From:	director@destinationmissoula.org
To:	Ellen Leahy; "Clint Burson"; "Kim Latrielle"; "Juanita Vero"; Grp. City Council and City Web Site; "Josh Slotnick"; "David Strohmaier"
Cc:	"Cindy Farr"; Shannon Therriault; Amber Sherrill; "Jeanna Miller"; "Deborah A. Johnston"; "Stenger, Robert"; "Mallory Scharf"
Subject:	KECI Article Regarding Health Department and Accommodations
Date:	Thursday, March 25, 2021 10:30:15 AM
Importance:	High

Good Morning Everyone – I am reaching out regarding an interview with me that KECI ran today that I am sure many of you have seen. First, I want to apologize for the way the article seemed slanted against the Health Department and its regulations. I wanted to reach out immediately this morning and let you know that this is not the tenor of the interview that I gave to KECI. I was horrified when I saw it this morning. This has been edited to look like something it was not. I made clear on multiple occasions in the interview that we hold the Health Department in Missoula County in the highest regard and had worked closely with you and community leaders to provide a community-wide safety campaign for our community from the beginning of the pandemic. I also made clear that this was not about disagreeing with the safety standards that are currently in place as the industry believes that the Missoula County Health Department and Board have done an amazing job of keeping our community safe throughout this past year. I made clear that what we were asking was just for some guidelines with criteria to be met that would be used to determine future loosening of the regulations for meeting and event planners to use as guidance in looking at future business and talking with clients who want to return meetings, conferences and events to Missoula. Neither did I intend it to look like the Health Department/Board is responsible for losing large events like the Missoula Marathon. My response was around the economic impact that large events have on our community. I was also very surprised that this interview was held for a week having let them know that you had been immediately responsive to our needs and that the meeting last week would be around this issue. Knowing this they did not include the outcome of last week's meeting and how it met the industry concerns.

Again, please accept my sincere apology for how this looks to the community. I will be reaching out to KECI. The timing of this article could not be worse with the attacks on public health at the State level. Please know that Destination Missoula and the Missoula TBID have been working with tourism regions/cvb's across the State to support you at the legislative level expressing our concern for the potential long term effects these bills could have on the safety of our residents and visitors. I personally have been very proud to say that I am from Missoula throughout this crisis, as your leadership and guidance have been an example to all communities across the State of the importance of public health and putting the safety of our community first. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do.

Barb

Barbara Neilan
Executive Director
DESTINATION MISSOULA/TBID
140 North Higgins, Suite 202
Missoula, MT 59802
Office: 406.532.3250

www.destinationmissoula.org

From: Ellen Leahy <eleahy@missoulacounty.us>
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 5:34 PM
To: Clint Burson <clintb@missoulachamber.com>; Kim Latrielle <kim@missoulachamber.com>; director@destinationmissoula.org; Juanita Vero <jvero@missoulacounty.us>; council@ci.missoula.mt.us; Josh Slotnick <jslotnick@missoulacounty.us>; David Strohmaier <dstrohmaier@missoulacounty.us>
Cc: Cindy Farr <cfarr@missoulacounty.us>; Shannon Therriault <stherriault@missoulacounty.us>; Amber Sherrill <sherrilla@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Jeanna Miller <jmiller@missoulacounty.us>; Deborah A. Johnston <djohnston@m-m.net>; Stenger, Robert <robert.stenger@mso.umt.edu>
Subject: Re: Covid restrictions and local Hotels/Motels and meeting spaces

Chamber and Destination Missoula,

Thank you for your letter. The Health Board reviews all epidemiological metrics and current rules at least monthly at their public meeting and has and will hold special meetings for timely response to changing conditions. In between those meetings, staff confer weekly with our epidemiological advisors, representatives of city and county elected officials. Your letter is well timed as we had a work session today with Health Board's Covid Committee to consider some of the same questions you raise.

i expect that we will have some intermediate changes for discussion at the Health Board at next week's meeting that will be proposed for the purpose of helping event planners plan ahead as much unknown conditions allow. We are evaluating the extent to which we can incorporate vaccination progress as a new metric. If we do not accomplish changes at next week's meeting, perhaps even if we do, the board is prepared to hold a special meeting in early April in order to continue making progress on this front.

Your input is welcome and will be shared with our Environmental Team and the Board. Ideas that you have or steps you would propose for discussion between our staff and the hotel and conference industry, to help shape board proposals, are welcome. I am copying EH Director Shannon Therriault and COVID-19 branch leader for rules and plans Jeanna Miller. We would be glad to have a discussion with industry representatives at the earliest mutually available time. Just suggest possible meeting times and we can set up a remote discussion.

I will also note that Amber Sherill serves as City-County elected representative to the Health Board and a member of the Board's Covid Committee. The other members of the Covid Committee are Vice-Chair Debbie Johnston and the Board Physician, Rob Stenger MD.

Thank you.

Ellen Leahy, RN, MN, MPH

Director & Health Officer

Missoula City-County Health Dept.

406-258-3882

From: Clint Burson <clintb@missoulachamber.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 4:35 PM
To: Ellen Leahy <eleahy@missoulacounty.us>; Kim Latrielle <kim@missoulachamber.com>; director@destinationmissoula.org <director@destinationmissoula.org>; Juanita Vero <jvero@missoulacounty.us>; council@ci.missoula.mt.us <council@ci.missoula.mt.us>; Josh Slotnick <jslotnick@missoulacounty.us>; David Strohmaier <dstrohmaier@missoulacounty.us>
Subject: Covid restrictions and local Hotels/Motels and meeting spaces

Ellen,

Please find attached a joint letter from the Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce and Destination Missoula regarding Covid-19 restrictions and the impact they are having on area hotels, motels and meeting spaces.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kim Latrielle at the Chamber and/or Barb Neilan at Destination Missoula.

Clint Burson

Director of Government Affairs

Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce

825 E. Front St. | P.O. Box 7577 | Missoula, MT 59802

406.543.6623

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