

STATE OF NEVADA
COMMISSION ON TOURISM

MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 18, 2025
2:02 p.m. – Adjournment
Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams / Teleconference

Agenda Item A – Opening – Call to Order and Confirmation of Proper Posting

Chair: Lieutenant Governor Stavros Anthony, Chair, Nevada Commission on Tourism (“Chair Lieutenant Governor Anthony”).

The meeting of the Nevada Commission on Tourism (NCOT) was called to order at 2:02 p.m. on Thursday, September 18, 2025.

Chair LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

“I will call the Nevada Commission on Tourism meeting to order. This is agenda item A, as in Adam. Everything was properly posted. Is that correct?”

KELLY BENOIT:

“Kelly Benoit for the record. The meeting was properly noticed and posted.”

The Chair also advised that, due to participating by phone, Commissioners wishing to speak should verbally identify themselves.

Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

Staff: Kelly Benoit conducted roll call.

KELLY BENOIT:

“Lieutenant Governor Chair Lieutenant Governor Anthony?”

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY: “Here.”

KELLY BENOIT:

“Commissioner Rick Murdock?”

COMMISSIONER RICK MURDOCK: “Here.”

KELLY BENOIT:

“Commissioner Fletch Brunelle?”

COMMISSIONER FLETCH BRUNELLE: “Here.”

KELLY BENOIT:

“Commissioner Shelly Capurro?”

COMMISSIONER SHELLEY CAPURRO: “Here.”

KELLY BENOIT:

“Commissioner Mendy Elliott?”

COMMISSIONER MENDY ELLIOTT: “Present.”

KELLY BENOIT:

"Commissioner Annette Kerr?"

COMMISSIONER ANNETTE KERR: "Present."

KELLY BENOIT:

"Commissioner Jill Rowland-Lagan?"

COMMISSIONER JILL ROWLAND-LAGAN: "Here."

KELLY BENOIT:

"Commissioner Mike Larragueta?"

COMMISSIONER MIKE LARRAGUETA: "Here."

KELLY BENOIT:

"Commissioner Jane Moon?"

COMMISSIONER JANE MOON: "Present."

KELLY BENOIT:

"Commissioner Judith Perez Siegel?"

COMMISSIONER JUDITH PEREZ SIEGEL: "Here."

KELLY BENOIT:

"Commissioner Herb Santos?"

COMMISSIONER HERB SANTOS: "Here."

KELLY BENOIT:

"Okay. We do have a quorum. Before moving on, it's important to note that ncot.publiccomment@travelnevada.com is still down. If you wish to make public comment via email, please email kbenoit@dtca.nv.gov. To call in using audio conference, call 775-321-6111, access code 448 527 964. Please leave microphones on mute until asked by the Chair, then unmute to speak, and use the raise-hand feature when possible."

A quorum was confirmed.

Agenda Item B – Discussion Only – Public Comment

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"This is the time set aside for public comment. If anyone would like to make a comment about an agenda item during our Commission on Tourism meeting, this is the time to do it. Is there anybody on public comment?"

KELLY BENOIT:

"I don't hear anyone on audio, so there is no public comment at this time. Kelly Benoit for the record."

No public comment was received.

Agenda Item C – For Possible Action -- Approval of Minutes

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"This is approval of the minutes from the June 4, 2025, Tourism Commission meeting. Are there any questions or comments about the minutes? I don't hear any comments. Is there a motion to approve the minutes?"

COMMISSIONER HERB SANTOS:

"Herb Santos, so moved"

COMMISSIONER FLETCH BRUNELLE:

"So moved, Fletch Brunelle."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Okay. I heard Commissioner Herb Santos make a motion. Is that correct?"

COMMISSIONER HERB SANTOS:

"That's correct."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"And I heard Fletch make a second?"

COMMISSIONER FLETCH BRUNELLE:

"Yes, sir."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Okay. Is there any comment on the motion? Hearing none. All those in favor, signify by saying 'aye.'"

MULTIPLE:

"Aye."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Anyone opposed, nay? I hear all ayes. The motion carries. The minutes are approved."

