



Highlands County Tourist Development Council
Highlands County Government Center Boardroom
Regular Meeting – January 29, 2026 @ 8:15 a.m.

Agenda

1. **Call to Order / Pledge / Meeting Notice / Roll Call / Quorum** J. Stewart
2. **Acceptance of TDC Meeting Minutes of October 30, 2025** J. Stewart
3. **Financial and Office Reports** R. Fultz
4. **Updates – Marketing & Events**
 - A. Destination, Marketing, and Budget Update C. Hartt
 - B. Digital Marketing Update from Madden Media A. Noto
 - C. Sports Events Update from Airstream Ventures A. Verlander
 - D. Citrus Golf Trail Marketing Update K. Strickland
 - E. Tourism Collaboration Initiative Update S. Phelps
5. **Items for Voting**
 - A. Spartan High Impact Signature Event Grant Request C. Bortnik
 - B. Premier Girls Fastpitch (PGF) New Event Grant Request A. Verlander
 - C. G-Ville 7 on 7 Sebring Classic New Event Grant Request A. Verlander
 - D. USFA Facility Rental Fee Grant Request (Cinco de Mayo) A. Verlander
 - E. USFA Facility Rental Fee Grant Request (Summertime Softball) A. Verlander
 - F. Sport or Special Event Grant Request from Florida Prep Lacrosse (Crabs Summer Slam) A. Verlander
 - G. City of Sebring Synergy Cost Share Request S. Noethlich
 - H. County Sports Complex Expansion Agreement C. Hartt
6. **Old Business/Discussion/Informational**
 - A. TDC Member Terms
 - B. Key Data 2025 Executive Market Summary C. Hartt
 - C. TMAP Launching FY27 R. Fultz
 - D. Guidelines for 3rd Penny Uses R. Fultz
L. Sauls
7. **Public Input**
8. **Board Member Roundtable**
9. **Upcoming Meetings & TDC-Sponsored Events**
 - February 16: Hospitality Training at Avon Park Community Center
 - **April 30: TDC Quarterly Meeting**
 - Early May: Annual Tourism Awards & Insights Program
10. **Adjournment** J. Stewart

Item 2



**Highlands County Tourist Development Council
Highlands County Government Center Boardroom
Regular Meeting
October 30, 2025 @ 8:15 a.m.**

Draft Regular Meeting

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:17 a.m. by Josh Stewart, acting chair.

Roll Call

Council Members Present:
Josh Stewart (Acting Chair)
Lydia Capote
Elizabeth Compton
Cindy Garren
Andy Kesling
Kristyn Robbins
Debra Worley

Absent:
Commissioner Campbell
Christine Hatfield

Also Present:
Casey Hartt, Lead Marketing Consultant
Reagan Fultz, Tourism Marketing & Project Manager
Leah Sauls, Development Services Director
Alex Noto, Madden Media
Alan Verlander, Airstream Ventures
Shellie Phelps-Whitfield, Biggest Fish Consulting
Kate Strickland, Wander Media
Dr. Ron Seveingy, Avon Park Baseball Museum
Nancy Fisk, Avon Park Historical Society
Carla Kappmeyer-Sherwin, Highlands Hammock State Park
Gaylin Thomas, Heartland Cultural Alliance
Jared Lee, City of Sebring

Ms. Fultz established that a quorum had been met.

Mr. Stewart welcomed Kristyn Robbins as a new member of the TDC representing the Holiday Inn Express in Sebring and Lake Placid.

2. Financial and Office Reports

Ms. Fultz presented the revenue and office reports. She noted that the most recent month reported from the Florida Department of Revenue was June 2025, and they were awaiting the remaining months through September to know the full collections for Fiscal Year 24/25.

She noted that the lead generation reports were reflective of the leads received through September 2025.

She also pointed out Paola Cruz in the audience, sharing that she would be starting as the new Tourist Development Coordinator on November 4, 2025.

Council members received detailed printouts of the financial and office reports. Questions from the council on formatting and titles of the reports were addressed by staff. There were no other questions.

3. Acceptance of TDC Meeting Minutes of August 7, 2025.

Mr. Stewart asked if there were any comments or changes to the minutes of August 7, 2025. No comments or corrections were noted.

Mr. Kesling made a motion, seconded by Ms. Worley, to approve the meeting minutes.

Upon roll call, all Council members voted aye, and the motion carried.

4. Marketing and Event Updates

A. Destination and Budget Update

Ms. Hartt presented a destination, marketing, and budget update, highlighting recent tourism performance indicators and ongoing marketing and public relations efforts. Staff activities included stakeholder outreach, hospitality training initiatives, coordination with partners on facility-related efforts, and preparations for upcoming tourism and industry events. She also shared upcoming initiatives and timelines related to kiosks, staffing, and future presentations.

The presentation and any discussion are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 45:18 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

B. Digital Marketing Update from Madden Media

Ms. Noto provided the Tourist Development Council with a digital marketing update, including an overview of Visit Sebring's website performance, paid media campaigns, and search engine optimization efforts. Key website indicators, partner referral activity, and engagement trends were shared, along with highlights from recent promotional campaigns and content performance.

Ms. Noto also outlined upcoming marketing priorities and initiatives, including continued content development, search optimization, and efforts to build upon recent campaign visibility and audience reach.

The presentation and any discussion are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 55:46 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

C. Sports Events Updates from Airstream Ventures

Mr. Verlander presented an update on current and upcoming sports tourism activity in Highlands County. He highlighted recent and prospective events, ongoing outreach to event organizers, and efforts to position Sebring, Avon Park, and Lake Placid as competitive hosts for sports tourism events.

The presentation and any discussion are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 1:08:27 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

D. Citrus Golf Trail Marketing Update

Ms. Strickland presented an update on marketing efforts for the Citrus Golf Trail. The update included an overview of ongoing digital marketing activities, email campaigns, and website enhancements aimed at promoting member courses and supporting upcoming tournaments and seasonal travel.

The presentation and any discussion are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 1:25:03 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

E. Tourism Collaboration Initiative Update

Ms. Phelps provided an update on the Tourism Collaboration Initiative, highlighting recent hospitality training sessions, stakeholder engagement activities, and regional collaboration efforts. She also outlined upcoming training opportunities, industry meetings, and representation of Highlands County at future tourism and travel-related events.

The presentation and any discussion are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 1:30:49 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

5. Items for Voting

A. Local Tax Collection Change

Mr. Zwayer, Highlands County Tax Collector, presented information to the Tourist Development Council regarding an option to change the remittance of the Tourist Development Tax from the Florida Department of Revenue to the Highlands County Tax Collector's Office.

Ms. Garren made a motion, seconded by Ms. Worley, to begin collecting the Tourist Development Tax through the Highlands County Tax Collector's Office effective January 1, 2025.

Upon roll call, council members voted aye, and the motion carried.

The presentation, discussion, and vote are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 35:20 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

B. Inspire Dance New Event Grant Request

Mr. Verlander presented a funding request on behalf of Inspire Dance for the Sebring Regional Competition to be held at the Alan Jay Arena in Sebring on May 1–3, 2026, with additional events proposed in subsequent years.

Ms. Worley made a motion, seconded by Ms. Capote, to approve the request as a three-year New Event Grant with funding of up to \$20,600 for Year One (2026) and up to \$10,600 per year for Years Two (2027) and Three (2028). Upon roll call, Council members voted in favor of the motion, with Ms. Garren opposed, and the motion carried.

The presentation, discussion, and vote are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 1:38:07 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

C. Deep South Lax Recruits Showcase

Mr. Verlander presented a funding request on behalf of Florida Prep Lacrosse for the Deep South Lacrosse Showcase to be held at Lake June Park in Lake Placid on November 22–23, 2025, with additional events proposed in subsequent years.

Ms. Garren made a motion, seconded by Ms. Worley, to approve the request as a three-year New Event Grant with funding of up to \$22,500 for Year One (2025), up to \$22,500 for Year Two (2026), and up to \$27,500 for Year Three (2027). Upon roll call, all Council members voted in favor of the motion, and the motion carried.

The presentation, discussion, and vote are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 1:46:24 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

D. TDC Grant Policies

Ms. Fultz presented the updated and new grant policies for the TDC grant program for the Council's approval.

Ms. Compton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kesling, to approve the policies as presented. Upon roll call, all Council members voted in favor of the motion, and the motion carried.

The presentation, discussion, and vote are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 1:50:56 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

E. Avon Park Baseball Museum Funding Request

Dr. Sevingy and Ms. Fisk presented a request for \$100,000 in funding from the Tourist Development Council for the Avon Park Baseball Museum. The presentation was made pursuant to direction from the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners at its August 19, 2025 meeting.

Council members asked questions of the presenters, and discussion occurred among the Council, presenters, and staff. The option to table the item for consideration at a future meeting was discussed. The presenters requested that the item not be tabled and stated a preference for the Council to take action at the meeting.

