

**Minutes**  
**State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission**  
**Eureka Springs, Arkansas**  
**April 17-18, 2003**

**Commissioners Present**

Billy Lindsey, Chairman	Bill Barnes	Polly Wood Crews
Loretta House	Danny Ford	Wade Williams
Mike Mills	Ness Sechrest	Montine McNulty
Jane Christenson	Jim Shamburger	Steve Arrison

**Commissioners Absent**

Jim Gaston	Debra Haak
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**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, Parks Operations  
Stan Graves, Manager, Parks Planning & Development  
Jon Brown, Region I Supervisor  
David Flugrad, Superintendent, Mt. Magazine State Park  
Earl Minton, Superintendent, Withrow Springs State Park  
Mike Brawner, Superintendent, Village Creek State Park  
Ed Smith, Superintendent, Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park  
Gloria Robins, Executive Assistant  
Jennifer Carson, Administrative Assistant  
Sandy Burch, Administrative Assistant

**Agency Staff Present**

Shelby Woods	Wayne Woods	Karen Mullikin
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**Aristotle**

Marla Norris	Jonathan Eudy	Dina Pruitt
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**Guests Present**

Kathy Harrison, Mayor, Eureka Springs  
Wayne Thompson  
Michael Clark, Sells & Clark  
Bob Purvis  
Maryl Koeth  
Anthony Stephens  
Lynn Berry  
Kelley Linck  
Bill Ott  
Barbara Moser

**Call to Order**

Chairman Billy Lindsey called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and Gloria Robins called the roll.

**Approval of the Agenda**

**Jane Christenson moved to approve the agenda. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.**

**Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Jane Christenson seconded and the motion carried.**

**Recognition of Guests**

Chairman Lindsey recognized guests in attendance. Eureka Springs Mayor, Kathy Harrison, welcomed the Commissioners. Ms. Harrison said the Commission is doing a wonderful job for Eureka Springs.

Chairman Lindsey also thanked everyone involved for the success of the Governor's Conference on Tourism. He recognized Steve Arrison as the recipient of the Tourism Person of the Year Award and for being honored by House Resolution 1041 adopted by the 84<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the State of Arkansas "Commending Steve Arrison on being named "Tourism Person of the Year."

### **Financial Report**

Larry Cargile presented a financial report for the fiscal year-to-date period ended March 31, 2003. The Parks Division expenditures, including construction/grants, totaled \$36,306,611 or 41% of annual budget. Tourism Division expenditures totaled \$7,033,311 or 58% of annual budget. Keep Arkansas Beautiful expenditures were \$321,790, or 62% of budget. Administration Division expenditures totaled \$1,626,060 or 62% of budget. History Commission expenditures were \$927,082, or 75% of budget. Total Department expenditures - \$46,214,854.

Parks Division operating revenue for the fiscal year-to-date period ended March 31, 2003, totaled \$8,562,800, an increase of 3% over the same period last year. Operating revenue for the month of March was \$935,050, an increase of 5% over last March.

**Mike Mills moved to approve the financial report as presented.  
Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

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

#### **Legislative Issues Update**

Richard Davies called the Commissioners' attention to a summary of the ACTS and bills that have been tracked through the session. Many different areas affect parks and tourism: law enforcement, state personnel policies and issues, highway, purchasing, construction, land, technology, etc. Mr. Davies said there were two pieces of budget issues. The first piece dealt with the Department of Corrections and the Human Services Department. There are 2.6 million people in Arkansas; one million of them are clients of the Department of Human Services. Their costs are increasing 20% each year. The costs of prisons are increasing 14% each year. If one totaled the costs for Prisons, Human Services and Education, there would not be any funds left for any other area of state government. Mr. Davies said there are massive shortfalls in revenues. The issue is the Lake View School decision, which it appears that the Legislature is going to require a study and postpone action until September. The problem is Human Services and Prisons won't have funding to operate until September. There was a lot of fragmentation between the Legislators that no one could get enough votes committed to pass anything. The last resolution that had been approved by both houses was to adjourn the previous day. No one could obtain enough votes to change that. If the Legislature had recessed instead of adjourning, when they returned, the agenda would have been one they decided upon. Since they adjourned, the agenda will be controlled by the Governor. What that means now is the Governor will call the Legislators back into special session to vote on budgets. That will need to be done before July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Davies said there is no such thing

in state government as continuing resolutions – if Parks and Tourism does not have an approved budget by July 1<sup>st</sup> we must leave and lock the doors. Another special session will be called in the Fall to deal with education. It was a difficult session. Mr. Davies gave a quick overview of action on some bills and acts.

Ness Sechrest commented on the great job Montine McNulty did during the session. Mr. Davies said that Ms. McNulty was as the Capitol all day, everyday. Regarding Parks and Tourism, Mr. Davies added that if there is no tax increase at all, in all likelihood, general revenue budget will be flat.

### **Washington DC Trip Update**

Richard Davies said the trip is scheduled for May 4th through 6<sup>th</sup>. The Commissioners who are planning to go are Ness Sechrest, Bill Barnes, Wade Williams, Jane Christenson, Loretta House and Montine McNulty. Staff attending will be Richard Davies, Joe David Rice, Greg Butts and Gloria Robins. Meetings are scheduled with the entire Arkansas Congressional Delegation, the USDA Forest Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service, the National Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Travel Industry Association. Mr. Davies said the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce had originally planned to go to Washington at the same time. The state chamber cancelled; however, many local chambers of commerce are still planning to go.

### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Richard Davies said that Arkansas is the number one state for the use of Corps facilities in the United States. We have wonderful lakes operated by very good people. The Corps has budget and other issues. Both districts, Little Rock and Vicksburg, are in attendance and would give a report on their budget.

Colonel Benjamin Butler with the Little Rock District said he appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Commissioners. Col. Butler gave a brief history of the Corps, the district breakdown in the Southwestern Division. Recreation is a one of the major areas. The Corps has over 7,500 campsites in Arkansas, 278 different types of parks, 78 marinas. Research indicates that for every \$1 that is budgeted for recreation returns \$56 to the economy. A graph was displayed showing Operation & Maintenance funding in 1994 of \$66M and in 2003 \$60M. Factoring in inflation the 1994 funding was \$65.5M and in 2003 it dropped to \$48.8M. This funding is for daily operation of recreational facilities – no new construction. In 1994 30% of the budget was spent on recreation. In 2003 approximately 40% will be spent on recreation. Col. Butler said his staff has made cuts in almost every area they can that is non-recreational. A lot of needed maintenance is not being done. Discussing the economic impact of recreation spending

in Arkansas, Col. Butler said there are 28 million visitors to Arkansas's lakes, \$833M is spent in trip expenses, 19,100 jobs are supported in the state, and \$432M is generated in personal income.

On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Col. Butler had been prepared to notify staff that 36 parks would not be opened in 2003. Fortunately, enough funds became available from both the Division level and from Washington D.C. to keep those parks open this season. However, unless something changes, more parks will remain closed in 2004 and more cuts will be necessary. Closure of the parks would have an economic impact in Arkansas: \$21M would be lost in trip expenditures, 480 jobs would be affected and there would be a loss of \$11M in personal income. Additionally, there would be a loss of local and state tax revenues, less concessionaire fees to local schools, private marina owners would feel the impact, there would be a reduction in small business operations adjacent to parks, park facilities will be vulnerable to vandalism because of reduced staff, a decline in public safety, etc. Cost saving considerations are: reduce recreation services, reduce the number of permanent rangers, summer hires and gate attendants, reduce infrastructure maintenance, shorten season (mid May to mid September)

Col. Butler said that several years ago, Senator Lincoln had introduced a bill that would have required that fees collected be returned to the park where there were generated, and that the amount collected would not offset what was already budgeted. Enough support was not gained for the bill. Congressman Boozeman may be attempting to introduce similar legislation. In conclusion, Col. Butler said that the current level of services exceeds projected funding and that hard decisions need to be made. He would like to partner with Arkansas State Parks to help select the parks that will be closed and to assist in making information about the closures available early so guests can adjust their plans.

Ness Sechrest asked if an adjustment in fee structure had been considered. Col. Butler said an increase in fee would not help because all fees go to Washington D.C. He added that the current fee structure is kept in line with other public recreation areas.

Richard Davies said the Department would be glad to partner in both areas. He asked if the Corps' budget was being cut across the board like all federal agencies, or is the recreation budget not on equal par with other divisions, and what message should be taken to Washington D.C. Col. Butler said there is not enough money, across the board, and more is definitely needed, and funds must be distributed equally. Billy Lindsey asked if Sen. Lincoln's bill were to pass, how much benefit would be derived. Col. Butler said just under \$5M is generated in the Little Rock District. Returning that money to the District would increase the O&M budget by 20%. Chairman Lindsey said we need to revitalize the effort to pass Sen. Lincoln's legislation. He said that he has also observed that in Corp facilities in other states there does not seem to be the same level of

financial difficulty. It was pointed out that of the 36 parks that were being considered for closure, none are in Missouri. Chairman Lindsey said that is a very important point and we need to tell to our legislators and ask their assistance.

Polly Wood Crews asked if closing parks and reducing staff will affect Homeland Security by exposing our waterways. Col. Butler said he cannot reduce staff any further. There are areas where the Corps is trying to prevent access. Ms. Crews suggested that if there isn't enough staff there is greater risk. Col. Butler said he is trying to prevent some problems with the installation of remote cameras. He said, however, that is not the same – a camera does not replace a staff on the ground. Ms. Crews said that is her point. Col. Butler said we are safe now, but the level of confidence increases with increased staff. Ms. Crews said when an area is made non-accessible, it becomes more accessible to those who want to enter to do harm.

