

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER - AGENDA ITEM DATA SHEET

Agenda Item: Tourism Streaming Advertising with Gray Media

Committee Review: Tourism Commission-07/07/25

Meeting Date: Finance – 08/05/25 and Council – 08/05/25

Requested by: Tourism Coordinator- Marty Richards

Presented by: Marty Richards/Karin Tepley

Background: During the 2025 budget preparation process, streaming advertising with Gray Media for the Chicagoland and Milwaukee areas was approved through August of 2025. Streaming advertising has continued to be a huge driver of visitors to our website and our area. Since we have utilized streaming advertising beginning in early 2022, visitors to the Greater Richland Tourism website have increased from 20,223 in the full year of 2021, to 80,981 in 2024. It is also one of the major reasons we have seen Direct Visitor spending increase significantly in the Greater Richland Area every year over the past 4 years.

The Tourism Commission has taken a conservative approach when increasing expenditures such as this as we are still getting a read on how much financial resource we have available, as some of the townships have just begun to collect and remit room tax, thus why the original decision was to only approve this expenditure for the first 8 months of the year.

Now that we have reached the halfway point of the year, we are getting a better understanding of our revenue from the new municipalities. Additionally, we know we started the year with an unallocated amount of funds of \$53,722.00. Therefore, understanding the value of streaming advertising to our efforts, and the availability of the funds to continue this effort through the month of September, the Richland Center Tourism Commission has recommended the expenditure of an additional \$5,000 to continue streaming advertising with Gray Media that will run this effort through the full month of September. These funds come from the Greater Richland Tourism account that is made up of room tax revenue from the City of Richland Center, and Richland, Ithaca, Eagle, Forest, and Henrietta Townships.

Department Recommendation: Tourism Coordinator, Marty Richards, strongly recommends this expenditure.

Committee Recommendation: On 07/07/2025 the Tourism Commission has recommended the following:

“Toni McCarvel made the motion to recommend to the Richland Center Finance Committee, to allocate another \$5,000 to continue streaming advertising with Gray Media through the end of September. Karen Tepley seconded that motion, and a roll-call vote was held. McCarvel-yes, Walsh-yes, Fruit-yes, Tepley-yes. Motion passed unanimously.”

Financial Impact: \$5,000

Funding Source: Unallocated room tax revenue

Requested Action:

FINANCE: Motion to recommend to the Council to approve an additional \$5,000 expenditure above the approved 2025 Tourism Annual Budget amount to continue streaming advertising with Gray Media.

COUNCIL: Motion to approve an additional \$5,000 expenditure above the approved 2025 Tourism Annual Budget amount to continue streaming advertising with Gray Media.

Attachment(s):

- Greater Richland Tourism Website Traffic since 2018
- Direct Visitor Spending Chart by Wisconsin Department of Tourism from 2014 to current.