

**Minutes of the Nevada Commission on Tourism
Marketing Meeting | February 13, 2015**

The Nevada Commission on Tourism held a Marketing Committee meeting at 10:00 a.m. on February 13, 2015 at Nevada Commission on Tourism, Laxalt Building, 2nd Floor, 401 N. Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701.

Call to Order

Lt. Governor Hutchison called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Commission Members present:

Lieutenant Governor Mark Hutchison
Rossi Ralenkotter
John Wagnon
Lorraine Hunt-Bono
Don Newman
Christopher Baum

Commission Members absent excused:

Staff Present:

Claudia Vecchio, Director
Sarah Bradley, Deputy Attorney General
Greg Fine, Director of Marketing
Bethany Drysdale, Director of Public Relations
Ryan Cherry, Lt. Governor Chief of Staff
Chris Matthews, Department Webmaster
Dee Chekowitz-Dykes

Guests Present:

Kevin Bagger, LVCVA
Marty McDonald, Fahlgren Mortine
Jeff Scott, Fahlgren Mortine
Sean Cowan, Fahlgren Mortine
Khrystie Reep, Fahlgren Mortine
Abbi Whitaker, Abbi Agency

Roll Call

Hutchison: I call to order the marketing meeting of the Nevada Commission on Tourism. I appreciate everyone being here this morning, and look forward to a wonderful meeting. Ms. Vecchio, will you please call the roll?

Vecchio: Thank you Lieutenant Governor Hutchison. First on the docket, Lieutenant Governor Hutchison.

Hutchison: Present.

Vecchio: Baum?

Baum: Here.

Vecchio: Governor Lorraine Hunt-Bono?

Hunt-Bono: Here.

Vecchio: Thank you. Don Newman? Rossi Ralenkotter?

Ralenkotter: Here.

Vecchio: I see Kevin Bagger, as well. We're thrilled to have him join us.

Ralenkotter: Yes, he's with us.

Vecchio: John Wagnon has not yet arrived, but we'll mark him present when he arrives.

Hutchison: Thank you very much.

Vecchio: Thank you, Lieutenant Governor.

Public Comment

Hutchison: All right. Let's move on to Agenda Item No. 2, which is Public Comment. Is there anyone here in the Carson City Office currently who would like to offer any public comment at this meeting? All right. Seeing none, I'll move down to Las Vegas. Is anyone down there in Las Vegas wanting to offer some public comment? All right. I don't see any down there either. We'll go ahead and close out then Item No. 2, Public Comment.

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Hutchison: We'll move on to Item No. 3, Approval of the Minutes. This is for September 26, 2014. You probably have seen those, I hope, Commissioners, in your packets. Are there any changes, modifications, or proposals by way of a motion, for any matter

related to those minutes? I will be recusing myself, since I was not present for that particular meeting, but the Chair will take a motion to approve the minutes...

Baum: Move to approve the minutes.

Hutchison: ...of September 26, 2010. I have approval of the minutes by Commissioner Baum.

Hunt-Bono: I'll second the motion.

Hutchison: Seconded by Commissioner Hunt-Bono. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

Group: Aye.

Hutchison: Any opposed say no.

Hutchison: All right. Motion carries. Thank you.

Introduction of New Integrated Marketing Agency

Hutchison: Let's move on to Agenda Item No. 4, Introduction of New Integrated Market Agency. Ms. Vecchio.

Vecchio: Thank you, Lieutenant Governor. It's a day of great hope and enthusiasm as we welcome a new agency into our fold as great partners of our marketing efforts moving forward. I want to take an opportunity to introduce Marty McDonald, who is our account architect. She is with Fahlgren Mortine, and somebody I worked with in the past. I have every confidence in her ability to guide this account moving forward. Marty will provide a brief introduction of the agency and show why they are one of the great tourism marketing agencies in the country. Marty, if you could come up to this microphone. State your name then we'll move forward with the presentation.

McDonald: Good morning everyone. Thanks for having us here. I'm Marty McDonald with Fahlgren Mortine. Thanks for that introduction. We are thrilled to be here. I hope everyone on the other end of the line can see our team here with me today. Our president and CEO, Neil Mortine, was here yesterday, unfortunately, had to leave for a family event, but wanted to send along his excitement, as well, and extend that to all of you. We just can't wait to get started. We have a lot of work to do. We have a great foundation on which to build.

We prepared a couple of things for you today, we won't get into a long, lengthy introduction of our agency. That's not the purpose of today's meeting. We did just want to give you a light introduction of our integrated experience. What you'll see is an agency overview, a video that we've prepared. We're hoping that

that technology will cooperate and everyone will be able to see that. We have a second video that I'll introduce in just a moment, but with that, we'll show the agency overview.

Hutchison: Ms. McDonald, will this be available in Las Vegas, as well?

McDonald: Yes, it will. Yes.

Hutchison: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you.

(Video presentation)

McDonald: All right. Hopefully, that gives you a taste of our agency and the breadth and depth of our experience. What you didn't see there is the depth of our tourism category experience, which is our largest vertical industry. We're a generalist firm. We work across categories, but tourism is the deepest.

Just a little story I wanted to share with you. We feel like being here today is one of the things that we're most proud of. This feels like it's been a long time coming for us to get the chance to work here in Nevada. We pitched this business two years ago, and came in second place. Although that was exciting to come this close, we didn't stop. We hung around like that awkward, uninvited guest and we just kept showing up. We came to the Cowboy Poetry Festival and we kept learning about Nevada. We came to the Rural Roundup. We were here in Elko. We kept showing up.

We are really invested in doing this work, and we think it's a great foundation, some great leadership in place with tremendous potential. We're excited to begin our work officially today, and yesterday we dug in deep. We're already laying foundation on plans for the next 90 days and beyond, so you'll hear more about that later.

Abbi, could you come up as well? We have a wonderful partner. That's the other thing that we did when we didn't give up. We kept showing up and we started learning about who would be the best partner to come to the table two years later. That was an easy question. That was Abbi, she's here with us today and we're excited to be working together.

