CITY OF JOPLIN

COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

ITEM:

Council Bill No. 2026-609 - Approves the Convention & Visitor Bureau's grant funding distribution for FY2026 related to special events, festivals, and marketing.

MEETING DATE:

May 4, 2026

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:

Convention & Visitors Bureau

REVIEWED BY:

Director of Convention & Visitors Bureau-Patrick Tuttle, Director of Finance-Leslie Haase, City Attorney-Peter Edwards, City Manager-Nicholas Edwards

SUMMARY REQUEST:

This Council Bill approves the Convention & Visitor Bureau's (CVB) grant distribution for FY2026 special events, festivals, and marketing. Funding comes from a portion of the Occupational License Tax (Hotel/Motel tax) collected under Ordinance No. 2000-048, as authorized by the City of Joplin voters on November 7, 2000.

BACKGROUND:

This CVB grant program aims to assist qualified organizations in promoting tourism activities that directly increase hotel/motel occupancy and create a positive image for Joplin. Qualifying applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Not-for-profit and for-profit organizations may apply
- Events must be held between November 1, 2025 & October 31, 2026
- Events must be held within 20 miles of Joplin city limits
- Events must be open to the general public

At the January 20 Joplin Convention & Visitors Bureau Advisory Board meeting, they reviewed two additional FY2026 CVB Grant applications and heard from the requested organizations. At the conclusion of the meeting, the board determined where appropriate, funding allocations and the amounts.

Two applications were reviewed, totaling $40,000 in funding requests. Funding for the grant program is capped at $140,000. At the start of FY2026, the council had authorized $110,000 to thirteen organizations.

In their review of all applications, the board considered many factors, including an event's tourism draw, potential room nights, growth potential, previous funding and reporting standards, overall appeal, and community development.

Applications are worth 100 points, with a 60-point benchmark as the minimum funding threshold. Each board member scored the applications individually, and the highest and lowest scores were removed. All were ranked by their average score.

Scoring criteria included the ability to increase event attendance, to attract new visitors to Joplin (from 70 miles+ one-way) outside the market, to retain a visitor in the area (for at least 3 hours), to generate overnight stays, marketing efforts shown to be 40% or more on a digital platform, event scheduled during low-occupancy time of year, show projected growth based on previous year's post-event summary, plus the overall composition and impression of grant application. After scoring and ranking all applications, the advisory board members discussed each application and made final funding decisions.

FUNDING SOURCE:

The grant funding comes from a dedicated portion of the CVB's annual budget. It is 100% funded from the Lodging Tax. No portion of the General Fund or any other revenue stream is used.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Convention & Visitors Bureau Advisory Board respectfully submits the following grant funding expenditure from the FY2026 CVB Budget:

1. Tuff Bull Productions for the Route 66 Pro Rodeo, in the amount of twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000).
2. Bright Futures/Safe and Sound Schools, for Bright Futures Coordinators Summit, in the amount of five thousand dollars ($5,000).

The CVB Advisory Board and staff recommend passing this bill on the first reading.

ATTACHMENTS:

Council Bill No. 2026-609