

COUNTY OF INYO
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



For

Tourism Marketing Services

Deadline for Submission: December 28, 2007

County of Inyo
Office of the County Administrator
P.O. Box N / 224 N. Edwards Street
Independence, California 93526

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The County of Inyo, through the Office of the County Administrator, seeks to obtain the services of an individual, organization, or firm with demonstrated experience in tourism marketing to develop and implement marketing efforts to effectively and cost-efficiently promote Inyo County and its sub-regions as a tourist destination.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND

Encompassing more than 10,000 square miles, Inyo County features an unparalleled variety of natural wonders and stunning vistas, recreational opportunities, cultural amenities, and rich native, pioneer, mining, movie making, and water histories. Included below is a description of some, but certainly not all of the tourism “products” Inyo County has to offer.

The County includes: Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the lower 48 states; Death Valley National Park, which features the lowest point of elevation (Badwater) in the United States; and, the Great Basin Bristlecone Pines, the oldest life forms in the world. The Palisade Glacier, which (like the ancient Bristlecone forest) is accessed through Big Pine, is the southernmost glacier in the Northern Hemisphere. The unique features of the Alabama Hills, located just outside of Lone Pine on the road to Whitney Portal, have set the stage for over 400 films, and continue to enchant visitors and movie producers from around the world. Spectacular palettes of wildflowers begin blooming in the early spring in Death Valley, before proceeding west and lasting into the late summer in High Sierra meadows. In fall, the canyons of the Eastern Sierra are ablaze with fall colors, with the Bishop Creek drainage serving as the zenith. The recently re-watered lower Owens River, beginning just north of Independence and continuing to Lone Pine, represents the largest river restoration effort in the country (and the latest chapter in the County’s storied history as a focal point in California’s “Water Wars”) and will add to the County’s already tremendous wildlife and bird-watching opportunities.

In the west, Highway 395 transects the Owens Valley, paralleling the majestic Eastern Crest of the High Sierra, where it passes through the towns of Lone Pine, Independence, and Big Pine, and the City of Bishop, while connecting San Diego and the Los Angeles basin to Mammoth Mountain ski resort (just 45-minutes from Bishop), Yosemite National Park (75-miles from Bishop), and Reno, Nevada (less than four-hours away). In the Southeast area of the County, the communities of Shoshone and Tecopa (featuring hot springs resorts and the fabled China Ranch Date Farm) provide a gateway to Death Valley National Park from Las Vegas (just 80-miles away). Inyo County is also within a three to six-hour drive of the burgeoning Central Valley population centers of Bakersfield and Fresno, and the San Francisco Bay area, respectively.

With over 97% of its land in public ownership, there is something to appeal every outdoor enthusiast. A longtime Mecca for fisherman, hunters, campers and backpackers, the County is now just as well known for its world-class bouldering, mountain climbing, and backcountry skiing opportunities. The stunning views offered from un-crowded, paved roads appeal to motorcyclists and bicyclists alike. And, thousands of miles of trails and dirt roads make Inyo

County a favorite destination for hikers, ultra-runners, off-highway vehicle enthusiasts, and mountain bikers. Numerous High Sierra trailheads are found just minutes from the each of the towns in the Owens Valley, and provide popular access into Sequoia National Park and Kings Canyon National Park. Kearsarge Pass, above Independence, is the lowest trailed pass over the Sierra Crest, making it a favorite route to the John Muir and Pacific Crest trails. Pack stations are still operated at many of the County's trailheads, providing visitors with a rare and unique opportunity to access the backcountry of the High Sierra. Of course, whatever their sporting interest, the County has dozens of campgrounds, RV parks, hotels and motels to accommodate the needs of every type of traveler.

The County is home to over 10 museums and visitors centers. Included among these are: the recently-opened Beverly and Jim Rogers Museum of Lone Pine Film History; Manzanar National Historic Site (5-minutes south of Independence), telling the story of the relocation of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II; the County-operated Eastern California Museum in Independence, which features one of the West's finest collections of Native American baskets; and, the Laws Railroad Museum and Historic Site, just north of Bishop, preserving the legacy of the last narrow-gauge railroad west of the Rockies, along with 28 historical buildings.

