

DEPARTMENT: Administration

BY: Rick Benson
PHONE: 966-3222

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION: Accept the Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce Proposals for Operation of the Mariposa and Coulterville Visitors' Center and Direct the County Administrative Officer to Prepare the Agreement Documents for Board Approval.

Please see attached staff report.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS During budget hearings your Board directed that a request for proposal be issued for the operation of both the Mariposa and Coulterville visitors' centers.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION: Your Board may wish to award the contracts to an entity other than the Chamber of Commerce. If no contract is awarded, the visitors' centers will close December 1.

Financial Impact? () Yes () No	Current FY Cost: \$	Annual Recurring Cost: \$
Budgeted In Current FY? () Yes () No () Partially Funded		
Amount in Budget: \$		List Attachments, number pages consecutively
Additional Funding Needed: \$		Mariposa and Coulterville RFPs
Source:		Five Visitors' Center proposals. (3 Coulterville,
Internal Transfer		2 Mariposa)
Unanticipated Revenue	_____ 4/5's vote	
Transfer Between Funds	_____ 4/5's vote	
Contingency	_____ 4/5's vote	
() General () Other		

CLERK'S USE ONLY: *and 11-551*

Res. No.: 11-550 Ord. No. _____

Vote - Ayes: 5 Noes: _____

Absent: _____ Abstained: _____

Approved

Minute Order Attached () No Action Necessary

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

Requested Action Recommended

No Opinion

Comments: _____

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original on file in this office.

Date: _____

Attest: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board
County of Mariposa, State of California

By: _____
Deputy

CAO: *RJB*



COUNTY OF MARIPOSA

P.O. Box 784, Mariposa, CA 95338 (209) 966-3222

JIM ALLEN, CHAIR
JANET BIBBY, VICE-CHAIR
LEE STETSON
LYLE TURPIN
KEVIN CANN

DISTRICT V
DISTRICT III
DISTRICT I
DISTRICT II
DISTRICT IV



MARIPOSA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTE ORDER

TO: RICHARD J. BENSON, CAO

FROM: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board *MW*

SUBJECT: Accept the Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce Proposals for Operation of the Mariposa and Coulterville Visitors' Center's, and Direct the County Administrative Officer to Prepare the Agreement Documents for Board Approval

RES. 11-550 & 11-551

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

ADOPTED THIS Order on November 8, 2011

ACTION AND VOTE:

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Administration

Accept the Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce Proposals for Operation of the Mariposa and Coulterville Visitors' Center's, and Direct the County Administrative Officer to Prepare the Agreement Documents for Board Approval

BOARD ACTION: Rick Benson, County Administrative Officer, reviewed the proposals that were received for operation of the Coulterville Visitors' Center and the recommendation. Supervisor Cann suggested that in the future there should be one-year contracts that have the ability to extend for multiple years, and discussion was held. Supervisor Allen referred to an incident with displaying brochures for B&Bs and he asked that the Chamber allow for the display of brochures for all of the businesses in the County.

Input from the public on the Coulterville Visitors' Center was provided by the following:

Lester Bridges stated he would like to have options for longer terms in the contract; and he commented on the Coulterville Visitors' Center operations and location options.

Ruth Sellers asked whether the Request for Proposals spell out the hours of operation; and she stated she would be inclined to give consideration to the Hotel Jeffery because of the potential to provide services for longer hours; and she noted that it could be advantageous to the History Center to provide the services – but she was surprised at the cost they submitted.

Eleanor Keuning stated she agrees with Ruth Sellers' suggestion for the Hotel Jeffery; but she does not agree with the History Center as it is across the Highway.

MaryAnn Huff noted the Hotel is under new management and she expressed concern with staffing the Center with volunteers. She commented on the

promotion of the John Muir Highway and their vision for the future and stated she does not want to lose the Visitors' Center.

Ruth Catalan stated she has only one problem with the Chamber's proposal and that is the location – she does not feel that the Visitors' Center should be in the middle of two commercial businesses.

(M)Turpin, (S)Cann, Res. 11-550 was adopted accepting the Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce proposal for operation of the Coulterville Visitors' Center and directing the County Administrative Officer to prepare the agreement documents for Board approval/Ayes: Unanimous.

Rick Benson reviewed the proposals that were received for operation of the Mariposa Visitors' Center and the recommendation; and he provided input on options for a longer contract term. Supervisor Allen reiterated his previous concern that B&Bs that are not members of the Chamber be allowed to display their brochures at the Chamber; and he expressed concern with the tour van that had been parked at the Chamber office with a banner. Supervisor Cann agreed with the concern on the van with the banner; and he commended the Chamber for the services and adjustments to their service levels this year. Discussion was held.

