



## ***AITKIN COUNTY TOURISM PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM PROGRAM OVERVIEW***

The purpose of this grant fund is to leverage county funds, private funds and volunteer efforts to increase tourism and related economic development activities in Aitkin County. Applicants must be registered as non-profit corporations with the Secretary of State, a Non-Profit Tourism Association or unit of Government. Several organizations may submit a single application or organizations may apply individually. Organizations need only to commit one hundred dollars (\$100.00) in good faith to ensure commitment to the grant request. Example: Program/Event Total Cost: \$1,100.00 would require the organization's commitment of \$100.00 to ensure the possibility of an Aitkin County Tourism Promotion and Development Grant (ACTPDG) of \$1,000.00.

**Grant Guidelines:** Guidelines for application and awarding of Aitkin County Tourism Promotion and Development Grants are as follows:

1. Funding Limits: Minimum of \$100 and a maximum of \$1,000 per grant application per year.
2. Matching Funds: The tourism grant program is intended to leverage locally funded promotions and not replace that funding. Significant consideration will be given to the amount and quality of matching funds/in kind contributions when grant applications are evaluated by the Economic Development Committee and County Board.
3. County-Wide Distribution: The intent of this program is to provide assistance throughout Aitkin County, accordingly consideration shall be given to amounts awarded and number of grants approved per year for any particular region of the county to ensure that an equitable level of funding is available throughout the county.
  - a. Event/Activity Eligibility: Grant Funds shall be used to market tourism and related economy enhancement events that will benefit Aitkin County. Including Northwood's ATV Trail enhancements. Funds shall be targeted towards attracting new, repeat and extended stay tourism visitations to Aitkin County or events that demonstrate an economic benefit to Aitkin County. Funds shall be targeted towards attracting new, repeat and extended stay tourism visitations to Aitkin County or activities that will enhance the Aitkin County economy. Events eligible for funding include: community/recreational events such as races, rides, tournaments, shows and exhibits; community celebrations; logistic and informational materials for tourism related information booths or trade shows and other. Eligible uses include radio, newspaper, TV, signage, internet, brochures and other related advertising; printed publications and marketing promotions.

- b. Special consideration will be given to applications that will enhance the Northwood's ATV Trail through signage, promotion, activities or trail amenities.
- c. Grant funds shall not be used to pay the salaries of part or full time staff associated with a particular event or organization associated with an event. Funds shall not be used for any type of prizes or other material items that may be offered, awarded, sold or given away as a promotion of the event being supported by the grant.
- d. Tourism grant funds may not be used to reimburse expenses occurred prior to grant approval by Aitkin County.

**Application Procedure:** All applications shall be submitted using the "Application for Aitkin County Tourism Promotion and Development Grant" and Model Resolution Form for Non-Governmental Organizations, both of which are attached.

- Grant requests must be submitted to ACTPDG c/o Ross Wagner, Aitkin County Courthouse, 217 2nd St. N.W.#131, Aitkin, MN 56431. Funding recommendations will be considered at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Aitkin County Economic Development Committee in June. Application deadline is May 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Committee recommendations will be submitted to the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners for final approval.
- The Model Resolution Form must be submitted by all applicant organizations, except governmental organizations. An Evaluation Form, to be completed and returned within thirty days following the completion of the program/event, will be sent to you following acceptance of your proposal.

**Reports and Recovery of Unused Funds:** Reports and procedures for recovery of unused funds are as follows:

1. A written evaluation shall be completed and returned the Aitkin County Economic Development and Forest Industry Advisor within 30 days of completion of a project/event. That written evaluation shall describe the success in meeting the goals of the event or promotion and should be included with the final financial report discussed below.
2. A financial Expense Worksheet and Financial Statement shall be completed and returned the Aitkin County Economic Development and Forest Industry Advisor monthly and a final closeout report within 30 days of completion of a project/event. That report shall also include a reimbursement check for any unused funds, make check payable to "Aitkin County-Tourism Grant Fund."

Further information and additional forms and materials may be obtained by contacting Ross Wagner, Aitkin County Economic Development and Forest Industry Coordinator, 217 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW, #131, Aitkin, MN 56431, 218-927-7305, [rwagner@co.aitkin.mn.us](mailto:rwagner@co.aitkin.mn.us)