Locally-produced festivals and events combine with numerous art galleries, headlined by Galen and Barbara Rowell's Mountain Light Gallery in Bishop, to form the core of the County's cultural amenities. The five-day Death Valley Forty-Niners' Encampment, has attracted thousands of visitors from across the country since its inception in 1949. Bishop's famed Mule Days celebration attracts over 20,000 visitors to the area every Memorial Day weekend. Lone Pine's annual Film Festival attracts western film buffs from around the world every October. In addition to hosting art shows, plays and musical performances throughout the year, Inyo Council for the Arts produces the Millpond Music Festival every September that attracts music lovers from across the West to enjoy three-days of eclectic music with the Eastern Sierra's Mount Tom and the Wheeler Ridge serving as a spectacular backdrop to the idyllic setting.

The County's business community is served by five chambers of commerce; Death Valley, Lone Pine, Independence, Big Pine and Bishop. For the purposes of responding to this RFP, each of these jurisdictions should be considered a "sub-region" of the County (unless the respondent proposes and clearly identifies other sub-regions for the purpose of marketing).

Besides the independent marketing activities pursued by individual chambers of commerce, the chambers also undertake joint-marketing activities working in partnership as the Coalition of County Chambers of Commerce. Recently, the Coalition of County Chambers of Commerce has worked with the County to develop:

- A Toursim Marketing Plan;
- A brand image (logo and tag line – see web site);
- Web-site (www.theothersideofcalifornia.com); and,
- A print advertisement in the California Travel & Tourism Commission's Travel Guide.

In addition, in 2007, Inyo and Mono counties initiated a collaborative planning process that has resulted in the formation of the Eastern Sierra Regional Partners group that seeks to identify opportunities to market the two-county Eastern Sierra region as a tourist destination. Participants include representatives from Inyo and Mono counties, the City of Bishop and Town of Mammoth Lakes, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management, non-profit organizations, chambers of commerce, and individual business owners. In addition to holding bi-annual conferences, Eastern Sierra Regional Partners has developed an intra-net site to facilitate communication and the calendaring of events among stakeholders between bi-annual meetings. ESRP is currently in the process of developing a regional logo that can be used in conjunction with a web portal, subsequent regional advertising efforts, and by individual members. And, participants are engaging in discussions to explore a variety of other seasonal and activity-based marketing efforts that may be undertaken on a regional basis.

As part of its annual budget process, and as its fiscal circumstances permit, the County endeavors to provide funding to supplement the on-going marketing activities of individual business enterprises, the chambers of commerce (working independently and in concert), other public agencies, non-profit organizations, and regional collaborations. In its approved budget for the Fiscal Year 2007-2008, the County identified up to \$75,000 to contract for tourism marketing services.

In soliciting proposals for tourism marketing services, the County seeks recommendations from proven marketing professionals, in the form of a proposal indentifying specific marketing activities to be accomplished within one-year from the date the contract is signed, as to how the County's money can be most effectively employed to increase the number of tourists that visit and spend money in Inyo County.

The County recognizes that the amount of funding it has available for the project will govern the scope and nature of the marketing activities that will be proposed. Proposed marketing activities should add value to the marketing efforts already being undertaken by other entities in the county, or identify "gaps" in current marketing activities (e.g., the type of media being utilized, markets being targeted, etc.). In either case, it is the responsibility of the respondent to clearly demonstrate how and why their proposal will enhance tourism in Inyo County.

It is the intent of the County to evaluate all proposals received in response to this RFP. To be considered, three (3) copies of the Proposal must be received prior to the close of business on December 28, 2007, at the County of Inyo, Office of the County Administrator – Tourism RFP, 224 N. Edwards Street, P.O. Drawer N, Independence, CA 93526. [Note: The U.S. Post Office will only deliver mail addressed to the P.O. Drawer, not the street address.]