Whitaker: Well, I think I know you guys all a little bit. I think you all know that I'm very excited to be working on the Travel Nevada brand. We do a lot of stuff here in Northern Nevada. We work a lot in the rurals. We helped create the Highway 95 RDA. We work a lot with the City of Fallon. We have a PR co-op that some of you are a part of for economic development, work closely with EDawn on a lot of different fronts. Tourism, as we know, is a huge driver of economic development.

For us to be able to integrate our knowledge of this state from that standpoint, and our knowledge of tourism from the work we've done with people like Andy it's very, very exciting. Thank you so much for giving us the chance to show you what an amazing job we're going to do for this state, and the amazing results that, together, we're going to be able to achieve. Thanks for this opportunity.

Hutchison: Thank you.

McDonald: The last thing we have prepared for you is one last video. It's very short. Like I said, we kept showing up. We wanted to make sure you were seeing us on the ground. That's one thing that's really important to us as the new firm being charged with doing this work, because we're going to be here. We want your stakeholders, all of you, the partners and this client to really know us, know what we're about and know the product that we can deliver. We made an investment in coming here as we were preparing for our presentation. We did a little video together with Abbi's team, so we wanted to share that with you today.

(Video presentation)

McDonald: As you can see, not all of us are equally athletic, but we are equally excited and honored to be here. We'll be here and available for questions if you have any.

Hutchison: Ms. McDonald, thank you very much.

McDonald: Thank you.

Hutchison: Thank you very much for your presentation. I'll tell you, you're way ahead of the game by pronouncing Nevada correctly.

McDonald: Thank you.

Hutchison: Before we close the Agenda item, I'll open it up for any questions that the Commissioners may have of you, Ms. McDonald, if you wouldn't mind just staying there at the podium for just a minute. Why don't we start in Las Vegas. Any questions or any comments from Las Vegas, Commissioners down there? Anybody?

Ralenkotter: We're good.

Hutchison: Okay.

Hunt-Bono: Governor. We're excited for the new relationship, and looking forward to some new creativity, and more publicity for our great state. Welcome to the team.

McDonald: Thank you so much.

Hutchison: Thank you. Any comments here? All right. Well, Ms. McDonald, thank you very much and we appreciate you coming here, appreciate the investment you've made and you all being here today. I've had a chance to say hello to almost everybody out there. We are looking very much forward to working with you and making Nevada the greatest place on planet earth for people to come and spend their tourism dollars.

McDonald: Thank you.

Hutchison: All right. With that, we'll go ahead and close out Agenda Item No. 4, and now we'll turn to Agenda Item No. 5. Ms. Vecchio.

Vecchio: Yes, if I could return to Agenda Item 4 b. The piece of this that made this energy so good between the Fahlgren Mortine Agency and all of us is really the PR-driven marketing approach. They, too, come at this with that same idea in mind. That is why Marty, who is a public relations person, is our account architect. It really is about creating the stories. It's about creating and educating people about the state of Nevada, and that's done through the public relations component which is then supported by the advertising side. Marty, who has a great integrated background, will be approaching in that way. We'll provide great that storytelling and educational foundation for our marketing programs, which will be supported by the paid side. That's a commitment that they've made, and I wanted to reiterate that's the approach that we're all taking as we move forward.

Marty mentioned the 90-day startup plan. When we talked with the team yesterday, we provided them with an update of the brand, where we started and how it evolved into the *Don't Fence Me In* campaign. During that conversation, we committed to quickly turning around a 90-day plan so all of you know where we're going to be and where we expect this program to be progressing within the first 90 days. They have committed to jumpstart this and will provide an integrated 90-day plan as part of that.

Within the next 90 days a major component of this plan is to start looking at how the campaign evolves creatively, how it evolves from a message standpoint and how we continue to accomplish our goals of further engagement with our key audiences. We've had this campaign, *Don't Fence Me In*, for two years. And as every campaign needs, we need to start to look at that.

Part of that 90-day plan, the evolution of *Don't Fence Me In* will be somewhat tactical and executable. That is where we look today for your input and that is Item 5. You were provided with the brand as we started. You all will recall our work with Green Rubino. They provided a tremendous foundation with language and with input from Nevadans about who we are, with this rich and quirky

personality and with the world class tourism product that we offer here. I think that is well-conveyed in the materials that you received. Those were provided to you as a reminder of where we've been, and how we got to where we are today.

We need to evolve and we need to look at this campaign and how we take it even further. As Governor Hunt-Bono said, how we bring in even more creativity to where we are. Your thoughts about how we should move forward from a process standpoint or how we should move forward creatively, are very welcome. We can take action, if you believe that needs to be done, in how we do this from a process standpoint, and how you are involved and what we need to do to ensure that you have proper input in these decisions as they move forward.

Hutchison: Thank you. You're looking for input from the marketing committee as a whole, right, in terms of what we're seeing before us, having had experience with this in the past, what are we looking for in terms of, as I think it says on the agenda, taking the slogan, from launch to fanatic engagement. We'll open it up then. Any comments here, Commissioners? Commissioner Baum, please.

Baum: Thank you, Lieutenant Governor. One of the things that I think is key here for our new marketing partners to hear from some of us in the field is that I'm a big fan of *Don't Fence Me In*. I think it's fantastic and I feel it's a much stronger positioning for the travel component than *A World Within*. *A State Apart*. I love the way that *Don't Fence Me In* has taken a bigger and bigger role in how we position to market ourselves.

I am concerned, however, that our website continues to be a challenge and we've redone it twice now and I just looked at it again this week, and when you do a search for where to stay in Reno-Tahoe, you still get Las Vegas properties. If we're going to spend money and get people excited about the Nevada experience and drive them to our state website to tell them what their options are, we have to have a website that has proper content that functions properly, and is laid out the way consumers think, and I think we're far from that now. I'm a big fan of *Don't Fence Me In*, but as we gear up and make it even more powerful, a lot of those people are going to end up at a website that needs some work. I do encourage the new team to make the website an early priority in that structure. Otherwise, we're spending a lot of money to drive people to a site that doesn't really fulfill all their needs. Thank you.

