

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, SMALL BUSINESS, AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2024 Interim

June 20, 2024

Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Tourism, Small Business, and Information Technology was held on June 20, 2024, at 1:00 PM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Max Wise, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Max Wise Co-Chair; Representatives Kim King Co-Chair; Phillip Pratt Co-Chair; Senators Gary Boswell, and Mike Wilson; Representatives Chad Aull, Shane Baker, Ryan Dotson, Deanna Frazier Gordon, Chris Fugate, Daniel Grossberg, Richard Heath, Nima Kulkarni, Savannah Maddox, Michael Sarge Pollock, Sarah Stalker, Killian Timoney, Timmy Truett, Bill Wesley, Richard White, and Susan Witten.

Guests: Billy Simek, Executive Director, Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition; Jereme Ransick, Board Member and Access Committee Chair, Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition; Curtis Rogers, Board Member and Conservation Committee Chair, Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition; Scott Alvey, Executive Director, Kentucky Historical Society; Sarah McIntosh, Director of Learning Services, Kentucky Historical Society; Stuart Sanders, Director of Research and Publications, Kentucky Historical Society

LRC Staff: Janine Coy, Crystal Thompson, and Sasche Allen.

Kentucky's Recreational Use Statute & Rock Climbing: Proposed Changes

The Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition is dedicated to securing and protecting public access to rock climbing in the Red River Gorge area and promoting the conservation of the environment. Representatives of the organization discussed recreational use statutes. The Council of State Governments created a model of recreational use statutes in 1965 in response to increased obesity and growing suburban areas. Although all 50 states have variations of recreational use statutes, all provide some form of protection to landowners when they allow people to recreate on their land. Most statutes state landowners owe no duty of care to keep the premises safe or provide a warning of danger. However, most statutes do not apply when the landowner charges a fee for entry or in cases of malicious intent. The Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition is proposing that the Commonwealth's

recreational use statute be amended to include rock climbing, bouldering, and rappelling as explicitly protected activities. In addition, the organization advises that the definition of "land" be expanded to include rocks, boulders, and cliffs, which would mirror several other states. Climbing is specifically mentioned in the recreational use statutes in states such as West Virginia, Virginia, and Tennessee.

Responding to Chairman Wise, Mr. Ransick discussed the Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition COVID-19 response.

Answering questions from Representative Kulkarni, Mr. Rogers described the collaboration among the organization, local officials, emergency responders, search and rescue teams, and other climbing groups.

Replying to Representative Maddox, Mr. Simek reiterated the suggested statutory changes.

Senator Boswell made remarks about landowner liability.

Representative White said he supports the suggested statutory changes and commented on alcohol related climbing accidents.

Representative Timoney thanked presenters and wished them luck on their future efforts.

The Kentucky Historical Society: Upcoming Programs and Events

The Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) is a member organization administratively attached to the Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet housed mainly within the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History, the Old State Capitol, and the Kentucky Military History Museum that educates and engages the public through history in order to meet the challenges of the future. Representatives of KHS discussed increases in K-12 student and teacher programming; social media reach and online ratings; and campus visitation. According to the American Alliance of Museums Economic Impact Formula's 2023 economic impact analysis, KHS employed 50 people in Frankfort with payroll and benefits totaling over \$4 million, spent over \$2.5 million on goods and services in Frankfort, and served over 30,000 visitors. KHS representatives stressed the economic impact of museums and discussed Kentucky History Day; the Kentucky History Awards; the Kentucky Local History Trust Fund; Old State Capitol and civics programming; National History Day; the Harrodsburg 250th celebration and history roadshow; and the historical marker program.

Chairman Wise thanked the presenters for their work on the General Assembly's Day at the Old Capitol hosted by KHS and commended the organization's civic engagement.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.