

**Minutes**  
**State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission**  
**Jonesboro, Arkansas**  
**October 17-18, 2002**

**Commissioners Present**

Debra Haak, Chairman  
Jim Gaston – Thursday Only  
Mike Mills  
J.D. “Bud” Shamburger

Bill Barnes  
Ness Sechrest  
Ted Mullenix  
Wade Williams

Polly Wood Crews  
Danny Ford  
Jane Christenson

**Commissioners Absent**

Billy Lindsey - Business Conflict  
Loretta Lever House – Business Conflict

Montine McNulty - Business Conflict

**Department Staff Present**

Richard W. Davies, Executive Director  
Larry Cargile, Central Administration Director  
Joe David Rice, Tourism Director  
Greg Butts, State Parks Director  
Nancy Clark, Assistant Tourism Director  
Mac Balkman, Manager, Operations  
Stan Graves, Manager, Planning & Development  
Marcel Hanzlik, Region III Supervisor  
Marlon Mowdy, Superintendent, Old Davidsonville State Park  
Monte Fuller, Superintendent, Lake Charles State Park  
Gretchen Sacotnik, Superintendent, Crowley’s Ridge State Park  
Nikki Cherry, Superintendent, Lake Frierson State Park  
Kelly Mulvihill, Superintendent, Parkin Archeological State Park  
Gloria Robins, Executive Assistant  
Jennifer Carson, Administrative Assistant  
Sandy Burch, Administrative Assistant

**Agency Staff Present**

Shelby Woods

Wayne Woods

Karen Mullikin

**Aristotle**

Jonathan Eudy

Jennifer Peper

**Guests Present**

Marynell Branch, Governor's Office  
Cari White, Executive Vice President, Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce  
Bobby Caldwell, Arkansas Broadcasters Association  
Kelley Linck, Ozark Mountain Region Tourist Association  
Michael Clark, Clark & Sells  
Bryan Clark, Clark & Sells  
Amy Jackson, Clark & Sells  
Gary Heathcott, Heathcott Associates  
Tonya Palmer, Heathcott Associates  
Rhonda Kline, Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce  
Tammy Branyon, Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce  
Nan Halbrook, Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce  
Mandy Cook, Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce  
Cherry Kaughman, Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce  
Teresa Ashley, Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Debbie Haak called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and Gloria Robins called the roll.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

**Jane Christenson moved to approve the agenda. Polly Wood Crews seconded and the motion carried.**

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

**Wade Williams moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Polly Wood Crews seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Recognition of Guests**

Chairman Haak recognized guests in attendance.

### **Welcome by Chamber of Commerce**

Cari White, Executive Vice President of the Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce, welcomed the Commissioners. Ms. White introduced the Chamber's volunteers and staff: Rhonda Kline, Chair of the Government Liaison Committee, Tammy Branyon, the Special Events Coordinator, Nan Halbrook the Accountant, Mandy Cook who is the Membership Services and Sales Director, Cherry Kaughman who is the Ambassadors Committee Chair and Teresa Ashley who is an Ambassador for the Chamber.

### **Financial Report**

Larry Cargile presented a financial report for the fiscal year-to-date period ended September 30, 2002. The Parks Division expenditures, including construction/grants, totaled \$12,396,630 or 14% of annual budget. Tourism Division expenditures totaled \$2,316,742 or

19% of annual budget. Keep Arkansas Beautiful expenditures were \$97,983 or 19% of annual budget. Administration Division expenditures totaled \$602,476 or 26% of annual budget. History Commission expenditures were \$332,938 or 26% of annual budget.

Parks Division operating revenue for the fiscal year-to-date period ended September 30, 2002, totaled \$4,506,239 an increase of 9% over the same period last year. Operating revenue for the month of September was \$1,190,128, an increase of 3.7% over September 2001.

The Tourism Promotion 2% gross tax collections to date total \$2,760,907, an increase of 6.5% for the same period last year.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve the financial report as presented.  
Jim Gaston seconded and the motion carried.**

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Report on Meeting with the Corps of Engineers**

Richard Davies reported on the annual meeting of the Mississippi River Corps district divisions that was held at Put-in-Bay, Ohio. Mr. Davies and Bryan Kellar attended the meeting during which they had time to meet with General Robert Griffin, Chief of Civil Works for the Corps. Mr. Davies said he had asked General Griffin what the ADPT could do to help the Corps districts in Arkansas with recreational facilities funding. The Commissioners were provided with a packet of information that included a listing of the Congressmen who serve on the Appropriations Committee, a sheet that indicated the number of recreation areas at Corps water projects by state, and a schedule of the Corps' budget process. Mr. Davies said this information would be helpful to the SPRTC in determining how it can help the Corps and when. He said he would be meeting with Montine McNulty to discuss how best to use the information.

### **Parks & Tourism Legislative Subcommittee Meeting Report**

Richard Davies said on October 4-5 the Parks and Tourism Legislative Subcommittee meeting was held in Altus and Mt. Magazine State Park. Mr. Davies said the Legislators asked the Department to move forward on the lodge and cabin projects at the park. Regarding the Nora Harris lawsuit that is delaying the bonds that would be used for the park, Ms. Harris' attorney terminated his services; however Ms. Harris had said she will re-file. He added that bond attorneys feel the only solution may be a constitutional amendment that would clarify bond issuing authority. Mr. Davies said there are two issues: one is where the Department could obtain the funds to finance the lodge and, two, the design of the lodge, which will cost approximately \$1 million and will take one year. He said the Subcommittee requested that the Department move forward with the design and let the Legislature discuss the funding issue. The reasoning is that when the funding issue is resolved the design work may be completed. Mr. Davies said the other side of the issue is the design work will take funds that will not be able to be used to upgrade campgrounds or complete projects in other parks. He said the Department's position with the Subcommittee was that the SPRTC had agreed to incur the expense but what would be difficult is if a \$25 million bond was called. He said two members of the Subcommittee are the Chairman of the Joint Budget Committee and the future Speaker of the House both of whom have Mt. Magazine State Park in their districts. Mr. Davies said he had asked if the \$1 million for the design work could be paid back from a bond issue – could it be a

part of the entire project. He said he doubted that, during the upcoming Legislative session, the \$1 million would be available. Stan Graves said approximately \$900,000 is now allocated from Amendment 75. Bud Shamburger expressed concern that it still could be five years before the project is undertaken. Jim Gaston said the \$1 million for the design work today would cost more if we delayed the project five years.

Chairman Haak asked if it would be a good idea to look at putting in cabins now. Greg Butts said that had been discussed. He said it is possible and the cost would be approximately \$2.3 million. Mr. Butts said local supporters, who have been waiting for a long time for the lodge, do not see the economic benefit from cabins versus what a lodge and restaurant will bring to the area. He said building cabins would be a good-faith effort, would operate at a net profit, and would help offset the other part of the operation that provides services but does not produce income.