Motion: Approve June 4, 2025 NCOT meeting minutes.

Motion by: Commissioner Herb Santos

Second by: Commissioner Fletch Brunelle

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item D – Discussion Only – Welcome Remarks

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"I just want to thank all the Commissioners for attending the meeting today. I know we had some hiccups because of the cyber-attack that is coming to an end. I appreciate your patience working with Rafael and me to put this meeting together. Thank you for serving on the Tourism Commission. I really appreciate volunteerism."

No action taken.

Agenda Item E – For Possible Action – Travel Nevada America 250 Grant Recommendations

Staff Presentation (Summarized)

Presenter: RAFAEL VILLANUEVA, CEO, Travel Nevada.

Mr. Villanueva reviewed Nevada's America 250 Grant Program, created as part of the state's contribution to the national semi-quincentennial celebration. Key points:

- The Governor's Executive Order charged the Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs with leading Nevada's America 250 efforts.
- The Legislature appropriated \$250,000 in Spring 2025 for America 250 tourism-driven grants managed by Travel Nevada.
- Application window: July 1 – August 15, 2025.
- Submissions: 31 applications, totaling \$846,000+ in requests.
- Available funding: \$250,000, requiring difficult decisions; more than \$500,000 in requests went unfunded.
- Eligible applicants included DMOs, local governments, nonprofits, and tribal entities.
- A 50% match was required; in-kind match (volunteer hours and non-monetary resources) was allowed.
- A five-person internal committee (industry marketing, Nevada Magazine, and PR) reviewed applications using a rubric weighing:
 - Project goals and alignment with America 250 and Nevada's role in U.S. history
 - Inclusivity
 - Promotion strategy
 - Economic impact and feasibility
 - Clarity and creativity of the project narrative

- Staff sought geographic balance across northern, central, and southern Nevada.
- Some projects were not funded because they duplicated rural marketing grants or did not align with America 250 goals.
- Travel Nevada will conduct quarterly check-ins with awardees and require final reports in August 2026; a full report will be brought back to NCOT in one year.
- A total of 14 projects are recommended for funding, structured into four voting blocks to manage Commissioner recusals.

Mr. Villanueva noted that recommendations will also be presented to the America 250 Commission (a separate board) alongside other state initiatives.

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Just to confirm, the 14 awards total up to \$250,000, correct?"

RAFAEL VILLANUEVA:

"Correct, yes."

He further explained the blocks were designed anticipating recusals by Commissioners Kerr, Moon, Rowland-Lagan, Murdock, and others, while avoiding 14 separate votes.

COMMISSIONER HERB SANTOS:

"Herb Santos for the record. Did any of these grants that were awarded also receive any of the rural grants for similar type projects?"

RAFAEL VILLANUEVA:

"Not for similar type projects, but other projects, yes. Some applications that were not funded were similar to Rural Marketing Grants previously awarded."

COMMISSIONER HERB SANTOS:

"So to be clear, all of these projects we're awarding here are separate, distinct projects from what they may have submitted or from the rural grants we awarded previously?"

RAFAEL VILLANUEVA:

"That's correct, yes."

He added that Rural Marketing Grants are only for rural communities, while America 250 was opened statewide, including Reno and Southern Nevada.

COMMISSIONER MENDY ELLIOTT:

"This is Mendy Elliott. I'm curious about how you valued the in-kind match. Was it per hour, per person? We didn't see full applications, and the detail sheet doesn't break out cash vs. volunteer

value. Coming from the Legislature, they'll ask how much skin in the game each jurisdiction has. Is our \$250,000 now worth \$500,000, \$750,000? I'd like that level of detail in the future."

RAFAEL VILLANUEVA:

He explained that volunteer value differed by project, but the committee focused primarily on alignment with America 250 goals rather than volunteer valuation as a deciding factor. He agreed to provide more detailed match breakdowns in future materials.

CORTNEY BLOOMER:

"Cortney Bloomer for the record. Travel Nevada uses the national standard rate for volunteer time, currently \$34.79 per hour."