Hutchison: Thank you, Commissioner Baum. Any response or comments in reply to Commissioner Baum's? Just identify yourself, if you would before you speak.

Cowan: I represent the digital offering for Fahlgren Mortine. Sean Cowan, Digital Experience Director at Fahlgren Mortine.

Hutchison: Okay, Sean.

Cowan: I represent that capability. We had a great meeting yesterday. We will have access to the website early next week. We're going to making a deep-dive assessment of any of the technology challenges, the user challenges. The first priority is to understand what you have in place today, thoroughly understand what challenges there are and what we need to do to make it successful, and we'll put forth a plan on how we're going to achieve that. The first thing is we believe your web presence has to be a solid foundation for us to be able to do a lot of the other things you want to do. That's where all of our efforts and focus will be.

Baum: All right. Thank you very much.

Cowan: Thank you.

Hutchison: Thank you, Sean. Thank you, Commissioner. Any other input or discussion down here in Carson City? Commissioner Newman, please.

Newman: Yes, my question, Claudia, do we own this Green Rubino? This is all bought and paid for? Do we have any obligations to them if this moves forward?

Vecchio: No, this is all historic information that we have purchased. This deck that you have is all information that we can use and do with as we want to and incorporate. It's our intellectual property.

Hunt-Bono: Governor, this is Lorraine in Las Vegas. I have a question for our agency in reference to the website. Statistically, do more people visit the website on their smart phones, or on their laptops, or like on a home computer? Do they have a number on that?

Hutchison: Just state your name before you speak, please.

Hunt-Bono: It seems to me it's more on smart phones.

Cowan: This is Sean Cowan. We're going to be making a full assessment of the analytical aspect of the site so we can understand how many people are coming to the site, what devices they're on and what the engagement is, how long they're on the site. We believe that mobile's not only the future that's here now and today, and we're going to focus a heavy effort on making sure that experience is a mobile-first type experience.

Reep: I'm just going to add to that real quick.

Hutchison: State your name.

- Reep: My name is Chrystie Reep and I am the media director for Fahlgren Mortine. I just want to add to that we'll look at the current website and how people are using it, but in general, people are using both equally, especially when it comes to tourism. They're using them for different purposes. For research, they use the website some and then they go to the mobile device. Both are equally important. A part of our assessment will also be what they're using it for on those devices. It's really important to look at not just one over the other, but what they're doing when they're on them from those different devices. That'll be something we'll include, as well.
- Hunt-Bono: My next question on that is, would you design a different format, then, for a laptop versus a smart phone, or basically the same thing?
- Cowan: This is Sean Cowan. It would be a responsive solution. That's the current trend and recommendation from a Google perspective, which allows your website to be consumed and viewed on all devices equally. Your site now is developed in that manner, although there's probably some challenges and improvements we seek to make. That's part of our consideration on every digital property we work on. Not only yours, but others as well.
- Hunt-Bono: So you're saying the same; is that correct?
- Cowan: It'll be a responsive solution...
- Hunt-Bono: The design is the same, the same thing on your laptop as you get on your smartphone?
- Cowan: No, it's a responsive experience would be, it will format itself so it's optimal on a mobile device. It'll be optimal on a tablet, optimal on a desktop. Visually, it might appear differently...
- Hunt-Bono: Yes then.
- Cowan: Yes, correct then. I apologize.
- Hunt-Bono: Thank you.
- Hutchison: Great. Thank you very much.
- Wagnon: This is Commissioner Wagnon here. I just wanted to echo what Commissioner Baum said earlier about *Don't Fence Me In*. You know, this is a great campaign. It's got great imagery. It fits Nevada perfectly, and I really appreciate what Claudia was saying earlier that this is more of an evolution, not a change the direction situation. We've got a great campaign. It's perfect for the state of Nevada. It still has a lot of legs in it. It actually is one of those kind of campaigns

that can evolve over a long period of time, and become just more and more refined and more and more effective. I also agree with Chris on the website issue and I think that's an area that we can focus on. Taking this campaign forward from where we are now, is going to be very exciting.

Ralenkotter: This is Rossi in Las Vegas. Just a question on pre-testing the new creative. What is the strategy behind that?

Hutchison: Please come to the podium Ms. McDonald, if that's you, come on up, or whoever.

Scott: Hi, it's Jeff Scott from Fahlgren Mortine. We'll be working with Claudia and her team to determine the best methodology for testing, whether it's quantitative or qualitative and how we'll approach that. Those are things we'll be working through and talking through in the coming weeks for sure.

Hutchison: Rossi, is that where you were going?

Ralenkotter: I was just also looking for the timeline on that relative to the new creative, getting that feedback to make sure that it is touching the consumer.

Vecchio: Rossi, this is Claudia. Absolutely. We would welcome your input in how you see that all unfolding. We're not going to rush in to this creative. We know we have a spring/summer campaign that needs to start mid-April. We're not thinking we'll have new television done by then. As we go through this evolution, we'll make sure that we get the pre-testing done, and that you all have input into the media planning and the overarching strategy. That has been relayed from this conversation; how we unfold this whole development process, and where you want to be part of it. We will work with the agency to ensure that all those proper testing mechanisms are in place.

Hutchison: Ms. McDonald.

Ralenkotter: Okay.

McDonald: Yes, I just wanted to echo that. I think that's a great point. I think one thing that we know is, as Claudia said, this will be an evolution of the campaign. So something that also will help direct and instill confidence is the fact that the research tells us the campaign is performing well and is working, so we'll draw from the research as well as the testing. That will help direct us out of the gate.

Hutchison: Thank you. My question for you is just as an overall strategy point. Is the strategy going to be to drive folks to the website, the commercials, the television, the print advertising? Is that the strategy to drive people to the website or is that not the primary strategy?