Mr. Butts said one of the things the Legislators wanted researched was the feasibility of a conventional loan. He said a bank would not approve a 20-year note. Jim Gaston said he would be opposed to obligating a future Commission with a long-term bank loan. He said if it cannot be done from the 1/8¢ funds, it should not be done. Regarding doing the design work now but not starting construction for five years, Bill Barnes said he is concerned because there may be market and technological advances during that five year period that were not incorporated into the original design work. He feels more money could be spent modifying the design than the cost increase of doing the design later. Mr. Barnes asked if the funds that are available for design work now could be used for campground improvements, or does it have to be held. Greg Butts said it has been allocated in the 1/8¢ plan, which means it is there to be used. ASP has committed to the design contract but the funds have not been expended yet. Mr. Butts said they have been waiting for a decision on the lawsuit before moving forward. Bill Barnes asked if there is a time frame on the contract. Mr. Butts said no, that ASP controls the contract. Mr. Barnes said that amount of money could be reallocated for other projects. Mr. Butts said there are projects ready to go to bid, and the 1/8¢ funds could be used for them. He said the Legislative Subcommittee passed a motion urging the Department to proceed with the design.

Polly Wood Crews asked how long the people in Logan County had been promised that the lodge would be built. Richard Davies responded that it has been twenty years. Ms. Crews said one Legislator who cared so much about it is already deceased. She said it is really important to those citizens that we hold to what we have said. Ms. Crews said if the Commission does not take some action, such as proceeding with the design plan, we will look like others before us who procrastinated and told them someday it would be done.

Richard Davies said, in his opinion, it would be political suicide to ignore the Speaker of the House and the Chairman of the Joint Budget Committee. Mr. Davies suggested we continue the design process and there may be some resolution during the Legislative Session. There are a lot of financing options. The Speaker of the House and the Chairman of the Joint Budget Committee, with this project in their district, will not let the Session pass without resolving this issue.

**Jim Gaston moved to approve that the design work continue for the lodge and cabin facilities at Mt. Magazine State Park. Ness Sechrest seconded and the motion carried.**

Bill Barnes said an alternate approach that makes economic sense for the area, and for ASP, is to build a few cabins - that is if there is not action during the Legislative Session. Mr. Barnes said that cabins will generate a positive cash flow, and good will.

Bud Shamburger said the design funds could be used to build campsites. He asked why the Department is not filing a lawsuit requesting a declaratory judgement from the court because that could be done in ninety days. Richard Davies said that is an option but the Department is not the only entity affected by the lawsuit. He said there are between 12 and 15 bond issues worth approximately \$300 million affected. Mr. Davies said the action that concerned everyone was when the Supreme Court originally dismissed the suit. Because one cannot be sued for thinking about something, it was the opinion of the Court that when action is taken, a lawsuit should be filed then.

Wade Williams said he does not think there is any member of the Commission who would question whether or not a lodge will be build. He said there are several ways this will be resolved in the next three or four years. Either by Nora Harris filing another lawsuit or the Legislature taking some action. Mr. Williams said because the design work will take one year, the Commission would not be pushing the project far off into the future. He said he thinks the time has arrived to move forward on the project. Debbie Haak said some action about this will come out of the Legislative Session. Danny Ford said the Commission has a plan for Mt. Magazine that was laid out some time ago. Mr. Ford said the Commission needs to let the Legislators know we are ready to proceed.

### **Legislative Budget Hearing**

Richard Davies said the Department's budget request is for \$95 million the first year of the biennium and \$97 million for the second year. The break-out for the first year of the biennium is: Administration \$2.5 million, Tourism \$13 million, Parks \$77 million, Keep Arkansas Beautiful \$525,000 and the History Commission \$1.3 million. *The total Department budget general revenue is down 6.71%, cash fund 13.4%, trust funds 6.7%, special revenue (1/8¢) 7.5%, federal revenue 1%.* Mr. Davies said, when the budget was presented, the Legislators did not discuss it, but wanted to talk about other, non-related, issues. The budget was assigned to the Parks & Tourism Legislative Sub-Committee for review and recommendations. Ness Sechrest requested a list of the Legislators on the Sub-Committee. Richard Davies said the upcoming election would affect the make-up of the Sub-Committee. He said he would send the Commissioners a listing of the Sub-Committee members when it is finalized.

### **Substantive Legislation**

Richard Davies said prior to the start of the Legislative Session, the Governor requests information on proposed legislation that may affect the Department. Joe David Rice said the only thing coming up would be to make sure there is an appropriation for the Tourist Information Centers. Mr. Davies said that would probably be an Arkansas Highway & Transportation Department bill.

### **Certificate of Appreciation**

Richard Davies said Quin Ashcraft, Administrator of Human Resources, is retiring after twenty-eight years of outstanding service to the Department. Mr. Davies said he appreciates all of Mr. Ashcraft's contributions and requested a Certificate of Appreciation for him.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve a Certificate of Appreciation for Quin Ashcraft who is retiring following twenty-eight years of exemplary service to The Department of Parks & Tourism. Jane Christenson seconded and the motion carried.**

Chairman Haak suggested that Commissioners also send notes to Mr. Ashcraft.

### Miscellaneous

Richard Davies reminded the Commissioners that during the previous meeting, they had moved to oppose Amendment 3 that would remove sales tax from food and drug sales, and educate voters on the potential affects if the tax were to be removed. Mr. Davies said Chairman Haak had signed a resolution voicing SPRTC's position. He said it would be helpful if the Commissioners ensured their local media receive a copy of the resolution.

### RESOLUTION

- WHEREAS, an amendment to the Arkansas Constitution, known as Proposed Amendment 3, has been presented to be placed on the ballot for the general election on November 5, 2002; and
- WHEREAS, Proposed Amendment 3 will abolish and forever prohibit the taxation of food and medicine in this state; and
- WHEREAS, it is estimated that state and local revenue would be \$435.8 million less than currently available, with no provision for replacing it; and
- WHEREAS, the State Parks of Arkansas, and the tourism promotion efforts at the State level, supporting a \$4 billion industry are dependent upon these revenues; and
- WHEREAS, the revenues from Constitutional Amendment 75, the 1/8<sup>th</sup> Cent Conservation Amendment, approved by the voters in 1996, are partially generated by the sales taxes on food and medicine; and
- WHEREAS, if approved, it is estimated that Amendment 3 will reduce the 1/8<sup>th</sup> Cent Conservation Amendment revenues by \$6.8 million a year, including loss in excess of \$3 million a year from State Parks; and
- WHEREAS, a reduction in funding of this magnitude would adversely affect the timely fulfillment of the promises made to the voters for State Parks improvements from Amendment 75; and

WHEREAS, the local Advertising and Promotion Commissions are funded in part by the taxes on restaurant food sales; and

WHEREAS, the approval of Amendment 3 would be catastrophic to the funding for these local promotion efforts, so crucial for the tourism industry.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission expresses its deep concern over the detrimental consequences to the State Parks of Arkansas and to the Arkansas tourism industry should proposed Amendment 3 be approved, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission make every effort to inform the supporters and users of our State Parks, the tourism industry in Arkansas, the local Advertising and Promotion Commissions, Regional Tourism Associations and the voting public of the adverse consequences of the approval of Amendment 3 by resolution adopted this 19<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2002.