COMMISSIONER MENDY ELLIOTT:

She reiterated her desire for clearer breakdowns of cash vs. volunteer match (e.g., for Laughlin's \$35,000 project) for future legislative and oversight clarity, though she did not wish to delay this round.

RAFAEL VILLANUEVA:

He agreed to incorporate that level of detail in future grant summaries, including Rural Marketing Grants.

COMMISSIONER SHELLY CAPURRO:

"I have to agree. Thank you for doing that in the future."

There was a brief light-hearted exchange as COMMISSIONER HERB SANTOS struggled to clear a raised hand icon, which was resolved.

America 250 Grant Awards – Block Votes

Awards are presented in four voting blocks, with Table Format A below. "Amount Requested" could not be specified in the meeting record; only "Amount Awarded" and totals were read into the record.

Table 1 – America 250 Block 1

Awardee	Requested	Awarded	Rational
Latino Arts & Culture	\$15,616	\$15,616	Strong cultural representation of diverse Nevada communities and voter education opportunities.

Washoe Valley Alliance	\$712	\$712	Strong alignment with heritage tourism objectives.
City of Sparks	\$26,000	\$25,785	Strong alignment with heritage tourism objectives.
Carson Valley Visitors Authority	\$4,110	\$4,110	Supports Genoa Americana Celebration expansion + map; fully aligned with America 250.
TOTAL AWARD REQUEST		46,223	

Block 1 Total Awarded: **\$46,223**

Abstentions: Commissioner Rick Murdock (recused).

COMMISSIONER JANE MOON:

"This is Jane Moon. I move to approve Latino Arts and Culture, Washoe Valley Alliance, City of Sparks, and Carson Valley Visitors Authority for a total of \$46,223 for the Travel Nevada America 250 Grant recommendations."

COMMISSIONER ANNETTE KERR:

"Annette Kerr, second."

Motion carried by voice vote; no nays.

Table 2 – America 250 Awards, Block 2

Awardee	Requested	Awarded	Rational	Adjustment
Pony Express Territory	\$49,954	\$49,954	Supports Re-Ride Celebration and HWY 50 Passport, directly tied to America 250 heritage storytelling.	
White Pine Main Street Association	\$22,000	\$18,000	Supports documentary on Ely's copper heritage and July 4 th celebrations.	Reduced to essential components.
Visit Fallon	\$39,900	\$39,900	Supports year-long heritage and arts celebration including murals, fireworks, and Chalk festival, fostering civic pride.	
TOTAL AWARD REQUEST		\$107,854		

Block 2 Total Awarded: **\$107,854**

COMMISSIONER JANE MOON:

"This is Jane Moon. I abstain from this block."

Motion: Commissioner Mike Larragueta moved to approve awards as read: Pony Express Territory (\$49,954), White Pine Main Street Association (\$18,000), and Visit Fallon (\$39,900).

Second: Commissioner Mendy Elliott.

Vote: Ayes; Commissioner Jane Moon abstained. Motion carried.

Table 3 – America 250 Awards, Block 3

Awardee	Requested	Awarded	Rational	Adjustment
Nevada Cowboy Country Territory	\$21,055	\$10,000	Supports marketing California Trail Days with partnerships from Native communities.	Reduced to balance budget.
Town of Pahrump	\$5,000	\$5,000	Main Street mural and youth arts legacy project fully funded for its strong community engagement and educational impact.	
Town of Tonopah	\$2,408	\$1,500	Supports brochures for historic walking tours, reduced funding covering essential promotional materials.	
TOTAL AWARD REQUEST		\$16,500		

Block 3 Total Awarded: **\$16,500**

COMMISSIONER ANNETTE KERR:

"Mr. Chairman, this is Annette Kerr. I will be abstaining from the Southern Nevada group."

Motion: Commissioner Herb Santos moved to approve "the Southern Nevada America 250 recommendations" as read above for a total of \$16,500.

Second: After multiple Commissioners indicated "second," Commissioner Jane Moon was recognized as the second.

