

Susi Lampe

From: Tourism Director <director@travelbuchanan.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 8:52 AM
To: Susi Lampe
Subject: RE: Question
Attachments: 2024 Buchanan County Tourism Funding Request City of Independence.pdf

Hi Susi,

Please see the attached funding request from hotel motel tax. Please let me know if there are any questions.

Thank you,
Jill Chemin
Director of Tourism
1111 5th Avenue NE
Independence, Iowa 50644
319.939.0338 (cell)





November 20, 2023

City of Independence
331 1st Street East
Independence, Iowa 50644

Honorable Mayor Bleichner and City Council Members,

Buchanan County Tourism's Mission:

Buchanan County Tourism Bureau (BCTB) exists to promote area attractions and amenities through public education, research, and the development of tourism. BCT exists to:

- 1) Educate the public on cultural, historical, and natural resources of Buchanan County
- 2) Market attractions and events throughout Buchanan County.
- 3) Promote economic growth for businesses and organizations in Buchanan County.

Request:

Buchanan County Tourism Bureau requests **\$25,000** of the \$121,539.53 Hotel Motel Tax collected by the City of Independence from 11/28/22-8/24/23 (data.iowa.gov).

Hotel motel tax is intended for the promotion and encouragement of tourist and convention business in the city or county and surrounding areas. As such, funding Buchanan County Tourism Bureau would be a pertinent use of said monies with a direct return on investment. Our efforts at increasing tourism to Buchanan County will increase overnight stays, creating more revenues in hotel motel tax. It will also work to increase the local economy, and population as a whole. Did you know that 64% of U.S. adults seriously considered moving to a new place as a result of travel? This fact highlights the extreme importance of our tourism efforts.

The Iowa Economic Impact Report states there were over 17 MILLION DOLLARS in visitor spending (TOURISM) in Buchanan County in 2022 alone! This is a 7% increase from 2021. Think of what the potential could be if we marketed the County and the City of Independence to its full capacity!! This is exactly what Buchanan County

Tourism Bureau plans to do with adequate funding. Outlined below is our marketing strategy to increase tourism in Independence and the County as a whole.

In order for tourism to make the most impact of marketing, we need professional tools to pinpoint the target market. The best resource for gaining this data is called Arrivalist. Through a partnership with the Iowa Tourism Office, this is a service that can give us incredible insight to the people visiting our communities, and the economic impact caused by their visits. Arrivalist data from 2022 shows that there were 33 THOUSAND adult trips to Buchanan County. Of that, 48% spent the day in town. 52% spent at least one night in Buchanan County. We also know that visitors came from Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, and Dubuque, but a very surprising amount came from places like Madison and LaCrosse, Wisconsin and Rochester, Minnesota. The 2 months with the most visitors were July and June. We can use these scientific numbers to work on concise advertising campaigns, and to create travel opportunities to attract more visitors from those locations. It can also assist in being awarded grants. The annual cost for this service with a discount is \$2,500, but with the information that is culled from the service, the program is priceless.

The key initiatives in our marketing strategy include advertising, website content, social media, influencers, travel guide & print materials, and visitor's center. An estimated breakdown of how the \$25,000 would be used is as follows: \$5,000 for Midwest Travel Network membership, \$2,000 influencer accommodations, \$5,000 professional photography/videography, \$5,000 print materials & distribution, \$1,500 social media campaigns, \$2,000 advertisements, \$1,000 Iowa State Fair and Iowa Tourism Conference, \$1,000 branded promotional items, and \$2,500 for the Arrivalist figures as stated above.

In short, we urge you to consider substantial funding of Buchanan County Tourism to sustain the longevity and success of tourism efforts in our area. It is of great benefit to the City of Independence and the County in its entirety. Thank you for considering this request; it is a pleasure to highlight the attractions and amenities that make Independence and Buchanan County such a great place to live, work, and play! Please direct any questions to BCTB Director, Jill Chemin at 319-334-3439 or director@travelbuchanan.com.

Sincerely,

The block contains two handwritten signatures. The first signature is in dark ink and appears to be 'Jill Chemin'. The second signature is in a lighter, possibly blue or grey ink and appears to be 'Kriss McGraw'.

Jill Chemin, BCTB - Director & Kriss McGraw, BCTB - President