

PURPOSE OF THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Hardee County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) is requesting proposals from professional firms and/or individuals to develop an economy-building strategy based on eco and agri tourism appropriate for the area.

VISION

The vision of the Hardee County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) is to build and diversify its economy and improve the quality of life for its residents by creating a unique, marketable visitor experience using valuable natural resources.

It is expected that the experience will incorporate some basic themes around the Peace River / Bone Valley regional history, culture, and archaeological / agricultural / natural resources. However, the experience should be driven by the interests and expectations of the target market and deliver high guest satisfaction, which will foster repeat visitation, profitable and sustainable operation with resultant economic development.

The visitor experience may occur in several locations (existing or yet to be created). Examples may include but not be limited to one or more of the following:

- Fossil related venues (domestic and imported)
- Archaeological related venues (domestic and imported)
- Equestrian related venues (from trail riding through Rodeo events to English riding)
- Development of suitable agri-tourism venues (dude ranch, citrus expo, farming practices)
- Development of a multi-purpose facility (size, environment, seating type, use possibilities)
- Eco-Tourism activities related to Hardee County Industrial Development Authority's natural resources including Peace River and its tributaries (birding, fossil hunting, canoeing, camping, exploring)
- Local and regional heritage / cultural attractions (Pioneer Park, Hardee Lakes, Paynes Creek Park, Wauchula Peace River Park, private venues including local and regional artists)
- Ancillary municipal / business development (who/what business types can be created from development of these venues)

SCOPE OF WORK

Hardee County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) is seeking a visionary and experienced partner to design, brand and deliver a viable, year-round visitor destination experience.

The scope of work includes:

- Business/financial trade studies and plans
- Branding identity and strategy planning
- Market profiling
- Messaging development
- Demand modeling, pricing and budgeting
- Overall visitor planning/programming
- Phased development planning
- Conceptual experience design

- Learning systems design
- Conceptual architectural/engineering design
- Private sponsorship/alliance development
- Long-term operational plan for sustainability
- Cost / benefit prioritization

SCOPE OF PROCUREMENT

The Scope of Procurement shall encompass the Scope of Work as defined above. This single award contract is intended to be a firm-fixed price agreement with regular progress payments over the duration of work which is not to exceed 6 months.

PROCUREMENT MANAGER

The IDA has designated a Procurement Manager who is responsible for the conduct of this procurement whose name, address, and telephone number are listed below:

Sarah Pelham - Procurement Manager
107 East Main Street
Wauchula, FL 33873
(863)773-3030
Sarah.pelham@hardeemail.com

EXPLANATION OF EVENTS

Issue of RFP

This RFP is being issued by the Hardee County Industrial Development Authority. Additional copies of the RFP can be obtained from the Hardee County Industrial Development Authority Economic Development Office Website at www.hardeebusiness.com or 107 East Main Street, Wauchula.

Acknowledgement of Receipt

Firms/Individuals should hand deliver, or return via registered or certified mail to the Procurement Manager by 3:00pm on Friday, August 26, 2011.

Questions

Firms/Individuals questions or the request of additional information may be made to the Procurement Manager.

Submission of Proposals

ALL FIRMS/INDIVIDUALS PROPOSALS MUST BE RECEIVED FOR REVIEW AND EVALUATION BY THE PROCUREMENT MANAGER OR DESIGNEE NO LATER THAN 3:00pm ON **FRIDAY, AUGUST 26, 2011**. Proposals received after this deadline will not be accepted. The date and time will be recorded on each proposal. Proposals must be addressed and delivered to the Procurement Manager at 107 East Main Street, Wauchula. Proposals must be sealed and labeled on the outside of the package to clearly indicate a response to the "HARDEE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY VISITOR EXPERIENCE" Request for Proposals.

RIGHT TO REJECT PROPOSALS: After the proposals are opened, they will be read aloud by the PROCUREMENT MANAGER or designee. The IDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, and to waive technical errors and informalities.

DISQUALIFICATION OF PROPOSERS: The following causes will be considered sufficient to disqualify any proposers, and no proposals from disqualified proposers will be considered:

- A. Collusion among or between proposers.
- B. Unbalanced proposals; that is, proposals in which the fees are out of all proportion to those proposed by others.
- C. Lack of experience or capital on the part of the proposers. Evidence of experience, ability, and financial standing, may be required of any or all proposers.

NOTE: Items furnished shall comply with all applicable Federal and State laws, ordinances, code rules, regulations, orders, and permits.