ARKANSAS STATE PARKS, RECREATION  
AND TRAVEL COMMISSION

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Debbie Haak, Chairman

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND  
TOURISM

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Richard W. Davies, Executive Director

Mr. Davies said the results of the Department's audit indicated three findings in the subsidiary ledger and the control ledger. He said they did not always match going back to the 1930s. Ten discrepancies have been reconciled. Mr. Davies said AASIS does not have a subsidiary ledger so there will not be these types of problems in the future. He said the meeting with the Audit Committee lasted five minutes.

**PARKS DIVISION**

**Daisy State Park Proposed Acquisition of Larry Fagan Property**

Stan Graves said Larry Fagan had contacted the park and expressed an interest in selling his property to ASP. Mr. Graves said the 4.90 acres are adjacent to park property and include a 2,200-sq. ft. residence and a 1,200-sq. ft. shop. The residence is currently under construction and is approximately 90% completed. The balance of the work to be done to complete the residence will cost approximately \$20,000. Mr. Graves said the owner is asking \$129,900 for the property. He said that is lower than what ASP would spend to build a comparable residence. The Long Range Development Plan for the park discusses renovating an existing mobile home. Mr. Graves said this residence is badly needed at the park. Greg Butts added that the property is on the entrance road to the park which is a great benefit. Danny Ford asked where the funds would come from for the acquisition. Mr. Graves said A-75 funds would be used.

**Wade Williams moved to approve acquisition of the Larry Fagan property Pt. Of the NW ¼ NE ¼, Sec. 14, T6S, R26W, City of Daisy, Pike County (approximately 4.90 acres). Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Report from Bill Barnes**

Bill Barnes reported that he, Montine McNulty, and other marina owners in Arkansas recently traveled to Washington DC and met with all the Arkansas Congressmen. The discussions were about funding for the Corps lakes in Arkansas. Mr. Barnes said in the Vicksburg District, in order to bring the campgrounds on the three Arkansas lakes back up to normal operating levels, the Corps would need \$5 million. And, that does not include any funds for improvements. The Little Rock District would need \$10 million, \$5 million for sustained operations and \$5 million for repairs. Mr. Barnes said they met with very positive responses and a genuine desire by the Legislators to fix the funding problem. The budget process, which started in early October, is stalled nation-wide. The appropriations bills have not been passed. The energy and water appropriations bill, which includes the COE, passed by the House but not passed by the Senate. Mr. Barnes said it may not pass – the Senate may not vote this year – it may be delayed until next Spring. The Arkansas delegation asked the Legislators to put pressure on the headquarters of the Corps to find old money somewhere and shift it to Arkansas to the two districts, and earmark it for the lakes. And, to try to get some additional money in the FY2004 budgets. Mr. Barnes said he, Montine McNulty and some other marina owners want to go back to Washington DC in the Spring and meet with the Legislators again on this issue. They had expected strong support because the lakes have a tremendous economic impact on the state. Mr. Barnes said right now the Corp in Arkansas does not have any money to operate the lake campgrounds. He had received a letter from the Lake Ouachita lake manager notifying him that all the campgrounds on Lake Ouachita will be closed November 1 to reopen February and March 2003, with the exception of parts of some areas. Mr. Barnes said it is a good thing this didn't happen in July. There will be some people who won't come back because they will think the campgrounds will be closed next year.

Jim Gaston said if the United States goes to war with Iraq, the expenses of that and the resulting national security needs will affect the funding needs of the Corps and other Federal recreation agencies. Funding for lakes, highways, etc., will suffer. Mr. Gaston, referring to the ADPT's Crisis Management Communications Plan, asked if the plan had been tied into the Internet in any way. Karen Mullikin said an update had just been completed on the Crisis Communication Plan. Information had been added that ties all state parks together through the Internet. Polly Wood Crews asked if that information had been shared with Bud Harper with the Office of Emergency Services (OES). Mac Balkman said it is not at the OES in that format and that probably needs to be done. Richard Davies said if the information is given to Mr. Balkman, he will make sure Bud Harper receives it.

### **Village Creek State Park - Long Range Development Plan**

Stan Graves said the items that are being addressed in the long range plans for the parks include projects that had been planned in the 10-year Legacy Plan that was provided to voters in 1996 for passage of Amendment 75 (the 1/8¢ Conservation Tax). Mr. Graves gave a brief history of the 7,000-acre park. A segment of the road that passes through the park has been nominated for the National Registry of Historic Places. The road was used during the Civil War as a military highway between Memphis and Little Rock. Also, a part of the park is on the Trail

of Tears. Mr. Graves discussed plans to develop environmental education in the park by expanding the Visitor Information Center, parking and road improvements, renovation of the amphitheater to make it barrier-free, additions to the new equestrian trail, relocation of the boat dock, campground renovations, replacement and improvements to park utilities and infrastructure, and improvements to the day-use area. The plan also calls for additional cabins, following the evaluation of a feasibility study and final approval by the Commission.

Jim Gaston asked if there has been any consideration given to wiring campsites to provide more than 50-amp service, because the electrical needs of future recreational vehicles may be higher. Mr. Graves said, not at this time because, hopefully, 50-amp service will be enough for the lifetime of the campsites. Bill Barnes said it is amazing how much development there has been in RVs in the last ten years. He suggested dropping wire that could handle up to 100-amps. Mr. Gaston said if larger conduit was used now it might be easier to pull larger wire at a later date. Mr. Graves said that would help, and could reduce expenses in the future.

Stan Graves reviewed the responses that had been received on the RFP/RFQ for the golf course and lodge operation. One response was received and that was for design of the golf course only. A questionnaire was sent to everyone that requested the RFP/RFQ asking why there wasn't more interest in bidding on the project. The downturn of the economy and lack of incentives by the state were cited as reasons. Mr. Graves said that even with those responses, most were only interested in the golf course. Greg Butts said the golf course and lodge were in the original master plan for the park that was approved by the Commission in the early 1970s. Richard Davies said the original thought was that Village Creek was to be "the DeGray East" of the park system. The plan also included a lake big enough for water-skiing but the erodable soil types will now allow a larger reservoir. Greg Butts said the original feasibility study was very positive and said the lodge and golf course was a viable approach. ASP looked at developing these facilities as a public/private partnership opportunity. Mr. Butts said they will be talking with the Arkansas Department of Economic Development (ADED) to discuss some things ASP can do with ADED to add additional incentives. Options for consideration will be provided to the Commission either in November or at the January meeting. Jim Gaston suggested that, because of changing demographics, park master plans be reviewed periodically, perhaps every five years.