McDonald: It will part of the strategy. Marty McDonald. It will be part of the strategy. There's no question about that, but it won't be the only strategy. What we know is important is that when people are in a social environment, if they're on Instagram or another platform, they want to be served content in a different way. It may be a poor or silly analogy, but in today's marketing landscape, we try to operate less like a restaurant and more like a taco truck. We need to meet people where they are and serve them content that we know will get a job done.

We need to be mindful, though, of technology and a strong backend. We talked a lot about that in our approach, our presentation. It's all rooted in data and technology; that we know our program will perform better if we are not necessarily just serving content to people where they are. But if we try to take that same consumer through a funnel and a journey, we try to capture their information, understand that they might be in the dreaming phase, they're thinking about where to go next. If we know who they are and how to reach them, we know that hopefully we're going to try to push them in subtly, not obnoxiously, but serve them with content that'll convince them to be a planner and to start planning their trip.

And then to be here in market. When they're in market, they need a mobile app. You know, we'll serve them different content depending on the vehicle. Our strategy is rooted in understanding the importance of the website absolutely, but it won't be the only foundational element.

Hutchison: Great. Thank you very much.

Newman: Marty, this is Don Newman. Our past campaign was based around muted beige. An architect who built the Boys and Girls Club in Elko said, on the cover of their presentation, "Beige is not a color for kids." I don't think beige is the color for the state of Nevada, although Southern Nevada is lots of beige sand, we have lots of neon. We talk about Nevada blue. We talk about the colors of Lake Tahoe. We need to have a color scheme that expresses the excitement that this state has to offer. So, personal pet peeve of mine. Let's put some pizzazz, because this is a state of pizzazz, into this and I'll be very happy.

Hutchison: We're not the beige state, right? That's the point, right, Commissioner Newman?

Newman: Exactly. There's nothing bland about the state of Nevada.

McDonald: Right. Thank you, Don.

Hutchison: Well said. Commissioners, any other comments before we move on? Ms. Vecchio, what do we need here? Are you looking for a motion? Do you think we need a motion, or is this more by way of discussion and input?

Vecchio: I don't think we need a motion based on the discussion. What we will do, if this is okay with everyone, is that in addition to the 90-day plan, we will put together a campaign evolution strategy and plan for executing through that creative process. We have lots of creative needs this time. We'll have a television spot probably, if everyone thinks that that's where we still need to be. We will have lots of digital. Unlike before, we'll have a robust CRM program, and we really haven't done that previously. We'll have this mobile app piece that has to get done. We have a lot of things that need to be accomplished creatively in the next little bit. We can put together a timeline -- and I'm looking for Marty -- of when and how all of those things will be executed. We can provide that out to you and if you have any comments or questions or concerns about that timeline, please let us know.

Again, we're not going to try and get the creative done quickly specifically for a campaign, but we're going to get this through in the most strategic and best way that we possibly can. While you might see components of it for the spring/summer campaign, and I'm encouraged that that might be the case, the campaign in its totality likely won't be ready until fall/winter, if that's what we decide to do. We've gone with two campaigns a year since I've been here. As we continue to have this more ongoing relationship and if we definitely want to have rabid engaged fans, we need to communicate with them more often than two campaigns a year. Evolving how we communicate with people is going to be part of this.

I really see us at a precipice of a dramatic change in the way we communicate. They know *Don't Fence Me In* is off the table. They know that's really the foundation, so building upon that in a very new way based on, as Marty was talking about, all the technology that's available and the budget that we're given to work with.

Hutchison: Can we address the Commission's input on creative? What's the plan there? I'm not sure what's happened in the past, but on a go forward basis. What I've heard other Commissioners talk about is input into creative product. At the same time, if you're going to have input, you've got to have timely input, right, so we're not waiting around for everybody. Just speaking for myself, I have no problem with timelines. If you want input you've got to do it by a certain date or whatever. What about the Commission's input on creative?

Vecchio: Right. What generally happens in the creative process is we'll come up with a strategy and a foundational approach for how this evolution will take place and what channels we'll be using. We'll get that out to the marketing committee for your input on the general direction and strategy.

Then, when we start the actual creative, each creative component comes with some type of a story board. Television comes with a story board; print, will come with some print mockups and we'll get those to you so you can take a look, and provide your input back to us. As you know, when we do this in a public forum, it gets to be a public process. We will share in a public forum when we need to and with each of you individually when that's most appropriate. We want to be sure that the process continues along in the right way.

We'll also notify you when we're going on a shoot, or doing creative in a place where you can be part of. We'll let you know when that's happening so you can be part of that, if you care to. Then, through the testing period, if you are so inclined, go and be part of that. I really want you part of this process the whole way so that at the end you all can say this is extraordinary work. We put our stamp on it and we're proud that this is representing Nevada. We will provide you with each of those benchmarks along the way and your participation will be welcomed.

Hutchison: Thank you, Ms. Vecchio. Commissioners, do you have any questions or comments about input on creative or the process that's just been laid out? If we don't speak up now then I think you pretty much have the okay. Any comments? Commissioner Baum.

Baum: Well, just as somebody who's been in marketing for a long time, I think the key is we don't want to be junior art director. Staff has a job to do and we don't want to do the job for them. Conversely, there are a lot of things strategically and directionally where, if we're involved in the process early enough, we can help avoid a misstep or make sure that our region of the state is equally represented in the messaging. So once again, we don't want to look over people's shoulders and tell them what to do and change a comma here and there, but we do want to make sure that we're not surprised at something when it's too late to make a change. It's a delicate balance, but I just want to state that I certainly don't expect to be signing off on creative. I just want to make sure I know in advance the direction we're taking.

Hutchison: Thank you, Commissioner.

Wagnon: Yes, this is Commissioner Wagnon. I'd like to support that comment, as well. I think the important part is to get the marketing committee or the Commissioners involved early on in the process at the strategic stage or at the concept stage versus on the backend, because there's a lot of time and energy that goes into building these campaigns. If we see it on the backend and there are any issues with it, it creates a problem for the agency. It usually creates a timing issue,

because we're pushed up against deadlines. I think we need to make sure that there are ample opportunities set aside for being engaged at the concept stage, the strategic stage and then, you know, later on as the creative starts to take shape. I just want to make sure we're not just coming in at the end of the process.

