

Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce

2022 Spring Meeting Notes

Tuesday, April 5, 2022, 10am, at Community Presbyterian Church

Attendees:

Kim Traynor, Chamber President, Yosemite Gateway Motel

Margie Beaver, Chamber Vice President, Beaver's Sporting Goods

Claire Landowski, Secretary/Treasurer, Mono Lake Committee

Rebecca Watkins, Community Presbyterian Church

Wayne Beaver, Beaver's Sporting Goods

Lily Pastel, Mono Lake Committee

Hillary Hansen-Jones, Mono Inn and High Sierra Brine Shrimp

Tom Jones, Mono Inn and High Sierra Brine Shrimp

Cory Zila, Tioga Green

Corey, Lee Vining Chevron

Paul McFarland, DeChambeau Creek Foundation

Tim Traynor, Yosemite Gateway Motel

Nancy Pinnizzotto, Nicely's etc

Kris Andriessen, CalTrans

Jeff Simpson, Mono County Tourism

Chamber Business

Update from CalTrans (Kris Andriessen)

Clean California event, April 23, 8am to 4pm. Free dump day at Benton Crossing Landfill. Residential waste only. Bring up to 9 tires.

Possibly another event in June for Pumice Valley Landfill.

Procurement fair, April 21, attendees get priority on CalTrans purchasing contracts. Contact Kris to sign up.

120 West update

- Snow removal complete up to Tioga Pass gate.
- Not open yet and no estimated opening date because many large rocks to remove, and need to shore up road shoulders which are soaked.

- No timeframe from NPS yet, either.

Lee Vining Rehabilitation Project - redesigning Hwy 395 through Lee Vining

- Full depth redo of pavement
- Selected design option 1, which is one lane in each direction plus center turn lane, and bike lanes on each side. Bump-outs for parking, right now designed as back-in angle parking but that could change pending community input.
- Nancy asked about snow clearing around the bump-outs - how will it work and will CalTrans be purchasing different equipment to be able to effectively clear snow from the parking areas? Unknown at this point.
- Rebecca asked about fixing drainage at intersections of 2nd and 3rd streets with 395. Currently doesn't drain so becomes dangerously icy—CalTrans needs to address.
- Comments on the project can be sent to d9publicinfo@dot.ca.gov

Reminder about election signs - they cannot be placed within CalTrans right of way

Update from Mono County Tourism (Jeff Simpson)

- Visitor Guide is ready for distribution. No ads this year, and probably won't have ads in future years, but every Mono County business is listed in the guide. Also has a calendar of events, campground guide, fishing regulations.
- Mono County has \$120,000 available to give out as forgivable loans to businesses to help subsidize hiring and retaining of low-income jobs.
- California DREAM Fund
 - \$10k grants available to new businesses
 - Business owners need to attend 10 small business classes put on by the state small business advocacy office
 - Not yet launched but coming up soon
- Send your opening dates to Jeff and he will post on Tourism's Facebook page
- Bodie Road opening tomorrow [opened 4/6/22]
- Fish stocking
- County spends \$100k each year on fish stocking, split between 18 bodies of water.
- Each destination gets 970lbs of fish (down a little bit from last year because Desert Springs has raised its rates a bit to cover fuel costs)
- Lee Vining Creek stocking dates will be May 24 and July 27
- Saddlebag Lake, June 28 and July 27
- Lundy Lake, May 24 and June 28
- Virginia Lakes, June Lake Loop will also be stocked

- Bridgeport Fish Enhancement Fund is a nonprofit that can help with fish stocking, they'd effectively double the load of fish we get through our own program if we partner. We'd have to put up banner and collect tags from caught fish. Wayne says he doesn't want to do that, wants to continue with independent program.
- Motels could consider using an ADR guild management program, which uses a dynamic pricing based on inventory. Book Direct is one company that does this. Obviously they take a fee or percentage
- Summer tourism forecast
- Big bump in international bookings
- India is a big and expanding market for us
- TOT revenue so far is on track with 2018-19
- Mono County has a community even marketing fund, you can get up to \$5k to promote an event
- YARTS as alternative to Yosemite entrance pass
 - The \$26 YARTS ticket includes the Yose entrance fee, and kids under 12 are free
 - Three stops in Lee Vining—Visitor Center, Mono Market, and Whoa Nellie Deli
 - The bus is never full! Great alternative to driving into the park
- Lundy Campground is open as of April 9

Camp Like a Pro (Paul McFarland)