Input from the public on the Mariposa Visitors' Center was provided by the following:

Ruth Sellers noted the Tourism Bureau is operating with funds provided by the transient occupancy tax, and she questioned how the Tourism Bureau could use those funds to bid for the Visitors' Centers as they are funded through the General Fund.

Lester Bridges provided input on the increased level of service and hours the Chamber provided this past summer, including making reservations for the tourists and bringing the Park Rangers to the Mariposa Visitors' Center; and he addressed the concern relative to displaying the B&B brochures and clarified that anyone in the County can place their business information in the Visitors' Centers. He commented on his discussions with the Tourism Bureau Executive Director relative to operation of the Visitors' Centers and of efforts to work together.

(M)Stetson, (S)Cann, Res. 11-551 was adopted accepting the Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce proposal for operation of the Mariposa Visitors' Center and directing the County Administrative Officer to prepare the agreement documents for Board approval/Ayes: Unanimous.

Cc: Bill Davis, Auditor
Kathy McCorry, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director
File

MARIPOSA COUNTY

Richard J. Benson
County Administrative Officer



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October 31, 2011

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Rick Benson, County Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: Visitors' Centers RFP

At your Board's direction, an RFP was issued on September 13, 2011 to solicit proposals for the operation of the Mariposa Visitors' Center and the Coulterville Visitors' Center. Copies of the RFPs are attached.

We received three responses for the operation of the Coulterville Center and two responses for the Mariposa Center. Each of the proposals have their own unique strengths. All of the individuals and organizations making those proposals demonstrate a commitment to provide a positive experience to those visiting our County.

Each of the proposals are attached for your review and are summarized below.

Coulterville

Mariposa County Chamber Of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce is our current contractor. Their proposal is very much status quo. They propose to use the same location as is currently in place. They have proposed to change the hours during the off-season to have the Visitors' Center open Friday through Monday. The proposed cost for the Chamber to operate the Coulterville Visitors' Center is \$25,000 annually.

Joy Kitchel

Ms. Kitchel has experience as she currently manages the Visitors' Center as an employee of the Chamber of Commerce. Her proposal was to operate the Visitors' Center out of the Hotel Jefferey. The location is exceptional, as the hotel is a landmark in the town. Hotel staff would also be available to assist visitors if necessary. The proposed cost for Ms. Kitchell to operate the center is \$31,405 annually, 26% higher than the Chamber.

Northern Mariposa County History Center

The History Center proposes to operate the Visitors' Center out of the museum. There would be a certain synergy to using this location as it is a natural attraction for tourists in Coulterville. The museum also has facilities in place available for the comfort of the visitors. The proposed cost for the History Center to operate the Visitors' Center is \$44,500 annually which is 78% more expensive than the lowest bid.

Recommendation

It is recommended that your Board award the contract to the Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce has operated the Visitors' Center successfully for several years. They have an understanding of what is required and have been serving the County well. The Chamber proposal is also the least expensive.

Mariposa

Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber proposes to operate the Visitors' Center as it is currently. They have suggested different hours which would enhance the time they are available to serve the public. The proposed cost for the Chamber to operate the Mariposa Visitors' Center is \$125,000 annually.

Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau

Tourism Bureau proposal emphasizes the benefits of incorporating the message and activities at the center with the overall promotion of Mariposa County. Because of the marketing expertise found at the Tourism Bureau and because the Bureau is a repository for information about activities within the County is suggested that through their operation of the Center they will be able to lengthen the stay of a visitor to Mariposa County. There is a synergy created by having the Tourism Bureau operate and control the activities at the Visitors' Center.

The Tourism Bureau indicates that to best suit their needs, a three-year contract would be preferred. A contract term longer than one year certainly can be considered by your Board. The proposal also includes innovations to the Visitors' Center aimed at gathering information from each visitor

Under the Tourism Bureau proposal the first year cost would be \$140,000 which is \$15,000 (12%) higher than the Chamber. The overall cost over a three-year period would average \$6,667 or slightly more than 5% higher than the Chamber proposal.

Recommendation

The Chamber of Commerce has a proven track record of providing excellent service to the tourists coming through Mariposa. There has never been an issue regarding their operation of the Mariposa Center. In light of this performance record and the County's difficult financial position it is recommended that a one-year contract be awarded to the Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce.

Your Board may wish to revisit the contracts next year. It is not required that a request for proposal be issued.