Hutchison: Thank you, Commissioner. All right. Ms. Vecchio, anything else that we need here? I see we've got the evolving *Don't Fence Me In* campaign positioning, and then we've also got development of the spring/summer plan. Anything we need to do on that, before we close out Agenda Item No. 5?

Vecchio: Well, it seems like probably the same sort of process for each of these. The spring/summer plan is a much tighter timeframe at this point, since we'll start that in either the first or the mid part of April. Now that we have the agency on board, we'll be crafting that. That plan along with the media plan and the strategic approach will be provided to you. We will let you know when we can get that all completed, so you will have that input right from the get-go. We are always open for questions as it unfolds.

The 90-day plan is the general approach and the things we're going to accomplish in the next 90 days. The ramp-up plan, the evolution of the *Don't Fence Me In* campaign, and the spring/summer campaign plan, are all going to be happening simultaneously. We will have those out to you all very shortly for your comments and input.

Hutchison: Great. Okay. Then with that, we'll close out Agenda Item No. 5, and move on to Agenda Item No. 6. Ms. Vecchio.

Vecchio: Thank you. Claudia Vecchio. Greg Fine, our Marketing Director, is going to provide an overview of where we are with the fall/winter marketing campaign to date, and he'll go through each of these various sections.

Fine: Thank you. Greg Fine, Director of Marketing for Travel Nevada. Commissioner Hunt-Bono, I just want to get back to you regarding the usage for travelnevada.com. It's about 45 percent of people who are accessing the website via mobile and some sort of handheld device, and then about 55 percent are still using the desktop.

Hunt-Bono: Thank you.

Fine: You bet. I just want to go through an overview of where we are in the winter campaign. I don't want to do a data dive because we're still in the process of the campaign itself. (slide show) I thought we'd take a look at where we are in relationship to how the traveler makes their buying decision as they're planning

their trip to Nevada. Some of this stuff is in your packet already, and I will be glad to share this deck with you for more information, because I don't want to hit upon all the numbers that are in here.

This is our broadcast buy that we had. That is in your packets, showing the breakdown of percentages of where the buy was taking place. In looking at some of the top line numbers I thought were interesting in our online video views. We had a pretty high click-through rate on the views, on the Owner IQ and Specific Media of about .1 percent, whereas the platform average is .075. What they're looking at and what they're engaging with is our winter TV spot. 98 percent of new sessions on the website are also new visitors to the site. Our online video is driving people to our site, and people are paying attention to it and looking for more information, which is great to see.

We established new relationships with content providers, Matador Networks and Nativo. Matador has their own platform that they push their content out on, and then Nativo places content in various publications, a couple hundred different publications from U.S. News and World Report to San Francisco Gate. It's a very cool partnership. I don't know if any of you had the opportunity to work with them. We've had a lot of luck with these guys. They've been very responsive to us and have given us all kinds of help. This is some of the stuff from Nativo, really great creative and good stories to tell about Nevada specifically.

What I wanted to point out here was if you look at Nativo, we've had a total of 27,000 views so far in the three weeks these campaigns have been running. They've clicked the ad, .58 which is relatively high. But they visited the website 2,930 times from the Nativo pages. Then if you go down to Matador, we're looking at 31,000 total views of the material, the content of the various stories that they put out, and then 16,000 shares in four minutes per story. That's the average, which tells us there's some people who are really paying a lot of attention. That is really encouraging to see. We really like this partnership with them, and I think that they've done a really remarkable job of highlighting specific areas of Nevada that you can't push out necessarily in a commercial.

Hutchison: How do people get these views? I mean, they're clicking on these -- I mean, how are they getting these views? Is it just a certain geographic area we're targeting, right?

Fine: We're targeting a specific geographic area. Matador actually is worldwide, and they have a very robust delivery system, from e-mail to a huge social presence. They're pushing us out there on all kinds of different channels. And then Nativo -- so say, for instance, somebody is looking for outdoor adventure in *Outside*

Magazine. A Nativo ad will be served up that says, here's the hot springs you can visit in Nevada. While they're reading this content in *Outside Magazine*, they'll click on that it'll take them to the whole hot springs story that we had placed in Nativo. We're hitting them from two different levels, drawing them in from Matador and then pushing it out through Nativo. Pretty exciting stuff.

The other cool thing about Nativo is that this stuff lives on ad infinitum. It really helps our search because, for instance, they posted the number one search term for small town travel in Nevada, which is pretty cool. That just helps boost us and boost our presence. A good partnership with TripAdvisor. I just wanted to point out a couple things here that accentuates our paid media affecting our earned media. For instance, we had an 8 percent increase in organic content searches in TripAdvisor, based upon people seeing our advertising. That shows that, you know, the page is really influencing the earned media. 17 percent increase of Nevada visitation to TripAdvisor on information about Nevada over the same period last year, and 8 percent of that is specifically attributed to our Travel Nevada advertising. The advertising is working and it's pushing people out there. That was some great information to see.

I talked a bit about our relationship with Expedia and Travelocity and how we've expanded that. You can see, this is off our winter landing page. How somebody would, if they were so inclined, to book a trip to Elko, could click on one of those links and it would then take them to an Elko page, or a Las Vegas page, or whatever city they were looking to visit. These Nevada landing pages have specific properties pertaining to that city. Here's Vegas, and then we go to Travelocity, Reno. Here's the really interesting thing, and it shows that we hitched our wagon to a very dominant star in the OTA realm. There has been 11 percent in booking revenue from last year at this time, and this has just occurred since these campaigns launched on 12/15 through the 9th of this month. \$51 million for Expedia, a 51 percent increase on Travelocity's booking of \$10.6 million. That is probably due to Travelocity being purchased by Expedia and it increased exposure they received there.

