

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Review and Recommend Approval of Five (5) FY 09 Tourist Tax Category “C-2” Grant Requests and Subsequent Tourism Agreements Totaling \$442,500

OBJECTIVE: Review and Recommend Approval of Five (5) Tourist Tax Category “C-2” Grant Requests and Subsequent Tourism Agreements for FY 09.

CONSIDERATIONS: Category “C-2” Grant Applications:

Grant Applications were made available on our tourism website in January and were due March 30, 2008. In accordance with the Grant Criteria, the applications were first reviewed by the Tourism Director and then by a panel of five tourism industry representatives including: Lisa Boet, Naples Originals, representing the restaurant industry; Annette Alvarez, General Manager of Waterside Shops, representing the retail and shopping industry; Doug Rickenbach, Naples Zoo, representing the attractions industry; Jennifer Fox, Norris Center, representing the cultural community and Jim Hennessey, Residence Inn-Naples, representing the hotel industry.

One change was made in the Category “C” criteria after the application forms were distributed. The requirement for “Dollar for Dollar Matching Funds” was eliminated from the reimbursement requirements in order to clarify that these are reimbursement grants- the grantee must spend the money and then request reimbursement for qualified expenses. This change was reviewed and approved by the TDC at their March 24, 2008 TDC meeting.

1. **Children’s Museum of Collier County:** This new museum is being built on the north side of North Collier Regional Park and will break ground this summer. The organization applied for a grant in FY 08, and was approved for \$125,000, but later withdrew the grant due to delays in permitting and fund raising. They have currently raised \$10 million dollars and are well on their way to building a first-class museum dedicated totally to children. The grant request is for assistance in the Grand Opening marketing expenses. Visitation for the first year of operation is estimated at 75,000 with a projected economic impact of \$4.5 million. The requested amount was \$200,000 and the Grant Review Committee recommends funding \$150,000 specifically for out of market promotion expenses.
2. **Conservancy of SW Florida:** The request is for \$63,500 to build and promote the new “Raptor Capture Exhibit”. The conservancy applied for a Category C-2 grant last year to rehab an existing exhibit. They were awarded a \$40,000 Category “B” marketing grant to assist them in promoting the museum to build lagging attendance. They also received a \$100,000 grant in 2004 to build the “Everglades: A Work in Progress” exhibit. The Conservancy estimates their visitor count will grow to 32,000 in FY 09, an increase of nearly 5,500 and an economic impact of \$1.2 million due in part to the new exhibit. The Grant Review Committee recommends funding at \$42,500 for building the exhibit and for out of market promotion expenses.

Category C-2 Grant Applications Cont.

3. **Holocaust Museum of SW Florida:** The request is for \$250,000 to promote the Boxcar Exhibit in out of market media. The exhibit will travel around the County and region to promote tolerance. This organization applied for and was granted \$100,000 in FY 08 for promoting the Boxcar Project opening ceremonies at the Naples Depot. The event was a big success and the traveling boxcar exhibit has been seen at schools all over Collier County. The museum staff estimates they have generated 250 hotel room nights in FY 08 from their boxcar exhibit. Economic impact for FY 09 is estimated at \$1 million from the operation of the Museum based on visitation of 30,000. The Grant Review Committee recommends funding of \$100,000 for FY 09 for use in promoting the boxcar exhibit in out of market areas where the TDC is also marketing the destination.
4. **Marco Island Historical Society:** The request is for \$250,000 to construct the Living History Hall at the new Marco Island Museum. This organization applied for and was awarded a grant in FY 08 for \$125,000 to build Phase 1 of the Museum. They have been very successful in raising funds for this project and have been able to move forward with construction of the main exhibit hall. They are returning to the TDC with a request to build another section of the museum. The museum will be under construction for some time, so estimates of economic impact, hotel room nights and visitation are difficult. The Collier County Museum staff will manage this Marco Island facility once the museum is completed. For the first year of operation for the new museum, visitation is estimated at 10,000 with 80% from out of the area, and an economic impact of \$2.7 million for 2009. The Grant Review Committee recommends funding for FY 09 at \$100,000.
5. **Naples Art Association dba von Liebig Art Center:** This organization has been funded the past two years by tourist tax funds (FY 07 \$50,000; FY 08 \$38,000). They have requested funding assistance for FY 09 for marketing the museum to attract out of town visitors. The request is for \$100,000 and the Grant Review Committee recommends funding at \$50,000 for out of market media. The Association estimates an economic impact of \$6.3 million, 875 room nights and 55,350 attendees from their marketing efforts in FY 09.

GRANT REVIEW COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS: The Grant Review Committee met on April 17, 2008 and reviewed each of these applications and made their recommendations as outlined above.

COUNTY ATTORNEY FINDING: Each application has been reviewed by the County Attorney and approved as to form and legal sufficiency.

FISCAL IMPACT: Funding for these grants are in the proposed FY 09 budget submitted to the County Manager under Category "C-2", Fund 193.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT IMPACT: There is no impact to the Growth Management Plan related to this action.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval for funding these five (5) Category "C-2" grant applications and subsequent Tourism Agreements with the Children's Museum of Collier County (\$150,000), Conservancy of SW Florida (\$42,500), Holocaust Museum of SW Florida (\$100,000), Marco Island Historical Society (\$100,000) & Naples Art Association dba von Liebig Art Center (\$50,000) for a total of \$ \$442,500.

PREPARED BY: Jack Wert, Tourism Director