CITY OF JOPLIN

COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

ITEM:

Council Bill No. 2024-622 - Approves the Convention & Visitor Bureau's grant funding distribution for FY2025 related to special events, festivals, and celebrations.

MEETING DATE:

September 3, 2024

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 FY2025 special events, festivals, and celebrations. Funding comes from a portion of the Occupational License Tax (Hotel/Motel tax) monies collected resulting from 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 with promoting tourism activities that strive to 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, 2024 & October 31, 2025
- Events must be held within 20 miles of Joplin city limits
- Events must be open to the general public

At the June and July meetings of the Joplin Convention & Visitors Bureau Advisory Board, they reviewed the FY2025 CVB Grant applications and heard from the requesting organizations. At the conclusion of the July meeting, the board determined funding allocations: where appropriate and how much.

Eighteen applications from eighteen organizations were reviewed, totaling $253,011 in funding requests. Funding for the grant program is capped at $140,000. Traditionally, up to $130,000 can be awarded through the initial grant process, with the balance kept in reserve and awarded throughout the fiscal year, in lesser amounts, by the CVB director.

In their review, 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 being the strongest funding measurement. Each board member scored the applications individually, and the high/low scores were removed. All were ranked by the average score received.

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. Following the scoring and ranking of all applications, the advisory board members discussed each application and made final funding decisions.

FUNDING SOURCE:

The CVB Grant funding comes from a dedicated portion of the CVB 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 recommendations from the FY2025 CVB Budget:

1. 4 State Trucks for Guilty by Association, in the amount of Twenty-five Thousand dollars ($25,000)
2. Ozark Christian College for marketing the 2025 conference series, in the amount of Twenty Thousand dollars ($20,000)
3. MO-KAN Dragway for marketing the 2025 racing season, in the amount of Eight Thousand Seventy dollars ($8,070)
4. Silver Sage Renaissance for the inaugural Silver Sage Renaissance Festival, in the amount of Fifteen Thousand dollars ($15,000)
5. Branco Enterprises & Neosho Schools for the Neosho Holiday Classic basketball tournament, in the amount of Twelve Thousand Five Hundred dollars ($12,500)
6. JOMO Pride, Inc., for the 2025 JOMO PrideFest, in the amount of Eight Thousand Five Hundred dollars ($8,500)
7. Mother Road Mayhem for the 2025 Mother Road Mayhem truck show events, in the amount of Five Thousand dollars ($5,000)
8. Joplin Trails Coalition for the Maple Leaf Bike Tour, in the amount of One Thousand dollars ($1,000)
9. Newton County Tourism Council for the 2025 marketing campaign, in the amount of One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty dollars ($1,820).

An application from YOFJ, LLC, for the Monster Games was awarded funding in the amount of Twenty Thousand dollars ($20,000). Since the application review, the organization has decided to move its 2025 event to Kansas City, citing limited event space for growth, broader lodging options, and more available airlift as factors in its decision.

Eight (8) of the eighteen (18) applications scored below the required 60 points and received no funding. The advisory board directed the CVB director to work with these organizations to see where specific financial support can be given.

1. ProMusica, Get Your Kicks on Route 66
2. Neosho Arts Council, ArtCon
3. Emancipation Celebration Committee, Emancipation Celebration
4. Joplin Disc Golf Club, 20th Annual Four States Open
5. North Heights Neighborhood, North Heights Porchfest
6. Freedom of Flight Museum, Freedom of Flight Museum Marketing
7. Great Wonders Production, Uplift Film Festival
8. Heartland Concert Band, Community Band Outdoor Picnic

These recommendations and adjustments represent $96,890 of the $140,000 budgeted for the FY2025 grant program. The balance of $43,110 will be allocated throughout the fiscal year following the same grant usage guidelines.

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

ATTACHMENTS:

Council Bill No. 2024-622