All proposals received will be reviewed by a committee of County staff to evaluate each respondent's Proposal relative to capability and qualifications, completeness, proposed scope of work, ability to contract, and cost. The scores of the individual members of the review committee will be sealed and provided to the County's Auditor-Controller. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors, in open session during a regularly scheduled meeting, and prior to reviewing the review committee's scores, will decide upon the weight to be assigned each of the evaluation

criteria described below. Once the Board determines the weight to be assigned to each evaluation criteria, the Auditor-Controller will unseal the scores, determine the average score each proposal received for each of the evaluation criteria, and then apply the weight-factor, determined by the Board of Supervisors, to each of the evaluation criteria. The respondent whose proposal receives the highest weighted total score will be invited to negotiate a contract with the County of Inyo to provide tourism marketing services for a period of one year.

II. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The response to this RFP must contain the following:

1. A description of the respondent's recent experience in providing tourism marketing services to a public agency; a geographically diverse region; a visitors' bureau or similar organization; and/or a market in which there exists a multiplicity of individual and cooperative marketing campaigns.
2. A listing of three (3) references (other than the County of Inyo) that may be contacted regarding the respondent's experience.
3. Identification of all staff and proposed sub-contractors, their capabilities, qualifications, and experience, and the hourly rate at which each will be billed, along with the resumes of key personnel who will be assigned to oversee each portion of the work, and their availability for the project.
4. A proposed time frame for completion of the work and key components thereof, followed by a discussion of the respondent's experience and history in meeting deadlines on previous projects.
5. A statement as to the respondent's ability to enter into County of Inyo Standard Contract #116 (attached hereto) which will govern the selected respondent's work.
6. A maximum of two pages of additional information, excluding the cover letter, if the respondent feels the information may be useful and is applicable to consideration of their proposal.
7. The respondent's proposed Scope of Work, including all associated costs.

Respondents wishing to have their submittal material returned after the selection process should so indicate in the cover letter accompanying their submittal material. Upon request, the County will return the proposal at the firm's expense, but will retain one copy of each proposal for at least one year.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

In requesting and evaluating proposals for tourism marketing services, the County of Inyo intends to rely on the expertise of the respondents, as marketing professionals, to recommend and demonstrate the most advantageous and cost-effective means of marketing the County and its sub-regions as a tourist destination; with respondents taking into consideration, among other factors, the financial resources the County has appropriated for the project, and the multiplicity of independent and concerted marketing efforts already being implemented.

The respondent's proposed Scope of Work must include the following components:

1. **Summary.** Provide a summary of the actual services and activities being proposed, and the total cost of the entire project as proposed.
2. **Approach.** Provide a brief description of the respondent's guiding philosophy and overall approach to providing tourism marketing services to Inyo County.
3. **Target Markets.** In addition to information that may be provided below for a specific activity as it relates to targeting a distinct demographic or market, identify the demographics and markets to which the marketing efforts will be directed. Discuss the rationale for targeting the identified market segments. Distinguish if different demographics or markets will be targeted in promoting different sub-regions of the County.
4. **Marketing Activities.** The County has not pre-determined the marketing activities that it intends to fund; nor does it expect a proposal to include implementing all of the activities listed below. The County is interested in having the respondent identify those activities that will provide the County with the "most bang for its buck." In addition to understanding the specific components of the marketing activities being proposed by the respondent, it also seeks to understand why the respondent may choose not to recommend pursuing a particular activity. The respondent's Proposal should, therefore, address each of the following activities and provide the information requested. For each activity that the respondent proposes to implement, provide the total cost of implementing that particular activity.
 - a. **Print Advertising.** Discuss whether or not the Proposal includes implementing a print advertising campaign, and why or why not. If so, provide the following information:
 - i. Describe or provide a sample of the proposed advertisement(s), or the envisioned components of the ad(s).
 - ii. Discuss whether the advertisements will promote the entire County, sub-regions of the County, or both.
 - iii. Identify the publications in which the advertisements will be placed. For each publication, tell the number of issues in which the ad will appear, the times of year, and identify the paid and total circulation of the publication.