PUBLIC ENTITY CRIMES - Section 287.113(2)(a) Florida Statutes, reads as follows:

“A person or affiliate who has been placed on the convicted vendor list following a conviction for a public entity crime may not submit a bid on a contract to provide any goods or services to a public entity, may not submit a bid on a contract with a public entity for the construction or repair of a public building or public work, may not submit bids on leases of real property to a public entity, may not be awarded or perform work as a contractor, supplier, subcontractor, or consultant under a contract with any public entity, and may not transact business with any public entity in excess of the threshold amount provided in Section 287.017, for CATEGORY TWO for a period of 36 months from the date of being placed on the convicted vendor list.”

Proposal Evaluation

The evaluation of proposals will be performed by an evaluation committee appointed by the HARDEE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (IDA). The Procurement Manager may, at his/her option, initiate discussion with Firms/Individuals who submit responsive or potentially responsive proposals for the purpose of clarifying aspects of the proposals, but proposals may be accepted and evaluated without such discussion. Discussions SHALL NOT be initiated by the Firms/Individuals.

Selection and Notification of Finalists

The Evaluation Committee will select and the Procurement Manager will notify the finalist Firms/Individuals no later than Friday, September 2, 2011. Only finalists will be invited to participate in the subsequent steps of the procurement. Finalist's presentations are scheduled for Tuesday, September 13, 2011 at the Hardee County Industrial Development Authority IDA meeting.

Oral Presentation/Demonstration by Finalists

Finalist Firms/Individuals may be required to present their proposals and respond to Evaluation Committee questions on the date established by the Procurement Manager. Hardee County Industrial Development Authority reserves the right to extend the time at its sole discretion. Finalist Firms/Individuals will be noticed of presentation time allotment prior to the September

13th meeting.

Finalize Contract

The contract will be finalized after IDA selection subject to attorney approval. Firms/Individuals In the event that mutually agreeable terms cannot be reached within the time specified, the IDA reserves the right to finalize a contract with the next most advantageous Firms/Individuals without undertaking a new procurement process or to cancel the award.

Contract Award

After committee selection, approval by the IDA, agreed upon terms and attorney review, Hardee County Industrial Development Authority (IDA) will award the contract.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Acceptance of Conditions Governing the Procurement

Firms/Individuals must indicate their acceptance of the Conditions Governing the Procurement section in the letter of transmittal. Submission of a proposal constitutes acceptance of the Evaluation Factors contained in this RFP.

Incurring Cost

Any cost incurred by the Firms/Individuals in preparation, transmittal, presentation of any proposal or material submitted in response to this RFP shall be borne solely by the Firms/Individuals. Any cost incurred by the Firms/Individuals for set up and demonstration of the proposed equipment and/or system shall be borne solely by the Firms/Individuals.

Prime Contractor Responsibility

Any contract that may result from the RFP shall specify that the prime contractor is solely responsible for fulfillment of the contract with Hardee County Industrial Development Authority. Hardee County Industrial Development Authority will make contract payments only to the prime contractor.

Subcontractors

Use of subcontractors must be clearly explained in the proposal, and major subcontractors must be identified by name. The prime contractor shall be wholly responsible for the entire performance whether or not subcontractors are used.

Amended Proposals

A Firms/Individuals may submit an amended proposal before the deadline for receipt of proposals. Such amended proposals must be complete replacements for a previously submitted proposal and must be clearly identified as such in the transmittal letter.

Firms/Individuals' Rights to Withdraw Proposal

Firms / Individuals will be allowed to withdraw their proposals at any time prior to the deadline for receipt of proposals. The Firms/Individuals must submit a written withdrawal request signed by the Firms/Individuals' duly authorized representative addressed to the Procurement Manager. The approval or denial of withdrawal requests received after the deadline for receipt of the proposals is governed by the applicable procurement regulations.

Proposal Offer Firm

Responses to this RFP, including proposal prices, will be considered firm for one hundred twenty (120) days after the due date for receipt of proposals or ninety (90) days after receipt of a

best and final offer if one is submitted.

No Obligation

The procurement in no manner obligates Hardee County Industrial Development Authority or any of its agencies to the eventual rental, lease, purchase, etc., of any equipment, software, or services offered until a valid written contract is awarded and approved by appropriate authorities.

Termination

This RFP may be canceled at any time and any and all proposals may be rejected in whole or in part when Hardee County Industrial Development Authority determines such action to be in its best interest.