Danny Ford asked what would happen to the parks that could be closed. Co. Butler said not opening them for a season is different than permanently closing them. He said once they are permanently closed they cannot be reopened – they have to be bulldozed and cannot be reclaimed. He said he is trying to get through until more funding becomes available. Mr. Ford said that is an important point. Bill Barnes asked how long can a park be temporarily closed. Col. Butler said probably no more than a couple seasons.

Michael Miller, Chief, Operations Division for the Little Rock said there has never been a Congressional add in the state of Arkansas for recreation. Mr. Miller said that is important because Congressman Berry works closely Congresswoman Emerson in Missouri. Congresswoman Emerson is able to get approximately \$2M annually for Clearwater in Missouri. She and Congressman Berry are on the Appropriations Committee. Texas, Missouri and Louisiana get Congressional add and Arkansas does not. Mr. Miller said the condition of the facilities in the Little Rock District is embarrassing.

Richard Davies said the recreation industry cannot compete in Washington D.C. with lobbyists with hydropower and navigation interests. We have a lot of recreation voters but they are not organized.

Chairman Lindsey said it is refreshing to hear Col. Butler site figures the Commission has been using as arguments for many years. It has not always been this way and the recognition that is being given to recreation is appreciated. It is an important point to us as we talk to the Congressional Delegation about what we need and why we need it. Chairman Lindsey said he was not aware that the Little Rock and Vicksburg Districts (in the state of Arkansas) had never received any add money for recreation.

Bill Barnes said, as he understands it, there are two areas that need to be addressed. One is to try to get the Corps in Washington to redirect more funds to these districts within the budget. That would be a re-prioritization of some funds to recreation in Arkansas. Mr. Barnes asked if the Commanding General is a "recreation person" or is he a "construction/civil works person." What is his personal mode of operation? Also, we need to get our Arkansas Delegation to provide more funding to the Arkansas lakes through congressional adds, line item increases, etc. If we were to receive a congressional add, how closely is that money directed. Can we have assurance that if those adds develop that the funds will be used on the recreational side of the lake operations in Arkansas. Col. Butler said it would depend on the language. If it says an amount would be spent on backlog maintenance at a particular lake, that would be done. That language would be put in by the legislator.

Bill Hobgood, Chief of Operations for the Vicksburg District said there are three Arkansas lakes in the Vicksburg District: Lake Ouachita, DeGray Lake, and Lake Greeson. There is a major problem this year with the Arkansas lakes. There is a \$3M shortage to keep those lakes operational in 2003. The Corps is operating at a reduced level of service. Mr. Hobgood said he works in three states: Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas. The level of interest in recreation and tourism in Arkansas is unmatched. We want to be a part of that. Mr. Hobgood, stating again the \$3M shortage, said by the middle of August there will not be any funds available to operate the three lakes in Arkansas. The good news is that through the 2004 fiscal year that starts September 1, there is sufficient funds budgeted to operate the lakes. The problem now is the next six months which are the most critical months of the fiscal year. Richard Davies said the budget does not come out until October. How can funds be added in the middle of the current year? Mr. Hobgood said it will have to come from other districts or divisions – an internal re-direction of funds. Or it could come from a supplemental appropriation bill from Congress.

Ms. Brenda M. Meeks, Project Manager said she would discuss Lake Ouachita, DeGray Lake, and Lake Greeson. Areas covered in Ms. Meeks' presentation were visitation, the problem with aquatic vegetation at Ouachita and DeGray, the backlog in maintenance, the additional cost for security since September 11, 2001, economic impact to the state and the Corps' public and private partnerships. Areas of services that have been reduced in 2003 include reduced staffing, no temporary Rangers hired for the season, no fee collection contracts have been awarded, no grass is being mowed, trash collection and cleaning have been reduced to two to three times per week and a shortened season. Ms. Meeks showed photos of a structure at DeGray Lake that was lost due to an arson fire. This fire may not have occurred if adequate staff had been on site. The backlog of maintenance that is not being done includes road paving, infrastructure repair, campground work and aquatic weed control.

Richard Davies said it appears that there are inequalities for recreation funding across districts especially when the amount received is compared with visitation. This is something we need to tell our Congressional Delegation.

Bill Barnes said there have been Congressional add in Missouri. Mr. Barnes asked if the other states in the Vicksburg District received the add and Arkansas was the only state that was not receiving these funds. Mr. Hobgood there are four large lakes in Mississippi received an \$11M Congressional add in FY03. That was the result of the Vicksburg District working directly with the communities in those areas and local individuals who have political strength meeting with the Mississippi Congressmen. It means more when individuals meet with Congressmen then when the Corps meets with them. Mr. Hobgood said there is so much more interest in recreation and tourism in Arkansas then in the other states, and this is disturbing. Mr. Barnes said this information needs to be given to the Arkansas Congressional Delegation. The Corps recreational experience means so much economically to Arkansas and attracts so many visitors who spend money in our small towns. Our Congressman don't realize this.

Richard Davies asked if the Corps has a plan to start working on the backlog of maintenance. Ms. Meeks said the Corps could start reducing the backlog within one year's time. Mr. Davies asked if there was \$2.2M made available could significant progress be made. Ms. Meeks said yes, and that there would be visible results every year.

Chairman Lindsey and Bill Barnes summarized by making the following points:

- For every \$1 budgeted for recreation, the Corps returns \$56 to the state's economy.
- Cutbacks in funding is resulting in a shortened camping season, maintenance not being accomplished (grass will not be cut and trash collections greatly reduced) and fewer law enforcement and program staff and some park not being opened for a season. If additional funding is not made available it may result in the permanent closing of some parks.
- Senator Lincoln had introduced a bill that would require user fees to be returned to the district where they were collected. This funding would help with the upkeep and maintenance that is needed in the parks. The fees amount to approximately 20% of the total budget.

- In other states, congressional legislators have worked to have funds appropriated for Corps facilities in their states. The parks are better maintained in those states and have not had to resort to closing parks. Texas, Missouri, Mississippi and Louisiana are receiving congressional adds. Arkansas is not receiving this funding. Arkansas has never received an “add.”
- Because of lack of funding, staff cutbacks have been necessary. This is resulting in some areas experiencing vandalism.
- More funding for recreation needs to be redirected to both the Little Rock and Vicksburg Districts.
- The Corps of Engineers in Arkansas wants to be a part of promoting tourism in the state.
- More funds are needed this year.
- The backlog in maintenance is \$5M in the Little Rock District and \$2.5M in the Vicksburg District.
- Because of the closures and shortened seasons at the Vicksburg District lakes in Arkansas, visitation has dropped \$1.5M. The loss in economic impact to surrounding communities and the state is over \$50M plus loss of jobs.

## **PARKS DIVISION**

### **Mt. Magazine State Park - Lodge and Cabin Project**

Greg Butts said during the State Parks and Mt. Magazine Program Committee’s joint meeting that followed the February Commission meeting, the Committees reviewed the design process and provided additional suggestions. At that time, Mike Mills brought up a point of clarification about the cabin component of the project, and was that specifically approved. Mr. Butts said he had sent to members of both committees and the full Commission, copies of the minutes from previous Commission meetings when this was discussed and action was taken. Mike Mills has concerns and some questions about was approved.

Mike Mills said he had taken the time to actually listen to the taped recordings of the meetings. At the February meeting we were told we had approved the lodge, as a 60-room unit, a conference center and 15 cabins. Mr. Mills said he does not recall the Commission ever approving – we were led to believe the Parks Committee was going to have input into the size of the lodge rooms and to the number of cabins, etc. The motions

that were made to approve anything were always not in that form of discussion. To go back to the June meeting, we were told by Richard Davies that is what the Committee's job will be – to establish how many cabins, etc. Mr. Mills said he thought they all agreed at that time, when Bud Shamburger led the discussion, that we needed the 60-room lodge. If we were going to build a lodge, we needed to build a 60-room lodge, and if we were going to build a convention center next to it, it had to be a certain size. During one of the meetings it was said we were going to build from 10 to 15 cabins and then all of a sudden we have graduated to the point of building 15. Mr. Mills said he knows it is going to be said that his concern over the number of cabins is in his own self interest – it is not. He said Richard's presentation addressed the state's financial problems and here we are putting together a program that is to the maximum capacity with Arkansas state taxpayers' dollars. Mr. Mills said he feels like we need to be a little bit more conservative and that happens to have come down to the number of cabins. Mr. Mills said, as a Commissioner, he is always a team player. He feels like it is his responsibility to question whether or not we still want to build the maximum number of cabins.

Jane Christenson asked how many cabins Mr. Mills thought should be built. Mr. Mills said he thinks it should start with six and then in five or ten years or when economic conditions change – for one thing we need more parking spaces. If we backed off the number of cabins, that would give us more parking spaces. Mr. Mills said he does not want it to come down to how many he wants – it needs to be an understanding. He feels that the project is being done too grandiose in the current economic climate we're doing business in.