**Jane Christenson moved to approve the Village Creek State Park Long Range Development Plan as presented. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.**

Richard Davies, clarifying the vote, said the Commission was voting on the ten-year plan with the golf course, lodge and cabins being brought back to the Commission at a later date for consideration on contracts, etc. Ted Mullenix asked if the vote includes talking to the Legislature to try to add some incentives for the development and operation of the golf course and lodge. Richard Davies suggested that be addressed in a separate motion. Greg Butts said a study had been conducted that said the golf course was feasible and that was reviewed and previously approved by the Commission. Authority was given to proceed with an RFP/RFQ to see who might be interested in the private sector to build and operate the golf course and lodge. The proposals would be brought to the Commission for review.

**Ted Mullenix moved that the ten-year plan for Village Creek State Park include language that would encourage the Commission to go to the Legislature**

**to consider incentives that would help a public/private partnership for the development and operation of the golf course and lodge facilities. Wade Williams seconded and the motion carried.**

Richard Davies suggested that if the Commissioners had any ideas on what sorts of incentives would be helpful, that those ideas be relayed to staff.

### **Renewal of Grant Partnership Agreements**

#### **1. Arkansas Press Association (APA)**

Greg Butts said the long-standing agreement with the APA has been a “win-win” situation. The agreement provides for a 50% match – ASP pays for one advertisement with individual newspapers, and they provide a second advertisement at no cost. Mr. Butts said ASP wants to continue the partnership.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve renewing the Grant Partnership Agreement with the Arkansas Press Association for another year. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.**

#### **2. Arkansas Broadcasters Association (ABA)**

Greg Butts said the partnership agreement with the ABA is in its fifteenth year. In the past fifteen years (beginning in November 1987), through the third quarter of the current calendar year, for the expenditure of \$811,250, ASP has received \$9,801,592.76 in advertising.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve renewing the Grant Partnership Agreement with the Arkansas Broadcasters Association for another year. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.**

Bobby Caldwell, a member of the Board of Directors of the ABA and Chairman of the Non Sustaining Commercial Announcement Committee, said he is glad the SPRTC is holding its meeting in northeast Arkansas. Mr. Caldwell said the Jonesboro area is a very beautiful part of the state and Village Creek State Park is an important part of east Arkansas. Mr. Caldwell said he started talking to people about the grant partnership program fifteen years ago and had almost given up on the idea. He talked with Richard Davies, quickly explaining what ABA wanted to do. Mr. Caldwell said Mr. Davies told him that the grant partnership program was exactly what ASP had been looking for to promote the parks. He said the ABA is in the top five state associations. Because the FCC allowed smaller stations to upgrade by increasing power, it has enhanced the partnership program because of the ability to broadcast in west Tennessee and north Mississippi. Most of Arkansas’s tourists come from surrounding states.

### **Park of the Year Awards**

Greg Butts said each year the entire operation of each park is evaluated. It is an opportunity to recognize and reward the outstanding job being done by park superintendents and their staffs. All areas are reviewed: customer comments, revenue, holding the line on expenses, volunteer programs, inter-departmental relations, working with the community and how well the facilities are maintained and operated. Mr. Butts said everyone was very pleased that Chairman Haak had been able to attend the September 24 Superintendents/Museum Directors Meeting.

Mr. Butts said Marlon Mowdy, Superintendent at Old Davidsonville State Park (Superintendent Mowdy was present) received the honor as being chosen Park of the Year for Region III, and the Outstanding Park Maintenance award. He read comments sent in from guests at the park. From Texas - *The park is neat and clean.* From Michigan - *Everything is great. You have a beautiful park with very friendly and helpful people. You are doing a wonderful job,* a Floridian noted, *We'll spread the word and hope to return next year.* Other comments – *Your staff was superb. Everything is clean: from the restrooms to the bathhouse to the park. Park personnel came through the park to make sure everything was fine.* Mr. Butts told Marlon he has done an outstanding job and, on behalf of everyone, congratulated him on the awards.

### 2001-2002 Awards

Park of the Year, Region I	Queen Wilhelmina
Park of the Year, Region II	Bull Shoals-White River
Park of the Year, Region III	Old Davidsonville
Park of the Year, Region IV	White Oak Lake
Museum of the Year	Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources
Overall Winner	Bull Shoals-White River
Volunteer Program	Village Creek
Outstanding Park Maintenance	Old Davidsonville
Interpretive Program	DeGray
Outstanding Special Event	AMNR's <i>Chautauqua</i>
Resource Management	Ozark Folk Center

Greg Butts told the Commissioners about Superintendent Jim Griffin's illness. He has a rare form of cancer and is being treated at MD Anderson in Houston, Texas. Mr. Butts said that not all the costs would be covered by insurance. Bud Shamburger had suggested that a fund be set up at a bank. Jim Gaston asked that any donations go through the Arkansas Tourism Development Foundation. Gloria Robins said that Montine McNulty had informed her that donations could be handled through the Arkansas Hospitality Association. Jim Gaston said the people in the Bull Shoals area would like the Commission to request the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission that the two boat launch ramps be named in honor of Jim Griffin. Mr. Gaston said there is genuine love for Superintendent Griffin in the area.

Polly Wood Crews asked Superintendent Mowdy why he thinks guests speak so highly of his park. Superintendent Mowdy said they take customer service very serious. He said he stresses with his staff that they all be very hospitable and friendly. Superintendent Mowdy said his maintenance staff does a great job. Ms. Crews asked him how his staff felt about the park winning. Superintendent Mowdy said they were all very pleased. He said he has received congratulatory cards and letters from a lot of the guests who stay at the park throughout the year. Keeping the campers happy only brings more folks back. Superintendent Mowdy said by doing that, the park experienced a 6.6% increase in revenue and expenses were decreased 4%. Everybody in the area of the park was extremely pleased to hear of the award. Staff works hard to do a great job and it has paid off. Superintendent Mowdy said, "Hats off to my staff and the people of northeast Arkansas who use Old Davidsonville as one of their prime locations for family outings". The Jonesboro area newspapers attended the awards presentation and celebration. The Commissioners applauded Superintendent Mowdy and his staff. Stan Graves said, many times, parks are what Superintendents are. Mr. Graves said Superintendent Mowdy keeps Planning & Development aware of the needs of the park.