Vote: Ayes; Commissioner Annette Kerr abstained. Motion carried.

Table 4 – America 250 Awards, Block 4

Awardee	Requested	Awarded	Rational	Adjustment
Laughlin Tourism Commission	\$35,000	\$35,000	Seven-month celebration across Nevada, Arizona, and California highlighting local history, The Davis Dam and boosting regional economic vitality.	
Clark County Parks & Recreation	\$21,4232	\$21,423	Supports signal box project turning utility boxes into historical landmarks, strong educational and visual impact.	
Visit Carson City	\$20,000	\$18,000	Supports public art trail celebrating Nevada values.	Partially funded to ensure sustainability.
St. Mary's Art Center	\$11,000	\$5,000	Supports content creation promoting historic arts venue.	Scaled back from full request.
TOTAL AWARD REQUEST		\$79,423		

Block 4 Total Awarded: **\$79,423**

COMMISSIONER JANE MOON:

"This is Jane Moon. I move to approve the Southern Nevada America 250 recommendations for Laughlin Tourism Commission for \$35,000, Clark County Parks and Recreation for \$21,423, Visit Carson City for \$18,000, and St. Mary's Art Center for \$5,000, for a total block of \$79,423."

COMMISSIONER ANNETTE KERR:

"Annette Kerr, second."

Vote: Motion carried unanimously; no abstentions noted for Block 4.

Chair's Direction: Chair requested that America 250 events be proactively shared with Commissioners so they may attend celebrations in their regions. Mr. Villanueva committed to including America 250 items and other events in monthly Commissioner updates.

Agenda Item F – For Possible Action – Request to Initiate RFP – Advertising & PR Agencies of Record

Staff Presentation (Summarized)

Presenters: CAROLINE SEXTON, Chief Marketing Officer; RAFAEL VILLANUEVA, CEO.

Key points:

- Travel Nevada requested approval to begin an RFP process to secure the next agency or agencies of record for:
 - Creative
 - Media planning and buying
 - Digital and social media
 - Public relations
- Contract may be awarded:
 - To one single full-service agency, or
 - To multiple agencies (model similar to current structure).
- Compensation structure: Travel Nevada is considering shifting from purely project-based/hourly fees to a retainer-plus model; the specific structure and amounts will be evaluated during the RFP.
- Spending authority requested: Up to \$17,000,000 (total authority), to cover:
 - Retainers
 - Project fees
 - Media and other purchases made on Travel Nevada's behalf
 - Final annual budgets will still be set biennially and approved each fiscal year through the normal process.
- Term: Initial two-year contract with two optional two-year extensions (potential total of six years), providing both continuity and flexibility.
- Selection criteria: Preference for Nevada-based or Nevada-connected agencies, but primary focus on:
 - Creativity and innovation
 - Media buying power and efficiencies
 - Expertise across advertising, digital, social, and PR
- Approval would allow staff to work with State Purchasing to draft and release the RFP.

Mr. Villanueva added that the item is being brought forward early because changing the compensation structure will require additional time within state purchasing processes.

Extensive discussion followed on:

- The RFP timeline and process
- Role of Marketing Committee vs. Evaluation Committee

- State purchasing rules
- Commissioner participation and potential conflicts or recusals

COMMISSIONER MIKE LARRAGUETA:

"Rafael and Caroline, it's Mike Larragueta for the record. What is your process? We just went through this at the RSCVA and it was an extensive process. Do you have scoring grids? Who is on the panel? Will there be finalists, in-person presentations, and will those come in front of the Commission, or only the recommendation?"

SEXTON:

She explained that the State is heavily involved in RFP facilitation (scoring, timelines, interviews). Travel Nevada will review initial responses, narrow to presenters, and a scoring committee will evaluate and then bring a recommendation to the Commission.

RAFAEL VILLANUEVA:

He explained that the Marketing Committee (a standing subcommittee made of marketing experts statewide) would review the process and criteria in conjunction with State Purchasing. He noted he cannot serve on the evaluation committee himself due to his oversight role.

