million people exposed to the ad campaign. The majority of those that saw the ads and responded to the survey had a positive impression of Arkansas.

### **September Presentation Follow-up**

At the request of several commissioners and staff, the print ads were “tweaked” to increase the size of the photos in the filmstrip and the main photo, and to look less nostalgic. Also Quick Response Codes will be added to the print ads.

### **PARKS DIVISION**

#### **PD 2205 Crater of Diamonds – Search Area Rules & Regulations**

Greg Butts introduced Justin Dorsey, recently promoted Superintendent of Crater of Diamonds State Park and stated Dorsey is from the younger generation of current and future leaders in Arkansas State Parks. Butts noted Tom Stolarz, Regional IV Supervisor could not be present for the meeting. Butts advised PD 2205 Crater of Diamonds – Search Area Rules & Regulations has been revised in the past and staff would like to modify again, primarily unrestricting some rules and regulations for the search area. Butts presented the revised policy directive to the commission for review, which will be brought before the commission for approval in November, upon conclusion of the 30 day public comment period. The revised policy has begun the Administrative Rules Process. Butts requested the commission review the revised PD 2205 for final approval in November.

#### **Arkansas Broadcaster’s Association Agreement Renewal**

Greg Butts introduced Jim McCall, Executive Director of the Arkansas Broadcaster’s Association (ABA). Executive Director McCall proposed continuing the ABA grant partnership program in the amount of \$75,000 with Arkansas State Parks (ASP) for 2010. McCall noted that he has been involved in the partnership for the past seven years and thanked the commission for their support, advising in 2008 Arkansas State Parks (ASP) has received \$19 in TV and radio air time for every \$1 spent and 2009 (thus far) ASP has received \$21 for every \$1 spent. Greg Butts commented since the origin of the partnership in 1987, ASP has contributed \$1.3 million in grant monies to the ABA and the ABA has contributed \$18.5 million in radio and TV air time and assistance. Butts thanked the ABA on behalf of ASP.

**Jay Bunyard moved to renew the Arkansas Broadcaster’s Association agreement in the amount of \$ 75,000 for 2010. Steve Arrison seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Arkansas Geological Survey**

Greg Butts reported the Arkansas Geological Survey in conjunction with the Center for Earthquake Research and Information at the University of Memphis has requested permission to place seismometers in five Arkansas State Parks (Woolly Hollow State Park, Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area, Cane Creek State Park, White Oak State Lake State Park, and the Ozark Folk Center) in order to monitor seismic activity throughout the state. Governor Beebe has made this a high priority and has instructed state agencies to expedite the project.

**Steve Arrison moved to approve the placement of the seismic stations in five Arkansas State Parks: Woolly Hollow State Park, Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area, Cane Creek State Park, White Oak State Lake State Park, and the Ozark Folk Center. Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Arkansas Press Association Agreement Renewal**

Greg Butts advised the Arkansas Press Association (APA) proposed continuing the APA grant partnership program in the amount of \$75,000 for 2010. Joan Ellison, ASP Public Information Officer, noted the APA will re-evaluate continuing the program for 2011. In response to the question of the APA accepting presentations for future partnerships, Ellison advised she will make inquiries and report back to the commission. Butts noted since the grant partnership in 1988, ASP has purchased approximately \$1.3 million in ad space from newspapers throughout Arkansas and received the equivalence in free advertising space totaling \$2.6 million in advertising.

**Steve Arrison moved to approve the renewal of the Arkansas Press Association agreement in the amount of \$75,000 for 2010. Darin Gray seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Daisy State Park – Removal of Structures**

Stan Graves requested approval for removal of five deteriorated structures from inventory: one well-house (#13.17) and a second well-house (#13.18) which have been decommissioned and are in disrepair. Graves reported three additional structures no longer in use: chicken coop #1 (#13.26 / AASIS 120005668), chicken coop # 2 (#13.28 / AASIS 120005670) and chicken coop #3 (13.27 / AASIS 120005669).

**Mike Mills moved to approve the removal of five deteriorated structures from inventory at Daisy State Park: one well-house (#13.17); a second well-house (#13.18); chicken coop # 1 (#13.26 / AASIS 120005668), chicken coop #2 (#13.28 / AASIS 120005670); and chicken coop #3 (13.27 / AASIS 120005669). Steve Arrison seconded and the motion carried.**

### **CIP Quarterly Report**

Stan Graves referred the commission to the CIP Quarterly Report for updates and reported 46 projects, in the amount of \$ 7.5 million, have been completed. Graves reported Planning & Development is continuously busy with 30-35 architect, engineer, and exhibit projects underway; approximately 25 construction contracts in process; and \$123 million in projects underway at the present time.

### **Miscellaneous**

Greg Butts presented a slide show of a healed bald eagle released at the Hobbs State Park – Conservation Area (HSP-CA) by licensed Gravette rehabilitator, Lynn Scimubato, with an excited large crowd present for the eagle release. Butts commented the eagle awareness programs began in 1979 in Arkansas State Parks and this was a great success story, making memories for park visitors.

Greg Butts reported HSP-CA Visitor's Center was recognized with an Award of Excellence for its construction and design excellence by the South Central Construction News.

Butts noted Dirty Jobs episode "Alligator Snapping Turtles" filmed near Jacksonport State Park will be aired October 20<sup>th</sup>, at 8:00 pm on the Discovery Channel. Arkansas State Parks and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission personnel assisted the Dirty Jobs crew.

Acting chairman, Debbie Haak reported Chairman Danny Ford has chosen a nomination committee comprised of Jay Bunyard and Ness Sechrest to recommend the 2010 State Parks Recreation and Travel Commission chairman and vice-chairman. The committee will report their recommendation at the November meeting.

The State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission meeting adjourned at 3:06 pm on October 15, 2009 at the Agriculture Center of the Four States Fair.