- Coalition of the willing that began last year to triage recreation issues. Largely community members plus local gov't and agency folks that care about keeping access open. Idea that *managed* recreation is key.
- Alpine, Mono, and Inyo Counties
- Last year put together brochures for distro, website that has interactive dispersed camping map, plus deployed dumpsters and toilets
- For this year there will be 19 dumpsters that go out, plus toilets with screening houses. Paid for by Clean CA for 3 years
- Looking for community feedback on the materials before they're reprinted and distributed.
- Hillary: Mono Lake County Park needs new signage and more trash/recycle bins
- Lily: will there be a printed map of the dispersed camping areas? → No, it's pretty much impossible to print so it's online and in an app

Fish stocking update (Wayne Beaver)

- Last year there were 8 stocks on Lee Vining Creek, total of about \$19k in fish, \$8600 of which came through the Chamber either through member dues or directed donations for fish stocking. The collection buckets made about \$4k, a much better turnout than expected.
- The state hatcheries are back up to about 50-70% of where they were before the crash, so they may be able to stock this year in a limited capacity.
- As Jeff said the County will also be stocking this year.
- CDFW has a new game warden assigned to the Eastern Sierra, his name is Caleb. He's stationed out of Mammoth and patrols from Crowley to north Mono County line. He will write tickets for littering and dispersed camping in addition to fishing violations.

USFS report (from Jameisha Washington)

- Working to open two campgrounds for fishing opener: Lower Lee Vining and Glass Creek. Biggest factor is weather and prepping campgrounds. Currently no volunteer host lined up for Glass Creek
- Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center to open mid-May (soft open) and fully open for Memorial Day weekend. Hours will be Tues-Sun 8:30-4:30. Possibility of using folks from Mono Lake Volunteer group to cover lunches, extend days/hours
 - NPS likely won't have staff to help at VC
 - Fuelwood permit process changing a bit—you'll only be able to pick up tags from 11:30 to 3:30 to allow staff to process wilderness permits in the morning
- South Tufa coverage is a priority especially Friday-Sunday, hoping Mono Lake Volunteers can help on Monday
- Nick and Rebecca will be back as rec techs
- Need OHV patrol, either hired or as volunteer
- In wilderness, more rangers and trail folks have been hired, there will be more attention in 20 Lakes Basin this year
- Inyo NF is hiring one more LEO to patrol Mono Ranger District
- Events/volunteer days: LV Creek Trail stewardship day - May 14, contact Paul McFarland. Earth Day, April 22. Public Lands Day, September.

Chamber budget & membership report (Claire)

- We finished 2021 with \$2639
 - But \$2100 of that was allocated for another fish stock that we deferred because of forest closures
 - And we had voted to spend ~\$500 on new Christmas lights for Main Street
- So far in 2022

- Received 7 memberships (as of yesterday, so now we're up to 9) - THANK YOU!
- for a total of \$1050
- Hoping to about double that; we usually have 12-15 members
- Current balance on our checking account is \$3258, but again about \$2100 is designated for fish, so our "real" balance is ~\$1200.
- Need to decide on budget for this year - how to allocate between fish stocking, advertising, other costs. → We'll do this via email

Advertising & events discussion

- Kim experimented last year with using boosted posts and it seemed really effective—it was not very expensive and really improved the reach of posts
- Need to post nearly daily if possible, and hashtags seem important also for reaching more people
- This year planning to do a boosted post to feature each Chamber member, in addition to a series of seasonal posts to highlight fishing opener, Tioga Pass opening, full summer swing, and fall colors
- Jeff Simpson offered to do a workshop on social media - May 3, 10 am, at Lee Vining Community Center. All LV businesses are welcome to come
- We'll add events calendar to Chamber website, please send your opening dates and other special events
- Mark Twain Days is back this year! Hillary organizing, it will be in August
- Winter fishing promo? Now that regulations have changed, you can fish in Lee Vining in the winter, but not sure it's a good idea to promote because of lack of winter infrastructure to support it, as well as safety concerns - LVVFD doesn't have resources to help if people get into bad situations, for example at Ellery or Saddlebag

Town picnic for late May?

- Want to welcome whole community, promote collaboration and community
- Celebrate Tioga Pass opening? - can we time it just before pass opens?
- Hillary offers to host at Mono Inn—had been thinking of doing a locals night → date will be June 7 (Tuesday). Chamber collab, to benefit one of the local charities?
- More details to come via email