COMMISSIONER JANE MOON:

She confirmed the current contract end date is June 30, 2026, and that no further extensions are available. The intent is to have a decision in FY26 for a July 1, 2026 start (FY27).

COMMISSIONER MENDY ELLIOTT:

She expressed a strong desire for Commissioner representation on the evaluation, noting the size of the contract and the expertise on NCOT. She felt the Commission should have "a seat at the table."

BRENDA SCOLARI:

Director Scolari explained that:

- Commissioners can serve on the evaluation committee, and this has been encouraged in the past.
- However, under State Purchasing rules, final award decisions rest with the evaluation committee; the award is not brought back to the full Commission for final selection.
- The contract details are not public until the contract is signed, though expenditures under the contract will later be approved through normal budget actions.

HARRY WARD, DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL:

He advised that whether a commissioner who serves on a committee can later vote on related actions would depend on the nature of their involvement. Commissioners would need to disclose participation and decide if recusal is necessary at that time.

COMMISSIONER HERB SANTOS:

He clarified his understanding: if the evaluation committee makes the award, "there's nothing for the Commission to do" in terms of selecting the winning agency.

Director Scolari confirmed that is correct under the purchasing framework.

COMMISSIONER MENDY ELLIOTT:

She reiterated that this is precisely why Commissioner participation on the evaluation committee is essential, given the size of the contract and limited formal approval role afterward.

COMMISSIONER FLETCH BRUNELLE:

As a Marketing Committee member, he described the caliber of that committee (various Nevada marketing leaders) and noted that in past roles (e.g., at LVCVA), boards have selected between multiple finalist agencies. Director Scolari indicated that for the State, the process is more constrained, but that Commissioners can be evaluation committee members, subject to formulas for committee size and composition.

MARY ELLEN KAWCHACK:

She explained that evaluation committees are typically confidential, multi-agency groups requiring balance (out-of-state, other agencies, using agency, etc.), and participation is a time-consuming commitment. NCOT has historically had at least one Commissioner on such committees.

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

He summarized that Commissioners interested in serving should contact Rafael, and he will coordinate with Director Scolari, legal counsel, and purchasing to determine appropriate placements (marketing committee vs. evaluation committee). The Chair stated that the first two additional Commissioners to volunteer would be included, along with Commissioner Brunelle.

Motion on Agenda Item F

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Any other questions or comments on agenda item F? Do I have a motion to initiate the RFP process for advertising and public relation agencies of record?"

COMMISSIONER ANNETTE KERR:

"It was Annette Kerr. I move to approve."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Okay. We have a motion to approve. Is there a second?"

COMMISSIONER JUDITH PEREZ SIEGEL:

"I second, Judy Perez Siegel."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Thank you. We have a motion. Is there any discussion on the motion? All those in favor signify by saying 'aye.'"

MULTIPLE:

"Aye."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Opposed, nay? Motion carries. Thank you everyone for helping us kind of shake this out. I feel a lot more comfortable about moving forward."

Motion: Approve initiation of the RFP process for advertising and public relations agencies of record as presented.

Motion by: Commissioner Annette Kerr

Second by: Commissioner Judith Perez Siegel

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item G – For Possible Action – Request to Initiate RFP – International Representation Agencies

Presenter: RAFAEL VILLANUEVA

Summary:

- Three international representation contracts (Canada, Australia, United Kingdom) expire in FY26.
- Travel Nevada requested authority to initiate an RFP process for up to \$500,000 per contract (maximum spending authority per country, set by biennium budgets and NCOT approval).
- Scope includes:
 - Trade relationships (tour operators, advisors, airlines)
 - In-market PR and media
 - Trade shows and sales missions
 - FAM tours and in-country training
 - Collaboration with LVCVA, RSCVA, Brand USA, and other U.S. partners
- Staff emphasized the need for boots on the ground in international markets.

COMMISSIONER HERB SANTOS:

"Who's on the evaluation committee right now?"

