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ORGANIZATION / PROJECT INFORMATION

Organization name	White Pass Scenic Byway
Project name	Marketing and Promotion
Project coordinator	Mary Kay Nelson
Amount requested from Lewis County	195600
Total project amount	200600

APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name	Mary Kay Nelson
Street address	360 SW Valley View Way #B Chehalis, WA 98532
Mailing address (if different from street address)	PO Box 805 Chehalis, WA 98532
Current home phone	(360) 508-1774
Current email address	info@WhitePassByway.com
Agency Tax ID Number	271818764
Organization Unified Business Identifier (UBI)	602728076
UBI expiration date	May 10, 2022
Type of organization:	501(c)3
Organization's mission statement or purpose (one or two sentences):	The mission is the public education and promotion of events, activities, and attractions of the Byway and the marketing and promotion and visitor enhancement of the Byway to increase the economy of the communities in Lewis County through overnight stays.
Year the organization was founded:	2007
Has your organization received Lewis County lodging tax funding in the past?	Yes

When did your organization receive Lewis County lodging tax funding?	2008 through 2020
How much did your organization / project receive?	\$77,200 in 2021

REQUIRED INFORMATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project name	Marketing and Promotion for the White Pass Scenic Byway
1. Describe how the project promotes tourism in all of Lewis County's unincorporated areas.	The request this year includes \$100,000 to hire a consultant to develop a countywide strategic plan for tourism that incorporates all communities and represents all tourism interests. The goal is to create a strong partnership. All marketing and training activities are focused on the unincorporated areas of Lewis County. The website and mobile app, as well as social media, concentrate specifically on the White Pass Scenic Byway corridor but also link to our neighboring communities in the county as well as Discover Lewis County. Our newsletters are distributed to all Lewis County communities in an effort to cross-promote the entire region. Throughout the year we monitor key community organizations such as East Lewis County Chamber, White Pass Country Museum, Morton Roxy, Onalaska Apple Festival, etc, to gather and distribute festival dates, and activities for the region.
2. Describe how the project will enhance tourism and result in "heads in beds."	Creating overnight stays is our primary goal. Our marketing targets a specific audience looking for outdoor recreation and leisure travel. The website has improved listings with photos of all lodging options, all lodging is also listed on the mobile app. We provide a comprehensive list for visitors with direct access (links) to Air BnB, VRBO, campgrounds, motels, and cabins in Lewis County. Overnight stays remain the major emphasis. Providing places to go and things to do will keep people here longer and get them to return. Lodging tax revenue in unincorporated Lewis County has increased 100% since 2018. This proves the value of marketing and providing the information that tourists need to visit Lewis County. Lodging is the #1 sought-after information when visiting a new area.

3. List the responsible party / parties.

The White Pass Byway volunteer Board of Directors representing six communities on the Byway is responsible for program oversight, setting goals, policy, and budget, for the organization and its projects. The Board hires contractors to conduct the day-to-day operations of this marketing and promotion program.

Marketing Director: Mary Kay Nelson

Social Media and Bookkeeping - Annalee Tobey

Website Development - Danielle Surkatty

It should be noted these individuals have been committed to this project for 14 years. This shows an extreme commitment and consistent message when marketing to the public.

4. Describe the area the project will serve, as well as the project's expected impact.

The White Pass Scenic Byway is defined by Washington State as the US Hwy 12 corridor from Mary's Corner to Naches. We expect to increase awareness, attendance, and participation in events, activities, and attractions in Mayfield, Mossyrock, Salkum Onalaska, Morton, Randle, Packwood, and White Pass, by promoting all there is to see and do in the region.

The Board of Directors has identified the need for a comprehensive countywide plan for tourism. We are willing and qualified to take the lead to make this happen by hiring a consultant. If funded, the Byway will seek a county-wide network via Zoom or Industry Facebook page to provide better communication among partners.