Danny Ford said that Mike Mills had told him that in the tapes of the meeting, he had a lot of comments and he still feels the same way. The money we are spending on the number of cabins and the lodge goes back to a business decision of cash flow and that is the money we have for that project. Taxpayers voted this money in – that is what the money is to be used for. We just talked about not having the visitors we used to have because we don't have a lodge and cabins on Mt. Magazine. It is going to generate more traffic, more visitors – not just for the lodge and cabins but for all the small businesses, like the antique stores and little country stores. We can't take this money and use it someplace else. We are going to have to do what we had in our plan to use it for. We want to have a show place on Mt. Magazine and it is hard to say that in these economic times but Mr. Ford said he didn't want to go backwards – he wants to use the money the way it was intended.

Billy Lindsey said he thinks there are instances when we need to take a very calm and serious look at private/public partnerships in a venture like this, particularly when it is going to be one that is a destination facility like DeGray. There are circumstances and instances where the private sector, for obvious reasons, would not be interested in a venture like this. Mr. Lindsey said he thinks this is a perfect example where the private

sector financing would never have undertaken this project. The commitment has been made on the part of the Commission to the Legislature and Arkansans that we were going to put a state park on Mt. Magazine. The private sector would not be likely to do this – it would not be financially feasible. As a private operator, Mr. Lindsey said he would not do it. If the state does not do it, it will not happen and that part of the state will be in the same situation it has been in for a long time. Mr. Lindsey said he has visited with people and talked with legislators and residents in that area and this is the biggest thing that has happened in that part of Arkansas for a long time. The situation that Mike Mills is concerned about we have addressed. In any future developments, additional cabins will be looked at on a case by case basis. There was a motion made and it is on record to that effect. We will have an opportunity to visit, in instance where we are going to develop with a capital expenditure like this, and discuss whether or not there are cabins are necessary, the number, what room sizes should be, etc. We have had input on room sizes and we have made some changes. Mr. Lindsey said, from a private operators' viewpoint, he and Mike Mills are very much in agreement on this issue. But in this instance, we have made the commitment. That commitment may have been for a 40-60 room lodge or 10-15 cabins, but Bud Shamburger's point was if we are going to do this project, let's put something on the mountain that is going to cash flow.

Mike Mills said the issue for him is the fact is the Commission approved the design concept – we were told we would have input on the number of cabins. Then we are told in a committee meeting that it has been determined without any discussion from any of us on how many we should have. And that was done by the staff, that's their job. We used the words 10-15 cabins and a 40-60 room lodge and then we used the words 60-room lodge and 15 cabins and it all just evolved without the process we were told we would be involved in.

Richard Davies said he thinks the basic misunderstanding between Mike Mills and staff deals with the process of obtaining Commission input. We approved the concept of a 60-room lodge and 15 cabins and the architect has been instructed to develop it. As it unfolds we have meetings where the Committee will review the designs and make suggestions on changes. Mr. Davies said that is the way he envisioned the process. The concept was approved – how we were going to proceed was approved and as plans came back from the architect we would have the committees review them and make suggestions.

Danny Ford said the way he reads the minutes from the June 2000 meeting – it says an environmental impact study gives approval to build up to a 60-room lodge plus 15 cabins. Mr. Ford said his understanding was that was an efficient operation and a larger facility is needed. He said he was not misled on a 60-room lodge and 15 cabins – that is what he assumed all the time.

Greg Butts said he is not disagreeing with Mike Mills. Mr. Butts said he has been under the impression, based on specific Commission motions that were made and the direction from the Parks & Tourism Legislative Sub-Committee, that the Commission had given its approval. Mr. Butts said everyone wants the project to be a show place. This project plus the potential partnership at Village Creek State Park are going to be two outstanding tourism attractions to the state – something we can all be proud of. In part, it does come down to financial operation and cash flow. If one looks at where we are today in the system from the standpoint of general revenue operating dollars – we have \$1.4M less in operating funds than we had two years ago. It has been reported by Richard Davies that the next biennium budget for general revenue for parks and tourism is flat. The amount of operating dollars is not going to increase. The Commission's challenge to staff has been to run park operations like a business and we have to have the cash funds to make them work and we want them to be successful. In this particular situation, to have the Mt. Magazine facility more successful, cabins are part of the mix. Based on 15 cabins we anticipate an estimated annual net profit of \$400,000. From the staff's perspective, we will do what the Commission directs. Staff will also provide what it feels is the best route to pursue being mindful of fewer operating funds. With reductions in general revenue, we are going to have to find ways to generate more cash revenue or slow the A-75 program and push more dollars into the operation side. We have an opportunity to also bring the private sector into the Mt. Magazine project. We cannot concession the operation based on the Constitution and issuing bonds – we cannot lease it. We can enter into a management contract. We want a facility that is going to be an attraction to the state. The Commission has charged staff to be fiscally responsible and we have been encouraged to generate more revenue from all park operations. We need to look at generating as much revenue as possible out of this proposed development. Greg Butts said, for a historically perspective, there were originally 18 cabins on the mountain plus the lodge.

Mike Mills said the way park operations generates revenue doesn't pay back. It could not be done in private industry. Mr. Mills said he assumes we would have to pay back the mortgage. If \$1M less is spent that is \$1M that will not have to be paid back.

Chairman Lindsey said his point is the Commission still has the opportunity to review the project. Nothing is done until the Commission signs off on the bond issue. We still have the opportunity to come back and make a decision on the number of cabins, parking needs, etc. We have not reached the point yet where we are going to say this is a "done deal" and we are building 15 cabins. It is necessary to have a 60-room lodge to support a restaurant and conference center.

Richard Davies said the Commission will have the final say on the bond percentage, and what the payments will be annually. He said he thinks there will be very little disagreement on physically components of the project. The questions may be on the

fiscal part. Chairman Lindsey said there will be other meetings when we can review plans again until we do come back as a Commission and decide what we are going to do. Mr. Davies said the Commission has the authority to decide to issue bonds – the Department does not have that authority.

Polly Wood Crews said we must not lose faith with the people in Logan County and the Mt. Magazine project is so important to those people in that area. We have to do the project well. This was a promise that was made about thirty years ago. Those people have waited and we owe it to them and to previous Commissions who believed we could do it. We are the instrument that will do it.

Greg Butts said we are trying to get a bid in late November or early December. The bonds will need to be sold about eight weeks out.

There being no further comments or questions, Chairman Lindsey said no action is required.

### **Village Creek State Park - Lodge & Golf Course Proposal**

Greg Butts said a private partnership team was present that would discuss their proposal for Village Creek. Mr. Butts said staff is excited about a potential partnership that will bring a new attraction to the state. A golf course project and lodge were in the original master plan for the park and the team that is assembled is very excited too about the project. Bill Thomas, with the Cross County Economic Development Corp., has been the master-mind behind getting this project moving forward and finding creating ways to get the golf course and lodge built. Mr. Thomas will be introducing a group who staff had met with at the park. This can be a very positive economic development project for the state.

Bill Thomas thanked the Commission for inviting him and the Wellington International, LLC. (WIL) to make a presentation. This is WIL response for the request for an RFP/RFQ for the project at the park. A talented and experienced team has been put together to develop a top quality resort facility in eastern Arkansas. Members of WIL present include: Earl Worsham, Chairman of the Board of WIL. Steven L. Jarrard is the CEO of WIL. Jack C. Climer is President and COO of WIL. Joe Meador, Vice President of WIL and President of Grand Entertainment in Nashville. Carl A. Kernodle with KPG Architects. Andy Dye with Andy Dye Designs.

Mr. Carl Kernodle said he grew up in Wynne and was at the dedication of Village Creek State Park. At that time he became very interested in the golf course and lodge as part of the master plan. About two years ago he started pursuing the creation of a development team for the project. WIL's goal will be to attract guests to the park by

providing additional recreational activities coupled with lodging and a conference center. Mr. Kernodle displayed diagrams of the proposed lodge and conference center. An overview was given on details of the layout of the facilities.

Mr. Andy Dye talked about the first time he visited the park. Mr. Dye said he was amazed by the park's unique topography, trees and creeks. He said he was impressed how clean and well kept the park is – the staff does a marvelous job. Mr. Dye said there is a location for a golf course that will compliment the park that will work in harmony with nature. The course can be laid in naturally with the land. He said with his family's 70 years in the golf course design business, this type of environment is rare. Mr. Dye said people will come to play golf at the park from more miles away than the Commission envisions because the setting is so naturally beautiful. Mr. Dye named a long list of groups that would schedule tournaments at the park. His suggestion is that it be a 27-hole course so the public can still play at the same time a tournament is taking place. Mr. Dye said he feels this could be one of the top public golf facilities in the United States.

Mr. Earl Worsham talked about his personal experiences in Arkansas, and then gave an overview of the history of his company. He said many of the projects the company has done have been pioneering projects. Projects completed in Arkansas included the convention center in Little Rock and the Excelsior Hotel. Mr. Worsham said his company is considering a component of a conference center because he feels the facility will draw people from cities beyond Memphis.

Mr. Steven Jarrard listed contingencies the company would like for the Commission to consider. They include a long term lease, 25% of the project costs be secured by the state, capital contributions on behalf of the state equal to the cost of at least 18 holes of the golf course, infrastructure, environmental studies, the Department's responsibilities, successful securing of financing, the flexibility to develop additional phases (such as a performance theater), and a feasibility study. Mr. Worsham discussed the steps that would be taken to secure financing for the project and funding options.