- iv. If different from the information already provided regarding “Target Markets” describe the demographic(s) and/or market(s) the ad(s) will target.
- b. **Radio Advertising.** Discuss whether or not the Proposal includes implementing a radio advertising campaign, and why or why not. If so, provide the following information:
- i. Describe or provide a sample of the proposed advertisement(s), or the envisioned components of the ad(s).
 - ii. Discuss whether the advertisements will promote the entire County, sub-regions of the County, or both.
 - iii. Identify the radio stations from which the advertisements will be aired. For each station, identify the station’s format, the times of day and year the ad will air, and the number of listeners during the time(s) specified, and the number of times the ad will air.
 - iv. If different from the information already provided regarding “Target Markets” describe the demographic(s) and/or market(s) the ad(s) will target.
- c. **Television Advertising.** Discuss whether or not the Proposal includes implementing a television advertising campaign, and why or why not. If so, provide the following information:
- i. Describe or provide a sample of the proposed advertisement(s), or the envisioned components of the ad(s).
 - ii. Discuss whether the advertisements will promote the entire County, sub-regions of the County, or both.
 - iii. Identify the radio stations from which the advertisements will be aired. For each station, identify the station’s format, the times of day and year the ad will air, and the number of viewers during the time(s) specified, and the number of times the ad will air.
 - iv. If different from the information already provided regarding “Target Markets” describe the demographic(s) and/or market(s) the ad(s) will target.
- d. **Internet Advertising.** Discuss whether or not the Proposal includes implementing an internet advertising campaign, and why or why not. If so, provide the following information:
- i. Describe or provide a sample of the proposed advertisement(s), or the envisioned components of the ad(s).
 - ii. Discuss whether the advertisements will promote the entire County, sub-regions of the County, or both.
 - iii. Identify the websites on which the advertisements will appear. For each website, identify the nature of the website, the manner in which the ad(s) will be featured, how long the ad(s) will appear, and the number of “hits” the website receives during the intervals of time specified.

- iv. If different from the information already provided regarding “Target Markets” describe the demographic(s) and/or market(s) the ad(s) will target.
- e. **Billboard Advertising.** Discuss whether or not the Proposal includes implementing a billboard advertising campaign, and why or why not. If so, provide the following information:
 - i. Describe or provide a sample of the proposed advertisement(s), or the envisioned components of the ad(s).
 - ii. Discuss whether the advertisements will promote the entire County, sub-regions of the County, or both.
 - iii. Identify the locations of the billboard(s), how many people see it over specific intervals of time, and the time of year and duration the billboard advertisement will be “up.”
 - iv. If different from the information already provided regarding “Target Markets” describe the demographic(s) and/or market(s) the ad(s) will target.
- f. **Trade Shows.** Discuss whether or not the Proposal includes attending trade shows, and why or why not. If so, provide the following information:
 - i. Describe or provide a sample of the proposed exhibit that will be featured at the trade show(s), or the envisioned components of the exhibit.
 - ii. Discuss whether the exhibit will promote the entire County, sub-regions of the County, or both.
 - iii. Identify the trade shows you plan to attend. For each trade show, identify location, the type of trade show, the duration of the show, and the number of attendees at the show.
 - iv. If different from the information already provided regarding “Target Markets” describe the demographic(s) and/or market(s) the ad(s) will target.
- g. **Direct Mail.** Discuss whether or not the Proposal includes implementing a direct mail advertising campaign, and why or why not. If so, provide the following information:
 - i. Describe or provide a sample of the proposed mailer(s), or the envisioned components of the ad(s)/mailers.
 - ii. Discuss whether the mailers will promote the entire County, sub-regions of the County, or both.
 - iii. Identify the number of pieces that will be mailed.
 - iv. If different from the information already provided regarding “Target Markets” describe the demographic(s) and/or market(s) the ad(s) will target.