Richard Davies said that during the Superintendent's/Museum Director's Meeting, there were several living history presentations. Mr. Davies said Jimmie Edwards, from the Ozark Folk Center, portrayed a Confederate soldier returning home to Mt. View from the battle of Franklin. Mary Gillihan portrayed a local mountain woman, and the former school superintendent did a performance about a fiddler who grew up in the area. Mr. Davies said the performances were all "world class" and the performers received standing ovations from park staff. He said he had suggested to Greg Butts that one of the performers should be at a future Commission meeting. Mr. Davies said the Commissioners would be proud of the quality of programming at the Ozark Folk Center. Greg Butts said the performance lasts about 30 minutes and is fascinating. Chairman Haak said there is a lot of great entertainment in the parks the Commissioners don't know about it. Richard Davies said there is a lot of programming that is "keeping the campers happy." Danny Ford agreed and added that Old Davidsonville is an excellent, well-maintained park. Mr. Ford said park staff does not always get the recognition they deserve. Richard Davies asked how many people attend interpretive programs each year. Greg Butts said there are almost 30,000 special events, programs and activities each year in parks that touch almost 750,000 people. From 10,000 to 20,000 students attend educational programs each year in the majority of parks. Chairman Haak said the Commissioners would be surprised to learn how many schools view state parks on the website to teach Arkansas history. Polly Wood Crews said the Commissioners should know that and promote it. It would be very beneficial if people were made aware of the scope of what ASP does. Greg Butts said park staffs keep the local educational community informed and have developed teacher work plans that integrate with curriculums. Danny Ford said that when the Commission is meeting near a park, it would be a good idea if a program by park staff could be presented to the Commissioners. Greg Butts said, unless agendas are too long, the Commissioners would see that next year.

### **CIP Quarterly Report**

Stan Graves said \$97.3 million is currently committed through various methods of finance for capital improvement projects throughout the system. A "method of finance" gives authorization to spend funds on a project. Mr. Graves distributed the latest report indicating A-75 projects completed or underway. It totaled \$56.9 million. Richard Davies said the Commissioners should keep the report because it will help answer a lot of questions Legislators might have about 1/8¢ expenditures.

Jim Gaston asked the status of the Bull Shoals-White River VIC. Mr. Graves said there are some questions remaining about the roof system as designed by the architect. The design will be completed in six months. The facility should be completed by mid-summer 2003.

Ted Mullenix asked what the policy is on putting private business brochures in parks. Greg Butts said, if space is available, area attractions' brochures can be placed in parks. All the state parks' brochures, the State Park Guide and the Tour Guide are displayed. Most VICs don't have much space available to display a lot of brochures. Richard Davies said it is simply a matter of space being available, there is not a policy against displaying area attractions' brochures. Chairman Haak said state parks need to be making every effort to display any area brochure. Ms. Haak said, as new VICs are being constructed, there needs to be room planned for brochure racks. Mr. Butts said more space could be added as design is worked through on the VICs. Chairman Haak said the mission is to move people around the state. Greg Butts said that he wants a computer in the VIC at Bull Shoals-White River that guests can access Arkansas.com

to find information across the state. Ted Mullenix said park VICs are, to some degree, tourist information centers. Debbie Haak said, during a recent trip to Branson, Missouri, she had never seen cross selling the way it is done there. Chairman Haak said she had asked if they had any information on Arkansas. She was told they had requested it but did not have any material to give guests in Branson.

### Miscellaneous

Greg Butts called the Commissioners' attention to an article in *The Sentinel-Record* that discussed the hydrilla problem in Lake Ouachita. Mr. Butts said the park has experienced problems with the aquatic plant and has used environmentally safe chemicals to treat the area around the marina, boat launch ramp and swimming beach, and added that the herbicide is very expensive. Mr. Butts said, to him, dealing with the weed condition at Lake Ouachita and Lake DeGray is one of the biggest issues before the Commission. Currently, over 1,000 acres of Lake Ouachita are affected, and it will ultimately affect recreation use on the lake.

Mr. Butts said Star Resources Corp. has returned to Pike County and is doing some additional drilling northeast of Crater of Diamonds State Park in an attempt to locate diamonds.

Greg Butts said ASP is making the right decisions about building water play features instead of traditional swimming pools as evidenced by what the City of Jacksonville is doing. The City will be replacing its 30-year old swimming pool with a water play area that will include an assortment of water toys at an estimated cost of \$2 million.

Mr. Butts said at next month's meeting the Commission will discuss the Arkansas Native Plant and Wildlife Center (ANPWC) at Queen Wilhelmina State Park. Mr. Butts said the ANPWC has requested an extension on time to make payments for the summer. Wade Williams asked if the Fites had made their payments. Mr. Butts responded that they had.

### TOURISM DIVISION

#### Tourist Information Center Update

Joe David Rice drew Commissioners' attention to a report included in their folders regarding the Tourist Information Centers (TIC). He stated that the site work in Texarkana has started and that the RFPs will be re-bid on December 4, 2002. A pre-bid conference with prospective bidders will be held November 20th. The longer timeframe will give Contractors more time to talk to Subcontractors and as a consequence, more quality bids are expected. The opening date should be March or April of 2004.

#### Advertising Agency Review

Mr. Rice stated that a meeting held, shortly after the last Commission meeting, with advertising agency representatives determined in what order and location each agency would present in Harrison. Agencies drew for both order and location. Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods will present first in the Reddy Kilowatt room, Heathcott Associates will present second at the First Presbyterian Church, and Sells/Clark will present third at the First Christian Church. A recommended timeline for the presentations was prepared. Mr. Rice explained each step of the plan to Commissioners and noted that it is tentative. Bill Barnes stated that he feels the schedule is fine, but that he does not want to vote right then and that he would like more time to think and talk about it. He further stated that he would prefer to vote the next morning. Mr. Rice stated that

two presentations could be seen before lunch and one after lunch to free up a little more time in the afternoon, but that the Commission needed to vote that afternoon. Wade Williams stated that he didn't recall agreeing to vote on the ad agency immediately after the presentations. He stated that he agreed with Mr. Barnes and that he wanted an opportunity to digest the information. Mr. Rice stated that the original timeline approved by the Commission in June states that the agency will be selected on November 21st. Mr. Gaston noted that if a vote was not taken that afternoon, the media would have to be informed if a quorum of Commissioners met for anything. Wade Williams stated that the Freedom of Information Act applies to two or more Commissioners if the issue is discussed between them. Commissioners discussed the schedule and how much time they would like for the discussion period and the break.

Richard Davies asked Commissioners if they wanted each advertising agency staff available after the presentations for the discussion period. Mr. Barnes stated that we would like that because he may have some follow-up questions. Mr. Gaston suggested having a thirty minute question and answer period should be enough time and that Commissioners would already have materials from the agencies. Joe David Rice stated that he agreed it would be a good idea to have the agency staffs present at the discussion. Gary Heathcott, from Heathcott Associates, stated that Commissioners may want to put some limitations on what could be talked about during the final discussion period (to prevent a possible bidding war). Mr. Gaston agreed that he had a valid point. Mr. Barnes stated that he wouldn't mind dispensing the final discussion period if the agencies were uncomfortable with it. Mr. Gaston believes that a final discussion is not necessary. Wade Williams asked for clarification if the presentation was a bid or if the agencies qualifications were being sought. Mr. Davies replied that the bid is part of the process. Several Commissioners agreed. Mike Mills agreed with Mr. Gaston in that the agencies do not need to participate in the final discussion period. Mr. Rice stated that he believed the agencies needed to be present in case they needed to clarify anything. Mr. Mullenix asked how he would get an answer to a question if the agencies were not available. Chairman Haak stated that the answer would have to come from the materials provided by the agencies and that if they didn't have the answer then he wouldn't get an answer. Richard Davies stated that if Commissioners have a question for the agencies then it could be asked during the break period. He noted that the Commission meeting is open to the public and the agencies could be present during the final discussion and that there would be ample opportunities to ask questions of the agency staffs.