5. Describe how the project will specifically promote tourism.

Digital Marketing: Paid advertising with Google and Facebook ads and newsletter campaign

Print Marketing: Continued printing of the popular tearsheet maps, and WA State Visitor Guides

Mobile App: Promotion of camping and lodging, events, dining, and tourism-related businesses

Website: Provides visitor information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week about what there is to see and do in Lewis County.

6. Describe how you have collaborated with other entities throughout Lewis County to promote tourism.

We have collaborated with Lewis County Outdoor Recreation Team, and continue to pursue grant opportunities for this program. We plan to conduct the Hospitality Training Program. We communicate with the USFS Gifford Pinchot for Outdoor Recreation and are the single point of contact for the Mt. Rainier National Park Having a representative from Tacoma Power and Packwood businesses on the Board keeps us up to date with what is happening in Lewis County.

The WPSB has a comprehensive list of contacts for all tourism-related organizations as well as relationships with public landowners, such as State Parks, National Parks, USFS, Tacoma Power, and DNR. If funded we will assemble a team to create a strategic plan for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism.

7. Describe why your project should receive funding.

The Byway has a proven track record of successful operations for the past 15 years. Our Facebook page is among one of the highest followings for tourism-related pages in the northwest, second to the Cascade Loop. Our audience is engaged and relies on Facebook for suggestions on seasonal information. The website has increased its following with improved imagery and is one of the best outdoor recreation and lodging resources in the state. In addition to our marketing program, the White Pass Scenic Byway is represented at Washington Tourism Alliance which has afforded our region more opportunities to be recognized and involved in statewide tourism programs. We believe we are the most capable of assembling a group of tourism-related individuals who will be capable of carrying tourism in Lewis County forward into the future.

8. Describe how your organization would respond to potential cancellations or closures, such as those caused by COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021.

During the past 2 years, the White Pass Byway played a significant role in communicating with all businesses along the US Hwy 12 corridor. With our up-to-date comprehensive contact list of businesses, we were able to contact them directly to distribute PPE and survey them for information about the status of their business. Many businesses expressed appreciation for this and felt the County was looking after their best interests. Serving the needs of communities is another way of serving our economy and making sure their needs are met during disasters and closures. We adjusting our messaging during the period of the stay-at-home order and have consistently reminded our audience to travel safely and recreate responsibly.

USE OF HOTEL / MOTEL TAX

Please indicate below the types of activities for which the lodging tax monies would be used:

TOURISM PROMOTION
MARKETING ONLY

Describe the expected results (measurable outcomes) of your project, with the dollar amount for each outcome.

\$100,000 Hire a consultant to develop a countywide tourism strategic plan
\$20,000 Google and Facebook Advertising - increase web traffic by 10%
\$5,000 Continue Mobile App with marketing to increase use by 5%
\$10,000 Purchase advertising in Washington State Visitor Guide and website to increase awareness
\$1,000 Print and distribute Lewis County Event poster - produce 500 countywide event posters
\$2000 Website and photos add appropriate new photos and content to website
\$5,000 Produce 5,000 hiking and drive tour tearsheet maps
\$3,500 Hospitality Training for up to 50 front line employees

Total number of attendees predicted to attend: 73,000

Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number

Investing in digital marketing is extremely effective. The data we collect on Google Analytics shows the more we invest in Google and Facebook advertising the more traffic we have on our website. LTAC revenue is primarily used for marketing and to conduct the business of the organization as it relates to website and social media.

This number is based on the number of web visits. Every day, depending on the season visits to the website range from 100-550. 30-50 people use the mobile app. This is available 24/7. It is expected only a percentage of these web visits result in lodging and visits to Lewis County, however, we continue to influence and reach potential visitors every day. The more visits we can drive to the site, the more people we can influence to come to Lewis County. In addition, our 44,545 Facebook followers see images and reasons to visit weekly throughout the year.

a. Projected number of attendees who will travel fifty (50) miles or more one way from their home or business to attend:

73,000

b. Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number

Again, based on website visits, Google Analytics report our audience is primarily from over 50 miles away. 41% of the web traffic is from the Seattle area, 7% is from Portland, 5% from Yakima, 3% from Tacoma, 2% from Olympia, Vancouver, Richland and Spokane. Less than 1% is from the local area of Lewis County.