RAFAEL VILLANUEVA:

"We have not gone to that point yet. This is just to start the process. The committee will likely include internal international team members (e.g., Nicole Orsua, Elsa Gomez) and external DMO representatives such as RSCVA and LVCVA."

COMMISSIONER MIKE LARRAGUETA:

He confirmed that the spending authority is \$500,000 per country, for a total of up to \$1.5 million, and asked about redundancy with existing LVCVA and Tahoe representation.

RAFAEL VILLANUEVA:

- Redundancy is a known concern; staff will seek complementary roles rather than duplication.
- LVCVA currently overlaps with Travel Nevada in Mexico, UK, and Canada, but not in Australia.
- In the past, Nevada and LVCVA have sometimes shared reps; future decisions will depend on LVCVA's willingness and strategic fit.

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

Reiterated that Commissioners interested in participating in the process should contact Rafael.

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Is there a motion to approve agenda item G?"

COMMISSIONER JANE MOON:

"Jane Moon for the record. I move to initiate the RFP process for International Representation Agencies in Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom for a spending authority of up to \$500,000 per contract."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Is there a second?"

COMMISSIONER HERB SANTOS:

"Herb Santos for the record. I'll second."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Thank you. Any questions or comments on the motion? All those in favor signify by saying 'aye.'"

MULTIPLE:
"Aye."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:
"Opposed, nay? Motion carries."

Motion: Approve initiation of the International Representation RFP process for Canada, Australia, and the UK, with authority up to \$500,000 per contract.

Motion by: Commissioner Jane Moon

Second by: Commissioner Herb Santos

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item H – For Possible Action – Destination Development – Cohort 4 Participant Recommendations

Presenters: RAFAEL VILLANUEVA, CORTNEY BLOOMER

Ms. Bloomer gave a detailed overview of Travel Nevada's Destination Development (3D) program, noting:

- 3D began in 2022 to stimulate economic development, improve quality of life, and enhance visitor experience in rural Nevada.
- Cohorts 1–3 have completed the project planning phase and are now implementing their plans with grant support.
- For Cohort 4, pre-application site visits were conducted from June 2 – July 18, 2025, for six interested communities.
- Applications were open July 28 – August 15 via the Submittable platform.
- Four applications were submitted from communities that had pre-application visits.
- Applications were reviewed by the 3D Working Group (Nevada Arts Council, SBDC, University Center for Economic Development, GOED, Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation, and BLM). The Working Group met August 21 to prepare recommendations.

Recommended Cohort 4 Awardees:

1. Mesquite Opportunities Regional Fund (Mesquite, Nevada)
 - Focus on sports tourism development and creating a vibrant, walkable downtown.
 - Application showed exceptionally broad and deep community collaboration and support.
2. Goldfield Main Street (Goldfield, Nevada)

- Entire community is a National Historic District with 120 historic buildings from early 1900s mining history.
- Strong outdoor recreation and heritage tourism potential.
- Working Group noted Goldfield's ongoing commitment to professional development and consistent engagement with Travel Nevada.

Ms. Bloomer noted that selection at this stage is for planning participation only; grant implementation funding (up to \$1,000,000 total for Cohort 4) will be allocated later through a separate process.

COMMISSIONER RICK MURDOCK:

"How much are the awards?"

CORTNEY BLOOMER:

"At this time, there are no financial awards. This is only selecting the communities to participate in the planning process. As you recall, we awarded funding to Cohort 3 communities (Friends of Sutro Tunnel and Walker Basin) at the previous Commission meeting."

RAFAEL VILLANUEVA:

"The total amount they will have opportunity to access will be a million dollars."

COMMISSIONER JANE MOON:

"Between the two of them, Rafael?"

RAFAEL VILLANUEVA:

"That is correct, yes."

COMMISSIONER JANE MOON:

"Per the recommendation of the 3D Project Working Group who have duly considered the Cohort 4 applications, I move that the Nevada Commission on Tourism approve the Mesquite Opportunities Regional Fund, Mesquite, Nevada, and Goldfield Main Street, Goldfield, Nevada, as the official Cohort project selections for Travel Nevada's 3D Project."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Okay, I have a motion. Do I have a second?"

