



City of Oregon City

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Staff Report

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Status: Agenda Ready

To: City Commission

Agenda #: 7g.

From: City Manager Tony Konkol

File Type: Report

SUBJECT:

Community Showcase and Use of Gift Certificates

RECOMMENDED ACTION (Motion):

Motion to approve the remaining available funds from the Oregon City Business Debt Relief Initiative and to add an additional \$3,823.49 from the City's General Fund to fully fund the gift certificate program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

As one of five initiatives to implement Oregon City's Tourism Strategic Plan, the Economic Development Department proposes to establish The Community Showcase, a marketing campaign designed to engage Oregon City residents in experiencing and learning more about the community's history via the use of virtual tours of historic sites in Oregon City, visitor-facing centers, and businesses.

By offering local residents the opportunity to virtually tour historic sites and other visitor-facing venues, Oregon City residents will learn more about the community's history and become more proficient at communicating with visitors about what there is to do and see in Oregon City.

Residents will win prizes and be incentivized to spend money (in the form gift certificates) at local businesses, thus driving local commerce on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic. The gift certificates are a major feature of The Community Showcase and they will be utilized to help sustain restaurants and other organizations that are important assets to Oregon City's burgeoning tourism industry.

BACKGROUND:

This item was discussed at the June 3, 2020 City Commission meeting and was continued to a subsequent meeting in order to address questions that had been raised about the proposed program. Commissioner McGriff and Commissioner Smith met with staff to review the proposed program and provide input.

In the Summer of 2017, Oregon City's Economic Development Department commissioned a Portland based consulting firm to develop a strategic plan for Oregon City tourism and begin laying the foundation for more structures and a mission-driven tourism industry.

The process began with an in-depth stakeholder engagement process designed to solicit input from the broader Oregon City travel and tourism industry regarding opportunities and challenges facing the

local tourism industry. This information was then summarized, themed, and used to inform the strategic planning team and provide guidance in the development of this Plan. A strategic planning committee that included local stakeholders from a variety of organizations including lodging, events, attractions, local businesses, and City leadership was formed. Rotator Creative from Tacoma, WA was chosen to develop the initial marketing efforts for Oregon City.

Beginning in the fall of 2019 and continuing through the winter of 2020, the Oregon City Commission devoted more resources to implementing the tourism strategic plan. A new position was created, Tourism Program Specialist, and a new Economic Development Manager were hired. Implementing the existing Tourism Strategic Plan became a primary focus.

One of the insights derived from surveying local citizenry and stakeholders during the initial planning process was that a tourism product is only as good as the people who support it and see its value.

Stakeholders and local citizens cautioned that Oregon City needed to ensure that the value of tourism be understood by the local community so that the community itself can get behind strategies to develop tourism thus enabling the creation of authentic experiences.

Hence, inspired by this insight, the Economic Development Department, during the winter of 2020, created The Community Showcase. The original goal of this project was to have visitors explore historic sites in-person. However, on March 23, 2020, Governor Kate Brown declared a state of emergency in Oregon to address the spread of the Novel Coronavirus. The current health crisis mandated that we adapt the program to comply with State regulations. With ensuing forced closures across the State including within Oregon City, the Community Showcase program was first paused, then reformed to feature primarily digital components.

The first component will consist of virtual tours of historic sites around Oregon City. These tours will be web-based (both on TravelOregonCity.com and other sites) and provide the visitor with a snapshot into the past, allowing museums to display their collections and historians to directly connect with residents virtually. The tours will include both visual and text components as we seek to make history come alive, as best as possible, during these unprecedented times.

The second component is an online quiz that will test the knowledge of those who participate in the program. The quiz will be located on the TravelOregonCity.com website and derived from the information within the online tours. The quiz will be approachable, and participants will not need to be history majors to pass. If visitors pass the short quiz, they will be invited to register their name and mailing address to be entered into a monthly drawing for a gift certificate.

The following plan is envisioned:

- The program will only be marketed locally and only Oregon City residents will be eligible (non-local addresses will not be included in the drawing)
- 50 winners will be selected randomly every month
- Gift certificates worth \$40 each will be emailed to the winners
- The program will run for 10 months

As we carefully begin to open up our economy, Oregon City residents will be more inclined to spend money locally, especially given the fact that many residents are unemployed but want to carefully

emerge from self-quarantine to contribute to helping our community to be more economically resilient in wake of this global health crisis.

OPTIONS:

1. Approve the Community Showcase Initiative, \$16,176.51 net available from OC Business Debt Relief Initiative, and an additional \$3,823.49 from the City's General Fund to back up the gift certificates.
2. Do not approve the Community Showcase Initiative, \$16,176.51 net available from OC Business Debt Relief Initiative, and an additional \$3,823.49 from the City's General Fund that would be used to back the gift certificates.

BUDGET IMPACT:

Amount: \$16,176.51 net available from OC Business Debt Relief Initiative

\$ 3,823.49 from the General Fund

Total: \$20,000.00

Funding Source: General Fund