

**CITY OF JOPLIN
COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

ITEM:

Council Bill No. 2021-600. This Council Bill approves the agreement between Tempest and the City of Joplin for design-to-launch services for a new VisitJoplinMO.com website for the Joplin Convention & Visitors Bureau. This agreement additionally provides for the hosting of the website, following launch through FY2024.

MEETING DATE:

Monday, March 15, 2021.

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:

Convention & Visitors Bureau.

REVIEWED BY:

Director of Convention & Visitors Bureau-Patrick Tuttle, Director of Finance-Leslie Haase, City Attorney-Peter Edwards, City Manager-Nicholas Edwards.

SUMMARY REQUEST:

A portion of the CVB's annual budget is dedicated for the management of the VisitJoplinMO.com website to promote Joplin as a tourism destination. In FY2021, the budget includes a complete redesign of the website (the current website has existed since July 2016). The continued hosting of this website through FY2024 is also included.

This agreement is for Tempest to provide the design-to-launch services necessary for a new VisitJoplinMO.com website for Fifty-Nine Thousand dollars (\$59,000) and hosting the website for Three Thousand Six Hundred dollars (\$3,600, \$1,200 per year) through FY2024.

Tempest was selected through the City's bid process. 28 bids were received with design prices ranging from \$10,000 to \$296,940.

Since 2014, the CVB has used Tempest CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software. A website able to support and interact with this software was part of the selection criteria. This merger of website operations and CRM software will support the management of the VisitJoplinMO.com content, updates, guest requests, and activity tracking.

BACKGROUND:

VisitJoplinMO.com is the official website of the Joplin Convention & Visitors Bureau, the tourism arm of the City of Joplin.

The importance of an up-to date, robust CVB/DMO (Destination Marketing Organization) website is supported by the following findings from a recent study on DMO website use by Destination Analysts, Inc.:

- DMO websites are seen as valuable, averaging a score of 7.9 on an 11-point scale.

- On average, over two-thirds (68.3%) of a DMO's nonresident site traffic is comprised of upcoming or potential visitors to the community they represent.
- With a focus on tourism recovery, local businesses are turning to the DMO not only for content to promote tourism to their community, but advocacy and information related to supporting local businesses. Residents are most commonly coming to DMO websites looking for ideas, activities, and things to do while practicing social distancing and researching activities for themselves and/or local family and friends: information which encourages economic activity.
- Amongst professional segments who access DMO websites for work purposes—meeting planners, travel trade and media/journalists—travel trade gave the DMO the highest ratings for importance and value. In total, 85.5 percent consider it important that the DMO offer the information available on the site and gave the DMO website an average value rating of 8.5 on an 11-point value scale.
- Media/journalists, another professional segment that represents potential economic generation for destinations, use DMO websites in search of media-related content. Story ideas and information on what's new in the destination are content types that media/journalists most commonly look for on these sites. These, along with photos and videos, could very well contribute to a destination's earned media coverage and ultimately influence incremental visitation.

A diverse set of people use the communication assets CVB/DMOs maintain, including their official websites—from those that represent significant economic generation potential like travelers, meeting planners, the travel trade and media, to those that foster the heart of the community, like local businesses and active residents. A strong tourism website must provide clear, easy to understand content, inviting images and videos, and details such as maps and itineraries.

Web-based tourism information covers four major aspects:

Destination Attractions and Activities

- Area attractions, calendar of events, history, and must-see sites

Accommodations (Lodging)

- Hotels and motels, recreational camping, RVs, B&B, Airbnb

Restaurants (Food)

- Mom & Pop establishments, local flavors, and popular brands

What to do

- Tailor-designed itineraries, local blogs, and features of local experiences

In the last year, covid-19 information, responses, and resources for a destination have become top of mind for travel planners from all segments. CVB/DMOs have adapted to offer this information as key component to a website, in addition to the traditional information offerings stated above.

In addition to leisure travelers, VisitJoplinMO.com serves as a resource for meeting planners and group tour operators. The current website is limited in how information on meeting and dining spaces, group activities, transportation offerings, and CVB services are presented. There is not a way to deliver a complete package to potential clients in this arena. The proposed new website will allow the Director of Sales to create a more compelling overview of Joplin's offerings for these types of services.

Since the 2016 launch of the exiting website, technology advancements and design qualities of tourism websites has changed. In addition to graphic aspects and quality, more options exist in the "back office" portion of the website to assist staff with keeping the content and images robust, current, and relevant. Video is a necessary component of today's websites, which the current site does not have that capability.

In the last year, the CVB has learned how quickly things can change. Many of Joplin's local businesses that are of interest to visitors changed their operations or closed their doors. VisitJoplinMO.com must be able to quickly pivot to reflect these changes and deliver the most up-to-date information to visitors. The current website uses multi-step functions to add new information or change existing information, and it is not optimal for the culture we now live in due to the covid-19 pandemic.

FUNDING SOURCE:

The VisitJoplinMO.com website management and hosting is included in the CVB's FY2021 annual budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Convention & Visitors Bureau recommends passing this bill on first reading.

ATTACHMENTS:

Council Bill No. 2020-600

Tempest Website design-to-launch agreement

Tempest MSA hosting agreement

2021-RFP-02

2021-RFP-02 Tabulations

2021-RFP-02 Score Sheet