Legal Review

Hardee County Industrial Development Authority requires that all Firms / Individuals agree to be bound by the General Requirements contained in this RFP. Any Firms/Individuals concerns must be promptly brought to the attention of the Procurement Manager.

Governing Law

This procurement and any agreement with Firms/Individuals that may result shall be governed by the laws of the State of Florida.

Basis for Proposal

Only information supplied by the Agency in writing through the Procurement Manager or in this RFP should be used as the basis for the preparation of Firms/Individuals proposals.

Firms/Individuals Qualifications

The Evaluation Committee may make such investigations as necessary to determine the ability of the Firms/Individuals to adhere to the requirements specified within this RFP. The Evaluation committee will reject the proposal of any Firms/Individuals who is not a responsible III.

RESPONSE FORMAT AND ORGANIZATION

NUMBER OF RESPONSES

Firms/Individuals shall submit only one proposal.

NUMBER OF COPIES

Firms/Individuals shall provide one (1) signed original of the full proposal, eight (8) signed color copies of the full proposal, to the location specified on or before the closing date and time for receipt of proposals.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

The proposal shall be limited in format and length. All proposals must be typewritten on standard 8 1/2 x 11 paper (larger paper is permissible for charts, spreadsheets, etc.) and placed

within binders with tabs delineating each section. Length shall be limited to a maximum of fifty (50) numbered pages (printed sheet faces) with text no smaller than 10 point font.

Proposal Organization

The proposal must be organized and indexed in the following format and must contain, at a minimum, all listed items in the sequence indicated. All pages shall be numbered except for those specifically excluded from the page count. Material shall follow this sequence and not exceed maximum page count:

- Letter of Transmittal
- Tables of Contents page
- Summary of Proposed Approach
- Response to Specifications, including Cost Proposal
- Firms/Individuals' Additional Terms and Conditions
- Other Supporting Material

Material excluded from the fifty (50) page maximum count is limited to:

- Front cover
- Divider pages (blank except for title information)
- Back cover
- Letter of Transmittal (two pages maximum)
- Tables of Contents page (one page maximum)

Within each section of their proposal, the Firms/Individuals should address the items in the order in which they appear in this RFP. All forms provided in the RFP must be thoroughly completed and included in the appropriate section of the proposal. Any proposal that does not adhere to these requirements may be deemed non-responsive and rejected on that basis. Other supporting materials may be included by the Firms/Individuals to provide the Evaluation Committee with an overview of the technical and business features of the proposal; however, this material will not be used in the evaluation process unless specifically referenced from other portions of the Firms/Individuals' proposal (NTE 15 pages).

MANDATORY SPECIFICATIONS

1. **Letter of Transmittal** - Each proposal must be accompanied by a letter of transmittal. The letter of transmittal MUST:
 - 1.1. Identify the submitting organization;
 - 1.2. Identify the name, title, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of the person
 - 1.3. authorized by the organization to contractually obligate the organization;
 - 1.4. Identify the name, title, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of the person
 - 1.5. authorized to negotiate the contract on behalf of the organization;
 - 1.6. Identify the names, titles, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses of persons to be
 - 1.7. contacted for clarification;
 - 1.8. Explicitly indicate acceptance of the Conditions Governing the Procurement.
 - 1.9. Be signed by the person authorized to contractually obligate the organization;
 - 1.10. Acknowledge receipt of any and all amendments to this RFP.
2. **Team Background Information (for each major team member)**

- 2.1. Company Name
- 2.2. Mailing Address
- 2.3. Phone and Email address
- 2.4. Office locations and number of full-time staff at each, if applicable
- 2.5. Company ownership, date of founding, and structure
- 2.6. Description of relevant services provided by the company
- 2.7. Gross annual billing
- 2.8. Company's culture and key differentiators
- 2.9. Principals' names and titles
- 2.10. Percentage of time Principals will spend on servicing project
- 2.11. Number of people employed by company, and number to be dedicated to support, development, and implementation. Each company or individual defined here shall constitute as a "Major team member" for the purposes of the specifications. (e.g. architect, marketing consultant, etc.)

3. Key Personnel and Relevant Experience

- 3.1. Firms/Individuals must include the resume or curriculum vitae with experience narratives of all key members of the proposed team, along with their functions on the team. Resumes should document knowledge and experience relative to the job duties to be performed. Copies of appropriate professional certifications must also be included.
- 3.2. Firms/Individuals must describe any previous projects completed by the team or members of the team in the last five (5) years that are similar in size and complexity to each of the relevant components of the scope of work.
- 3.3. Firms/Individuals must include sufficient portfolio examples and/or case studies.