Mr. Kesling made a motion, seconded by Ms. Capote, to deny the funding request. Upon roll call, the motion passed unanimously, and the request for funding was denied.

The presentation, discussion, and vote are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 6:10 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

F. Facility Study Additional Update & Third-Penny Funds

Ms. Hartt and Mr. Verlander presented information in response to the Council's prior request for additional financial strategies related to facility recommendations identified in the most recent facility study.

The presentation included potential next steps for the Tourist Development Council, including the creation of designated projects to earmark available third-penny funds for county-owned or proposed sports facility development concepts, specifically the Sports Complex Expansion and a multi-purpose indoor sports facility.

Ms. Garren made a motion, seconded by Ms. Compton, to allocate \$1.9 million from Cost Center 5309 to a project created to support facility enhancement and development at the Highlands County Sports Complex, and to allocate the remaining balance of Cost Center 5309 to a project created to support development of a TDC-approved multi-purpose indoor sports tourism facility within Highlands County.

Upon roll call, all Council members voted in favor of the motion, and the motion carried.

The presentation, discussion, and vote are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 1:54:18 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

G. 2026 TDC Meeting Dates

Ms. Fultz presented a proposed meeting schedule for the 2026 calendar year, which would follow the schedules set and adopted for previous years.

Mr. Kesling made a motion, seconded by Ms. Compton, to set the TDC meeting schedule as follows for the 2026 calendar year:

Thursday, January 29, 2026

Thursday, April 30, 2026

Thursday, August 13, 2026
Thursday, October 29, 2026

Upon roll call, all Council members voted in favor of the motion, and the motion carried.

The presentation, discussion, and vote are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 2:18:37 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

H. 2026 TDC Chair & Vice Chair

Ms. Fultz introduced the item for the Council's voting of their Chair and Vice Chair for the 2026 calendar year.

Ms. Garren made a motion, seconded by Ms. Worley, to approve Commissioner Campbell as the 2026 TDC Chair, and Josh Stewart as the 2026 TDC Vice-Chair.

Upon roll call, all Council members voted in favor of the motion, and the motion carried.

The presentation, discussion, and vote are available for public viewing at the following link, beginning at the 2:19:50 mark: <https://youtu.be/JbW5cKaiBg0>.

6. Old Business / Discussion / Informational

A. Caladium Festival Update

The item was presented for informational purposes only. No discussion or action was taken.

B. TDC Grant Recommendations

The item was presented for informational purposes only. No discussion or action was taken.

7. Public Input

Time was made for public input.

8. Board Member Roundtable

Time was made for board member roundtable.

9. Upcoming Meetings & TDC-Sponsored Events

- Oct. 30: Art & Culture Stakeholder Meeting at SFSC Center for Performing Arts
- Nov. 10 – 11: Citrus Golf Trail Open at Sun 'N Lake Golf Club
- Dec. 6: Last Paddler Standing at H.L. Bishop Park
- Dec. 12: Spartan Group Tour – RSVP with Reagan or Casey
- Dec. 13 – 14: Spartan Trifecta Weekend at Skipper Ranch
- Dec. 27 – 30: Citrus Golf Trail Ladies Invitational at Sun 'N Lake Golf Club
- January 29: TDC Quarterly Meeting

10. Adjournment

Mr. Stewart adjourned the meeting at 10:39 a.m.

For all backup documents, please contact Highlands County Public Information Office at 863-402-6500.

DRAFT

Item 3

**HIGHLANDS COUNTY
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT REVENUE BALANCES
FOR FY 2024 / 2025 - FINAL**

Period	Taxes	Interest	TOTAL
October	\$ 160,689.68	\$ 15,099.26	\$ 175,788.94
November	144,660.63	17,624.16	162,284.79
December	161,192.63	17,888.31	179,080.94
January	229,010.08	17,339.70	246,349.78
February	270,147.04	15,414.96	285,562.00
March	331,004.97	15,902.51	346,907.48
April	177,834.69	16,482.42	194,317.11
May	153,562.34	17,179.37	170,741.71
June	107,141.66	17,394.88	124,536.54
July	111,942.80	18,287.04	130,229.84
August	105,173.27	18,246.58	123,419.85
September	111,193.02	17,289.63	128,482.65
TOTALS	\$ 2,063,552.81	\$ 204,148.82	\$ 2,267,701.63

**HIGHLANDS COUNTY
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT BALANCES
FY 2024 / 2025 - FINAL**

Description	Operations 5301	Marketing & Events 5305	Lakes 5306	Asset Dev/Enhance 5309	TOTALS
Ending Balance 09/30/2024	0.00	2,195,281.71	6,124.13	2,444,286.47	4,645,692.31
Revenue Replace Allocation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tax Revenue - FY 24/25 *	270,897.94	1,429,878.28	0.00	566,925.41	2,267,701.63
Grants / Misc. Revenue	0.00	28,345.90	0.00	4,634.05	32,979.95
Interest Adj. per Finance	0.00	(55,417.56)	249.09	55,168.47	0.00
Expense - FY 24/25 **	270,897.94	1,110,518.24	0.00	86,178.00	1,467,594.18
Less Encumbrances ***	0.00	45,000.00	0.00	0.00	45,000.00
Less Contingency		200,000.00			200,000.00
Available Balance	0.00	2,242,570.09	6,373.22	2,984,836.40	5,233,779.71

* - Revenues (taxes & interest) thru 9/30/25

** - Expenses thru 9/30/25

*** - Purchase orders "pulled" thru 9/30/25 but funds not expended yet; does not necessarily equate to Tourist Board's approved projects list.

TOURIST TAX REVENUES FY14/15 TO CURRENT

FISCAL YEARS PRIOR TO 4TH PENNY

FY14/15	
MONTH	REVENUE
October	\$ 23,120.78
November	\$ 21,048.70
December	\$ 27,647.65
January	\$ 52,243.11
February	\$ 58,400.96
March	\$ 84,295.71
April	\$ 26,865.85
May	\$ 23,873.46
June	\$ 21,559.04
July	\$ 20,538.04
August	\$ 18,555.70
September	\$ 22,429.78
Total Revenue for 14/15	\$400,578.78

FY15/16	
MONTH	REVENUE
October	\$ 26,896.02
November	\$ 28,461.81
December	\$ 35,355.22
January	\$ 53,684.60
February	\$ 61,101.62
March	\$ 85,800.87
April	\$ 32,177.72
May	\$ 24,566.91
June	\$ 23,274.72
July	\$ 22,087.48
August	\$ 17,170.71
September	\$ 19,335.12
Total Revenue for 15/16	\$429,912.80

FY16/17	
MONTH	REVENUE
October	\$ 25,337.16
November	\$ 26,691.21
December	\$ 31,779.06
January	\$ 56,308.75
February	\$ 59,294.91
March	\$ 83,327.89
April	\$ 29,909.40
May	\$ 23,424.23
June	\$ 21,712.29
July	\$ 21,234.44
August	\$ 15,873.35
September	\$ 35,809.45
Total Revenue for 16/17	\$430,702.14

FY17/18	
MONTH	REVENUE
October	\$ 37,784.53
November	\$ 37,812.25
December	\$ 38,466.37
January	\$ 54,552.75
February	\$ 66,084.02
March	\$ 73,431.19
April	\$ 32,076.85
May	\$ 26,838.59
June	\$ 27,228.52
July	\$ 27,044.32
August	\$ 42,138.16
September	\$ 46,656.88
Total Revenue for 17/18	\$510,114.43

TOURIST TAX REVENUES FY14/15 TO CURRENT, Cont'd.