- h. **Other.** Describe any other marketing activities you recommend undertaking. In addition to providing the cost of the specific activity, provide a sufficient description of the components of the activity – similar to the information being requested in sub-sections a. to g. above.
5. **Collaboration.** Describe if and, if so, how you propose to collaborate with the chambers of commerce in the county, and/or the Coalition of County Chambers of Commerce, and/or other stakeholders in carrying-out the activities proposed in your Scope of Work.
6. **Integration.** Describe how you will approach integrating your marketing activities with those already being undertaken by other entities in the County. Describe the factors that will indicate where integration may be appropriate, and when it might not be.
7. **Outcome Measurement.** Describe how you will measure, and convey to the County the effectiveness of each marketing activity that you undertake. For each measurement, identify the milestone that will indicate the particular activity is successful.
8. **Sub-Regions.** Describe how your proposal will market the unique sub-regions of the County, in addition to the County as a whole. If you recommend, for purposes of marketing, distinguishing the county’s sub-regions in a manner other than the primary jurisdiction of each of the County’s five chambers of commerce, define the proposed sub-regions and the reasoning for distinguishing them as such.
9. **Sustainability.** Describe if and, if so, how the marketing activities proposed in your Scope of Work could be maintained in subsequent years, either by the County, another contractor, or other entities within the County. Describe if and how the marketing activities proposed in your Scope of Work might serve as the foundation for enhanced marketing activities in future years.
10. **Budget.** Include a summary budget for your proposed Scope of Work showing the total costs that the County will incur to implement the project (marketing activities, travel expense, administrative costs, etc.)

IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA/SELECTION PROCESS

A review committee comprised of County staff will evaluate all submitted proposals. The information provided in your proposal will be the basis for the evaluation. In evaluating each proposal, each member of the review committee will assign a score of 1 to 25 points (with 25 points being the highest score possible) for each of the following criteria:

A. Capability of Respondent & Qualifications of Assigned Personnel

This includes an evaluation of the respondent’s experience with projects of a similar nature, ability to meet deadlines, and reference check.

B. Completeness of Proposal

Has the respondent clearly and completely provided all of the information requested in Section II. Proposal Requirements?

C. Proposed Scope of Work

Does the respondent’s proposed Scope of Work include all of the required components? Is the respondent’s approach to the project well thought out and responsive to the County’s objectives? Are the reasons provided for targeting specific markets and demographics well-reasoned and supported with facts? Based on the respondent’s description(s), are the samples or envisioned components of specific marketing activities of a quality nature? Are the reasons provided for pursuing or not pursuing a specific marketing activity well described and practical? Based on the information provided by the respondent, do the proposed marketing activities seem likely to increase tourists, and the amount of money tourists spend in Inyo County? Is the respondent’s approach likely to identify and maximize appropriate opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders and integrate the proposed marketing activities (as appropriate) with existing efforts? Does the proposed Scope of Work promote the County as a whole AND its unique sub-regions? Has the respondent defined the sub-regions of the County, and articulated the reasons for doing so (if different from the jurisdictions of the various chambers of commerce)? At the end of the term of the contract, will the County or another contractor be able to duplicate or further the marketing activities undertaken by the respondent? Does the budget provided correspond to the proposed Scope of Work, and appear to represent all of the costs that will be incurred by the County during the term of the contract? Does the budget afford the County the opportunity to pick and choose, and make an informed decision relative to selecting specific marketing activities?

D. Ability to enter into Standard Contract No. 116

Has the respondent clearly indicated their ability and willingness to enter into Standard contract No. 116 without deviation? What is the significance of the exceptions, if any, the respondent requests to Standard Contract No. 116?

E. Cost

Can the scope of work proposed by the consultant be completed for the amount of money the County has budgeted for the project? Considered in relation to the proposed Scope of Work, is the Proposal cost-effective? Where similar activities, services or other costs can be identified, is the proposed cost competitive with other proposals?