You can see some of the other stats there. The ADR is up on both sites. Length of stay is up for Travelocity. Length of stay is down a percent for Expedia. I'm not sure why that is, but overall room nights, 424,000 Expedia, and respectively 91,000 for Travelocity. We gain good exposure with them, and I think we have a good opportunity to make direct bookings based upon that information.

Just some statistics from our website. We've had 29,000 adventure views from the launch of our campaign, which is fairly significant. That's people going to a specific adventure that we pushed out. Again, it could be the hot springs or it

could be the significance of Picon Punch in our state -- our state's history, so on and so forth. 6,477 partner referrals which is just wonderful in my book. That's people clicking out to our various partners, whether it's a lodging facility or it's an attraction. Pretty significant referral rate. 4,300 visitor guide orders. That's good to see. And that's again, from the launch of the campaign.

About the paid portion of our social on Facebook. The important thing I wanted to point out was the 27,000 additional views that we received of our TV spot through our paid advertising on Facebook. When we wrap everything up at the end and we do our effectiveness study, we'll be able to show the relationship between how this has impacted our organic social impact.

Our promotion, coming along nicely. You can see we've got some great partners there. Commissioner Wagon, thank you very much for participating on Heavenly's behalf. Apex is a new partner for us, and they are a worldwide sunglass distributor. They just happen to be in all of our key target markets, as well as some of our feeder, or international markets. We're looking at expanding upon that relationship, and that certainly came about because of this particular promotion. The promotion is built to create a strong buzz in both PR and the social end of things. We're doing a lot of buildup leading up to it. We'll have a strong presence while the promotion is taking place, and then we have the opportunity to do the follow up of what took place, what type of party they had and enjoyed themselves. It's getting some good buzz, and we have another week for that before that closes out and the winners will be announced.

Okay. Commissioner Baum, yeah, we understand. We've gone through some pain with our search aspect on our website. Admittedly, it's been difficult. We're currently in beta testing, moving from this old position where you would type something in and you would have to type it all the way in, and then when you get the search results you get this confusing left-hand navigation bar and then even less-focused series of points of interest being detailed on the website. As of the end of this month, we will then be going to what is called predictive search. If you type in red, Red Rock will come in and then offer that information up. If you type in Reno, you won't get Renown Hospital. Our search display is changing dramatically to a more visual display.

Instead of having copy blocks and text-heavy type of search, we're giving photos with brief captions, considerably more search options on there, and then an easier to use navigation bar at the top. I think we're going to see a considerable change in our usage based upon this, and our bounce rate, I think, is going to drop considerably. We've added a map element as well, that allows people to click on

the map, take them to that particular point of interest or adventure. Chris, did I forget anything on that?

Matthews: No, but we'll get the (inaudible).

Fine: Got it. Sorry.

Matthews: For the record, Chris Matthews, Tourism Webmaster. Hello. On the backend, one of the things that we've been able to do is to expose the inner workings of how search results are displayed, which is going to allow us to fine tune those results to make sure that what we're expecting to see is what we are actually seeing. To Commissioner Baum's point, I just did a search on our beta site for Reno and sorted by the places to stay, and our first 71 results are very specifically Reno lodging facilities. We've been able to fine tune that and make sure that the appropriate entries are showing up where they're supposed to.

Hutchison: Great. Thank you very much. Is it just a great job to the tourism webmaster? Don't you just love telling people that?

Matthews: Oh, it's brilliant. I love it.

Hutchison: Thank you for your information. Commissioner Baum.

Baum: Just to that, since we have our new marketing team here, two of the other areas that I'm sure will be addressed are the way the state is referred to. For example, Reno-Tahoe is referred to as northwestern. No consumers look at the world that way. That's not a term that's used locally. It's not a term used by outsiders, so it makes it difficult. If you don't know where Reno is located in the state, there's no way you're going to end up there, and so that's a major flaw. And then the other thing is when it gets to special events, which certainly are a big element of Northern Nevada's appeal and certainly big in Vegas, as well, we're short on content. Some of the largest, most impressive 500,000-attendee kind of events don't show up, and some of the smallest, most secondary events do. So content wise, we really have to work on that because we're underselling ourselves.

We're one of the best states in the country in terms of special events and activities to come to, and yet most of those are not on the website. Those are big things, because if we're spending millions of dollars in advertising to drive people to that site and when they get there they can't find information on the things we're most proud of, that's a problem. I don't want to beat a dead horse, but with a new team these are real issues, because website mobile device the same content is being drawn, it has to be useful.

- Hutchison: Thank you, Commissioner.
- Fine: Lieutenant Governor, I jumped ahead in the Agenda a little bit. I overran Bethany's portion, so I might as well just close out.
- Hutchison: You've got the flexibility to do that, so...
- Fine: All right. I apologize about that.
- Hutchison: That's all right.
- Fine: Finally, we are in the website world. We're updating our much needed Nevada culture and tourism industry partner and specific museums, arts and Indian Commission websites. This is the site on the left is the overarching Tourism and Cultural Affairs site, which will house museums, Indian affairs, our industry partner site, as well as arts. Those are being made over and new content is being put into those now and should be live somewhere in mid-March or so.
- Hutchison: All right. Ms. Vecchio.
- Vecchio: This is Claudia, for the record. This is the Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs component of the site. The travelnevada.biz site, the industry site, it will remain a Travel Nevada component. It's not a consumer site, it's for industry and industry education. When we talked at the strategic planning meeting as a full Commission, the managing and enhancing the reputation of this organization and its offerings out to our partners, needs to live very strongly on that site. While the agency will be working on the consumer facing travelnevada.com, Chris and his team, will be completing nevadaculture.org, which is our sister agency. The business site of TravelNevada will be the next key thing that they'll be working on internally. The site will be redesigned to enhance the reputation and the product offerings from our agency.
- Hutchison: Great. Thank you. Mr. Fine.
- Fine: And finally, I just want to leave you with this. We just received an e-mail this morning from a lady who is responding to one of our thank you e-mails. It says, "Thank you for the nice e-mail. I had the privilege of staying at the Luxor and love Nevada, too. I would like to live in Nevada and move to your beloved state. I currently live in Maryland and hate this state." (Inaudible).
- Hutchison: All right. Mr. Fine, your assignment today is to go find her and bring her here.
- Fine: So that's it for me. Thank you very much. Can I answer any questions?
- Hutchison: Commissioners, any questions on Mr. Fine's fine presentation? All right.