Our marketing efforts continue to target Puget Sound and Portland markets.

65% are from Washington and 10% from Oregon. California shows 9% web visits. The more marketing money we have the wider the reach we have for marketing.

a. Projected number of participants who will travel from another country or state to attend:

20,000

b. Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number

Using statistics from Google Analytics, we find interested and potential visitors from a wide variety of locations. 97% are from the United States with 67% from Washington. 11% from Oregon, 4% from California, 2% from Texas and Florida. Out of state tourists tend to spend more and stay longer, thus they are an important segment; however it typically costs more to market to them. Leveraging our local dollars with Washington State Travel Guides and ExperienceWashington.com is also cost effective, especially now that their marketing program has begun.

out of country stats from the website for this year:

India 1%

China .67%

Mexico .49%

a. Projected number of participants who will stay overnight in paid accommodations: 5,000

b. Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number

There is a direct correlation between the amount of money spent on digital advertising and the number of visitors to the website. The more we spend on marketing the more traffic is sent to the website and mobile app, and the better we can influence them to come here. Our ability to drive visitors to lodging and camping is directly related to funds available for marketing. Outdoor recreation is a popular activity and brings many from the urban centers on vacations and weekend getaways. The more visible we are, the better we can compete for their business. Lewis County continues to be economically feasible as a place to go and stay, as well as play.

a. Projected number of participants who will stay overnight in unpaid accommodations: unknown

b. Describe how receiving lodging tax dollars would increase that number

We know that by increasing the visitors to Lewis County, we will also increase the number of visitors who stay in unpaid accommodations. There is no way to determine exact numbers.

10. Describe how the project provides short-term or long-term economic benefit for Lewis County

The development of a tourism strategic plan will ensure we identify and reach the long-term goals for the economic benefit of Lewis County. The Byway organization was created in 2007 for a long-term approach to marketing and promoting the unincorporated area of Lewis County. 14 years later it appears to have achieved that goal and can take some credit for investing tourism dollars. Approximately \$600,000 has been invested in the White Pass Scenic Byway. This was leveraged with Federal funds to install signage and other roadway improvements on US Hwy 12. It allows Lewis County to access funds not otherwise available due to the Scenic Byway status. The electric vehicle program currently being installed was first brought to the Lewis PUD by the Byway program. Partnerships with the USFS have gained funds used at Windy Ridge. Tacoma Power partnerships have leveraged grants such as the Mossyrock Dam overlook.

11. Explain what plans exist to allow this project to become self-sustaining. Include any plans for ticket sales, event sponsors, and other cost-recovery models.

The Byway seeks opportunities to supplement the Lewis County Lodging tax allocation. We will continue to seek outside grant opportunities such as the Port of Seattle grant. We intend to conduct a sponsorship program to the local communities in 2020. We are working with Discover Lewis County to apply for an Outdoor Recreation grant through the NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation program. This will not fund general operations and marketing. We rely on Lodging Tax dollars for marketing and promotion.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Website address	https://www.whitepassbyway.com/
Facebook user name	Facebook.com/whitepassscenicbyway
Instagram	Instagram/whitepassby
Twitter account name	Twitter.com/whitepassbyway
Any other social media platforms your organization uses to promote tourism	We have a mobile app platform Download our Mobile App at Google Play or Apple store search for WhitePassWA We also have Pinterest and YouTube channels

BUDGET

Amount	195,600
Source	Lewis County LTAC
Confirmed	No
Date available	2022

Income 2

Amount	5,000
Source	Community sponsorships
Confirmed	No
Date available	2022

Income 3

Income 4

Income 5

Income 6

Total Income	200,600
What percentage of your project does your request for Tourism Promotion Dollars represent?	97.5