FISCAL YEARS COLLECTING 4% TDT

FY18/19	
MONTH	REVENUE
October	\$ 54,327.10
November	\$ 71,994.27
December	\$ 64,625.96
January	\$ 121,869.88
February	\$ 125,752.81
March	\$ 206,212.71
April	\$ 69,821.55
May	\$ 68,042.60
June	\$ 59,724.95
July	\$ 59,569.14
August	\$ 54,149.47
September	\$ 59,389.48
Total Revenue for 18/19	\$1,015,479.92

FY19/20	
MONTH	REVENUE
October	\$ 60,771.86
November	\$ 69,843.75
December	\$ 93,115.90
January	\$ 128,896.18
February	\$ 156,987.00
March	\$ 62,523.28
April	\$ 36,965.33
May	\$ 43,334.89
June	\$ 56,117.30
July	\$ 63,094.60
August	\$ 48,655.60
September	\$ 56,923.47
Total Revenue for 19/20	\$877,229.16

FY 20/21	
MONTH	REVENUE
October	\$ 76,975.97
November	\$ 106,567.00
December	\$ 64,602.93
January	\$ 96,549.75
February	\$ 102,464.05
March	\$ 206,210.64
April	\$ 102,224.62
May	\$ 92,438.98
June	\$ 81,464.52
July	\$ 85,225.58
August	\$ 73,315.28
September	\$ 86,493.30
Total Revenue for 20/21	\$1,174,532.62

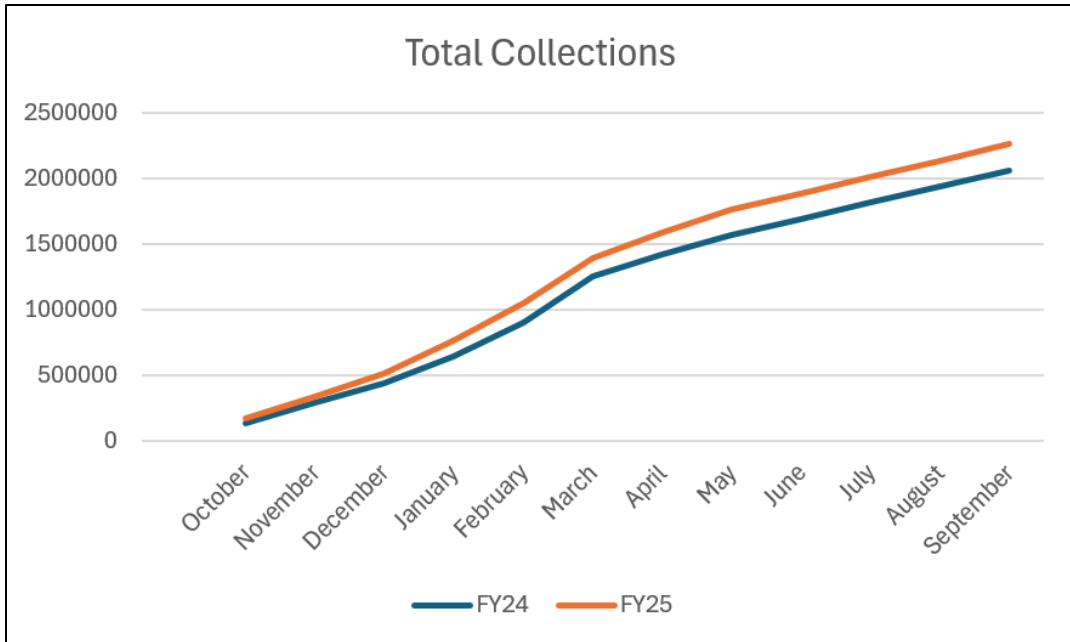
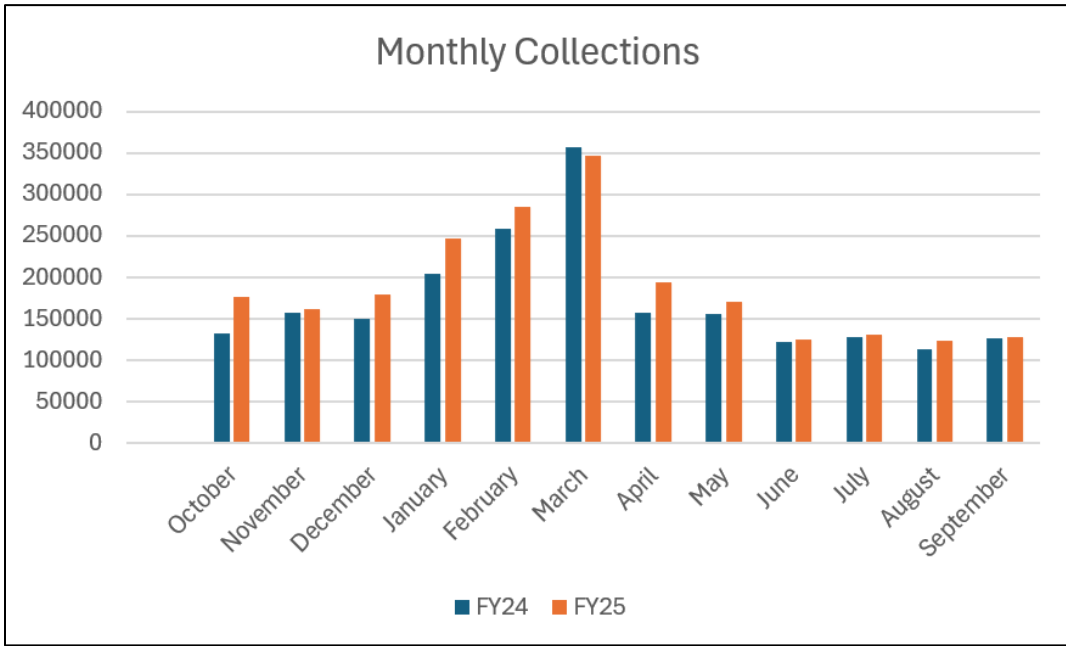
FY 21/22	
MONTH	REVENUE
October	\$ 118,841.95
November	\$ 105,876.25
December	\$ 120,563.05
January	\$ 136,601.62
February	\$ 181,959.16
March	\$ 288,865.36
April	\$ 131,598.20
May	\$ 100,392.63
June	\$ 91,591.19
July	\$ 106,870.71
August	\$ 77,825.61
September	\$ 116,063.44
Total Revenue for 21/22	\$1,577,049.17

FISCAL YEARS COLLECTING 5% TDT

FY 22/23	
MONTH	REVENUE
October	\$ 194,813.41
November	\$ 146,842.12
December	\$ 147,328.69
January	\$ 169,777.39
February	\$ 241,887.91
March	\$ 351,868.47
April	\$ 120,831.21
May	\$ 93,838.88
June	\$ 98,169.53
July	\$ 100,023.92
August - 5%	\$ 100,819.93
September - 5%	\$ 167,625.01
Total Revenue for 22/23	\$1,933,826.47

FY 23/24	
MONTH	REVENUE
October	\$ 132,758.45
November	\$ 157,706.47
December	\$ 150,311.58
January	\$ 203,565.26
February	\$ 258,286.64
March	\$ 356,562.71
April	\$ 157,799.95
May	\$ 155,657.68
June	\$ 121,827.72
July	\$ 127,730.68
August	\$ 113,699.57
September	\$ 125,673.44
Total Revenue for 23/24	\$2,061,580.15

FY 24/25	
MONTH	REVENUE
October	\$ 175,788.94
November	\$ 162,284.79
December	\$ 179,080.94
January	\$ 246,349.78
February	\$ 285,562.00
March	\$ 346,907.48
April	\$ 194,317.11
May	\$ 170,741.71
June	\$ 124,536.54
July	\$ 130,229.84
August	\$ 123,419.85
September	\$ 128,482.65
Total Revenue for 24/25	\$2,267,701.63



	FY23/24	FY24/25	% change
Oct	\$ 132,758.45	\$ 175,788.94	32%
Nov	\$ 157,706.47	\$ 162,284.79	3%
Dec	\$ 150,311.58	\$ 179,080.94	19%
Jan	\$ 203,565.26	\$ 246,349.78	21%
Feb	\$ 258,286.64	\$ 285,562.00	11%
Mar	\$ 356,562.71	\$ 346,907.48	-3%
Apr	\$ 157,799.95	\$ 194,317.11	23%
May	\$ 155,657.68	\$ 170,741.71	10%
June	\$ 121,827.72	\$ 124,536.54	2%
July	\$ 127,730.68	\$ 130,229.84	2%
Aug	\$ 113,699.57	\$ 123,419.85	9%
Sept	\$ 125,673.44	\$ 128,482.65	2%
TOTAL <i>to current reported month</i>	\$ 2,061,580.15	\$ 2,267,701.63	10%

Leads

2025-2026 vs 2024-2025

2025-2026	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total YTD
Visit FI Magazine	107	45	81										
Phone Request	6	4	8										
Undiscovered FL													
Contact Us*	19	14	17										
Request Info*	41	44	55										
Subscribe*	83	105	133										
Total	256	212	294	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	762

Web Site Total*	143	163	205	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	511
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2024-2025	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total YTD
Visit FI Magazine	101	52	88	72	132	123	180	99	127	260	182	109	1525
Phone Request	4	5	4	5	6	8	3	12	9	4	6	5	71
Undiscovered FL													
Contact Us*	17	20	19	13	22	30	34	19	16	18	19	17	244
Request Info*	14	7	12	35	42	124	169	52	47	77	68	41	688
Subscribe*	87	132	177	214	104	207	184	94	83	121	130	109	1642
Total	223	216	300	339	306	492	570	276	282	480	405	281	4170

Web Site Total*	118	159	208	262	168	361	387	165	146	216	217	167	2574
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Variance +/-

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total YTD
2022 vs 2023 Leads	33	-4	-6										
2022 vs 2023 Website Leads*	25	4	-3										