Fine: Fantastic.

Hutchison: You did a great job. Thank you very much.

Fine: Thank you.

Hutchison: Ms. Vecchio, do we have anything else on Agenda Item No. 6? Does that close us out?

Vecchio: That closes us out of item 6.

Hutchison: All right. Let's close out Agenda Item No. 6 and move on to Agenda Item No. 7, which is Public Relations Update.

Drysdale: Hi. For the record, Bethany Drysdale, Director of Public Relations. I'm going to give a quick overview of how some of what we're doing in public relations is integrated. You're going to hear that word over and over again, integrated with what marketing is doing. This is very exciting for us because before Claudia got here several years ago, PR was not really part of marketing. I would not be at one of these meetings and we were doing our own thing. Claudia very brilliantly brought us together and it's been working more and more cohesively with Greg on board now. It's very exciting for us to be able to know that we have one solid mission, one solid goal and one solid voice. What I'm going to show you is really just examples of what we've been doing to speak in one voice.

Social media is huge for our audience, of course, really targeting those millennials who are on their phones and using social media. Greg used a slide earlier that I wish I had included in mine, as well. It was the inverted pyramid that showed impressions at the top. Fantastic. You get people aware of your brand. That's wonderful. That's where we've been for a very long time, showing people what's around Nevada. What we want to do is really engage people, and that's where you get the likes. People who are loyal to your brand will like everything you do. We see on Facebook lots of likes. For a long time, we really reported the impressions and the likes because that was the awareness. But the real meat of what we want to do is getting people to advocate for us, getting them to take that step beyond just scrolling through their news feed on Facebook and liking things here and there. We want them to share it. We want them to think something is so cool that they want their friends to see it. That's what we're really getting after, is developing the content, developing the social media posts, news that is really interesting and cool enough, for lack of a better word, something cool enough that they want to share with their friends, making them look cool in the process, as well.

That's what's been really exciting for me in this last campaign is to see the change in engagement, to see the change in shares. We are hitting records that we've never hit before, obviously, if it's a record. This is really exciting to me, some of the stats. I won't read through all of them, but to finally see people retweeting and reposting things is just so cool for us. When we get to that TNS study that'll come out at the end of the campaign, as Greg said, we'll really be able to see how the paid and the earned is working together to drive our message even farther.

Facebook is where it gets really, really cool. You'll see engagements, 22,000 engagements. Again, not just people seeing things. That's where they're actually taking action and liking and sharing things. In the last week alone, we had an increase in 31 -- almost 32 percent engagement. This is so exciting, and I truly believe it's because we're serving them things that they want to see, that they think is interesting. A lot of it is the content that's been developed for Matador and Nativo and content developed for our website, where we're working very integrated, again, with marketing. We're coming up with the messages, the things that we think are cool and will be shared, they're working them into their marketing platform, and then we can all share it. So it's really awesome how it's working together.

Here's one of the Matador stories. 15 things every Californian should know about Nevada. California is obviously one of our big target markets, both in Bay area and Southern California. This story was just phenomenal, got shared and liked and reached all over the place. That was one great example.

Hutchison: Could I just ask you (inaudible)?

Drysdale: Oh, absolutely.

Hutchison: Is that our original content or was that something we took from another publication?

Drysdale: Matador created it for us. We gave them the story ideas. They really came back to us throughout and said, okay, here are some stories that we think we should put together, and we went back and said, well, this one's okay but it's been played out, or this one's a great idea, can you flesh this out for us. I don't remember how many stories are they doing for us.

Fine: I think they're doing four and then a video segment.

Drysdale: They're doing four stories for us and then a video, as well.

Hutchison: Over the course of how much time?

- Drysdale: Of --
- Fine: Between now and the end of the month.
- Drysdale: Now and the end of the month. We've had two, right, so far? Three through Matador, so we have one more coming. This is really us working with them to develop the right story ideas. They aren't going out and creating without our stamp of approval, and really working with us on it. Something that we know, everybody loves lists, especially in social media. There's argument that they've been done to death, but I think people still really want those nuggets, those sound bites. Okay, these are the 15 things that I probably should know about the state. I think that's why this one did really well. It's a little challenge to our neighbors to the west. If they want to come here, these are things they should know about our state.
- Hot springs are fantastic. Whether you are somebody who will actually go out and sit in a hot spring or you just think you might be that type of person who's cool enough to do that, whether or not you actually will do it. I think it really resonates with the aspirational side of travelers. This posted really well. This was another one that Matador wrote for us, but we told them we want a hot springs story. These are the hot springs we want you to include, and they went out and wrote it. If you don't know the Matador network, I really recommend going and checking it out. It's very cutting edge. I don't know if that's the right word for it. It definitely skews to a younger audience and it skews -- maybe risqué is not the right either, but it's -- a little edgy, a little edgier.
- Hutchison: Generally, risqué is not a good word in public meetings.
- Drysdale: No. Yeah, we'll strike that word. It is a little bit edgier, but it's our audience. It's a fantastic website, and they are huge on social. They are just all over the place in social media. This is another one they created. Got some great engagement from that. This one was actually an organic news story from USA Today. We love when we get those big posts. This one did really, really well, as well.
- Hutchison: Let me just ask you. What's your role, Ms. Drysdale, in trying to get USA Today or National Publications or Regional Publications? I mean that's one of the things you're doing. You're pitching this stuff all the time. Are you seeing results from that? What do you see trending with your efforts with major publications?
- Drysdale: That's a very traditional public relations, media relations role and we are pitching them constantly. It's really cool, I think. I like to think that Nevada works differently than a lot of other states, where we really work cooperatively with the local areas, as well. We're seeing that when we're pitching ski stories, of course,

North Lake Tahoe, South Lake Tahoe, RSCVA. Everybody is pitching those stories, as well. We go out to travel writer conferences and meet with travel writers. Freelancers are golden. They've had a bad reputation in the past for being travel writers so they can get free vacations, but that's really not the case. Travel writers have to make money. They have to sell their stories to make money. By selling their stories to many publications, they make even more money, which makes us more exposure.

