

August 5, 2016

Mayor Treece and City Council Members  
City of Columbia  
710 E. Broadway  
Columbia, MO 65201

***REF: Annual Tourism Development Program Update***

Dear Mayor & City Council,

On behalf of the Convention & Visitors Bureau Advisory Board, this letter serves as the annual update on the CVB's Tourism Development Program.

A portion of the Columbia Lodging Tax is set aside for tourism development. Applications can be made by not-for-profit and for-profit organizations for assistance with funds to develop new, or expand existing festivals and events that generate overnight visitation in Columbia hotels, provide an economic impact and have potential for future growth.

The Tourism Development Program currently has five different categories: Signature Series, Festivals & Events, Sports Events, Attraction Development and Community Sponsorships.

In FY2016, there was \$425,578 appropriated in the CVB's budget for the Tourism Development Program. The Convention & Visitors Bureau has received 30 applications to date, and a total of \$168,189 has been awarded.

Of that, \$75,000 was awarded to seven "Signature Series" events. These events are Columbia's largest and oldest festivals that have been funded through the tourism development fund for over 10 years. These events are considered "iconic" to Columbia, generate national press coverage and add to our overall tourism product.

During the FY2016 Signature Series funding cycle, the board scored each application on the following criteria: overnight stays, marketing plan, sponsorship plan, event timing and cultural image. Funding level recommendations were then made based on a three-tiered scoring system, i.e.: Gold tier - \$12,500; Silver tier - \$10,000 and Bronze tier - \$7,500.

The current Signature Series events are: True/False Film Festival, Roots N Blues N BBQ Festival, Show-Me STATE GAMES, Art in the Park, MU Concert Series, Citizen Jane Film Festival, and the Heritage Festival.

In 2016, there was \$19,000 awarded to two Sports Development applications, including the Go Girl Run Marathon, by Ultramax Sports and the SEC Swimming & Diving Championships. This was the first time the Mizzou Student Rec Center had the opportunity to host this event which brought in over 600 athletes and over 1,000 family & fans. We also received a Festival & Events application requesting \$10,000 to a new comedy festival making its debut in Columbia this September. This three-day event will consist of a variety of comedy: sketch, standup, improv, as well as panel discussions with comedians, live comedy talk-show tapings and workshops.

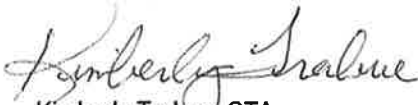
Community Sponsorships became part of the Tourism Development Program in 2013. These are events or promotions targeted at residents and/or the community that don't generate a great deal of room nights, if any, but do provide a means to increase awareness of the city of Columbia as a tourism destination. Applicants are eligible for this type of sponsorship if they do not meet the guidelines of the Festivals & Events application process. There has been \$56,240 paid out in FY2016 for 20 different events, including Fire in the Sky, Mid-America Open Disc Golf Tournament, SPLAT, We Always Swing Jazz Series, 9th Street Summerfest and the Unbound Book Festival.

The CVB also contracted with the University of Missouri Office of Research for \$7,949 to conduct an economic impact study of the True/False Film Festival. As many festivals and events are partially financed by public tax support, these third-party studies are important in identifying their positive impact on the local community. The Board was pleased with the results and plans to continue with surveys as a tool to assess and evaluate festivals & events every two to three years.

In closing, we have requested \$425,000 be appropriated in the CVB's FY2017 budget as we anticipate requests for tourism dollars will continue and anticipate 25-30 applications may be received during the fiscal year.

On behalf of the CVB Advisory Board, thank you for your time and thank you for your service & commitment to the city of Columbia.

Sincerely,



Kimberly Trabue, CTA  
Chair, CVB Advisory Board

cc: CVB Advisory Board Members  
CVB Director - Amy Schneider, CTA  
City Manager - Mike Matthes, CTA  
City Clerk - Sheela Amin, CTA