

# City of Prescott

## Tourism Advisory Committee



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September 10, 2025 | 11:00 AM  
201 N. Montezuma Street  
Council Chambers, 1st Floor  
Prescott, AZ 86301

### MINUTES

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Christensen called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

#### 2. ROLL CALL

Margo Christensen - Chair  
Matt Brassard - Vice Chair  
Tamara Burks – Member  
Robert Coombs - Member  
Jim Dawson - Member  
Dennis Gallagher - Member  
Edd Kellerman - Member (Absent)  
Autumn Kline - Member  
Nick Medina - Member  
(Vacancy)

#### 3. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of the August 27, 2025 Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

**THE AUGUST MINUTES WERE NOT AVAILABLE AT THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2025  
TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING.**

B. Presentation & Discussion Regarding a Funding Request for Pure Imagination Festival.

Pure Imagination Festival Chair Candace Devine provided an overview of the festival and the level of support she is looking for:

Ms. Devine presented the Pure Imagination Festival 2025 promotional video and provided background on the event. She explained that the festival, now in its fourth year, generated an estimated \$1 million economic impact in a single day due to strong ticket sales and a diverse lineup. Visitor data showed attendance from Phoenix, Flagstaff, Seattle, California, Sedona, and other regions. She described the festival's mission of fostering cross-generational connection through eclectic performances and

community inclusion, highlighting efforts such as free admission for children, ticket donations to veterans, eco-friendly vendor practices, and partnerships with tribal communities. Despite its cultural and economic contributions, the event has operated at a loss of \$1.5 million over four years, with rising costs creating challenges. Ms. Devine stated she is seeking short-term City support to help sustain the festival, ideally a three-year commitment in the range of \$50,000 to \$80,000 annually. She expressed gratitude for past support but emphasized that a larger commitment is needed to keep the festival viable.

Chair Christensen asked whether the festival would be canceled in 2026.

Ms. Devine responded that while she has not fully ruled it out, there is currently a 70% chance it will not occur due to financial uncertainty and the need to maintain strong relationships with artists and vendors.

Member Coombs stated that the festival is a significant draw for Prescott and noted interest from visitors at the Visitor Center. He expressed concern that skipping 2026 could negatively impact the event's momentum in 2027.

Member Dawson asked Community Outreach Director John Heiney how this event compares to other Tourism Grant events such as the New Year's Eve Boot Drop.

Mr. Heiney explained that while similar, the Pure Imagination Festival follows a different approval process, requiring Council approval. He added that it performs strongly in terms of tax generation.

Ms. Devine added that the festival is broader in scope, engaging 40–60 local and non-local vendors, nonprofit partners, and local workforce, as well as providing free activities such as kayaking. She contrasted this with other events that rely more heavily on out-of-town nonprofits.

Chair Christensen suggested the Committee consider forwarding the request to Council for approval or denial of a three-year commitment but noted concern about future Bed Tax funding levels.

Member Dawson stated he did not see how the Committee could advance the request without a defined dollar amount.

Ms. Devine reiterated her goal of \$50,000 to \$80,000 annually but noted she would welcome any amount.

Chair Christensen asked for clarification on whether this dollar amount request was for three consecutive years, or that number per year.

Ms. Devine confirmed per year.

Chair Christensen again cautioned that available Bed Tax funding is uncertain.

Member Medina stated that if such funding were to be provided, it should require complete transparency on financials given that the usual grant award is significantly lower.

Ms. Devine responded that she is open to a contractual arrangement, full disclosure of financials, and noted that while the festival is a for-profit entity, she has not personally profited and considers the event a passion project.

Chair Christensen suggested tabling the matter for future discussion due to time constraints, and asked committee if it would be appropriate to make recommended motion to move forward to council for approval or denial and if so, keep it a 3-year agreement or drop down to year to year.

Member Medina supported tabling for further review at the next meeting due to the lack of time to further review the proposal.

Mr. Heiney noted that a new policy from the City Manager's office may soon streamline these types of requests and recommended the committee work with staff on a motion to Council.

Chair Christensen agreed, adding that while she supports the festival, funding limitations require careful consideration before advancing.

**MOTION BY MEMBER MEDINA TO TABLE THE DISCUSSION FOR NOW AND REDISCUSS AT THE OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup> MEETING; SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR BRASSARD: PASSED (8 - 0)**

C. Presentation & Discussion Regarding Meetings & Events Video Production.

Mr. Heiney presented the Prescott Event Alliance 2025 promotional video, noting that it was designed to market Prescott as a destination for meetings, events, and activities by showcasing major venues throughout the area.

Chair Christensen stated that the video was very well done.

***This item is for discussion only. No formal action will be taken.***

D. Presentation & Discussion Regarding the FY26 Final Grant Allocations.

Mr. Heiney presented the final FY26 grant allocations, noting that the highest award granted was \$4,050 to the Whiskey Row Marathon.

Member Dawson clarified that the Whiskey Row Boot Drop had been awarded \$4,400.