Our role is pitching. We pitch constantly. Chris Moran who is not here today, she works in our office and writes a lot of the pitches and she's got a growing and very, very good list of media that she pitches to. We're also watching what travel writers are writing about, something that's a hot topic we'll jump on that if we fit in to it and we'll pitch a story.

Instagram is something that we're continuing to grow. Instagram is strictly visual, not a lot of room for text, so Nevada is perfect for it. Getting our colors out, like you mentioned, Don. Nevada is such a cool, beautiful state. Our sunsets lately have just been amazing, and we've seen a lot of traction with the really scenic shots on Instagram. Instagram is a place where we're doing a lot of curated content. We're getting people to post things for us, which is great. If you can get other people to post what they think is really cool and tag you in it, you're getting them to take an extra step, to go out of their way to do something for you. That's huge. That's part of the advocacy. They are now our advocates for the state.

Here is some examples of shots that were actually posted for us. Instagram isn't a really conversational place. People don't comment that much. To see even a handful of comments is exciting for us, and to see people taking that step to post these things for us. The scenic shots work really well on Instagram. Then jumping right into another segment. One of our things that we're really looking at now is supporting the air service coming into primarily Reno-Tahoe. That's where the big action is happening right now. Forgive me, please, in the south. I know there's a lot of great air service, new air service happening in Las Vegas. Where we're seeing some immediate opportunity, though, is with the new flights coming into Reno. With Volaris, the direct flight from Guadalajara, we have a media group coming in the week after next to write about that flight, and then a couple weeks later Travel Channel from Mexico is coming in on that flight and writing about Northern Nevada on a tour that we'll be doing.

JetBlue is a hot topic right now and we are all over that, especially now with our great partnership with Abbi Agency to see they're handling the RASC contract, as well. There is some great overlap and cool things that we can do. JetBlue is going to do a big press conference, media tours, a lot of really great media opportunities

in New York, so we'll be able to be a part of that. That's front and center on our radar right now. Then long-term, the Thomas Cook flight coming in from London. As you know, we have an office in London, representation there, so we're working with them to support that flight, as well. That doesn't happen until September, so we're in the planning stages now and I'll have more to be able to tell you as we get closer to that.

The spring/summer campaign. We're all about get out of there. It's been a nice, sunny winter, but we're looking forward to really pushing the adventure off roads in the spring/summer campaign, working with the Abbi agency on planning a press tour around adventure. This is not going to be a sightseeing, you know, bring your walking stick along. This is going to be a serious adventure tour. I'm very excited about that. That will really be our focus for the spring/summer, getting those messages out of really the only things you can do in Nevada. I mean, you can go to Utah and you can climb rocks, but they're going to have some real true-to Nevada experiences. I know I'm speaking very generally, because we're planning that now, but rest assured this is going to be a really cool adventure-focused campaign for us in the spring/summer. That is it for PR, so I'm happy to take any questions.

Hutchison: Commissioners, any questions for Ms. Drysdale, please? All right.

Drysdale: Okay.

Hutchison: Commissioner Baum.

Baum: Just a comment. I've only been here for three years, but I'm seeing more regional cooperation and coordination of PR efforts. And, obviously, a lot of that in the northern part of the state has to do with all the great story angles from the Tesla battery factory and other companies moving into the region, the drone industry, et cetera. But it's opening a lot of doors, and the good news is that the RSCVA and RASC, which I chair, work with the Abbi Agency, which is also creating a regional consortium and then we work closely with Bethany and her team here at NCOT. So on the PR side, I think we are pretty much well-linked together at every level, and as a result we're making sure we're not stepping on each other's toes and are able to go forward and maximize these opportunities. There's a lot of great media around the corner from various combinations of partners in that consortium. But there's never been more opportunity to get these national stories and reach the decision makers and the influencers who can help change the dialogue about, certainly, the Reno-Tahoe area, but also the rest of the state.

Hutchison: Thank you, Commissioner. Any comments in Las Vegas? All right.

Ralengkotter: It's great.

Hutchison: Thank you very much, Ms. Drysdale. Appreciate your presentation. Ms. Vecchio, does that close us out for Agenda Item. 7?

Vecchio: That closes us out for Item 7, and I believe we have covered Item 8.

Fine: We have.

Vecchio: All right.

Hutchison: Okay. We'll close out both Agenda Item 7 and Agenda Item 8. That takes us to Agenda Item No. 9, Public Comments. Are there any members of the public or anybody in the audience today here in Carson City who would like to offer public comments to the Commission? All right. How about in Las Vegas, any members there? Okay.

Public Comment
None

Hutchison: Well, just by show of hands, I'm just curious, who here is from out of state? Who here traveled here from out of state? Anybody here travel from out of state? All right. Your homework is to go stimulate the local economy. If you have any questions, I think Claudia can help you with a lot of different suggestions. All right. Then we'll go ahead and close out Agenda Item No. 9, which is Public Comment and we will move on to Agenda Item No. 10.

Adjournment

Hutchison: The Chair will accept a motion for adjournment.

Baum: Move to adjourn.

Hutchison: Commissioner Baum moved to adjourn.

Ralengkotter: Second.

Hutchison: Second by -- Lieutenant Governor, was that you?

Ralengkotter: No, it was me, Rossi.

Hunt-Bono: It was Rossi.

Hutchison: Oh, I'm sorry, Rossi. Well, then I'll -- we'll give Rossi the second. You heard the motion, all those in favor? All those in favor signify by saying aye.

Group: Aye.

Hutchison: Any opposed no? Motion carries. We're adjourned. Thank you very much.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dee Chekowitz-Dykes, Executive Assistant
Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs
Nevada Commission on Tourism