Danny Ford moved to approve adjusting the advertising agency schedule so that two presentations will be viewed before lunch and one after lunch, followed by a 15- minute question and answer period for each presentation, so that some time would be available in the afternoon for a discussion and a break. Commissioners will vote the same day as the presentations, November 21, 2002. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried. Wade Williams, Bill Barnes, and Polly Wood Crews opposed.

#### Retirement/Relocation Update

In response to Wade Williams's request for more information on the Retirement/Relocation program, Donna Perrin completed an informal survey. A copy of the survey was placed in Commissioner's folders. Commissioners had no further questions. The new Arkansas Retirement/Relocation was also distributed to the Commission.

#### Arkansas Quarter Design

Joe David Rice stated that Governor Mike Huckabee recently unveiled the design that will be used by the U.S. Mint for the Arkansas quarter. Dortha Scott from Mt. Ida submitted the entry, which incorporates a mallard soaring above the water with trees in the background, a rice

plant, and a diamond. The quarter will be released in October 2003 and will be circulated for at least 30 years. It will be the 25th quarter released in the series produced by the U.S. Mint. He thanked Montine McNulty and the Arkansas Tourism Development Foundation for the \$2,000 contribution and to J. French Hill and Delta Trust and Bank for the \$1,000 contribution for prize money to encourage people to enter a contest to design the quarter. As a result, Arkansas had more entries than any other state.

#### Arkansas Scenic 7 Byway Association Marketing Proposal

Joe David Rice introduced Kelley Linck, Executive Director of the Ozark Mountain Region tourism association. Mr. Linck presented the Arkansas Scenic 7 Byway marketing proposal to the Commission. He explained that this is a joint proposal between the Ozark Mountain Region (OMR) and Diamond Lakes to benefit the Scenic 7 Association. Mr. Linck described the budget and requested a 25% match of funds for the association. The program includes a new website, new distribution services and advertising to garner attention for Scenic 7. Total estimated expenditure is \$20,000 with the Department's share being \$4,000; \$2,000 to the Ozark Mountain Region and \$2,000 to the Diamond Lakes association working as liaisons for the Scenic 7 Association.

Richard Davies questioned the action of giving \$2,000 to each region that already has an established matching fund set up. He asked if that would be a problem in the future and whether or not it would be more beneficial to give the money directly to the Scenic 7 Association. Mr. Linck stated that there was some concern that the Scenic 7 proposal was not a new idea and as such needed to be a new idea to requests funds. Mr. Mills stated that he felt this proposal was well within the guidelines. Mr. Davies stated that he likes the project, but wondered whether the money should be given to the regions or directly to the Scenic 7 Association. Mr. Mills stated that he thinks that issue is a technicality. Mr. Davies replied that he is concerned about setting a precedent when the regions already receive matching funds. Mr. Williams stated that he feels it doesn't matter who requests the funds, but that the idea is not new. The only new item is the proposed website. He further stated that the brochure would be reproduced and is not new. Mr. Linck stated that the website is new, new distribution avenues will be utilized, and advertising will be used; additional advertising and marketing will be added to the current plan.

Mr. Davies asked Joe David Rice and Nancy Clark if the funds would be accounted for separately from regional funds. Nancy Clark stated that she read the proposal as adding \$2,000 more to both the Ozark Mountain Region and the Diamond Lakes Region funds and did not recommend doing it this way. Mr. Rice stated that the initial proposal did not involve OMR or Diamond Lakes. Chairman Haak asked if the Scenic 7 Association could make the proposal without the assistance of either tourism association. Mr. Linck replied that it could.

Jane Christenson moved to approve the Scenic 7 Byway marketing proposal with the money being given directly to the Scenic 7 Byway Association. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.

Wade Williams stated that he doesn't have a problem with the project, but that it sets a precedent. He further stated that he feels there is nothing in the campaign that hasn't already been done. Chairman Haak asked Mr. Linck if the proposal could be adjusted to show only the new ideas. Mr. Linck stated that he could come back and show it more clearly. Mr. Williams stated that if the regions had the \$4,000 they would not be presenting a proposal to the Commission. Mr. Ford asked if the proposal needed to reflect \$4,000 in new components. Mr. Williams stated that there would need to be \$16,000 in new ideas because of the 25% match. Mr. Linck acknowledged that the Scenic 7 Association would not be able to come up with \$12,000

for seed money for a new project. Mr. Mullenix asked for clarification on the new elements in the campaign. Mr. Linck stated that the website, the distribution services, and the advertising were all new. Bill Barnes asked how the original brochure was printed. Mr. Linck explained that it was funded by membership in the Association. He further explained that this campaign is a catalyst to help get the Association growing again. He noted that the proposal would not be a yearly item, but a way to get the group growing so that it can sustain itself. Mr. Mullenix stated that the Scenic 7 Association needed to be more aggressive about recruiting members. Polly Wood Crews noted that the Association is trying to do the best it can with the limited income to help the state.

Chairman Haak noted that she appreciates Mr. Linck's attendance at the Commission meetings. He replied that anyone in tourism should attend and that he has learned a lot.

## Section Reports

### Research & Information Services

The section processed 29,600 requests for information during September 2002. The January through September inquiry total is 307,771, down 16.5% from the same period in 2001. Tourist Information Center visitation was 673,181. There were 4,617 requests for the Arkansas Retirement/Relocation Guide. User sessions to the six agency web sites totaled 276,976 during September 2002. A detailed report is currently being prepared on the 2,400 questionnaires that have been entered for the 2002 Spring Conversion study.

Charles McLemore and Eddie Fugatt attended the Travel & Tourism Research Association South Central States Chapter Annual Conference in Mobile, Alabama, September 18-20, 2002. Eddie has also posted the fall foliage reports every Thursday afternoon on Arkansas.com. Reports can also be obtained by calling 1-800-NATURAL as well as local television stations and the Weather Channel.

### Tourism Development

All Regional Associations met the September paperwork deadline. Association postcards located in the Vacation Planning Kit are also being updated.

Donna Perrin and Kristine Puckett have met with tourism organizations in Lake Village and Lepanto as well as presented the Hospitality in a Heartbeat program to the Fairfield Bay Community Club. Over 3,882 Arkansans have attended the program since it was introduced at the 1996 Governor's Conference on Tourism.