* = Website Leads

Item 4A



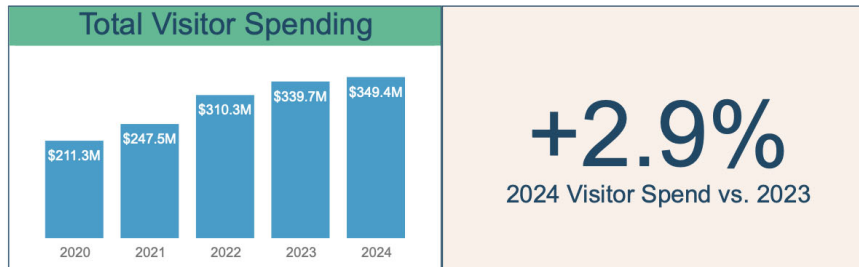
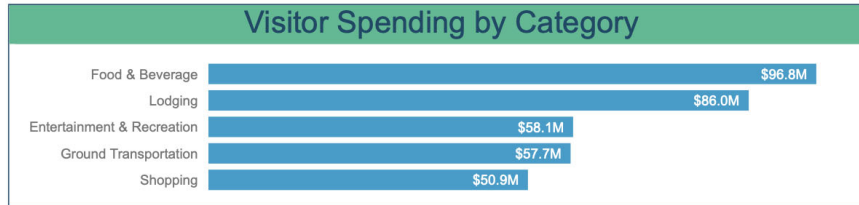
**Destination, Budget & Facility Development Update
January 29, 2025**

VENTURES | BLU BUCHI | Resort | ALPINE BREWING CO.

2024 ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM



Highlands County



\$33.9M

State & Local Taxes Generated

\$30.2M

Federal Taxes Generated

	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
GDP	\$139.6M	\$28.1M	\$31.3M	\$199.0M
Jobs	3,343	539	465	4,347
Wages	\$85.2M	\$15.8M	\$16.8M	\$117.8M
Total Business Spending	\$272.7M	\$59.9M	\$56.6M	\$389.2M

Figures in this document are based on spending by visitors during 2024, including domestic out-of-state visitors, international visitors, and Florida residents who traveled at least 50 miles to the destination. They also include both day and overnight trips. Indirect impacts are impacts on non-tourism businesses which provide supplies to tourism businesses (e.g. restaurant suppliers). Induced impacts are impacts on non-tourism businesses due to spending of wages by employees of tourism businesses (e.g. the money spent by a tourism business employee at a grocery store). "Total Business Spending" is the amount paid to suppliers by businesses.

Source: Rockport Analytics

Tourism Development Trends for Small Markets

1. Collaboration at Strategic Advantage
2. Technology & Visitor Connectivity Matter More Than Ever
3. Events & Experiences as Economic Drivers
4. A Shift Toward Authentic, Small-Town Experiences
5. Outdoor, Nature-Based & Wellness Travel Continues to Grow
6. Drive-In Market & Short-Stay Travel Remain Strong

Next Steps: Align With Traveler Behavior & Welcome Visitors True to Who We Are





- Most important trend shaping tourism in 2026 is **collaboration**.
 - Successful destinations are those where cities, organizations, and businesses work together rather than in isolation.
- Visitors **do not experience city limits**; they experience regions.
- By aligning our messaging, sharing resources, and coordinating efforts, we **strengthen the entire county's tourism economy**.
- **Strategic collaboration** allows us to amplify our reach, maximize investment, and create a more seamless experience for visitors.
- Visit Sebring selected to speak on this topic at **Destinations Florida's Marketing Summit** in May.

1. Collaboration as a Strategic Advantage

2. Technology & Visitor Connectivity Matter More Than Ever

- Today's travelers plan differently than they did even a few years ago.
 - They **expect real-time information**, digital trip planning tools, and easy ways to discover what's nearby.
- Investments in **digital visitor tools, wayfinding, and online content** help ensure that when someone arrives in Highlands County, they can easily find places to eat, shop, explore, and return to.
- Technology also allows us to better connect Sebring, Avon Park, and Lake Placid as one **unified destination** while still highlighting their unique personalities.



3. Events & Experiences as Economic Drivers

- Events remain one of the **most effective tools** for driving visitation, especially during shoulder seasons.
- Tourism-driving festivals, sporting events, cultural celebrations, and niche gatherings help **create reasons to visit at specific times of year** while supporting local businesses.
- **Strategic tourism development** means not only supporting existing signature events but also identifying opportunities for new experiences that align with our assets whether that's outdoor recreation, wellness, arts, endurance racing, sports or agriculture.





5. Outdoor, Nature-Based & Wellness Travel Continues to Grow

- Travelers in 2026 are **prioritizing experiences** that support wellness, time outdoors, and mental reset.
- This includes time on the water, nature walks, birding, cycling, fishing, and quiet **escapes from busy urban life**.
- With more than 100 lakes, beautiful natural areas, and parks like Highlands Hammock State Park, our **county is well positioned to meet this demand**.
- Strategic tourism development means continuing to promote outdoor recreation responsibly while encouraging experiences that **connect visitors to our natural environment and encourage longer stays**.

6. Drive-Market and Short-Stay Travel Remain Strong

- Highlands County's **central Florida location** places us within easy driving distance of several major metropolitan areas.
 - Makes us an **ideal destination** for weekend getaways, short retreats, and repeat visits throughout the year.
- In 2026, successful destinations will continue to focus on being **easy to access, easy to navigate, and fun to enjoy.**
- Developing themed itineraries, scenic routes, special tours and multi-day trip ideas that **connect our three cities helps visitors see the county as one destination with many diverse experiences.**
(GeoTour)



Looking Ahead: 2026

- Tourism development in Highlands County is not about chasing trends for their own sake.
- It's about thoughtfully aligning with changes in traveler behavior while staying true to who we are.
- By focusing on authenticity, outdoor experiences, smart technology, regional collaboration, and community pride, we are positioning Highlands County for sustainable tourism and economic growth in 2026 and beyond.

Our goal for 2026: Welcome visitors in a way that supports our local businesses, enhances quality of life for residents, & preserves the character that makes our communities special.





TDC Staff Activity & Stakeholder Outreach

- Facility development presentations to BOCC, City of Sebring & Town of Lake Placid.
- Launched/ hosted 2 Highlands County Hospitality Trainings (October & November).
- Hosted International Network of Golf (ING) Fall Conference for golf media, Nov. 18-21
- Hosted Spartan VIP tours for community leaders, Dec. 12
- Held TDC Board Member Orientation for new TDC representative.
- Presented to Leadership Highlands.
- On-going conversations with Airstream Ventures, Huddle Up Group, Synergy Sports, and County Parks Department regarding sports tourism events and facility developments.
- On-going conversations with Legal regarding several projects including TDC grant changes, vendor agreements, grant agreements and facility development.
- Launched new TDC grant changes.
- Ensured True Omni kiosks were installed. Still working with company to work some kinks out.

Public Relations Update

>Much PR

- Participated in **Visit Florida's media missions: Nashville & NYC**
 - Prepared collateral & traveled to Nashville
 - Met with dozens of media and influencers, sharing the story of Sebring, Avon Park & Lake Placid, FL
 - Included sodas from the Sebring Soda Shop at the NYC evening event
 - After the event, did personalized follow-ups and pitches with all media who attended both events
- Prep work for **International Media Marketplace (IMM)**, the most important media marketplace in the U.S. in NYC on January 22
 - Audited more than 500 media to rank & choose them for media requests
 - Requested 72 appointments in the hopes of receiving 24 quality appointments
 - Sent personalized invitations to all 24 asking them to select Highlands County as well in the appointment request tool
- Wrote the Highlands County **holiday events press release**
 - Sent the release to more than 75 media
- Requested **“What's New for 2026”** info from county, chambers and cities.



Public Relations Update

>Much PR

- Attended **IMM**, the most important media marketplace in the US, taking place in **NYC in January 2026**
- Representing Sebring, Avon Park & Lake Placid FL and sharing the amazing things we have to offer.
- Hundreds of other destinations there.



