



# Colorado Tourism Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

## Attendance:

### CTO Board:

Nick Ragain, Jennifer Shea, Senator Dylan Roberts, Ken Murphy, Representative Matt Soper, Amanda Parsons, Bruce Dalton, Phil Washington, Amber Blake, Senator Marc Catlin, Dana Rodriguez

### CTO/State Employees:

Tim Wolfe, Jill Corbin, Andrea Blankenship, Sami Wells, Elizabeth O'Rear, Taren Mulch, Julie Dufault, Faith Overall, Michelle Wulfson, Phil Steider, Kaiti Jacobson, Terry Fabrizio, David Fishman, Nat Rodriguez

### Additional:

Amanda Sherlin, Carrie Tomlinson, Zoe Berry, Mira Whang, Caitie Johnson, Katie Payer, Corry Mihm, Brittany Leblanc, Barb Bowman, Dave Santucci, Debbie Johnson, Laura Libby, Kim Lenox, Carrie Gill

## Meeting called to order at 12:06 p.m.

- Introductions and roll-call - New board members were introduced, and departing members were recognized and thanked for their service.
- Approval of previous meeting minutes - January Minutes - Motioned by Ken Murphy, approved by Phil Washington and seconded by Senator Roberts. May Minutes - Motioned by Ken Murphy, approved by Jennifer Shea and seconded by Nick Ragain.

## Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Review

- Tim provided an overview of the budget, including a briefing on funding sources, and outlined the current state and federal funding landscape. It was noted that FY25 included three grants, while FY26 is anticipated to include only one (EDA).
- Tim formally proposed the FY26 budget.

## Fiscal Year 2026 Approval

- Ken Murphy moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. The motion was approved by Phil Washington and seconded by Amanda Parsons.

## Director's Report, Tim Wolfe

- International Pace.
- Denver International Airport (DEN): Passenger Numbers & Growth Opportunities.



- Statewide Occupancy Rates.
- Overview of the America 250 - Colorado 150 Commission and key initiatives.

## **Board of Directors Roundtable Discussion**

### Legislative and Regional Updates:

- **Rep. Soper:** Announced the kickoff to the tourism season on June 19 in Palisade and the upcoming opening of the Wine Museum.
- **Sen. Catlin:** Noted that Western Colorado University is celebrating its 125th anniversary, to be highlighted as part of the 250/150 events. Also mentioned Strawberry Days on June 1 in Glenwood Springs.
- **Sen. Roberts:** Provided a recap of the legislative session, including:
  - Passage of a bill allowing counties to raise the lodging tax up to 6%.
  - I-70 infrastructure issues.
  - Affordable housing legislation.
  - Progress on the Mountain Rail project.
  - Budget concerns for 2027.
  - Gilpin County's tourism and gaming sectors feel left out as far as marketing goes.

### Partner and Stakeholder Reports:

- **Dana Rodriguez:** Taking notes on what can be improved for 250/150 industry engagement. Mentioned Mexico City as a possible market idea.
- **Bruce Dalton:** Commented on the complexity of strategic planning and budgets. Provided updates from the CADMO annual meeting:
  - Dave Santucci to be hired for newsletter and DMO communications.
  - Positive feedback on Tourism Day at the Capitol.
  - Future shift from Tourism Day to a more effective reception format.
  - CADMO to draft new by-laws.
- **Amanda Parsons:** Noted increasingly shorter booking windows affecting short-term rentals. Emphasized the importance of local support in state tourism efforts.
- **Phil Washington:** Provided updates on the aviation sector:
  - Air traffic controller shortages.
  - Southwest Airlines internal issues (not currently affecting Denver).
  - Aircraft availability concerns (Boeing).
  - Noted a drop in international visitors due to global political factors.
- **Jennifer Shea:** Reported a strong winter spend despite lower visitation. Transitioning into summer operations and analyzing consumer buying power trends.
- **Nick Ragain:** Shared that venue-based traffic (e.g., Ford Amphitheatre) remains strong. Discussed early conversations about a potential sporting venue in Colorado Springs. Noted significant declines in website visitors across platforms, possibly due to Google's AI search model reducing click-throughs.



- **Ken Murphy:** Voiced concerns about visitor experiences due to public land and funding issues. Mentioned the potential for nonprofit involvement and the need for advocacy. Amanda will coordinate with John McMahon and others on potential support from the industry for national efforts.
  - **Rep. Soper:** Suggested a joint advocacy letter from the four legislative board members.

### **Wrap-Up and Q&A**

- No further business or questions.

### **Adjourn Meeting**

Ken Murphy moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by Bruce Dalton and seconded by Nick Ragain. The meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.