COMMISSIONER MIKE LARRAGUETA:

"For the record, Mike Larragueta. I'll make a second."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Thank you. I have a motion on the floor. Any discussion or questions about the motion? All those in favor signify by saying 'aye.'"

MULTIPLE:
"Aye."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:
"Anyone opposed? Motion carries."

Motion: Approve Mesquite Opportunities Regional Fund and Goldfield Main Street as Cohort 4 3D project destinations.

Motion by: Commissioner Jane Moon

Second by: Commissioner Mike Larragueta

Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item I – Discussion Only – Destination Development – Next Phase (Special Projects Grants)

Presenters: RAFAEL VILLANUEVA, CORTNEY BLOOMER

CORTNEY BLOOMER:

- The 2025 Legislature provided an additional \$500,000 for Destination Development.
- Rather than adding another full 3D Cohort (which is long-term), Travel Nevada will launch "Special Projects Grants" focused on accessibility in tourism across rural communities.
- Grants will support two categories:
 1. Programmatic Support and Training (~\$100,000) – education, technology solutions, visitor readiness, and workforce training to help destinations better serve visitors with disabilities.
 2. Infrastructure / Capital Enhancements (up to ~\$400,000) – projects to improve accessibility at facilities, attractions, and recreation amenities.
- Application window: October 1 – November 14, 2025.
- Recommended awards will be brought to the December NCOT meeting.

Commissioners asked about timelines and scope; staff confirmed dates and reiterated alignment with the Strategic Plan and demographic trends (aging travelers, families with disability needs).

Agenda Item J – Discussion Only – Travel Nevada Quarterly Report

Presenters: RAFAEL VILLANUEVA, CAROLINE SEXTON, TRACIE BARNTHOUSE

Staff provided a video-based, narrated summary of Q4 results and FY25 highlights across:

- Destination Development (including 3D implementation, Gerlach museum opening, Walker Basin and Sutro grants)
- In-state market development (Deso Apparel partnership, in-state media missions in Las Vegas and Reno)
- Domestic and international marketing, trade, and PR (e.g., “Wild Westival” media event with Condé Nast in NYC; IPW participation; media and trade missions)
- Influencer strategy and budget:
 - FY25 influencer budget: \$250,000, including content production and paid promotion.
 - Focused on niche audiences (rockhounding, cocktail culture, etc.) and rural content capture.
- Website and AI search impacts:
 - Travel Nevada is seeing reduced website traffic where Google AI overviews now surface Travel Nevada content directly.
 - Staff is adapting by personalization, structured data, tracking performance across traditional and AI search, and maintaining strong SEO practices.
- Nevada Magazine & Visitor Guide:
 - NevadaMagazine.com is being migrated under TravelNevada.com for improved SEO and security.
 - Print remains in place: Two magazine issues per year plus the Adventure Guide.
 - The Adventure Guide recently won a U.S. Travel ESTO award for best printed piece.

Key exchanges:

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

Who monitors influencer content to ensure it aligns with state expectations.

CAROLINE SEXTON:

Detailed vetting, contractual guardrails, and ongoing monitoring by both internal and agency social media teams.

COMMISSIONER HERB SANTOS:

Asked whether Nevada Magazine was becoming digital-only. Ms. Sexton clarified that is not the case; print remains, with the website migration simply consolidating digital presence.

COMMISSIONER JANE MOON:

Praised shared experiences at media and trade missions (e.g., rock climbing, VR experiences,

cooking classes), noting they are more effective than traditional booth-style interactions and have directly driven visits to Fallon. She encouraged Travel Nevada to continue these experiential formats.

Staff agreed and noted these models will continue in future missions.

12. Finance Report (Agenda Item K – Discussion Only)

Presenter: STEWART TERRY, Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Terry explained:

- Due to the statewide cyber / ransomware incident, access to detailed actuals for FY25 and early FY26 is temporarily quarantined.
- He presented a high-level overview of budget categories and FY25 results, noting:
 - Some personnel transactions were cleared during FY25 close-out, adjusting totals by approximately \$70,000, but still within overall budget authority.
- He offered to provide a more detailed interim written finance report by email once systems access is fully restored, in advance of the next NCOT meeting.