Mr. Carl Kernodle said the golf course construction is more susceptible to weather than any other part of the project. The plan would be to construct with a target of having all facilities opening at the same time. Mr. Kernodle outlined the timeline for design and construction of each component of the project along with hiring and training of personnel. Assuming the Commission would give its approval today to proceed, the target date to open would be mid-May 2005. Mr. Dye said the critical aspect to consider with the golf course is growing seasons for the course to mature.

Ness Sechrest asked how long it would take to get back a feasibility study. Bill Thomas said it would take 60 days. Mike Mills asked if WIL would be considering selling in five years. Mr. Worsham said they would not and it will be a long term investment. Jane Christenson said this is a project, like Mt. Magazine, that has been promised to the people of eastern Arkansas for a long time. Ms. Christenson asked how liquor would be handled in a state park. Greg Butts said it would be addressed in the lease with a private company and would require a private club license. Richard Davies said there will have to be extensive discussion on the liquor issue and we will have to be careful because this is a state park. All the studies will have to be done. We will also need to assure everyone that we are being sensitive to the park's natural resources. Mr. Davies asked if we could come to an agreement to conduct a feasibility study before we negotiate a final contract. Mr. Worsham said that could be done. WIL could be working on the financing side at the same time park staff can do the environmental studies. Mr. Davies said the feasibility study will drive the project. Mr. Worsham said his estimate of the cost of the feasibility study is approximately \$30,000, no more than \$35,000. Mr. Davies said there have been discussions of sharing the cost of the study. Chairman Lindsey asked what the formula is to determine the value of a 27-hole golf course. Mr. Worsham said they are proposing a percentage of gross sales from the entire complex. It would be zero for the first two years and increases from 1% going up to 2% at \$2M in gross sales. That will have to be negotiated. Jim Shamburger asked about the management of the facilities. Mr. Worsham said they would hire a management company and it would have to be acceptable to the Commission – that would be put into the lease agreement.

Regarding paying for the feasibility study, Greg Butts said he is willing to partner and will pursue what funding is available. Mr. Butts said ASP has to go through various state procedures as far as hiring firms to conduct a study – WIL does not. Mr. Worsham said if the Commission approves, WIL will pay for the cost of the study and ASP and reimburse WIL one half the cost when it is able. Mr. Davies said that would be best.

Representative Leroy Dangeau said he very much appreciates the time the Department, Commission and WIL have taken on this project. Rep. Dangeau said it looks like the project will move forward and he really appreciated. He said WIL's reputation is spotless and he thinks this is a win-win situation. Rep. Dangeau said he and Rep. Danny Ferguson will do everything they can in the Legislature that needs to be done. He does not see any problem with the Legislature.

Representative Danny Ferguson said he seconds what Rep. Dangeau said. He said he had a great experience working with the people in Memphis and to partner with the regional chamber of commerce. Rep. Ferguson said eastern Arkansas will be extremely appreciative of the Commission's approval of this project.

**Wade Williams moved to recognize Wellington International, LLC. as the respondent selected to the Request for Proposal/ Request for Qualifications for Village Creek State Park Golf Course and Lodge Development. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.**

**Wade Williams moved to authorize the Wellington International, LLC. to proceed with the feasibility study for a golf course, lodge, and other facilities at Village Creek State Park, and authorized the staff to negotiate a memorandum of agreement for cost share of the feasibility study for Wellington International, LLC and Arkansas State Parks. Ness Sechrest seconded and the motion carried.**

Chairman Lindsey said what excites him the most is that this may be the beginning of a public/private partnership that could work out in other instances in the state. He is very much in favor of it. Bill Barnes said this is exciting to him, also, and will be a huge benefit to eastern Arkansas and possibility spur development of more products in the state.

#### **Moro Bay State Park - Proposed Ouachita River Commission (ORC) Grant**

Greg Butts said the Ouachita River Commission (ORC) has asked what the plans are for cabins at the park. Former Representative and State Highway commissioner John Lipton requested a meeting to discuss the subject. Mr. Lipton, Rep. Joyce Dees, Mr. Clyde Temple, Chairman of the ORC, and several officials from the Bradley County Industrial Development Corporation (BCIDC) met with staff to discuss camper cabins at the park, and request the consideration of housekeeping cabins instead of camper cabins. From their perspective, they see housekeeping cabins as a greater benefit to the area's economy. Mr. Clyde Temple said funds are available for cabins if ASP asks for it. We told BCIDC that, with the Commission's approval, we could look at a feasibility study. The BCIDC has approved funds for a feasibility study. Mr. Butts said his recommendation is that we accept the feasibility study funds.

If it proves feasible to build the cabins, Jim Shamburger asked if we had the funds to build the housekeeping cabins or would it have to be taken from something else. Mr. Butts said the majority of the funding would have to come from some other project. Stan Graves said \$200,000 had been planned for camping cabins. Mr. Graves showed a photograph of a cabin that was proposed. It broke out to be \$25,000 for each cabin.

Richard Davies said we have been contacted by Bradley County officials every year about these cabins. We have always said they are not part of the plan and we did not have the funds. They came back this time and said they still think it would be the best thing for Moro Bay because Bradley County does not have any tourist attractions, and the ORC could provide \$100,000 if ASP would reconsider.

Bill Barnes said we all want to put in facilities that will be the most popular for a park and have the greatest return for the least amount of operating overhead. He asked about the existing RV sites. Greg Butts said there are 20 Class A campsites. Mac Balkman said the occupancy is less than 35% annually. Bill Barnes asked if a study could look at more Class A sites because that is a big developing market. There are modular cottages with log siding with one or two bedrooms that are less costly and can be easily set up. Mr. Barnes asked if the study would look at all those options. Stan Graves said those different options are alternative camping solutions but not considered a part of the proposed ORC's study. Bill Lindsey said he does not want to take part of ORC's \$100,000 and spend it on a study that will not change the plan. If the Class A campsites have an occupancy rate of 35%, Mr. Lindsey does not think cabins will do much better. For \$100,000, four of the modular cottages could be put in at the park. Mr. Butts said he does not mind asking ORC if they would consider the different options, but what they want is housekeeping cabins. Stan Graves said ORC is convinced that with the hunting and fishing demand, that the cabins will be in high demand. Wade Williams said if we can save money by utilizing modular units, as long as they are housekeeping cabins – have we fulfilled their wishes? Or do they want them build on site? Mr. Butts said they suggested units similar to the rest of our system. Loretta House asked if it would be possible to get one of the modular companies to give us some designs to show the people in Bradley County. Stan Graves said another part of this is ORC would like to have funds diverted from shoreline erosion to this project. Greg Butts said part of the cabin study is to determine what it will cost to meet health department standards. The land is subject to flooding and there are sewer treatment issues. It is one thing to buy modular units or build cabins and it is another to build camper cabins that utilize a bathhouse.

Chairman Lindsey said that what staff had done for the last several years to tell local officials that housekeeping cabins are not in the plan and we don't have money to do anything else. Now ORC has come to us with funds for the study. Richard Davies asked if a part of the study could include looking at the kind of cabins that could be build and their costs. Stan Graves said if we go back to them with some type of housekeeping unit, they will be happy. Bill Barnes said he does not have a problem with a few cabins at Moro Bay but he has a problem with building anything that increases overhead and operational costs. Bill Barnes said RV parks that offer full hook-ups are full. Polly Wood Crews asked staffs' opinion. Greg Butts said he would build camper cabins. These would provide something different for the park and would not require the expensive sewer treatment costs of housekeeping cabins. We need to address all the

costs involved with sewer treatment that would be necessary for housekeeping cabins. Jim Shamburger said he does not like the idea of taking their money for a study if we are not willing to do what the study might say needs to be done. Richard Davies said the people in Bradley County feel like they have been left out. They could say to a Legislature that they offered to pay for a study and we told them no.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve accepting the funds from the Ouachita River Commission to conduct feasibility for housekeeping cabins at Moro Bay State Park with the specific understanding that Arkansas State Parks is not committed to the construction or completion of any recommended improvement. Danny Ford seconded.**

**Wade Williams moved to amend the motion that the study specifically include not only the economic feasibility of housekeeping cabins but give a recommendation as to the number of units that it would take to be economically feasible and review the possibility of using modular units. Polly Wood Crew seconded the amendment.**

**A vote was taken on the amendment and the motion carried. A vote was taken on the motion as amended and it carried.**

#### **Lake Catherine State Park - Renewal of Horseback Ride Concession Agreement**

Greg Butts said the horseback ride concession agreement with Mr. Ray Lovett is up for renewal. Wade Williams said one of the amendments is that ASP will have the right to review the remittance schedule for possible changes at the end of the second year which is the time that it is scheduled to go from 10% to 15% of gross income. Mr. Williams asked if there have been any problems. Mr. Butts said no. Commissioner Mills noted that based on the size of the operation, a 10% gross income payment would be the maximum an operator could afford and operate at a profit.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve renewal of the horseback ride concession agreement with Ray Lovett at Lake Catherine State Park. Jim Shamburger seconded.**

**Bill Barnes moved to amend the motion by leaving the payment due at 10% for the five year period of the renewal. Ness Sechrest seconded.**

**A vote was taken on the amendment and the motion carried. A vote was taken on the motion as amended and it carried.**

**Delta Heritage Trail State Park**

**a) Renewal of Maintenance Agreement with Arkansas State Highway & Transportation Department (ASHTD)**

Greg Butts said this is a renewal of the agreement with ASHTD that provides inspections and maintenance on the bridges and trestles along the railroad right-of-way where the park is located.