Earned Media -Much PR



Highlands Hammock State Park: from nation... park rejection to conservation triumph
nationalgeographic.com




Florida's 14 Most Underrated Towns to Visit ... 2025
worldatlas.com



12 Small Town Florida Escapes to Plan This Year (One for Every Month)
onlyinyourstate.com



All Aboard the Most Festive Holiday Train Rides in the U.S.
thrillist.com

 **Secret Miami**
January 12 at 10:00 AM · 🌐

Did you know Florida has a town with more clowns per capita than anywhere else? 🤡 It's also home to nearly 50 larger-than-life murals and was voted "America's Most Interesting Town" by Reader's Digest. 📖 Less than 3 hours from Miami, learn all about Lake Placid and plan your next trek here: bit.ly/lakeplacid1



Why Retirees Are flocking to This Central Florida Lakes Region for a Peaceful Life
investopedia.com



Facility Development Update

- **Highlands County Sports Complex** – Expansion property purchase to close on April 1. Survey received in January; moving to next steps. In talks with Synergy Sports.
- **Indoor Facility Land Donation** – In property owner’s court. Legal asked for 15 acres to be properly divided from larger parcel. (Across from Fred Wild Elementary)
- **Max Long/City of Sebring** – Item on TDC agenda for co-funding Synergy Sports agreement to do additional research on proposed improvements.
- **Lake June Park/Town of Lake Placid** – Location of Town’s new pickleball courts will prevent complex expansion from occurring without more property.
- **Sebring Municipal Golf Course** – City received three (3) proposals on Jan. 20.
- **Donaldson Park/City of Avon Park** – Presentation from TDC regarding facility study & recommendations for Avon Park was not requested.

Tourism Award Nomination Portal Open

Award Categories Include:

- Attraction Service Champion
- Hotel Service Champion
- Restaurant Service Champion
- Rising Star Champion
- Volunteer Champion
- Innovation Champion
- Sports Tourism Champion
- Humanitarian Champion

- Deadline: March 31



Looking Forward

- **TDT collections** change to local tax collector – on Feb. 3 BOCC agenda
- Scheduling another day for **Hospitality Training** on February 16
- **Role of the Arts in Redevelopment** – Shellie Phelps presenting to BOCC, Feb. 17
- Adding **Dock Dogs** to Sebring Soda Festival.
- **Avon Park Rotary** presentation, April 15
- Next **TDC Board Meeting**: April 30, 2026. Meetings are open to the public.



2024-2025 Marketing (5305) Budget to Date *As of 9.30.25

	Approved Budget	Earmarked/Spent	Balance Remaining
Advertising/SEO/SEM/ Website	525,000	377,691	147,309 (did not launch Destination Channel)
Experience Enhancement (Water-based Grant)	50,000	(Earmarked but 3-year contract will not start until 25-26 FY)	50,000
Promotions/PR	65,000	46,895	18,105
Sports Marketing	82,000	81,000	1,000
Visitor Services	40,000	65,050 (kiosks)	-25,050
Industry Relations	20,000	35,236	-15,236
Event Grants	575,000	294,200	280,800
Special Projects	63,000	67,000 (Huddle Up, Facility Study, RMPK)	-4,000
FSF Income	(+20,000) Not included in total below	+1,595	
TOTAL	\$1,420,000	\$975,524.5	\$452,928

2025-2026 Marketing (5305) Budget to Date **Oct. 1, 2025-Jan. 14, 2026*

	Approved Budget	Earmarked/Spent	Balance Remaining
Advertising/SEO/SEM/Website	629,000	354,073	274,927 (TV channel, microsites)
Experience Enhancement (Water-based Grant)	100,000	0	100,000 (Lake June Lagoon & Nature Experiences)
Promotions/PR	85,000	39,600	45,400 (Media Missions, FAM Tours)
Sports Marketing	86,000	84,000	2,000
Visitor Services	75,000	171	74,829 (Signage & Visitor Guide re-prints)
Industry Relations	125,000	85,994	39,006 (Education, Outreach, Hospitality Training, Bus Tour confs)
Event Grants	500,000	176,000 (GFNY, MLGT, CGT Ladies, Spartan)	324,000
Special Projects	200,000	3,600 (Land survey)	196,400 (Facility development planning, state grant consultant, Strategic Plan, Local TDT collection, Other special projects TBD).
FSF Income (TBD)	0		
TOTAL	\$1,800,000	\$743,438	\$1,065,562

“

Unity is strength...
when there is teamwork
and collaboration,
wonderful things can
be achieved.

- Mattie Stepanek

”

Any Questions?
Casey@VisitSebring.com



Item 4B

Item 4C



X



QUARTERLY REPORT

SPORTS TOURISM PRESENTATION
JAN. 2026



X



Association Trips

Upcoming Sports Conference which will connect us to sports tourism even organizers which will help us bring more events to Avon Park, Lake Placid and Sebring.



04/26
Las Vegas



06/25
TBD



10/26
Birmingham, AL



10/26
Virginia Beach, VA



12/26
Punta Gorda, FL

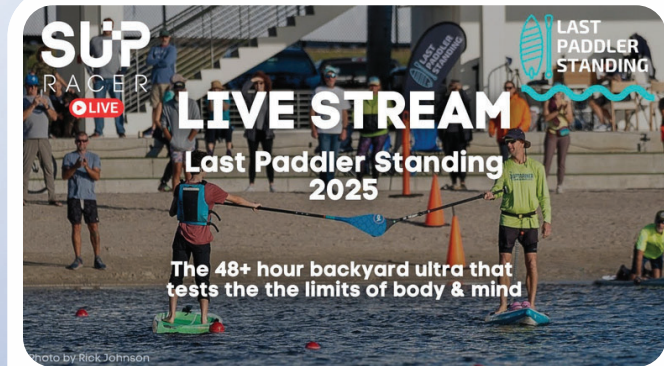
Highlighted/New Events



SPARTAN RACE

More than 8,000 racers attended the December weekend. It has become an annual event in Highlands County generating near \$2 million in economic impact.

In 2026, the event will move later in the year to December 18-20.



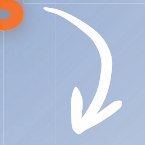
LAST PADDLER STANDING

Last Paddler Standing is an endurance SUP race that took place on Lake June in Winter in Lake Placid, FL.

Unlike any other paddle race in the world, Last Paddler Standing is a race of stamina and strategy. Racers paddled a 3.33 mile loop course, starting and finishing the loop within a one-hour period. Over 40 racers from all over the world came to Highlands County. This event will now become an annual event.

Booked Events

Oct 25-Sept 26



- **CGT Open (Nov 25)**
- **Last Paddler Standing (Dec 25)**
- **Spartan Race (Dec 25)**
- **CGT Ladies Invitational (Dec 25)**
- US Fastpitch (6 events)
- Dock Dogs (April 26)
- Pro Watercross-Sebring (April 26)
- Crabs Lacrosse (May 26)
- GVILLE Flag Football (May 26)
- Inspire Dance (May 26)
- 5v5 Soccer (June 26)
- Lax O Lakes (June 26)
- Team Fla Lacrosse (June 26)
- Deep South Lax Showcase (Aug 26)
- UFFL (Aug 26)
- Pro Watercross-AP (Aug 26)
- Premier Girls Fast Pitch (7 events)
- American Power Boat (Oct. 26)
- Last Paddler Standing (Dec 26)
- Spartan Race (Dec 26)
- Ladies Golf Invitational (Dec 26)



ADVANCED CONVERSATIONS

- Minor League Golf Tour (2026)
- Gridiron Sunshine Football Classic (2026)
- Premier Lacrosse League Camp (2026)
- US Senior Pickleball (2026)
- Legend 2 Legacy (2026)
- Brand Name Athletes (2026)
- Unrivaled Sports (2026)

CONVERSATIONS

- 7v7 Football (2026)
- USA Cycling (2026)
- FICA-Cycling (2026)
- US CCO (2026)
- Game On Events (2026)
- Jr. College Softball (2025-26)
- FIRST Robotics Qualifier
- American Darters Assoc (2026)
- Surf Foil Tour (2026)



Annual Contract

OCT 2025- SEPT 2026

TOTAL VALUE

\$5.1 Million

\$82,000 per year

2025-2026 TOURISM IMPACT VS. CONTRACT

“Actual” numbers
through
Jan. 29, 2026

EVENTS

GOAL: 22
ACTUAL: 4
28 Booked

ROOM NIGHTS

GOAL: 12,000
ACTUAL: 6,900

TOURISM IMPACT

GOAL: \$7 MIL
ACTUAL: \$5.1 MIL

(Room night values, impact values, marketing values)

Item 4D



citrusgolftrail

scope of WORK



1

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

Ongoing creation, scheduling, and engagement across Citrus Golf Trail's social media platforms to build brand awareness, grow audience reach, and drive traffic to the website and member courses.

2

EMAIL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Strategic development and distribution of branded e-newsletters that highlight news, promotions, and events to nurture relationships with past visitors and inspire future travel.