Approximately fifty-five Henry Awards nominations have been received. Deadline for entry is October 31st.

### Group Travel

This section responded to 55 inquiries in September. Year-to-date, 1,776 requests have been fulfilled.

Jane Ellen Frazier attended the 7th Annual "Blues in the South" as well as spoke to a representative from US Bank of Springfield, Illinois regarding future group tours. Beth Wiedower attended Meetings Quest in St. Louis.

### Communications

Section members sent out the first "Visiting Sports Fan" releases to South Florida and Alabama newspapers, with good results. The September issue of Arkansatravel.com was posted on time. Plans are also being coordinated with CJRW and Aristotle for the online marketing as well as online package and "hot deals." A section meeting was also held to discuss plans to

improve Arkansas coverage in out-of-state newspapers, national magazines, and on radio station broadcasts. Copy and photos were also provided for the new Louisiana Purchase section of the web site.

## Marketing/Communications

### Online Advertising Creative Recommendations

Karen Mullikin discussed the online advertising report, which was distributed to Commissioners. Copies of the Spring/Summer 2003 Online Media plan as well as the ad sizes were also distributed. The effectiveness of online advertising will be constantly monitored and analyzed throughout and after the campaign. An acceptable return on investment will be determined as a foundation for future recommendations. Effectiveness will be determined by the click-through percentage, cost-per-visitor, customer conversion ratio, and visitor conversion ratio. CJRW will be able to compare reports and change sections and creative in varying degrees in the different web sites. Those sites include AOL, Travelocity, Dallas Morning News, Houston Chronicle, Chicago Tribune, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Memphis Commercial Appeal, Tulsa World, and the Oklahoman.

Aristotle will maintain the current monitoring procedures for measuring web site activity. Tracking will be established by setting up different IP addresses with a unique web profile so that every campaign will have separate tracking for each site. Additional programming will be done to track each individual banner placement to determine the success of each position in the buy. Newsletter signups, vacation planning kit requests, and special interest signups would also be tracked to optimize possible future buys on any of these advertising portals. Aristotle will also provide a final report at the conclusion of the campaign. Ms. Mullikin stated that the program would be monitored as specifically as possible based on the amount of money invested in Internet advertising.

Ms. Mullikin stated there are so many ad sizes because there are a lot of different audiences looking for different things. The message in the ad is tailored to the targeted audience. The final products are a combined effort between CJRW, Aristotle, and Department staff.

Jim Gaston inquired as to whether any of the ads will be pop-ups. Ms. Mullikin stated the ads were not pop-ups. He also stated that anything with AOL should be negotiable due to the current negotiations regarding ads. Bill Fitzgerald stated that the Media Director is aware of the situation and the fact that some of AOL is subject to change. Mr. Gaston stated that AOL will no longer have pop-up ads, excluding third parties, and have raised banner ad rates as a consequence. He further stated that anything with AOL will be negotiable because Microsoft will shortly follow suit and probably try to undercut AOL's rate. Shelby Woods stated the campaign does not start until March and that there will be enough time for negotiations. Karen Mullikin agreed that market changes need to be investigated before placing the ads.

Ms. Mullikin stated that about 11 different messages contained in 29 different ads will be placed on the recommended sites. She also stated that a new concept, hot deals, will also be tested. Three different vacation giveaways will also be tested; one on AOL, one on Travelocity, and one on the Dallas Morning News site.

Bill Fitzgerald first described the intent and purpose behind the creative recommendations to Commissioners. He stated the online ads must get the viewer's attention and stimulate them to click on the ad. There are two sets of online creative recommendations; one set includes the entry pages into the ads and the other set is for the actual ad pages. The entry pages will appear on the web sites (AOL, Travelocity, and the newspaper sites). The ultimate goal of online advertising is to give people an invitation to visit Arkansas and send them from the site they're on to another place where they can respond in a number of ways. The entry pages are

there to give a nice, warm, appealing, enticing invitation to people and as such are not jammed full of information. The secondary goal is to build the database so that we can communicate with these people in the one-on-one e-marketing at a later date. There will be three links on the entry pages; one to the home page, one to sign up for an e-newsletter, and one to sign up for a Vacation Planning Kit. The viewer has the option to pick a link at any time as well as to leave the page. An ad has also been created to promote the giveaways, which will take the viewer to one of three pages depending upon the rotation. Each of the three communities (Hot Springs, Eureka Springs, and Little Rock) will develop a package that will be given away online. Mr. Gaston questioned whether a viewer would need to agree to provide their e-mail address. Mr. Fitzgerald stated there would be a box for them to check. Mr. Gaston also asked why it was necessary to give a prize away to obtain a viewer's e-mail address. Ms. Mullikin stated that Jay Harrod, the Communications section Manager, feels strongly that the giveaway idea needs to at least be tested. Richard Davies stated that he thinks the idea behind it is that a lot of people are on the Internet looking for "deals" and that a giveaway is a way to get their attention and entice people who might not have otherwise considered Arkansas. Mr. Gaston stated that he is interested in a visitor that wants to pay for something, not one that is interested in a bargain. He feels that people who sign up because of the vacation giveaway may not be truly interested in coming to Arkansas. Jonathan Eudy stated that the people are already looking at Arkansas information. Karen Mullikin stated that the vacation giveaway will be rotated in to several places and that there is not a specific buy dedicated to the piece. She reiterated that the vacation giveaway is just a test. Bill Fitzgerald concurred. Mr. Gaston noted that in his experience, the people who want to give away vacations are not the operators. He also stated that a person who signs up for a newsletter without any enticement is more of a prospect than one who signs up because of the giveaway.

Bill Fitzgerald and Bryan Stafford presented the ads to the Commission. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the ads are an extension of the print campaign. Ted Mullenix asked if the visitor would be tracked throughout the site and if we could tell what portions of the site are popular in different regions. Jonathan Eudy stated that they would be tracked starting at the banner ad through the site. He further stated that we would be able to capture all of the information because of the unique IP addresses.

Commissioners discussed different aspects of the ads and the entry pages. Mr. Fitzgerald explained where on the site the ads would be placed. Wade Williams questioned how fast the pages would load if accessed through a dial-up connection. Jonathan Eudy stated that the largest splash pages would be a little slow, but there would also be backup HTML pages. Bill Fitzgerald stated that since the page hasn't been programmed, it's difficult to tell how long it will take to load. Jonathan Eudy also explained that a "skip page" could also be created that would go to the alternative HTML page. Mr. Williams stated that he was concerned that it will take too long to load for people to be interested or that they would not get the full message. Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Eudy assured him that an alternative page would be available so that the visitor would receive the full message and that there would not be a problem with the majority of the pages.

Bill Barnes asked how the staff would know which vacation giveaway ad would pop-up. Mr. Fitzgerald replied that they wouldn't know because the ads pop up at random.