**Ness Sechrest moved to renew the maintenance agreement with the Arkansas State Highway & Transportation Department for work at the Delta Heritage Trail State Park. Wade Williams seconded and the motion carried.**

**b) Holland Property Acquisition Update**

Stan Graves reminded the Commissioners of the approval they had given in September 2002 to acquire 3.15 acres from James Holland and his mother, Faye Holland. The property adjoins the Delta Heritage Trail and contains a house, shed, swimming pool and shop building. The appraisal on the property was \$230,000. Mr. Holland said he wanted the purchase to include a mobile home and shed. Mr. Graves said the mobile home could be used for seasonal housing or perhaps relocated to another park. The property was re-appraised to include all buildings and the appraisal was updated to \$282,000. Mr. Holland said did not accept the offer, and said they wanted \$450,000 for the property. Mr. Graves said the replacement cost that was represented in the appraisal was \$336,000.

Mr. Graves said this is an excellent piece of property that would provide employee housing and has a facility that could be utilized for a maintenance building. Mr. Graves asked that the Commission approve increasing to 20% above the \$282,000 appraisal which would bring the offer up to \$338,400. If the Hollands do not accept that, approval is requested to condemn the property.

Jim Shamburger asked for an explanation between the two different appraisals for the house, shed and swimming pool. Mr. Graves said that when the appraiser looked at the property a second time, more attributes may have been discovered. Wade Williams asked if the appraiser was an independent appraiser. Mr. Graves said Dwight Brown is an independent appraiser. With regard to the condemnation, Mr. Williams said one fact that will have to be proven is that the property is necessary to the park. He asked if there was any other property within a reasonable distance that could be acquired.

Greg Butts said there is land across the highway and he noted that condemning the Holland property for park purposes would not be an issue as far as a judge's ruling. The Department does not take condemnation lightly. Land across the highway could be acquired and a residence and maintenance building could be constructed. Mr. Graves said the cost to build a residence would be between \$180,000 and \$200,000 and approximately \$225,000 for a three-bay maintenance building. Those costs would be added to whatever the land across the highway would cost.

Wade Williams said if the Commission approves condemnation, the end result will be whose appraiser a jury would believe. Ness Sechrest said replacement costs will always be higher. Bill Barnes asked the cost of land across the highway. Stan Graves said he believes it is between \$2,500 and \$5,000 per acre. Mr. Barnes asked how many acres we would want to acquire. Mr. Graves said there may be approximately four acres available. Richard Davies asked if Mr. Holland is aware that condemnation is a possibility. Mr. Graves said no. Billy Lindsey asked how often a property owner usually settles. Greg Butts said there have been situations where we have tried to find middle ground between our appraisal and the owner's appraisal. Mr. Lindsey asked if Mr. Holland has an appraisal or has he simply said that \$450,000 is what he wants for the property. Mr. Graves said he has not. Mr. Butts said that Mr. Williams is correct in that a jury would look whether someone in the real estate or banking business stated that the property is worth \$450,000. Most of the time a jury will split the difference between the two appraisals. Mr. Barnes asked if being a state agency puts us at a disadvantage. Richard Davies said yes and added that the only time it was not is when the other party misrepresented the property and the jury gave them less than appraised value. Chairman Lindsey asked about the condition of the house and maintenance building. Mr. Graves said it will require some work; new carpet, paint, etc., the maintenance building is in good condition and is of adequate size. Wade Williams asked, if we owned the property, what it would cost to bring the house up to standard. Mr. Graves said he did not know. Bill Barnes said we are prepared to offer \$338,400 for the property. Greg Butts said we would go to trial at the appraised value of \$282,000. Mr. Barnes asked, if we went to court, could we expect to acquire the land at somewhere around the amount we are offering or could it be more. Wade Williams said if our appraiser knows what he is talking about; his numbers should be fairly close to what any other appraiser would come in with. A jury could look at the replacement cost, as well. At the same time, one never knows what a jury is going to do. Mr. Barnes asked how long the property had been for sale. Mr. Graves said it is not on the market; we approached him.

**Mike Mills moved to approve offering \$338,400 for the Holland property which is 20% above the appraisal of \$282,000. If the offer of \$338,400 is not accepted, then negotiations include reference to possible condemnation; however condemnation proceedings are not begun without prior approval by the Commission. Danny Ford seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Crater of Diamonds State Park**

#### **a) Removal of Building from Inventory**

Stan Graves asked approval to remove a substandard employee residence from inventory.

**Mike Mills moved to approval removal from inventory at Crater of Diamonds State Park a residence, building #23.06. Loretta House seconded and the motion carried.**

#### **a) Proposed James Archer Memorial**

Greg Butts reminded the Commission of Mr. Archer's death in January 2003 and that staff had been asked to develop an appropriate memorial plaque. An 18" x 24" plaque is proposed which includes a photograph of Mr. Archer. The plaque will be placed in the diamond discovery area in the park. Wording on the plaque tells the story about Mr. James Archer and his love of the park.

**Polly Wood Crews moved to approve an 18"x24" memorial plaque honoring Mr. James Archer to be placed at the Crater of Diamonds State Park. Jane Christenson seconded and the motion carried.**

#### **b) Update on Water Play Area Construction Schedule**

Stan Graves said construction is proceeding, but the question is when the water play area will be completed. Mr. Graves said the crew was trying to make a Memorial Day opening. Though the contractor feels we will make that date, Mr. Graves is doubtful. Construction has been delayed because of the wet soil conditions. The amount of fill material has been increased, etc. Mr. Graves said a more realistic opening date is mid to late June. Bill Barnes said he feels the community understands and knows everyone is working as hard as they can to complete the project.

c) **Travel Channel Video**

Greg Butts showed a short video that aired March 29, 2003 on the Travel Channel. The video is about finding treasures across America and features the Crater of Diamonds State Park.

**Pinnacle Mountain State Park - Renewal of Cooperative Agreement with Partners For Pinnacle (PFP)**

Greg Butts said that since 1992 PFP has held an annual fundraising event called the *Pinnacle Mountain Rendezvous* which is attended each year by about 30,000 visitors. Mr. Butts said the agreement with PFP states a payment of 5% of net proceeds from the event. The rest of the money raised is used on various projects at the park.

**Ness Sechrest moved to approve a five-year renewal of the concession and operating agreement with Partners For Pinnacle, Inc. for the annual event *Pinnacle Mountain Rendezvous*. Jane Christenson seconded and the motion carried.**

**Prairie County Museum - Cooperative Agreement with County**

Greg Butts said adjacent to our Prairie County Museum is a reconstructed 1800s log cabin museum and a variety of outbuildings and other structures. Mr. Butts proposes a Memorandum of Agreement with Prairie County that allows our museum staff to use the property for tours and activities at no cost to the Department.

**Loretta House moved to approve a five-year renewal of the Memorandum of Agreement with Prairie County for the use of the grounds and buildings adjacent to the Prairie County Museum. Bill Barnes seconded and the motion carried.**

**Withrow Springs State Park - Renewal of NOARK Girl Scout Council Agreement**

Greg Butts said the NOARK Girl Scout Council has enjoyed the swimming pool at the park for many years. The Department has an agreement with NOARK for use of the pool at times when it is not open to the public. The fee is reduced to one half the price of admission and the council provides lifeguards.

**Mike Mills moved to approve a five-year renewal of the agreement with the NOARK Girl Scout Council, Inc. for use of the swimming pool at Withrow Springs State Park. Jane Christenson seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Devil's Den State Park - Long Range Development Plan**

Stan Graves said the park is located in an area of the state where the population is growing and is very popular with guests. Mr. Graves described the topography, flora and fauna, and the Devil's Den Crevice Cave Area that is home to numerous bat species including the Ozark Big-Eared Bat. The cabins and the majority of other buildings in the park were constructed by Company 797 of the Civilian Conservation Corps between 1933 and 1942. The proposed long-range development plan for the park includes: construction of an elevated bridge over Lee Creek, upgrade or reconstruction of the existing amphitheater, renovation of a swimming pool bathhouse, picnic area improvements, upgrade of campsites and replacement of a campground vault toilet, relocation of the horse camp, repair to plumbing and electrical systems in cabins, two employee residences, parking improvements in the day use area, improvements to the existing water treatment plant, improvements to the maintenance buildings, and construction of a new visitor center, and reconstruction of a group cabin. Bill Barnes asked if the foundation and footings are still in place where the group cabin would be located. Mr. Graves said it is, however, the original footings will need to be replaced. Mike Mills asked the square footage of the proposed group cabin. Mr. Graves said approximately 1,500 sq. ft. Bill Barnes asked that, when it is time to construct the group cabin, to discuss it with the Commission before starting the project.

**Mike Mills moved to approve the long range development plan for Devil's Den State Park as presented. Polly Wood Crews seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Capital Improvement Report**

Stan Graves distributed copies of the report for the months of January, February and March, 2003. \$54 million in projects are underway throughout the system, and \$41.3M in projects has been completed.

### **Miscellaneous**

Greg Butts showed the Commissioners the new Russellville Chamber of Commerce Directory that has a photograph of the new Visitor Center at Lake Dardanelle State Park on the cover. The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Celebration will take place on May 10 at the Louisiana Purchase State Park.

**TOURISM DIVISION**

**Resolution**

Joe David Rice thanked Bill Barnes for putting Department and Agency staff in touch with Aloha Boats for the Travel & Win game. They allowed us to purchase a pontoon boat valued at approximately \$30,000 for \$7,000, which is essentially the cost of the motor. Mr. Rice asked for the Commission's approval in presenting them with a Resolution of gratitude.

