

PINE COUNTY REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR MARKETING CONSULTANT

INTRODUCTION

Pine County is seeking proposals from qualified firms to assist the county in creating a county brand, slogan and logo to assist in resident recruitment, promote tourism-based assets and create unified marketing tools that can be integrated across all departments.

The purpose of this engagement is to provide Pine County with a refreshed logo and tagline needed to attract visitors, workforce, and businesses to the entire county, including guidance on refreshing website pages, social media communications and building partnerships with private and non-profit organizations that share similar goals.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Pine County is approximately 1,400 square miles with just under 30,000 residents. Pine County offers the best of both worlds. Its location on the I-35 corridor makes for ease of access to all the attractions and markets of the Twin Cities and Duluth. At the same time, its attractive small towns and rolling, wooded countryside speckled with many recreational amenities represent the best of rural living. It is a splendid place to work and live.

Pine County's communities are vibrant and full of year-round activities and events promoted by organizations like the Pine City Area Chamber of Commerce, Hinckley Convention & Visitors Bureau, Hinckley Area Chamber of Commerce or Sandstone Area Chamber of Commerce. Along with these chambers of commerce, Pine County also collaborates with GPS 45:93 a regional economic development consortium and Old Highway 61 Coalition to attract visitors & businesses.

Pine County's abundance of scenic and recreational activities attract and keep residents satisfied with many lakes and rivers which make up over 23 square miles of water. The Chengwatana State Forest, General CC Andrews State Forest, Banning State Park, St. Croix State Park, Robinson Quarry Park and the Nemadji State Forest boast miles of hiking, ATV, canoeing, kayaking, rock & ice climbing, cross-country skiing, white-water rafting and snowmobile trails.

The largest employer in Pine County is the Grand Casino Hinckley, owned by the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. The casino is a popular destination for fun-seekers from the Twin Cities. Because of this establishment and the surrounding recreational opportunities, the accommodation and food service industry provide 26% of the local jobs and the retail trade provides nearly 13%.

Four major healthcare systems serve the county – Essentia, Fairview, Gateway Clinics, and Welia. While no large provider dominates, the sector provides 11% of the local jobs. Pine Technical & Community College is one of the fastest growing technical & community colleges in the state and not only provides valuable workforce training opportunities, but along with the local school districts provides 10% of the job base. Manufacturing employers are typically smaller companies, with a strong presence of the precision metals industry and provide 4% of the job base.

PROJECT GOAL

Assist Pine County to develop a fresh logo and tagline that can be incorporated into its website and marketing materials to attract visitors, residents, and businesses to Pine County's communities. This project will also build upon and incorporate partnerships with private and non-profit organizations who share similar goals of local business & workforce development.

SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of this project is:

- A. Assist the County in producing an updated logo, with a branding plan and slogan to be used to implement a concerted campaign to attract visitors and residents to work, live and play in Pine County. The tagline should morph into a short elevator pitch that can be used for press releases and other media where a short description of Pine County is needed.
- B. The County's website will be redesigned in winter 2022-23 and the branding plan will be incorporated into the website. Feedback and guidance on the information presented on the County's website is also desired to achieve the goal of this project: attract people to work, live and play in Pine County, in a streamlined, up-to-date manner.
- C. A consistent style format for press releases, an updated letter head/memo template, color scheme, style guide and instructions for implementation are desired so that the results of this project could be fully executed and replicated by County staff with the updated brand being accepted county-wide across multiple departments, so all communication looks uniform and represents the brand of the county.

Additional suggestions are welcome and should be thoroughly explained and itemized in the proposal.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

The following will be considered minimal contents of the proposal. Proposals shall not exceed 15 pages.

- 1. Provide a restatement of the goals, objectives, and project tasks to demonstrate the responder's view of the project and your approach to this project.
- 2. Provide information on background and experience in the following areas:
 - a. Size of the firm (# of employees)
 - b. Location of principal office and satellite offices
 - c. History of firm and scope of work
 - d. Names and information on principals and primary team members and roles of those who will primarily work with Pine County
- 3. Conflicts of Interest: Provide any information on prospective conflicts of interests, including existing or financial relations with related vendors or other firms.

4. References: Include at least five references from previous similar projects. Include Minnesota local government projects if possible.
5. Identify any subcontractors you would likely use on the project.
6. Detailed work plan to include:
 - a. Project implementation schedule and phasing - Please provide an estimated project timeline. Timeline should include:
 - ✓ Estimated duration and phasing by milestones and deliverables.
 - ✓ Estimated pricing by milestone and deliverable; as well as individualized for each or any suggestions to the scope.
 - b. Outline of local involvement and services expected to complete the project. A minimum of three status meetings are to be contained in the work plan in addition to any data collection or input/review meetings.
 - c. Outline the project management approach that your company will employ to execute this project and identify individual(s) responsible for the various areas in the outline.
 - d. The county would like flexibility to work with the winning vendor to develop the final scope of work by using the above framework as a guide.

PRE-SUBMISSION MEETING

The county will host a pre-submission meeting at **9 a.m. on August 31, 2022** via video conference. At this pre-submission meeting the county will provide an overview of the project and answer questions.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The local project team will evaluate all proposals using the following criteria to conduct a best value evaluation:

- Experience and qualifications of the vendor and personnel assigned to the project
- Clear understanding of the project
- Clear technical proficiency for the mix of technologies and cohesiveness of the proposal
- Project work plan and timeline
- Demonstrated ability to complete the work in a timely manner
- Work experience in small and rural communities
- Pricing

After evaluating all proposals, the county may elect to interview one or more firms in person and/or via video conference. The county reserves the right to make the final selection at its sole discretion based on its assessment of how the vendor best meets the needs of the county.

It is anticipated that the total project cost will range between \$10,000-\$25,000. Proposals that are outside of this range will be considered but should include detailed justification within the proposal.

SELECTION

It is anticipated that the county will select the winning vendor within 30 days of the submission deadline. Upon selection, the winning vendor will have not more than 30 days to enter into a professional services agreement with the county and begin the project.

PRIMARY CONTACT

The contact for all inquiries is:

Lezlie Sauter, Economic Development Coordinator

Lezlie.Sauter@co.pine.mn.us

320-591-0019

All proposals are due by **4:00 p.m., September 9, 2022** local time and shall not exceed 15 pages. Proposals should be submitted electronically to Lezlie.Sauter@co.pine.mn.us.