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#150619-TDOGRANTS

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TDO Announces New Local Marketing Grant Program

The Santa Rosa County Tourist Development Office and Tourist Development Council have adopted a new grant program for funding local events and related marketing. The “Local Marketing Funding Program” will replace the previous process of groups requesting funding throughout the year. The county’s budget line for local event marketing will now be approved once a year as part of the annual budget process. Organizations must complete the grant application by **August 31** to be considered for an estimated \$70,000 of tourist development tax funding for the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

[Click here](#) to view the grant application package or visit www.santarosa.fl.gov/tdo.

Two applicant workshops will be held to provide guidance on grant requirements, application process, funding guidelines, Florida’s Playground branding requirements, authorized uses, the reimbursement process and to answer questions from the public. A representative from potential applicants **is highly encouraged to attend one** of the two sessions:

- Thursday, July 2 at 10:30 a.m. at the Economic Development Office, 6491 Caroline St., Suite 4 in Milton
- Wednesday, July 8 at 11 a.m. at the Navarre Visitor Center, 8543 Navarre Pkwy. in Navarre

Successful grants will support events that focus on increasing out-of-market awareness of Santa Rosa County, particularly during the shoulder months, with the goal of increasing lodging room occupancy in the county. Allowable expenses can include promotion, marketing, program expenses, paid advertising, production and technical expenses, site fees, rentals, insurance, rights and sanction fees. Projects will be reviewed and ranked by the Santa Rosa Tourist Development Council on Wednesday, Sept. 16. The TDC will make recommendations to the Santa Rosa Board of County Commissioners for approval in October.

Other program details include:

- Funding will be provided as reimbursement for approved actual expenditures at the end of the event.
- An event can be funded for a maximum of three years, unless continuation is recommended by the TDC and approved by the commission.
- Events must take place in 2015/2016 fiscal year unless recommended by the TDC and approved by the commission.
- The maximum request is encouraged not to exceed \$5,000.
- Post event documentation including a detailed budget, post event profit and loss statement, and visitor survey to help gauge return on investment must be provided.
- Unallowable expenses include administrative expenses, building renovation or remodeling expenses, purchase of permanent equipment or alcoholic beverages, donations, scholarships, travel expenses, social or hospitality functions, or programs for the purpose of soliciting advertising or sponsorships.

In Santa Rosa, visitors pay a five percent tourist development tax on lodging in addition to the state sales tax. The Florida bed tax or tourism tax was specifically put in place by the legislature to help fund promotion of an area. The funds can only be used for activities that market or bring visitors to the county. Permissible funding activities are often referred to as activities that put “heads in beds” or bring out of town tourist to the area who boost a local economy through their spending.

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