Director Heiney acknowledged and confirmed the correction.

Member Dawson recommended that in the future the Committee determine clear guidelines for what qualifies as a tourism grant, questioning whether grants should focus strictly on filling hotel beds or more broadly support tourism-focused events such as festivals. He noted that the awarding of funds to the flute camp set a precedent that any camp could apply and be considered.

Director Heiney stated he would consult with the Committee, and if there is consensus, a discussion could be held on defining grant qualifications.

***This item is for discussion only. No formal action will be taken.***

E. Presentation & Discussion Regarding Canadian Travel Trends.

Mr. Heiney presented on Canadian travel trends, noting this followed a request from the previous meeting. He explained that the Longwoods International Tracking Study indicated 63% of Canadian travelers are now less likely to visit the United States, citing tariffs, political statements, and policy concerns.

Mr. Heiney added that further data is expected in the spring as the snowbird season progresses. He also reported that STR, now under parent company Costar, shows that leisure travel has recovered more strongly than group travel, which remains below pre-pandemic levels. He noted a broader shift in travel patterns, with more U.S. citizens now traveling abroad than European visitors entering the United States - a reversal of the previous five-year trend. With regard to Canada specifically, he emphasized that the concern lies less with current numbers and more with emerging trends, with clearer data expected by spring.

***This item is for discussion only. No formal action will be taken.***

F. Presentation & Discussion Regarding a Welcome for New Recreation Services  
Director Kristy Diaz-Trahan.

Recreation Services Director Diaz introduced herself to the Committee, sharing that she is a fourth-generation Arizonan from Wilcox and has been in Prescott for three months. She described her 25 years of experience in the parks and recreation industry, including significant collaborations with destination marketing organizations. Her background includes work in Albuquerque on the Balloon Festival, the largest economic impact event in New Mexico, as well as projects with the University of New Mexico and Convention Center. She also highlighted her experience in Oro Valley, where she worked with Visit Tucson to develop major facilities such as an Olympic-sized swimming pool for large events and a disc golf course that generated substantial

revenue. Director Diaz emphasized her philosophy of showcasing community assets while balancing the needs of both visitors and residents.

Chair Christensen welcomed Director Diaz to the community and to future Tourism Advisory Committee meetings.

Member Dawson asked about the current status of Prescott's lakes, specifically Willow Lake.

Director Diaz explained that a management plan for Willow Lake is underway, focusing on recreation as well as the health and welfare of the property, with the goal of keeping it clean and preserving wildlife.

Member Dawson further inquired whether low water levels have impacted kayaking and associated vendors.

Director Diaz clarified that the City's contracted kayaking vendors are located at Goldwater and Watson Lakes.

***This item is for discussion only. No formal action will be taken.***

#### **4. UPDATES**

##### **A. Staff Announcements & Updates**

Staff from the Tourism and Recreation Services Departments provided the following updates to the Committee:

- No updates were reported for the Airport or Film Office.
- Recreation Services announced upcoming events including the Powwow and Big Sting at Watson Lake, restoration of the Willow Creek Ball Field, lighting improvements at Heritage Park, and an upcoming Dog Park renovation.
- Marketing & Destination Engagement shared opportunities related to America 250, highlighting Prescott's unique position as the Territorial Capital. Plans include potential events such as "America's Potluck" on July 5th, use of the Arizona 250 logo, and participation in a statewide Passport program. Discussions emphasized collaboration with stakeholders, the need for advertising, and early business involvement. Website and social media analytics were also presented.
- Sales & Marketing reported numerous proposals submitted, with the potential to secure large events in coming years.
- City Updates included the extension of the public comment period for SR-89, the opening of a new Communication Engagement Manager position as Mr. Heiney shifts into an Economic Development role, and vacancies for the Finance Director and Economic Development Manager positions.

***This item was for discussion only. No formal action was taken.***

B. Committee Member Updates

Councilwoman Fruhwirth and Committee Members provided the following updates:

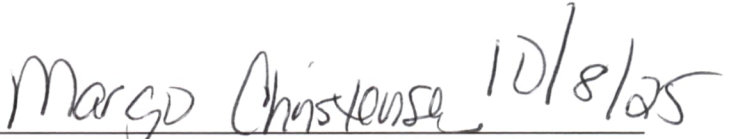
- Reported challenges with SR-89 and the affluent line, Council is seeking public input. Upcoming November elections, the APS Franchise Agreement for public vote, and developments tied to Prop 478 such as new trucks.
- The Labor Day show was very successful, with Sunday seeing especially strong turnout.
- The “Boots on the Row” event is sold out along with other events, noted the Prescott Western Heritage Center expansion should be completed within the next week with a move into the former Board & Brush space.

***This item was for discussion only. No formal action was taken.***

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chair Christensen adjourned the meeting at 12:26 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
MARGO CHRISTENSEN, Chair

 10/13/2025  
Arley Tucker, Staff Liaison