4. Understanding of the Problem

- 4.1. In no more than 500 words, describe the Firms/Individuals' preliminary vision for the visitor
- 4.2. Experience and brand of Hardee County Industrial Development Authority.
- 4.3. Firms/Individuals must identify the most important trends and top players within the Florida Tourism industry that must be considered when developing a tourism destination.
- 4.4. Firms/Individuals must identify the most important trends and top players within the local
- 4.5. Tourism market that must be considered.
- 4.6. Firms/Individuals must describe any relationships the team has with other key players in the tourism or destination experience industry.
- 4.7. Firms/Individuals must describe the three (3) biggest challenges facing the project beyond budget and schedule.
- 4.8. Firms/Individuals must describe one (1) potential exhibit / attraction that the Firms/Individuals believe is fitting.

5. References (for each major team member)

- 5.1. Firms/Individuals must include at least three (3) references from clients who have

previously received related services from the company. At a minimum, each should include the reference's company name, point-of-contact name, phone number, e-mail address (if available), and a single sentence description of the services provided.

Note: The Firms/Individuals is responsible for verifying reference contact information.

The Evaluation Committee is not obligated to try to locate persons not found at the numbers or places given in the proposals. Obsolete or wrong Contact information could result in a zero score in this category.

6. Approach

- 6.1. Firms/Individuals must describe the creative approach and process that the team intends to use for each of the relevant components of the scope of work, including team structure, milestones and estimated schedule.
- 6.2. Firms/Individuals must describe the process intended to keep the client involved and informed.
- 6.3. Firms/Individuals must describe the methods by which creative concepts are tested and validated for effectiveness at achieving stated objectives.

7. Cost Proposal

- 7.1. Firms/Individuals must include a comprehensive cost proposal including cost basis (i.e. time and materials, Firm-Fixed-Price) and include breakouts for phases of work. Travel should be estimated separately from Fees.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

FACTORS POINTS

Factor	Description	Points Value
1	Relevant Experience and Key Personnel	350
2	Understanding the Problem	200
3	References	100
4	Soundness of Approach	200
5	Cost Proposal	150
	TOTAL	1,000

EVALUATION FACTORS

Points will be awarded on the basis of the factors listed above and explained below. Up to the maximum number of points listed above will be awarded based on the Firms/Individuals' response to the mandatory requirements.

Relevant Experience and Key Personnel

Points shall be awarded on the basis of demonstrated relevance of the Firms/Individuals' experience and background to the size and scope of the project described herein. Team member experience specifically related to the space industry market and remote attraction development is of particular interest. Major team members must have at least five (5) years experience in their respective fields. Portfolio examples and/or case studies should illustrate the team's experience, breadth and depth of capability, and creativity to handle each of the relevant components of the scope of work.

Understanding the Problem

Points shall be awarded on the basis of demonstrated familiarity with Hardee County Industrial Development Authority, the tourism industry, the Florida tourism market, and ability to find useful precedents elsewhere within the Firms/Individuals' own body of work or general knowledge. The Firms/Individuals' appreciation, understanding, and elucidation of the central challenges that lie ahead shall be considered, particularly in the context of past experience. Points shall also be awarded on the basis of how well the Firms/Individuals demonstrate an understanding of the Hardee County Industrial Development Authority vision for the visitor experience.

References

Points shall be awarded on the basis of similarity of the referenced business dealings to the scope of this RFP as well as the reference's satisfaction in their dealings with the Firms/Individuals. The Evaluation Committee may contact any or all of the references.

Soundness of Approach

Points shall be awarded on the basis of the degree to which the proposed approach allows for a creative, exciting and educational product, while still meeting the project objectives and achieving the desired outcomes. The strength of the team's internal and external collaborative processes, team cohesion and arrangement, and the team's philosophy in managing budgetary challenges and ongoing alliances during the creative process will be considered.

Cost Proposal

Points shall be awarded on the basis of lowest cost for the work proposed and best return on value to Hardee County Industrial Development Authority. The lowest Firms/Individuals cost receives the highest points and all other Firms/Individuals will be evaluated in relation to the lowest cost.

Oral Presentations

If selected as a finalist, the Firms/Individuals shall provide the Evaluation Committee the opportunity to interview the proposed key personnel during an oral presentation at a date, time, and place set by the Procurement Manager.