3

WEBSITE REDESIGN

A complete refresh of the Citrus Golf Trail website focused on modern design, streamlined navigation, and improved user experience to better showcase member courses and increase conversions.

social MEDIA

TOTAL AUDIENCE

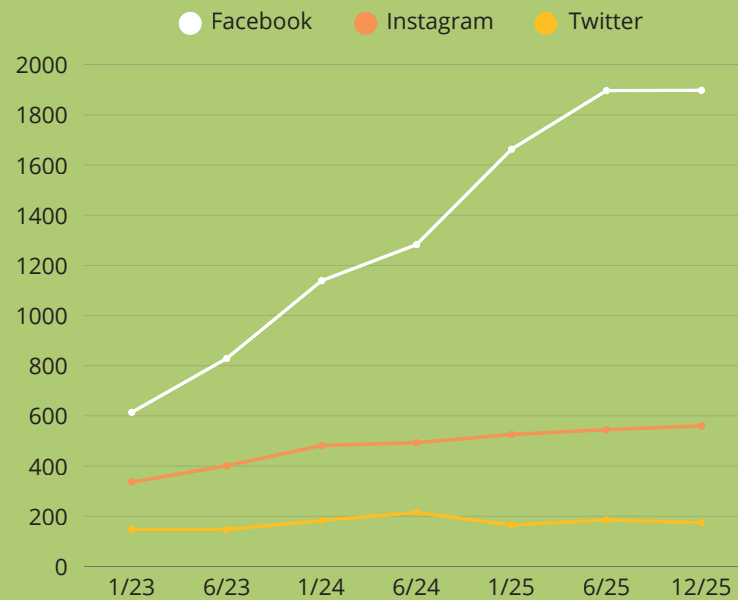
↑ 162%

AVERAGE IMPRESSIONS

4,208

AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT RATE

↑ 7%



email MARKETING

Date	Open Rate	Click-Through Rate
January '23	33%	1%
January '24	32%	1%
January '25	31%	1%
Current	30%	1%

website REDESIGN



DESTINATION OVERVIEW

An engaging introduction that highlights Highlands County's charm, the Citrus Golf Trail experience, and what makes the area a must-visit golf destination.



WEEKLY BLOG POSTS

Fresh, search-optimized content published regularly to showcase member courses, travel tips, and stories that keep the website dynamic and improve visibility.



SPECIAL EVENTS

A dedicated section promoting tournaments, seasonal offers, and community happenings to keep visitors informed and encourage repeat visits.



CUSTOM BOOKING ENGINE

An integrated tool that allows users to seamlessly book accommodations and tee times directly through the site, simplifying trip planning and driving conversions.



citrusgolftrail



Item 4E



BIGGEST FISH

CONSULTING LLC

Highlands County TDC

January, 2026



COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Avon Park, Lake Placid, Sebring

**Shaping the future of tourism
across the county,
through community
connection,
communication,
and collaboration**



American Bus Association National Conference

Connections with 75 Tour Operators

FOUR SESSIONS

**EVERYONE
Matters**

HOSPITALITY TRAINING FOR HIGHLANDS COUNTY

Art and Culture Stakeholder Meeting

**What do the ARTS
have to do with
REVITALIZATION
and
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT?**

**The ARTS have the power
to align
tourism
and
economic development
messaging
with storytelling**

Regional Team Meetings

Connect - Communicate- Collaborate

October

Wet Dogs
Brewery
Lake Placid

January

Classic
Caladiums
Avon Park

February

TEAM RETREAT
Rafter T Ranch
Sebring



**THANK
YOU**

Shellie Phelps
Biggest Fish Consulting
shellie@bigfishart4you.com

Item 5A



Event: Spartan Central Florida Trifecta Weekend (Dec. 2026 - Dec. 2030)

Amount Requested:

Annually: \$110,000 (\$66,000 (marketing) + \$44,000 (2,200 verified room nights))

Criteria for Evaluation of Marketing Plan: High Impact Event Grant

- I. Marketing Channels & Tactics (Social, Website, Email, Commercials, Print Ads, etc.) **20**
 - II. Digital Advertising Strategy & Digital Ads Examples **20**
 - III. Digital Audience **15**
 - IV. Digital Marketing Performance Metrics **10**
 - V. Budget & ROI Justification **15**
 - VI. Measurable Success Metrics & Reporting **15**
- Bonus Points: **0**

TOTAL SCORE: 95 (eligible for 100% requested marketing funding)

To be eligible for maximum funding, scores must be at least 85. Scores of 50 or less will not be eligible for funding. Scores from 55-80 will be eligible for 75% of requested funds.

Staff recommendation/suggested motion:

Move to approve the grant funding request from Spartan Race, Inc. for the Central Florida Trifecta Weekend as a five-year High Impact Event Grant, with annual funding of up to \$110,000 for 2026–2030.

Of the annual amount, \$66,000 shall be reimbursed for event marketing efforts as outlined in the submitted marketing plan. The remaining \$44,000 shall be reimbursed based on \$20 per verified room night and shall cover the facility rental fee.

Funding shall be paid from Cost Center 5305 – Marketing & Events.



APPLICATION

HIGHLANDS COUNTY TDC HIGH IMPACT SIGNATURE EVENT GRANT APPLICATION

Total Funding Event is Requesting of TDC: \$ 110,000
(\$ 66,000 for marketing expenses + \$ 44,000 for all other eligible expenses)

I. Applicant Information

1. Name of Applying Organization: Spartan Race Inc.
2. Complete address of Applying Organization: 234 Congress St. 5th Fl
Boston, MA 02110
3. Website for Applying Organization: www.spartan.com
4. Social Media for Applying Organization: @SpartanRace & @spartan IG, FB, X
5. Grant Contact @SpartanRaceTube YouTube
 - a. Name: Cherie Bortnick
 - b. Title: Vice President Business Development
 - c. Phone: (909) 260-7778
 - d. Email: cherie.b@spartan.com
6. If different from above, Name of Event Director/Coordinator (onsite Point of Contact):
 - a. Name: _____
 - b. Title: _____
 - c. Cell Phone: _____
 - d. Email: _____
7. Details about Applicant: (describe your business or organization)
Global leader in endurance sports and wellness
Spartan hosts over 250 events in 50+ countries
annually.

II. Event Information

1. Name of Event: Central Florida TriFecta Weekend
2. Type of event: Obstacle Course Racing
3. If sport, Level of Event (ex. Youth 13U, Adult Amateur, Etc.) Adult & youth amateur
4. If sport, is this event an elimination tournament? No
5. Dates of Event: 12/19/2024 - 12/20/2024
6. Location of Event: Skipper Ranch
7. Event Website: www.spartan.com/en/races/central-florida
8. Event Social Media Handles/Pages: Same
9. Event Admission Price (if applicable): \$20 - \$200
10. Schedule of Event: (can provide in separate attachment/document if needed)
Festival open at 6:00am and closes at 7:30pm. Heats of 200 participants
are deployed every 15 minutes beginning at 7:30am ending at 3pm
Saturday: 21k / 5k and kid heats. Sunday: 10k / 5k and kid heats.

III. Event History & Economic Impact

1. Has this organization received funding from the TDC for any events in past? Yes
 - a. If yes, please provide the following information:
 - i. Event Name: Central Florida Trifecta Weekend
 - ii. Event Dates: Varies December annually
 - iii. Room Nights Generated: Varies 4,500+
 - iv. Reimbursement from TDC: \$90,000 annually

2. Has this event been held in another destination prior to Highlands County? Yes
 - a. If yes, please answer the following:
 - i. Previous Destination: Polk County
 - ii. Dates: Varies December
 - iii. Venue: Mulberry FL
 - iv. Total Room Nights Generated: 4,500
 - v. Economic Impact (if available): _____
 - vi. List of funding from outside entities, like a TDC, with entity names and amounts: Undisclosed

3. Projected number of attendees: 10,960
4. Percentage or number of attendees from outside of Highlands County: 99%
5. Guaranteed minimum number of paid room nights the Event will bring to Highlands County: 2,600
6. Please complete the table below.

Category	Type	# of Adult	# of Youth
Total # Expected Participants (includes competitors, coaches, trainers, officials, etc.)	Out-of-State	3,000	200
	In-State & Staying Overnight	3,500	300
	In-State & Day Tripping	2,000	100
	Highlands County Residents	200	50
Total # Expected Fans (family, friends, etc.)	Out-of-State	550	50
	In-State & Staying Overnight	400	50
	In-State & Day Tripping	300	50
	Highlands County Residents	100	50
Total # Expected Media	Out-of-State	2	
	In-State & Staying Overnight	2	
	In-State & Day Tripping	2	
	Highlands County Residents	4	

7. Beyond the Post-Event Report and Room Certification Forms required by the grant, how will you verify and document the attendees that traveled into Highlands County and stayed overnight? Are you willing to share your findings with the TDC?

We will provide the zip codes of attendees as well as survey results.

IV. Event Budget Summary

EVENT REVENUE

This grant cannot be the sole source of revenue. Please list all Event revenue sources, types and amounts, including grants, sponsorships, registration fees, and in-kind services provided from public agencies, such as Police Department, Fire Rescue, etc. Please designate hard dollars versus in-kind.