**Loretta House moved to approve a Resolution of gratitude to Aloha Boats. Jim Shamburger seconded and the motion carried.**

**RESOLUTION**

- WHEREAS, Waco Manufacturing of North Little Rock is the oldest pontoon boat builder in the South and among the oldest in the United States; and,
- WHEREAS, Waco Manufacturing is a family-owned business which has been employing Arkansans since 1960; and,
- WHEREAS, Waco Manufacturing is known throughout Arkansas and the nation for its line of superior pontoon boats; and,
- WHEREAS, Waco Manufacturing provided assistance above and beyond the call of duty with its participation in the 2003 Arkansas "Travel and Win" game; and,
- WHEREAS, Waco Manufacturing's generosity will greatly enhance a highly visible promotional campaign;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Arkansas State Parks, Recreation & Travel Commission extends its gratitude and appreciation to Waco Manufacturing for its unparalleled contributions to the State of Arkansas.

This RESOLUTION adopted by the Arkansas State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission on this day April 17, 2003, in the City of Eureka Springs.

ARKANSAS STATE PARKS, RECREATION  
AND TRAVEL COMMISSION

/S/ Billy Lindsey, Chairman

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND TOURISM

/S/ Richard W. Davies, Executive Director

Mr. Rice stated that he, Richard Davies, Nancy Clark, Shelby Woods, and Karen Mullikin would personally deliver the Resolution.

**2003 GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE REPORT**

Joe David Rice thanked Nancy Clark for all her hard work and effort on the Governor's Conference. He asked Ms. Clark to give an update. Nancy Clark announced that a little over 600 people attended this year's conference. She thanked all the participants and attendees for coming and noted that there was a good turnout of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Forest Service people. Ms. Clark stated that the program presented by Drs. John and Kristen Hunt was very well received. A synopsis of attendee concerns from that presentation was included in Commission folders. She stated that evaluation forms had been received and that she would look at implementing suggestions into next year's conference. She also thanked CJRW, Aristotle, Department staff, and the people of Fort Smith for helping make a successful conference. She noted that next year the 30th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism will be hosted by Fayetteville, March 7-9, 2004. Commissioners applauded Ms. Clark for her efforts. Mr. Rice noted that the people in Fort Smith were very easy to work with.

Karen Mullikin stated that the Governor's Conference received some good media coverage including quite a bit of television coverage. Joe David Rice was on two segments of the early morning show. Nancy Clark was also interviewed. A tape of one of the segments and the interview was played for Commissioners.

**SECTION REPORTS**

**Research & Information Services**

The section processed 21,557 requests for information during February and 33,973 requests during March. Tourist Information Center (TIC) visitation was 27,557 during February and 60,877 last month. Requests for retirement/relocation information totaled 1,545 for February and 3,605 for March. Web site visitation for the five agency

web sites totaled 248,250 for February and 343,163 in March. Joe David Rice noted that inquiries were down, but possibly attributed it to the media being placed later in the year.

TIC Managers as well as Charles McLemore, Eddie Fugatt, and Leigh Bidewell attended the Governor's Conference. TIC Managers and Ms. Bidewell worked on the Monday evening auction. The *2002-2003 Arkansas Tourism Annual Report*, compiled by section staff members, was also presented to Conference attendees.

The Spring TIC Familiarization Tour is scheduled to be held April 28 – May 2. Eighteen TIC employees will tour the Northwest Arkansas and Western Arkansas' Mountain Frontier regions.

### **Communications Section**

Section members worked with Aristotle on preparation of the FY 04 and FY 05 initiatives and budget for the Tourism suite of web sites. Staff members assisted and attended the Governor's Conference as well as finalized the 2003 Arkansas Media kit. The March issue of ArkansasTravel.com was posted. Staff assisted the Secretary of State's office and CJRW on the Louisiana Bicentennial Passport.

### **Tourism Development**

Regional Associations met the monthly paperwork deadlines for February and March. The Annual Regional Tourist Association meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 4th at the Arkansas Hospitality Association. Mr. Rice noted that fulfillment by the regions as well as the Department was slower than normal and that five of the regions had double digit delivery dates. He stated that a letter would be sent to those regions. Mr. Rice also stated that mail service has seemed to deteriorate since 9/11.

Staff members attended the Arkansas Festival Association Annual Workshop. Awards were presented and new board members were appointed. This year's event was held in North Little Rock. Fort Smith will host the workshop next year.

Entry forms for the Fall/Winter Calendar of Events were mailed. April 30th is the deadline for submissions. Reminder postcards have also been mailed. Of the 875 anticipated event forms, 340 have been received. Event coordinators are increasingly using the online entry form.

### **Group Travel**

The section responded to 37 inquiries in February and 129 in March, a total of 2,341 requests, fiscal year-to-date.

The new online Travel Leads Management system has been launched, which allows approximately 350 tourism affiliates to receive leads via e-mail every Monday morning. The system also gives the affiliates 24-access to research sales lead history since January 2003.

The May 2003 issue of *Black Meetings & Tourism* will include the new Arkansas Meeting promotional piece. The magazine will reach an estimated 28,000 travel and meeting professionals throughout the United States. The piece will also be available for in-house fulfillment purposes.

### **ARISTOTLE – WEB SITE ANNUAL PROMOTION PLAN**

Joe David Rice stated that Aristotle and Department staff had spent hundreds of hours formulating the plan. Steve Arrison asked how the plan would work into the budget. Richard Davies stated that the Tourism budget is composed of general revenue and the 2% tourism tax. He stated that fixed expenses come out of the budget first and the Internet and advertising budgets come out next. The plan being presented today is the staff recommendation on the Internet piece. After the budget has been approved for the next fiscal year, the Internet recommendation will be revised to fit the budget. Mr. Davies stated that the plan is composed of things that need to be done, things that should be done, and things that could be done. He sees the Internet not only a promotion piece, but also a fulfillment piece because a lot of what used to be mailed is now being fulfilled through the Internet. Ness Sechrest asked what the Internet budget was for this fiscal year. Mr. Davies stated that the Internet is part Parks and part Tourism. Marla Norris stated that \$262,000 had been appropriated for Tourism and \$123,000 appropriated for State Parks. Ms. Norris stated that typically not all of the money had been spent.

Ms. Norris made sure that all Commissioners had received a book containing the proposed plan. She stated that planning for the recommendation had been going on for about a year. Staff as well as Commission and requests from CJRW were all placed on a list. That list was culled by Department staff to only include the most important items. Aristotle staff also gives input. She stated that research and trends continue to be critically important. Last year, the number of people on the Internet continued to increase as did Internet travel research, planning, and booking. Trip planning begins nearer to the time the trip is taken and those prospective visitors are more demanding. Based on the conversion study, of the 20% of inquiries fulfilled through the web site, only 16% are coming from television and magazine ads. The rest are linking from other web sites, search engines, etc. or from a direct e-mail. Ms. Norris stated that the conversion study information states that visitors are looking for attractions in Arkansas, places to stay, as well as restaurants and places to shop. 86% of the people stated that they received all the information they needed on the web site. The goals are to make it a better fulfillment

piece, get people to the web site, and a better marketing piece. Ms. Norris explained some of the trends which impact why the web site needs to be redesigned every two years including the impact of technology.

Bill Barnes asked if the web site were designed to accommodate the modern trend of computers would the older models still be able to process the information. Ms. Norris answered that the web site is designed for the majority of computers at the time, but that the main information is placed so that the older models wouldn't have to scroll too much to get all of the information. Dina Pruitt noted that the sites are designed to be scaleable so that the design will fill the screen for the higher resolution computer.

Dina Pruitt discussed not only the Arkansas State Parks website, but also the individual park sites. She briefly talked about trends. She mentioned that Department staff had been given the ability to create PDF files, which, when printed look like the actual brochure. These files are available throughout the State Parks web site. There is a link for brochures for each park. Approximately 3,000 pieces have been printed since its inception in March of last year. Ms. Pruitt noted that this saves on printing and fulfillment costs as well as getting the information to the visitor faster. DeGray Lake Resort State Park and the Ozark Folk Center sites page views have both increased substantially over last year. Page views for Petit Jean State Park have increased because the web site began last year.

She explained the redesign of the State Parks this year and mentioned some of the enhancements that would be made. She briefly discussed the goals for the State Parks web sites. Ms. Pruitt stated that the way the web site is designed now requires the visitor to already know something about Arkansas. She recommended implementing a search tool to aid visitors in finding the desired location whether it's by a river, a lake, or has educational programs. Richard Davies stated that a lot of the calls to the office are from people who want a location near a specific place (river, lake, etc) but don't know the name or area in which to look. He noted that he thought it was a good idea. Ms. Pruitt stated that some people do not like search engines and there would be an alternative list of categories for visitors to choose from. It's just another way to access the information.

Ms. Pruitt stated that another important feature is mapping, a way to print location maps. Map Quest and Yahoo are examples of this. Although they have a paid service that can customize maps, she proposed linking to the free service. Ms. Norris interjected that this had been done on a very early version of the web site. Mr. Davies stated that the project had been underwritten by Best Western. Ms. Norris stated that it would be integrated into the site. Montine McNulty asked why the customized service wasn't recommended. Ms. Norris replied that the Department was charged by the amount of

maps downloaded and it simply became too expensive. Ms. Pruitt noted that the downside to the free service is that the sites change the links to the maps yearly so the link will have to be reprogrammed annually.

