

Big Sky Liquor Licensing Solutions Group  
Organization Meeting  
May 28, 2008

1. The meeting began at 10:10 am with following present: Marne Hayes, Ennion Williams, Scott McCormack, Christian Johnsen, Loren Bough and Dick Fast. Bill Simkins and Eric Ossorio joined later.
2. After introductions, discussion focused largely on scope of problem and brainstorming for possible avenues of action. For purposes of discussion, we began with the scope of the problem as laid out in the agenda: “Liquor Licensing quotas in Montana are not realistic for a resort such as Big Sky, which is large and growing. Restriction of licenses, such as has occurred in Madison County (Yellowstone Club) and which could occur in Gallatin County under normal growth circumstances and which would certainly occur if Big Sky were to incorporate, do not recognize the significant contribution which Big Sky makes to the economy of Montana and have the potential to limit that contribution. It is in the interests of the state to work with us to find means to mitigate the current situation.”
3. Most of the discussion focused on two avenues: 1) Legislative action to modify the criteria for resort licenses and 2) Application to the Department of Revenue to expand the existing resort areas to include as much of the Big Sky area as possible. Among observations were: 1) Any effort to modify the law or expand the areas will require involvement of all the major players from Big Sky, including all the resorts (Big Sky, Moonlight, Yellowstone, Spanish Peaks, Town Center, etc) as well as involvement from businesses, especially those holding alcoholic beverage licenses; 2) Legislative action will require a significant dedicated leader or leaders with a sufficient budget to support lobby activities – this leadership needs to come from within the professional infrastructure of Big Sky; 3) Support from the Montana Tavern Association is essential – communication with the MTA should begin as soon as possible; 4) Big Sky needs to have general community agreement on a solution, especially from the key players as noted above; 5) A study by state Department of Commerce on economic impact of sales of alcoholic beverages in Big Sky area would be helpful.
3. As a first step to understanding better the potential for changes in law or expansion of the resort areas, Bill Simkins agreed to contact a local lawyer (Mike McGarrity) with extensive experience in liquor licensing to see if he could meet with the group. Other contacts will be initiated based on that meeting – The Montana Tavern Association and Montana Department of Revenue are likely candidates for follow-on discussions.
4. The next meeting will be scheduled based on availability of Mike McGarrity.
5. Meeting adjourned at 11:15 am.