Income Source & Type (i.e. Publix Sponsorship or Attendee Registration Fees)	Income Amount (or In-Kind Amount)
Registration Fees	\$ 730,000
Sponsorship	\$ 40,000
Visit Sebring/TDC Funding Request	+ \$ 110,000
TOTAL INCOME ALL SOURCES	= \$ 880,000

EVENT EXPENSES

Provide an itemized summary of all Event expenses, then indicate those which are intended use of TDC funds at the bottom of this page. Please be as detailed as possible, including intended media outlets, promotional materials, etc. and the dollar amount that will be expended (tentatively) for each category. This chart will reflect the total amount of the grant you have requested. Use additional sheets if necessary. Please refer to the list of Ineligible Expenses in the grant guidelines.

Expense Type (Facility Rental, Event Speakers, Signage, Insurance, etc.)	Expense Amount
Marketing Expenses (detailed marketing plan required)	\$ 135,000
Facility Rental	\$ 72,000
Rentals	\$ 89,000
Consumables	\$ 118,000
Shipping & Transportation	\$ 87,000
Staff travel, meals, wages	\$ 174,000
Materials / variable	\$ 4,800
TOTAL EVENT EXPENSES	= \$ 679,800
Intended Use of Tourist Development Tax Funds (provide details)	Amount
Marketing Expenses Eligible for Reimbursement	\$ 664,000
Facility Rental Fee	44,000
TOTAL EXPENSES TO BE REIMBURSED BY TDC	= \$ 110,000

Grant Application Checklist

Please initial next to each item and fill in the blanks below. This list must accompany your grant application.

Initials

CB This application is being submitted at least four months (120 days) prior to the event start.

Date of Event: December Annually 2027-2032

Date of Application: 1/14/26

CB I understand that the reimbursement request must be completed and submitted to the Tourism Office with all backup and supporting material no later than 60 days after the event ends, which will be on Varies by year (date 60 days after event ends).

CB I have included an IRS **W-9 Form** and a **copy of the Florida Division of Corporations (or similar) form** with the application.

CB I have included a detailed **Marketing Plan** for the Event and have reviewed the scoring rubric pertaining to the scoring of Marketing Plans for reimbursement eligibility.

CB I have included a sample **Visitor/Attendee Survey** for the Event and will submit survey results to the Visit Sebring office no later than 60 days after the event takes place.

CB I understand, if awarded the grant, the signee of the agreement between the County and my business/organization can only be an individual listed on the Florida Division of Corporations (or similar) as an Authorized Agent of the applying organization.

CB I understand that someone representing this grant application must be available at the TDC meeting when it considers the application for funding or the application will not be considered.

CB I understand that the "Visit Sebring" logo must appear in any print advertisements that are funded by the TDC. For digital ads, the "Visit Sebring" logo must either be featured on the advertisement or on website/landing page linked to the ad or the ad must link to the TDC's website, VisitSebring.com. **I will also use the #VisitSebring hashtag on social media posts related to this event.**

CB I understand that no expenses incurred **before** the TDC recommends approval of the grant application will be reimbursed **under any circumstances**. I also understand that no funding has been approved until an authorized signee for the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approves execution of the Grant Contract and that no expenditures will be reimbursed if the BOCC designee does not approve execution of the Grant Contract.

- CB I understand that reimbursements following the event will only be made for itemized, authorized expenses approved by the TDC, and authorized designee of the BOCC in the fully executed Grant Contract.
- CB I agree that the funds I receive will ONLY be used in accordance with the eligible and ineligible uses of funds as listed in the grant policies and guidelines.
- CB I understand each reimbursement request must include copies of paid invoices, screenshots of digital ads, copies of the ad/tear sheets, invoice for reimbursement amount to the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners, copy of front and back of cleared checks paying for advertising, and outreach figures identifying the number of people your ad reached outside Highlands County and inside Highlands County. I also understand cash receipts will not be accepted.
- CB I understand that all approved expenses will only be reimbursed after the event is complete and all post event reporting is submitted to, then audited and verified by TDC staff. And I understand that reimbursement for funds tied to room night verification will only be provided at a rate of \$20/verified room night, or funds tied to attendees will only be provided at a rate of \$0.50/verified attendee.
- CB I understand that I am required to submit a **Room Night Certification Form** from each participating hotel/accommodation to track the number of hotel room nights the Event produces in order to receive funding.
- CB I understand that I can use the online **Visit Sebring Attendee Survey** as another method of capturing room nights generated by my event. I understand that only results submitted **within 10 days** of the completion of the event will be considered valid. I also understand that Visit Sebring will look at the higher results between the survey and the Room Night Certification Forms to award any reimbursement based on verified room nights.
- CB I acknowledge that I am required to submit the **Post-Event Report Form** for the Event within 60 days after completion of event to receive payment.
- CB I have reviewed the **Highlands County Special Event Permit Flow Chart** and will proceed with any required county permits. (Contact: Melony Culpepper; (863) 402-6638). I understand that this event may require a Highlands County Special Event Permit, and it is up to me to complete that permit request and pay the required permit fee.
- CB I have reviewed and understand **all** insurance expectations required by the County and will provide the TDC office with **all** required Certificates of Insurance (COIs) naming "Highlands County" as additionally insured or proof of exemptions no later than 15 days before the event begins. If required, I will also provide the TDC office with a General Liability Certificate of Insurance (COI) naming "Florida Sports Foundation" as additionally insured no later than 15 days before the event begins.
- CB I acknowledge that any material made or received by Highlands County in connection **with my request for Event funding** is a public record and subject to public inspection **unless there is a legislatively created exemption that makes it confidential and not subject to disclosure**. I acknowledge that I cannot dictate to Highlands County what

material is open to public inspection or the circumstances under which material is deemed confidential.

CB I understand that as a requirement to receiving funding, I will execute a release to permit Highlands County to photo and/or record the Event and I must make Event invitees aware of this and make the signing of a release a requirement to participate in the Event.

CB I understand that all funds received are subject to audit by the Highlands County Clerk of the Court – Internal Auditor or other representative as Highlands County may designate.

CB I have reviewed and understand the scoring rubric pertaining to this grant.

CB I have reviewed and understand **all** policies and guidelines pertaining to this grant.

Authorized Agent: Cherie Bartnick

Title: Vice President of Business Development

Date: 1/14/26

Authorized Agent Signature: 

EVENT PLAYBOOK



SPARTAN

**TOUGH
MUDDER**



SPARTAN TRAIL



DEKA

PROCESS + CREATIVE LINKS

EMAIL, ORGANIC SOCIAL, PAID DIGITAL AND WEB

MARKETING TEAM

ALL BRANDS

PROCESS **THE BELOW PROCESSES HAVE NOT BEEN ROLLED OUT YET*

Opens

1. Real Estate Team sends out a SLACK to 'event-launches' SLACK group announcing the event launch
2. Channels use Canva template assets to launch their own comms

Inventory Added, Sold Out and Selling Out

1. Adolfo sends out an email global marketing calling out specific events two weeks in advance

Local (Paid Digital) Last Chance, 30-60-90 Days Out & Countdown

1. Channels use these at their own discretion

TEMPLATES PROCESS

1. Copy the template you would like to adjust and save it ONLY to your team NOT to the "Spartan and Tough Mudder team:
2. Adjust copy, image and logos as needed
3. DO NOT adjust the background or any layers of the asset

ALL BRANDS

CREATIVE LINKS

Canva **REMINDER TO INCLUDE/DOWNLOAD THE PARTNER LOGOS [HERE](#) WHEN MAKING ASSETS**

- Spartan
 - [Early Bird](#)
 - [Opens](#)
 - [Inventory Added](#)
 - [Selling Out](#)
 - [Sold Out](#)
 - [Local](#)
 - [Last Chance](#)
 - [Countdown](#)
 - [30-60-90 Days Out](#)
- Tough Mudder
 - [Early Bird](#)
 - [Opens](#)
 - [Inventory Added](#)
 - [Selling Out](#)
 - [Sold Out](#)
 - [Local](#)
 - [Last Chance](#)
 - [Countdown](#)
 - [30-60-90 Days Out](#)
 - [Venu Spotlights](#)
- Trail
 - [Opens](#)
 - [Inventory Added](#)
 - [Selling Out](#)
 - [Sold Out](#)
 - [Local](#)
 - [Last Chance](#)
 - [Countdown](#)
 - [30-60-90 Days Out](#)
- DEKA
 - [Opens](#)
 - [Inventory Added](#)
 - [Selling Out](#)
 - [Sold Out](#)
 - [Local](#)
 - [Last Chance](#)
 - [Countdown](#)

