

## **RFP for Branding of Lake County, CA as a Tourism Destination**

**Introduction:** In recognition of the vital role tourism can play in the economic vitality of Lake County, a group of stakeholders formed The Lake County Tourism Improvement District (LCTID) Board in November 2018 with the mission of expanding leisure traveler visitation to and overnight stays in the County. To assist in achieving this goal, the LCTID is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to help build a recognizable and distinct brand for California's Lake County as an exciting and adventurous tourist destination.

### **Purpose**

To increase out-of-county visitation and overnight stays in the county through the creation of a new brand.

Process:

The proposal submission and review process will consist of two phases:

### **Phase I**

Issue RFP, receiving proposals, and the review process.

### **Phase II**

The selection of firm(s) in which additional information may be requested and an oral interview conducted with selected firm(s). At the conclusion of the evaluation process, a successful applicant will be chosen at the discretion of the LCTID board.

### **Qualified Applicants:**

- Demonstrated success in developing a brand and related creative assets
- Experience in destination marketing strongly preferred, but not required.
- Ability to provide comprehensive strategic plan for implementing the brand and use of creative assets.
- Some knowledge of Lake County would be desirable.

**Background:**

Lake County's Tourism Improvement District (LCTID) was approved October 2018 and seated its Board November 2018. The successful passage of this Tourism Improvement District created a 1.5% assessment on lodging revenue. These non-tax funds will be used to increase visitor stays and tourism activities. This new entity joins 105 other Tourism Improvement Districts in California and will act as the official destination marketing organization for Lake County.

Our current situation: California's Lake County has many entities marketing independently;

- <http://www.lakecountywineries.org/> - Twenty nine wineries with tasting rooms some with wine producing capabilities.
- <https://www.lakecountywinegrape.org/> A powerful group of independent wine grape growers
- <https://lakecounty.com/> Lake County's current visitor website designed for The County and managed by CROWD. NOTE: It is expected that this site will be the primary portal to the LCTID's efforts. (Note: [www.visitlakecountyca.com](http://www.visitlakecountyca.com) refers to the same site)
- <https://www.instagram.com/visitlakecountyca/?hl=en> <https://www.facebook.com/VisitLakeCountyCA/>
- Destinations Magazine produced annually by the Lake County Chamber of Commerce

Fires. 500,000+ acres of our world-class scenic beauty burned in the Mendocino Complex fire in summer 2018, ranking as the largest wildfire in California's history. The majority of the fire burned north of the county and did not destroy population centers. However, the fire did burn much of the 900,000 acre Mendocino National Forest. It is the only national forest in the state of California without a major paved road entering it so it has never afforded easy access to tourists.

Access. Lake County is the only county in California without a railroad line; Lake County has a small municipal airport. The county has three main highways; Highway 29 in the south from Napa, Highway 20 in the north running east/west to the coast and in the center of the county- Highway 175 from Mendocino. Much of the access is over

rigorous mountainous routes, except for Highway 20 from Ukiah in Mendocino.

**Brand.** Lake County desires to have a cohesive brand and marketing effort with a distinctive image and creative materials identifying who we are and why visitors should visit the county. We will be changing our URL from lakecounty.com to new visitlakecountyca.com website (to be developed). Lake County possesses many beautiful strong visual elements but they are not used effectively or cohesively to attract visitors. An extensive marketing strategy aimed at attracting overnight visitation is needed year-round, with emphasis during shoulder season of winter.

**Strengths:**

- Rural, scenic beauty, cleanest air in California
- Only 2.5 hours from San Francisco, Sacramento
- Natural beauty - walnut and pear orchids, the largest and oldest natural lake entirely within California, Blue Lakes, Mt. Konocti, an ancient dormant volcano.
- Charming towns, friendly people.
- Unhurried, relaxed; unassuming, laid back; tranquil 'unplug' vibe.
- World-class wine region with 35 tasting rooms.
- One of the top 3 bass fishing lakes in U.S.
- Extensive water and walking trails; kayaking, boating, cycling; mountain biking; OHV trails in Mendocino National Forest;,
- Incredible bird watching.
- Native American heritage; diverse natural history including a once active volcano and hot springs.
- Dark night time skies and extensive star gazing.
- Snow Mountain National Monument.
- Four Casinos with gaming, three with lodging.
- Top 25 Golf Course ranking in California Hidden Valley Lake Golf Course
- Equestrian activities, trails, rodeos, events

**Objectives:**

- Increase hotel occupancy by 10% over 12 months after launch of branding campaign

- Target Bay Area (Silicon Valley, San Francisco, East Bay and Marin), Sacramento and North Coast
- Promote year round attractions
- Make Lake County a destination getaway for all ages

**Timetable:** The schedule below is an estimate of deadlines. LCTID reserves the right to amend the RFP and timetable at any time and changes to this schedule will be posted to our website with the date of change stated.

**RFP Activities:**

RFP Issued: March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Last Day for Questions: March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Due electronically: by April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Contacted for phone interviews: by April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Awarded: April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Proposal Outline:**

Proposals should include the following:

I. **Branding Plan:** Applicant must submit a comprehensive plan showing how they will develop brand identification/story/creative and strategies for implementation. Must demonstrate how the proposal will establish a recognizable and distinct brand in the minds of travelers and potential visitors; separate our brand from the rest for quick recognition; inspire travelers to stay in Lake County and entice them to come again; increase awareness of Lake County, California.

II. **Scope of Work:** The successful applicant will develop a brand plan that specifies the demographics of our primary audience, values, personality, value proposition, brand positioning, and brand launch including traditional, digital, and content marketing.

III. **Deliverables:** Creation of a brand vision and strategy to implement that brand including the following; (1) brand identity elements, (2) a brand book with templates; (3) specification of logo,

fonts and colors; (4) tagline(s); (5) branding document with explanation; (6) summation of branding.

IV. ***Budget/Expenditure Plan:*** Our budget is small compared to our neighbors. Weight will be given to creative, economical proposals which achieve the desired deliverables.

V. ***Background and Demonstrated Past Performance:*** Applicants must provide relevant information that clearly demonstrates the applicant's financial position and related experience, knowledge of marketing as it relates to tourism and destination marketing. Applicants must also disclose if they are working with other destination marketing organizations, TBIDs, TIDs.

VII. Visit Lake County CA TID has the right to accept none of the proposals, reject or deny any proposal, and accept partial proposals.

VII. Notice of intent to award the contract will be sent via email to all vendors who submitted a timely Proposal.