For each proposal, the individual evaluation forms completed by each member of the review committee will be placed in an envelope that will be sealed and provided to the Inyo County Auditor-Controller. At a subsequent regular meeting of the Inyo County Board of Supervisor’s, in open session, the Board will assign a weight factor to each of the criteria identified above; the weight factor will be represented as a percent, and the sum of all weight factors will total 100%. Once the Board approves the weight factors, the Auditor-Controller will open the sealed envelopes and, for each proposal, average the individual scores awarded by the members of the review panel for each criteria, and then apply the weight factor approved by the Board of

Supervisors to the average score for each criteria. The Auditor-Controller will then tally the resulting total points awarded for each proposal and announce the results to the Board of Supervisors.

Inyo County will commence contract negotiations, including finalizing the Scope of Work and associated Fee Schedule, with the respondent receiving the highest total ranking when the average scores assigned by the review committee for each evaluation criteria are weighted in accordance with the weight factor the Inyo County Board of Supervisors assigns to each criteria. (In the event of a tie, the County will negotiate with both respondents and award the contract to the respondent with the whom the negotiated contract is most advantageous to the County.) If the County and that respondent are unable to consummate an agreement, the County will reject that firm and begin negotiations with the respondent receiving the second highest ranking. This process shall continue until the County reaches an agreement with a contractor. Once an agreement is reached, the successful contractor shall execute County of Inyo Standard Contract No. 116, which will then be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for approval. The execution of the contract by the Chairperson of the Inyo County Board of Supervisors will constitute notice to the contractor to proceed with the work. The term of the contract shall not exceed one year.

V. INQUIRIES

The County will hold a proposal conference on Thursday, December 6, 2007, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Chambers in Independence, California, to receive and respond to questions from prospective respondents. Questions regarding this RFP will only be responded to during this proposal conference.

The County reserves the right to limit each respondent to 5 questions. Each question, and the response to the question will be transcribed and posted on the County's web site (www.inyocounty.us).

Respondents who cannot attend the conference in person may submit questions in writing. Written questions should be delivered in person or via the U.S. Postal Service (questions sent via e-mail or via facsimile transmittals will not be accepted). The County will respond to written questions, received prior to the conference, only after all questions from prospective respondents physically in attendance have been responded to, and only in the time allotted. Parties wishing to mail written questions for the proposal conference should send them to:

County of Inyo
Office of the County Administrator – Proposal Conference
P.O. Drawer N
224 N. Edwards Street
Independence, CA 93526

VI. SUBMITTAL INFORMATION

Those parties wishing to submit proposals should send them to:

County of Inyo
Office of the County Administrator – Tourism RFP
P.O. Drawer N
224 N. Edwards Street
Independence, CA 93526

[Note: The U.S. Post Office will only deliver mail addressed to the P.O. Drawer, not the street address.]

DEADLINE: To be considered, three (3) copies of the Proposal must be delivered to the above address by the close of business on December 28, 2007. Postmarks are not acceptable.

VII. CONFIDENTIAL AND PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

Inyo County follows the intent of the California Records Act (PRA). If a respondent's Proposal contains material noted or marked as confidential and/or proprietary that, in Inyo County's sole opinion, meets the disclosure exemption requirements of the PRA, then that information will not be disclosed pursuant to a request for public documents. If Inyo County does not consider such material to be exempt from disclosure under the PRPA, the material will be made available to the public, regardless of the notation or markings. If a respondent is unsure if its confidential and/or proprietary material meets the disclosure exemption requirements of the PRA, then it should not include such information in its proposal.

VIII. EXECUTION OF COUNTY CONTRACT

The selected contractor will be required to enter into a contract with the County of Inyo on the County of Inyo Standard Contract No. 116, a copy of which is attached in Exhibit A. Please note the requirements in the Contract for worker's compensation, general liability, and vehicle liability insurance.

Ronald Juliff
County Administrator

Date: November 16, 2007