Another addition to the mapping component would be a topographical map that shows the terrain of the state and the parks, which would be color-coded by region. Colorado has a similar option, but not as in-depth. Wade Williams asked if the individual State Park maps were what Carter-Burgess had been working on. Richard Davies stated that he didn't think so. Mr. Williams stated that a lot of money had been spent on the Master Plan maps, which show the topography and features. He stated that having the park detail online in some form would allow people to choose which site they want to camp in. Ms. Norris stated that not a lot had been budgeted for mapping this year so that we can figure out what resources we already have and how to best use them. She stated a more in-depth recommendation would be presented next year. Richard Davies described the work that Carter-Burgess is doing and questioned whether or not that could be posted. Greg Butts stated that maps had not been done for all the parks. He further stated that the park brochures have specific information about campground information. Mr. Davies stated that it's a good idea and needs to be checked into. Mr. Williams stated that if it were available, it would allow visitors to choose their own camping site. Ms. Norris noted that there are also issues about plug-ins and download speed that would have to be resolved, but there might be some usable versions.

Ms. Pruitt discussed recommendations for better ways to promote park features. A different State Park will be featured each month on the main page. Several State Parks also intend to include Hot Deals & Packages. Video tours and a video page will also be added as well as an online form allowing visitors to purchase gift certificates online. Wallpapers, postcards, and photos will also be updated. The web site will cater to specific audiences including RV travelers and geocachers. Wade Williams asked if the caches could be listed on the individual park pages. For example, if Devil's Den wanted to create some caches, would they be able to post them. Ms. Pruitt stated that it could be done.

Ms. Pruitt stated that Department staff had specifically requested a way to get information up quickly about changes in the Parks. An area will be built and appear on the main page. The information will also appear on the individual park page.

Another recommendation includes developing a template site that can be customized for each type of park (Museum parks, History & Heritage parks, and Environmental Education parks). Each park will benefit from its own website by showcasing it to potential visitors. Ms. Norris noted that each park is so important to the area in which it's located. Having its own web site would allow the people in the community and the region to link to it and promote local attractions. Bill Barnes asked how the template would be built. Ms. Pruitt stated that they would work with Park staff to

come up with a design that would be easily alterable and customize it for each Park. Bill Barnes asked who would decide which Park would get a site. Mr. Butts stated that it would be a Department decision.

Web content will also be integrated into interactive, interpretive kiosks within some State Parks. Bull Shoals, Cossatot, Hobbs State Park-Conservation Area, and Lake Fort Smith are possible locations. Richard Davies asked if these kiosks would be the same as the ones that will be in the new Welcome Centers. Ms. Norris replied that they would be similar. She noted that coupons will be available at the kiosks located in the Welcome Centers. Richard Davies asked if there would be advertising or coupons on the State Parks kiosks. Greg Butts stated that he thought there was some great interest in the private sector for partnering on this, but it hadn't gone that far yet. Ms. Norris stated that the kiosks would allow the parks to share interpretive programs.

Ms. Pruitt proposed updating the web sites for the Ozark Folk Center, DeGray, Petit Jean, Queen Wilhelmina, Old Washington, and the Crater of Diamonds. Recommendations for website hosting and renewals, and server optimization for speed were also presented.

The Internet budget for presented recommendations for State Parks totaled \$196,471 including a \$17,861 contingency fund, which is 10% of the total fiscal budget. Mr. Davies stated that just because something is budgeted does not guarantee that all the money will be used. It is a way of guaranteeing to pay up to that amount. There are not flat fees, just placeholders. In other words, Aristotle may not use all the money budgeted but they can use up to that amount. Mike Mills commented that everyone in state government spends everything in their budget. Greg Butts stated that he has never spent everything in the budget for advertising and the Internet. Wade Williams asked Mr. Butts had ever spent everything appropriated to State Parks. He replied that he had. Mr. Davies interjected that general revenue funds are spent first because there is no way to roll them over into the next fiscal year.

Loretta House asked if the regional brochures could be posted on the website to help fulfill requests quicker. Ms. Norris stated that it's not a State Parks issue, but that they were looking at putting those pieces within the immersive tour section next year. She stated that the Ozark Mountain Region currently had its brochure as a downloadable PDF file. Ms. Norris also stated that she would be speaking to the Regional Associations at the annual meeting. Mr. Davies asked if it is possible to print a certain page from a PDF file. Ms. Pruitt replied that it is possible. Bill Barnes asked if he could scroll through the brochure without having to take the time to download it and print certain pages. Ms. Pruitt stated that a visitor could either choose to scroll through the PDF file or choose a certain page from the table of contents, but that the whole book would have to be downloaded before viewing. Ms. Norris stated that the size of the Arkansas Tour Guide

was too large to be available as a PDF and would take a long time to download. She also stated that this would only work for smaller publications. Ms. Pruitt added that the publication could be set up to download in sections. Ms. Norris stated that they would look at breaking the sections up to have quicker download times. Mr. Barnes stated that he is concerned about people who have dial-up Internet connections.

Marla Norris presented the Tourism website recommendations. The goal of the content reorganization/redesign implementation component is to update the content and reorganize it more clearly for the viewer. Focus group feedback will help the effort. Ms. Norris invited all Commissioners to view the focus groups over the Internet or at Aristotle on June 2nd, 4th, and 5th. Mock-ups will be presented to groups in Chicago, Dallas, and Little Rock. Participants will fill out a survey from their home computers. She noted other states are dealing with the same issues, such as what information needs to be placed on the main page. She stated that we have to look at what our competitors are doing in order to stay abreast of the trends. An evaluation will be done of the information currently on the site. Ms. Norris stated that it is difficult to present the content in a tantalizing way and get them to the links at the same time. A key to the plan is an online photo gallery and search display archive. Four hundred photos will be treated and compressed for the website. Captions will be written for each photo and visitors will be able to view photos by clicking on the title in a list or by choosing to view the next image in a viewing window. The gallery will be searchable by keywords and data attached to each image will include the region, city, body of water, interest area, and activity. Jonathan Eudy stated that this option will be a time and money saving device. Loretta House asked if a publication could download a copy of the photo to run with an article. Mr. Eudy stated that it could easily be done.

Ms. Norris discussed the immersive tour recommendation, which addresses the complaints of some visitors. Currently on the web site, before a visitor can get specific travel information, they must choose what region of the state to visit or the specific town. Visitors unfamiliar with the state have difficulty determining which section to view. Immersive tours will present each region of the state with video, 360-photography, photographs, content, and links that show the visitor what Arkansas has to offer. One tour will be available for each region; Ozarks, River Valley, Ouachitas, Central, Delta and the Timberlands. Ms. Norris stated that she had spoken with Jay Harrod and that he, with other Department staff, is already outlining locations to have the 360 images. She also stated that she had spoken to Debbie Wilson at Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods about available images. She further stated that the intent is to use the existing content. Jonathan Eudy described the many layers of this component and how it would multi-purpose all the databases into one website. Jim Shamburger asked if the website couldn't just link to the regional tourism association websites. Ms. Norris replied that there are 12 regional tourism associations and that the main problem is that visitors have to know where they want to go. Mr. Shamburger asked how the 360 image works on a dial-up connections.

Mr. Eudy stated that it works like any other file and has to be downloaded. Ms. Norris stated that aspect is still being worked out. Ms. Pruitt added that a low resolution as well as a high resolution version could be formulated. Loretta House agreed that 360 views were good. Ms. Norris noted that some 360 views are currently in stock. They are currently shooting more because it's spring and it needs to be done if they are to move forward, if they get approval.

Ms. Norris also stated that the recommendation included redesigning the city pages to integrate databases and display information. For example, with the new design, if visitors click on Hot Springs, they will see a city page with photos from the photo gallery database as well as articles about Hot Springs from ArkansasTravel.com. Events in the area, state parks, lakes, and rivers will also be promoted. The page will contain all the information pertaining to that city.

"Print This Page" and "E-mail to a Friend" components were discussed. The "Print This Page" feature can be used to find out what pages and information visitors are printing off of the site. It will allow us to take content that may not be important to visitors off the website. Jim Shamburger stated that this was a good idea.

Jonathan Eudy described how important maps are visitors and how prominent and prevalent they are on the Internet. This recommendation includes adding the topography of the State because of its uniqueness. Mr. Eudy also discussed recommendations for various online management tools, promotional support and tracking for CJRW, ArkansasTravel.com, Hot Deals & Packages, and the online media room. Ms. Norris noted that a "New Deal Alert" could be implemented. An alert would be sent out weekly to interested individuals about new deals and packages for that week. Wade Williams asked if deals could be searched for by date. He believes this is an excellent and useful idea. Jonathan Eudy stated that they could be searched by date. Jim Shamburger asked if deals could be searched by activity. Mr. Eudy replied that function is currently available.

Also discussed were the Group Travel and Retirement & Relocation recommendations. The recommendations heavily relied on staff requests. Jim Shamburger asked if the index information with the Arkansas header located on the left hand side of the web page could be placed on every web page so that it reminds viewers they are on the Arkansas website. Montine McNulty agreed. Marla Norris noted the request. Niche e-newsletters and the e-mail customer relations management system were also discussed. Ms. Norris noted that newsletters will be customized and that some of them may be dropped and others added dependant on interest. Jim Shamburger asked if Ms. Norris was saying that some of the niche newsletters would be dropped. She replied that potentially some might be dropped and others might be added. She asked for the Commission's input on the issue before a final decision is made.

