



## ***AITKIN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM PROGRAM OVERVIEW***

The purpose of this grant fund is to leverage county funds, private funds and volunteer efforts to increase tourism in Aitkin County. Applicants must be registered as non-profit corporations with the Secretary of State. Several organizations may submit a single application or organizations may apply individually. Organizations need only to commit one hundred dollars (\$100.00) in good faith to ensure commitment to the grant request. Example: Program/Event Total Cost: \$5,100.00 would require the organization's commitment of \$100.00 to ensure the possibility of an ACTGAC Fund grant of \$5,000.00.

**Grant Guidelines:** Guidelines for application and awarding of Aitkin County Tourism Grants are as follows:

1. **Funding Limits:** Minimum of \$100 and a maximum of \$5,000 per grant application per year.
2. **Matching Funds:** The tourism grant program is intended to leverage locally funded promotions and not replace that funding. Significant consideration will be given to the amount and quality of matching funds/in kind contributions when grant applications are evaluated by the Advisory Committee and County Board.
3. **County-Wide Distribution:** The intent of this program is to provide assistance throughout Aitkin County, accordingly consideration shall be given to amounts awarded and number of grants approved per year for any particular region of the county to ensure that an equitable level of funding is available throughout the county.
4. **Event/Activity Eligibility:** Tourism Grant Funds shall be used to market tourism related events that occur within Aitkin County. Funds shall be targeted towards attracting new, repeat and extended stay tourism visitations to Aitkin County. Events eligible for funding include: community recreational and informational events such as races, rides, tournaments, shows, educational programs, etc.; annual and event specific community celebrations; logistic and materials support for tourism related information booths, radio, newspaper, TV, signage, internet, brochures and other advertising related printed publications and media promotion.
  - a. Tourism grant funds shall not be used to pay the salaries of part or full time staff associated with a particular event or organization associated with an event. Funds shall not be used for any type of prizes or other material items that may be offered, awarded, sold or given away as a promotion of the event being supported by the grant.
  - b. Tourism grant funds may not be used to reimburse expenses occurred prior to grant approval by Aitkin County.

**Application Procedure:** All applications shall be submitted using the “Application for Tourism Development and Promotion Grant” and Model Tourism Resolution Form for Non-Governmental Organizations, both of which are attached.

An application form may be submitted at any time during 2011 to be reviewed by the Committee at their next quarterly meeting. The application form is also available in Word Format for your computer which you can request a copy of from the Aitkin County Economic Development and Forest Industry Coordinator. The Application Deadline for 2011 is as follows;

- Grant Request Deadline; Applications are due the following dates, January 14<sup>th</sup>, April 29<sup>th</sup>, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, November 10<sup>th</sup>. The Tourism Grant Advisory Committee meets after the due dates and then gives a formal recommendation to the Aitkin County Board.

The Model Resolution Form must be submitted by all applicant organizations, except governmental organizations. An Evaluation Form, to be completed and returned within thirty days following the completion of the program/event, will be sent to you following acceptance of your proposal.

**Reports and Recovery of Unused Funds:** Reports and procedures for recovery of unused funds are as follows:

1. A written evaluation shall be completed and returned the Aitkin County Economic Development and Forest Industry Advisor within 30 days of completion of a project/event. That written evaluation shall describe the success in meeting the goals of the event or promotion and should be included with the final financial report discussed below.
2. A financial Expense Worksheet and Financial Statement shall be completed and returned the Aitkin County Economic Development and Forest Industry Advisor monthly and a final closeout report within 30 days of completion of a project/event. That report shall also include a reimbursement check for any unused funds, make check payable to “Aitkin County-Tourism Grant Fund.”

Further information and additional forms and materials may be obtained by contacting Ross Wagner, Aitkin County Economic Development and Forest Industry Coordinator, 217 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW, #131, Aitkin, MN 56431, 218-927-7061, [rwagner@co.aitkin.mn.us](mailto:rwagner@co.aitkin.mn.us)