Expense - Personnel

County	0
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Other Funds	0
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Total	0
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Expense - Administration

County	0
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Other Funds	0
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Total	0
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Expense - Marketing/promotion

County	37,200
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Other Funds	5,000
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Total	42,500
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Expense - Direct sales activities

County	0
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Other Funds	0
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Total	0
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Expense - Minor equipment

County	0
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Other Funds	0
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Total	0
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Expense - Travel

County	2400
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Other Funds	0
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Total	2400
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Expense - Contract services

County	148,500
Other Funds	0
Total	148,500 includes Strategic Planning consultant
Expense - Other activities	
County	7700
Other Funds	0
Total	7700
Total Cost	
County	195,600
Other Funds	5,000
Total	200,600
Priority 1	Full funding including Lewis County Strategic Planning and Marketing and Operations
Full Funding Request	195,600
Priority 2	95,600
Minimum Funding Request	78,000
Applicant will / can accept no less than this amount	78,000
If partial funding is received, how will that affect the project / activity? Please describe:	Reduction in funding will directly affect the amount of marketing that can be done with paid advertising and social media. Very little of the budget is spent on overhead and operations. Marketing is carried out by professional contractors who manage the day-to-day operations and execute all aspects of the program, from organizational management, social media, advertising, networking, mobile app, and website management to hospitality training. All these activities will be reduced if less funding is received. Without a Lewis County Strategic Plan for tourism, we believe Lewis County will jeopardize the investment of valuable tourism dollars. The tourism industry needs to unify and determine the future of tourism. without leadership at Discover Lewis County and other key individuals retiring, we need to build a program that can sustain our industry and invest wisely for the future.

PROJECT TIMELINE / TOURISM SEASON

What is your anticipated timeline for accomplishing this activity?

The marketing operations is an ongoing and continual program year-round. While we seek to promote the off season and shoulder seasons, we also need to promote the events and activities that happen during the peak summer season in order to compete in the tourism marketplace. In order to increase lodging tax, our job is to market businesses and lodging when there is a need and availability. Winter recreation is as important as summer outdoor recreation. Both require year-round marketing efforts.

The Strategic Planning session will be initiated in the first quarter of 2022. The completion is targeted for completion by September 2022 in time for the next round of lodging tax allocations. The goal is to have a plan on how best to invest and leverage the lodging tax revenue collected in Lewis County.

Year-round

Yes

Year-round Explanation

Website, social media, mobile app, newsletters and tearsheets

Off-season

Yes

Off-season Explanation

Website, social media, mobile app, newsletters and tearsheets

Shoulder season

Yes

Shoulder season Explanation

Website, social media, mobile app, newsletters and tearsheets

High season

Yes

High season Explanation

Website, social media, mobile app, newsletters and tearsheets

Is it a seasonal activity appropriate to its location? Explain

Yes, all our marketing is targeted to the best audience for that season. Our social media programs and digital marketing is adapted for the appropriate season. Communication on seasonal roads, facilities events and programs is important to travelers coming to Lewis County. Many agencies and organizations have become dependent on Byway maps, newsletters, website and mobile app for updated information. We provide Lewis County visitor information digitally 24/7 year-round.

Financial Review

Balance sheet

<https://lewiscounty.formstack.com/admin/download/file/11479711974>

Income statement

<https://lewiscounty.formstack.com/admin/download/file/11479711975>

Operating budget for 2021

<https://lewiscounty.formstack.com/admin/download/file/11479711976>

Projected budget for 2022

<https://lewiscounty.formstack.com/admin/download/file/11479711977>

Financial review

Financial review

<https://lewiscounty.formstack.com/admin/download/file/11479711978>

Nonprofit determination

Nonprofit determination

<https://lewiscounty.formstack.com/admin/download/file/11479711979>

Personnel list

Personnel list

<https://lewiscounty.formstack.com/admin/download/file/11479711980>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Signature



(Print or type applicant's name)

M.E. Lerchen, President

Date

Oct 06, 2021