Jim Gaston moved to approve the online advertising recommendations subject to market changes for AOL. Mike Mills seconded and the motion carried.

Richard Davies complimented CJRW, Aristotle, and Department staff for working so well together on the project.

### Trail of Holiday Lights TBA Creative Recommendation

Karen Mullikin stated that this spot only runs in-state as part of the Television Broadcasters partnership program. It begins mid-November and will run through Christmas to promote the Trail of Holiday Lights. Mr. Fitzgerald played the spot for Commissioners.

Danny Ford moved to approve the Trail of Holiday Lights TBA creative recommendation. Jane Christenson seconded and the motion carried.

### 2003 Spring/Summer Newspaper Insert Update

Karen Mullikin stated that after some discussion at last month's Commission meeting the recommendation to drop the newspaper insert in late April was reconsidered. The original insertion dates were to be April 20-21, 2003, which is eight weeks later than last year, due to the shorter vacation planning stages. There was some concern that moving the insertion back so far would negatively affect fulfillment and the spring break season. Although a tag to promote the insert will be still used on the television commercials, the recommendation has been revised so that the insertion will drop only four weeks later, April 6-7, 2003.

Bill Barnes moved to approve the new recommendation for the Spring/Summer newspaper insert, which will be distributed April 6-7, 2003. Jane Christenson seconded and the motion carried.

### 2003 Spring/Summer Press Proofs

Karen Mullikin distributed copies of the 2003 Spring/Summer press proofs and television spots approved at the September Commission meeting.

### Aristotle Report

Jennifer Peper reminded Commissioners that a few months ago Aristotle offered to do a monthly presentation about the activity on the website, the traffic on the website, and the monthly changes. She stated that the Arkansas.com site gets close to 1.8 million page views a month and almost 180,000 visits per month. The most popular pages are the Attractions/Lodging/Dining, the Outdoors & Sports, the Calendar of Events, Find a Map, and Must See. Requests for Vacation Planning Kits totaled over 61,000 and remained steady. Over 600 Retirement & Relocation Guides were requested for the month. Ted Mullenix asked if it was feasible to have the Attractions, Lodging, and Dining places in one database. Jennifer Peper stated that there are so many materials on the main page that some things had to be combined, but that next year they will take the recommendation under consideration. She further stated that this way was the most convenient way to give the information to the visitor by the city. Richard Davies stated that in the future, ways for the visitor to obtain the information with fewer clicks could be considered. Mr. Mullenix feels that the Attractions/Lodging/Dining, the most requested page, viewed is too cluttered for the visitor. Ms. Peper stated that it will be taken into consideration next year.

ZIP code information from the website was also discussed. The number of visitors to the site was ranked by the state in which they reside. Joe David Rice asked if the information could also be broken down by requests for Retirement/Relocation information. Jennifer Peper agreed that it could be done. Mr. Davies stated that it would be an interesting breakout.

Ms. Peper stated that they would be working with the Arkansas Hospitality Association in the future to get the information on a more consistent basis for the Book-It button. She stated there were over 7,000 clicks on the button last month and over 11,000 clicks this month.

She also discussed ArkansasStateParks.com and the family of websites. She noted that, for example, ArkansasKids.com is referring traffic to the State Parks website. Wade Williams asked if the same statistic had been done for Arkansas.com. Ms. Peper stated that it could be done, but has not been done as of yet.

Jonathan Eudy updated Commissioners on the implementation of the plan approved at the June Commission meeting. He stated that the fall updates are complete and the winter updates will start on November 1st. The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial site has also been finished. It's placed on an interior page to keep from moving another interest off the front page. Work has also been done on the History & Heritage pages and the Arts & Entertainment pages and they have been integrated into the Attractions/Lodging/Dining database. As a result, the information is more consistent and easier to control.

The Spring/Summer conversion study is complete and the data is currently being processed. An exit conversion study is also underway. When the visitor leaves the domain, a pop-up, cookie-based page, pops up once every three months asking for the visitor's e-mail address and zip code.

The Trail of Holiday Lights is complete and will roll out with CJRW's campaign. The send a newsletter to a friend page has also been completed. It's expected for the e-newsletters to do well. Statistical information will be available in the future. Mr. Eudy noted that Dina Crane is working with State Parks staff to redesign the Arkansas State Parks website.

#### Miscellaneous

Mr. Rice stated that he, Shelby Woods, and Karen Mullikin put together some criteria for the Community Partnership Marketing Program. Copies were placed in Commissioner's folders. He asked them to pay particular attention to item number 7, which states that the Parks & Tourism portion may not exceed 20% of the total project cost with a maximum state contribution of \$25,000. The intent is that the State's investment be considered initial "seed money" to stimulate development of community partnerships. Mr. Rice stated the one exception would be for Steve Arrison of Hot Springs. He explained that Mr. Arrison had presented a letter to Mr. Davies and himself asking if they could come back with the HotSpringFest promotion. He and Mr. Davies agreed before the criteria were developed. Wade Williams asked if they gave approval to submit the proposal again or approved the proposal itself. Mr. Rice stated that it just allows Mr. Arrison to submit the proposal again. Mr. Williams stated that if it were a good idea and it worked, then they should be in a position to gain the community's support. Ms. Crews stated that she thought the intent was for a one-time investment to be used as a springboard. Mr. Rice replied that he didn't recall that it was for a one-time investment. Mr. Davies stated that the intent was to "get stuff going." Shelby Woods stated that he thought this program should entice people to do things they would not ordinarily do or to get people in communities to do things they wouldn't ordinarily do. Ted Mullenix stated that the Commission should be sensitive to whether or not the investment would help private enterprise or the local A&P Commission. Chairman Haak asked if a motion was needed. Mr. Rice stated that the criteria are just guidelines and the proposals will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Davies noted that if Commissioners did not agree with the criteria, they need to let the staff know. Bill Barnes asked that the investment level be raised to 25% because the proposal could always be funded at a lower level. Richard Davies noted that if the criteria stated 25%, then every proposal would ask for a 25% match. Bill Barnes stated that he was fine with that because it didn't have to be funded at that amount. He also added that the 25% might make it a little more attractive to interested people.

Rohn Craft made a few comments of gratitude for the Commission's help in getting a bill passed that prohibits the possession and use of glass containers within the banks of Arkansas' navigable waterways. He distributed a copy of Act 803 of 2001.

Greg Butts reminded everyone of the Grand Opening of the first four miles of the Delta Heritage Trail on October 25th.

Ness Sechrest asked how long it had been since the Commission had traveled to Washington, D.C. Richard Davies replied that it had been about three years. Mr. Sechrest suggested considering going sometime next April or May to revisit those agencies. Chairman Haak also suggested going every two to three years so that they get in the habit of seeing the Commission.

#### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

##### Appointment of Nominating Committee

Chairman Haak appointed Jane Christenson, Ness Sechrest, and Wade Williams to the nominating committee.