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

Requested the detailed finance report be emailed to all Commissioners when available.

COMMISSIONER MENDY ELLIOTT:

Indicated she would defer detailed questions until she can review the full report.

No action was taken.

Agenda Item L – Discussion Only – Governor’s Conference on Tourism (GovCon) Update

Presenter: TRACIE BARNTHOUSE, Chief Communications Officer

Highlights:

- Dates & Venue: December 9–10, 2025 at Grand Sierra Resort (GSR) in Reno.
- Commission Invitations: Registration links and lodging details have been sent; Travel Nevada will handle Commissioner accommodations and share confirmations as the event nears.
- December 9:
 - NCOT Quarterly Meeting at RSCVA boardroom (thanks to Commissioner Larragueta).

- Commissioner Bootcamp – including roles, Travel Nevada updates, and an expanded fiscal overview of both Travel Nevada and the Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs.
- Welcome Reception hosted by Reno Tahoe with a themed event.
- Keynote & Sessions:
 - Opening keynote: Jenny Wood, former Google executive, NYT-bestselling author, and HBR contributor, speaking on resilience in a time of change.
 - Tourism Economics – returning due to high ratings last year.
 - US Travel Association and Brand USA session with Travel Nevada’s international reps on global outlook.
 - A panel featuring Commissioner Mike Larragueta, the Reno-Tahoe International Airport CEO, and the EDAWN CEO.
 - An agritourism panel is being developed (not yet finalized at time of meeting).
- Awards Dinner:
 - Conference will conclude with a hospitality leadership award recognizing an industry leader’s contribution to Nevada tourism.

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

Confirmed an agritourism session would be included. Ms. Barnthouse noted it is planned and in development.

COMMISSIONER HERB SANTOS:

Asked about returning a marketplace component to GovCon. Mr. Villanueva explained that there will be no marketplace in 2025 due to attendance and international representation considerations, but staff will consider reinstating it as the conference grows and more international partners attend.

COMMISSIONER MENDY ELLIOTT:

Emphasized that the Commissioner Bootcamp should include a full fiscal analysis of the department. Mr. Villanueva confirmed that would be the primary focus, with Director Scolari covering DTCA and Travel Nevada.

Agenda Item M – Discussion Only – Future NCOT Meeting Dates

Presenter: RAFAEL VILLANUEVA

Upcoming NCOT meetings:

- December 9, 2025 – Reno (in conjunction with GovCon)

- March 4, 2026
- June 3, 2026
- September 9, 2026

Staff aim to keep meetings within the same week each quarter. Commissioners may contact staff if substantial conflicts arise.

No action taken.

Agenda Item N – Discussion Only -- Public Comment

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:
Opened public comment.

COMMISSIONER ANNETTE KERR:
"Annette Kerr in Elko. I just wanted to let everyone know that on the 23rd of September, Rafael will be in Elko making presentations to our County Commission, our Board for the CVA, as well as City Council, and we'll be having a luncheon with all hotel stakeholders. My thanks in advance to Rafael and his staff for allowing him to come to Elko. We look forward to having him."

KELLY BENOIT:
Reported no additional public comment.

Agenda Item O – For Possible Action -- Adjournment

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:
"Last agenda item, possible action, adjournment. Is there a motion to adjourn?"

COMMISSIONER HERB SANTOS:
"Herb Santos for the record, so moved."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:
"Is there a second?"

COMMISSIONER MENDY ELLIOTT:
"Second, Mendy Elliott."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:
"I have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying 'aye.'"

MULTIPLE:

"Aye."

CHAIR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR ANTHONY:

"Opposed, nay? Motion carries. Thank you for going through this process. I look forward to seeing all of you in person at the Grand Sierra Resort on December 9th. Thank you very much, everyone."

Meeting adjourned.