Montine McNulty stated that she assumed that this presentation is for informational purposes only. She noted that several Commissioners had left before the end of the presentation. Ms. Norris stated that Commissioners may not be able to make a decision that day.

Marla Norris stated that the list of e-newsletter subscribers needs to grow. The best way to accomplish that goal is through giveaways or contests. Regional tourism associations would be used to give the giveaways. Associations that are first to commit to a giveaway will have first choice of the month they want to have it promoted. Once the subscriber has entered, a page confirming entry in the contest and other promotional links will be displayed including links to Hot Deals & Packages and other selected pages. Names of the winners will be randomly selected by Aristotle and forwarded to Jay Harrod, who will contact the winner as well as the regional tourism association.

Ms. Norris described the recommendation for Special Promotions with Cities. She also went through the Online Activity reporting and Search Engine Performance maintenance recommendations.

The Internet budget for Tourism for the 2003-2004 Fiscal Year is \$400,856, including \$36,441 as a contingency budget, which is 10% of the total fiscal budget. Ms. Norris concluded her presentation and asked if anyone had questions. Montine McNulty stated that she had not seen the information before today, that she was overwhelmed and that it is so complex. She stated that she was disappointed about the lack of any focus on lodging or any specific goals for lodging. Ms. McNulty stated that she thought that visitors want to make reservations on the Internet and she missed any kind of focus on that issue. Ms. Norris agreed that visitors do want to have the capability of making reservations online. Ms. McNulty stated that it is important to have people stay in lodging establishments in the state. She further stated that she feels the kiosk section is a wonderful idea, but needs input from the private sector because there's a lot of opportunity. She feels that it should be taken slowly. Ms. McNulty also stated that she feels that it's awfully expensive. Steve Arrison stated that the plan is a great idea and wishes it could all be done, but he has a problem with having the Internet proposal before the marketing recommendations. He wants to see the whole package before approving it. Richard Davies stated that the marketing package is typically delivered in two pieces, the Fall/Winter recommendation is presented in May and the Spring/Summer plan is presented in September. He noted that Aristotle's plan is a work plan for an entire fiscal year. Mr. Arrison asked if anything would have to be taken out of the advertising budget to increase the Internet budget. Mr. Davies stated that it might just be a transfer of money instead of foregoing advertising items. Mr. Arrison stated that he didn't think he was comfortable with increasing the budget by approximately 40% when he wasn't sure

where the money would come from. Jonathan Eudy stated that a lot of what is in the recommended budget was not in last year's budget, kiosks for example as well as the Retirement/Relocation site.

Ness Sechrest asked if it was possible to postpone a decision until next month due to some Commissioners leaving that may have similar reservations. He noted that since the Department did not have an approved budget, the plan could not be taken to the Legislative Council. He suggested that a postponement would allow Commissioners to discuss their concerns with Aristotle. Bill Barnes stated that since so many Commissioners had left, that it was too much money to make a decision. Richard Davies stated that he has to do 2-year contracts through Legislative Council and that if he has an opportunity to do that, even without Commission approval, then he needs to do it. He stated that the Commission could come back and discuss the Aristotle contract at a later date. Greg Butts noted that May 16th was the deadline for the June Council. Mr. Davies replied that if the Department does not have a budget, they won't accept it.

Ms. Norris stated that they could come back after the focus groups and share what they learned, present a mock-up and get Commission input. Richard Davies stated this is an annual work plan and that a component of the plan doesn't have to be done just because it's approved. Wade Williams asked if the staff would look at the pieces as they were implemented and if there were questions about whether or not to implement it, they would look to the Commission for approval. Richard Davies agreed that was true. Mr. Williams stated that he was confused because the process wasn't any different than what had been done in the past, it wasn't nearly as much money as the advertising budget and until the past year had only spent a couple of hours on a \$6 million approval for the advertising budget. He understands that it's complex, but feels there are some wonderful ideas. He further stated that just because the budget is approved, it doesn't obligate the m to implement all the components, but it does give the ability to move forward if it needs to be done.

Montine McNulty stated that she was opposed to approving the plan at that time because she feels it needs more discussion. Wade Williams stated that Commissioners have had the plan for several days, sat through a 2 hour presentation, and it is the joint recommendation of staff and Aristotle and that the plan contains some exciting opportunities and ideas and that the Commission needs to move forward. Loretta House stated that she liked that the staff was excited and participating and that this is a joint recommendation. Ness Sechrest asked what 30 days would matter. Mr. Williams replied that if Mr. Davies couldn't take it to the Legislative Council it might not make a difference, but that it's strange that the Commission is struggling over this issue when it usually does not.

Bill Barnes asked how the recommendation was formulated. Ms. Norris stated that the process began last November by an exchange of lists of thoughts and ideas between staff and Aristotle and Aristotle returned proposals of how those ideas could be implemented and the possible costs involved. A lot of meetings were conducted between staff and Aristotle to formulate the objectives and goals of the website and how best to accomplish them. Richard Davies, Joe David Rice and Marla Norris explained the process and emphatically stated that it was not done overnight. Bill Barnes stated that he felt the recommendation was the agreed upon, Department endorsed package and that it's consistent with the process the way the advertising agency makes its recommendations. He further stated there was nothing different about the process. Joe David Rice reiterated that it's an involved process and a lot of things have been cut out. Wade Williams asked what kind of impact there would be if the decision were postponed. Richard Davies replied that there wouldn't be an impact as long as he could take it to the Legislative Council except for any work plan items that need to be accomplished within the next month. Gloria Robins mentioned that a Minute Order was needed from the Commission. Nancy Clark stated that one was needed for the advertising agency contract. Mr. Davies replied that he didn't think one was needed because the ad agency is selected by the Commission and the Internet provider was selected by the Department. Ms. Clark agreed that he was correct.

Bill Barnes stated that Chairman Lindsey had some concerns about the overall increase in the budget as well as the niche markets newsletters and the immersive tours. He also stated that Chairman Lindsey is concerned that the upgrades to the Ozark Folk Center and DeGray Lake Resort sites are not necessary at this time.

Wade Williams asked Ms. Norris how a delay would impact Aristotle. She replied that certain photography needs to be done for the 360 images because it's spring. She also stated that they are doing the photography on a good faith effort and reiterated that the immersive tours site can be cut back. Ms. Norris stated that they are under the assumption that they will be redesigning the site and that it is shaping how the focus groups will be handled so that the information learned can be applied. She noted that she felt Aristotle's role is to research, listen and make suggestions. Bill Barnes likened the plan to a road map and stated that he felt most everyone would agree on the major points and asked how everyone would feel about approving the plan in concept with the caveat that there needs to be further discussion at the next meeting on specific line items and the total overall cost of the budget. That way it would give Aristotle the latitude to go forward with the work. Mr. Barnes stated that they would reserve the right to cut back the expenditures on certain components of the plan. Montine McNulty stated that she thought Commissioner Christenson was under the impression that there would not be a motion on the plan at that time. Mr. Barnes replied that Commissioner Christenson had made sure there would be a quorum before she left so that there could be a vote. Montine McNulty stated she thought the motion needed to be voted on then. Bill Barnes asked Wade Williams if he wanted to

change his motion. Mr. Williams replied that was the way he had understood his motion; i.e., that they were bringing a concept and as each section comes up either approve it, pare it down or delete it entirely. Richard Davies suggested approving the concept and bringing questions back next month. Ness Sechrest stated that there were some Commissioners not present that may have some concerns that they aren't able to voice and Aristotle may work on something that the Commission may not want. He asked why 30 days would matter. He further stated that he didn't feel the representation of Commissioners was present. Mr. Davies stated that he understood the point, but that the delay may hurt the photography schedule. Montine McNulty stated that she thought they were using existing photography. Ms. Norris replied that existing photography will be used, but that there are photographs not in the inventory that need to be taken.

Bill Barnes reminded everyone that this recommendation is a joint effort between staff and Aristotle and that the Commission depends on the staff.

**Wade Williams moved to approve the annual web site work plan as presented. Loretta House seconded.**

**Wade Williams moved to table the previous motion until the May Commission meeting. Montine McNulty seconded and the motion carried.**

### **MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Woods stated that he would send a report to Commissioners by mail. Karen Mullin invited Commissioners to a webcast of the focus groups at the Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods office, which will take place April 23-24, 2003 in Dallas, Texas and St. Louis, Missouri. Commissioners agreed to hold off on the reports until the next Commission meeting. Bill Barnes suggested that the items be placed as high on next month's agenda as possible.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Nancy Clark mentioned pertinent tourism-related articles to Commissioners. She also noted that the Transportation Department had released almost a million dollars in scenic byway money for programs in eastern Arkansas; \$900,000 for exhibitry at the Game & Fish Nature Center in Jonesboro, \$25,000 for the Great River Road and almost \$25,000 for the Crowley's Ridge Scenic Byway.

Steve Arrison thanked the people of Eureka Springs for their hospitality. Polly Wood Crews, Commissioners and guests applauded Steve Arrison for being named Tourism Person of the Year. Bill Barnes thanked all of the hosts and hostesses in Eureka Springs on behalf of the Commission.

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The State Parks, Recreation and Travel Commission adjourned at 11:15 on  
Friday, April 18, 2003.