SPARTAN

EMAIL, ORGANIC SOCIAL, PAID DIGITAL AND WEB

MARKETING TEAM

NAM EMAIL

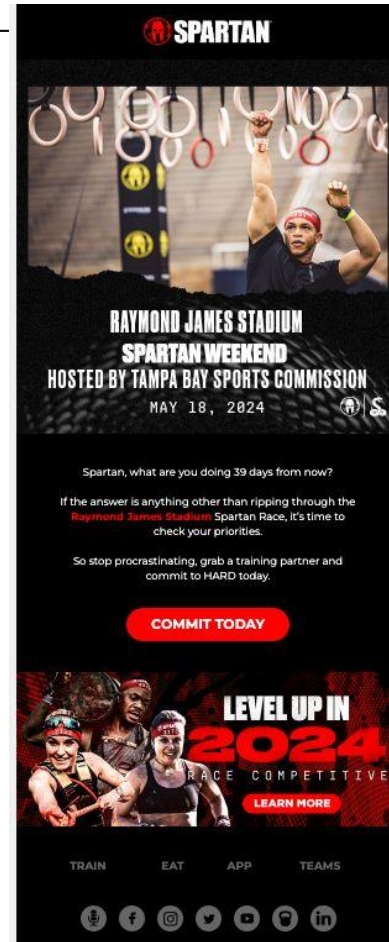
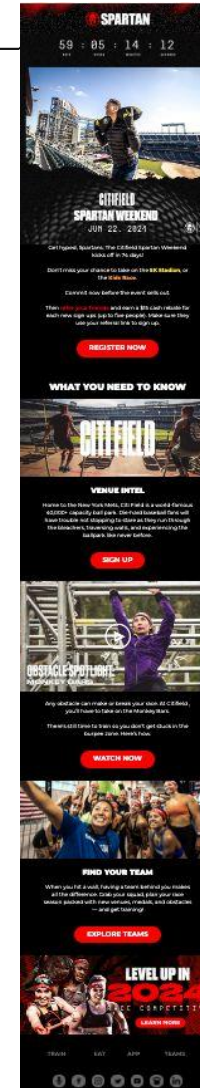
PreRace 90/60/30 Race Again - Event Promotional Sends

- PreRace - [RaceAgain 90](#)
- PreRace - [RaceAgain 60](#)
- PreRace - [Race Again 30](#)

Audiences consist of

- Viewed "Location" Race Page
- Location Past Racers
- Event Interest: Location
- Location 200 Miles

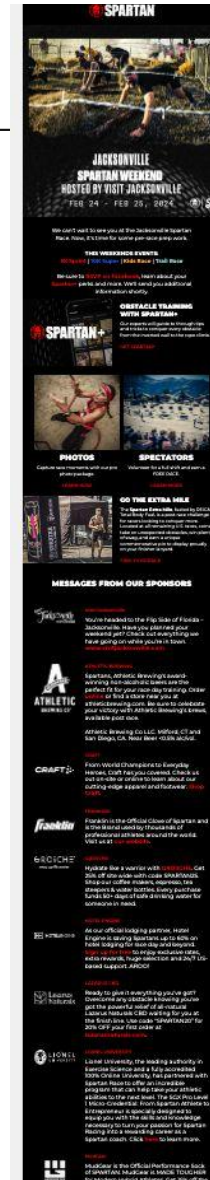
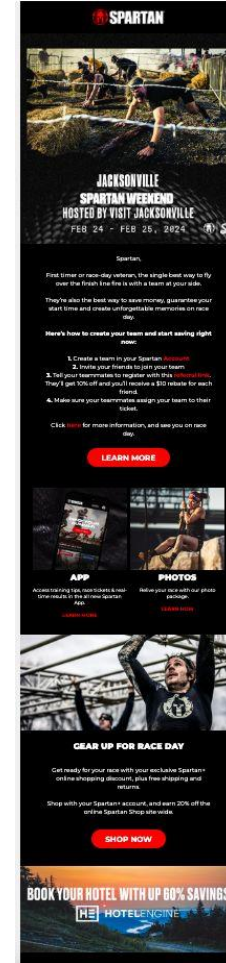
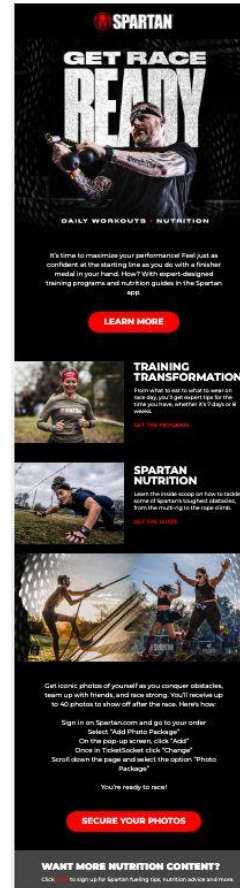
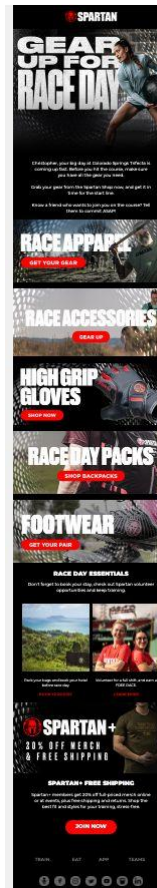
[Link to event Calendar](#)



NAM EMAIL

PreRace Event Transitional

- PreRace - 60 Days - Gear Email: [Touch 1](#)
- PreRace - 45 Days - Nutrition Email: [Touch 2](#)
- PreRace 30 Days - Teams Email: [Touch 3](#)
- PreRace 10 Days - Race Day Prep:
 - [Touch 4 Non-Members](#)
 - [Touch 4 Spartan+ Members](#)
- PreRace 5 days + 1 Day - Race Day Checklist:
 - [Touch 5 Non-Members](#)
 - [Touch 5 Spartan+](#)
- [Link to pre & post race Series Deck](#) : Audience explained in individual slides.



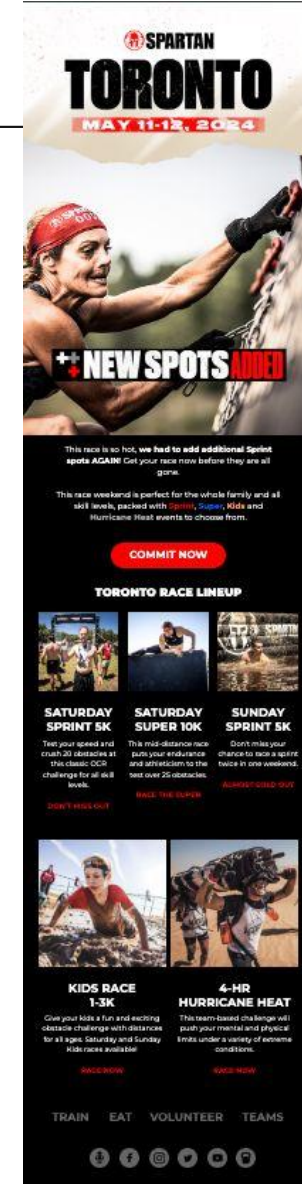
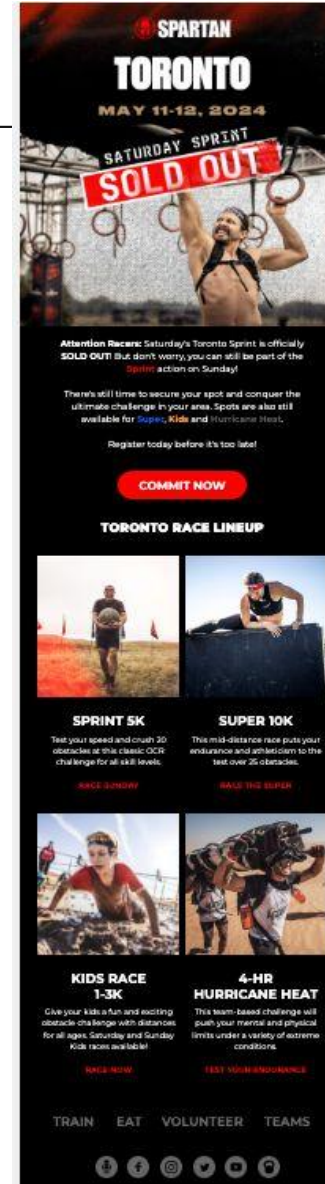
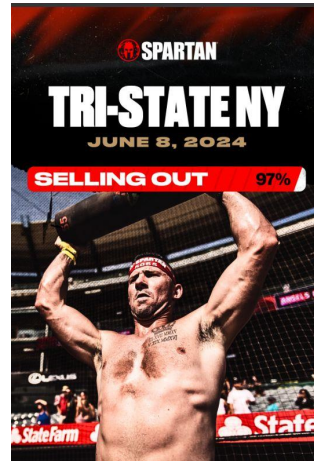
NAM EMAIL- * New Initiative

Selling out/ Sold Out Campaign Series

- Designated for underperforming events
- Email 1- Selling out
- Email 2- Sold Out
- Email 3 - Inventory Added

Audience Consist of:

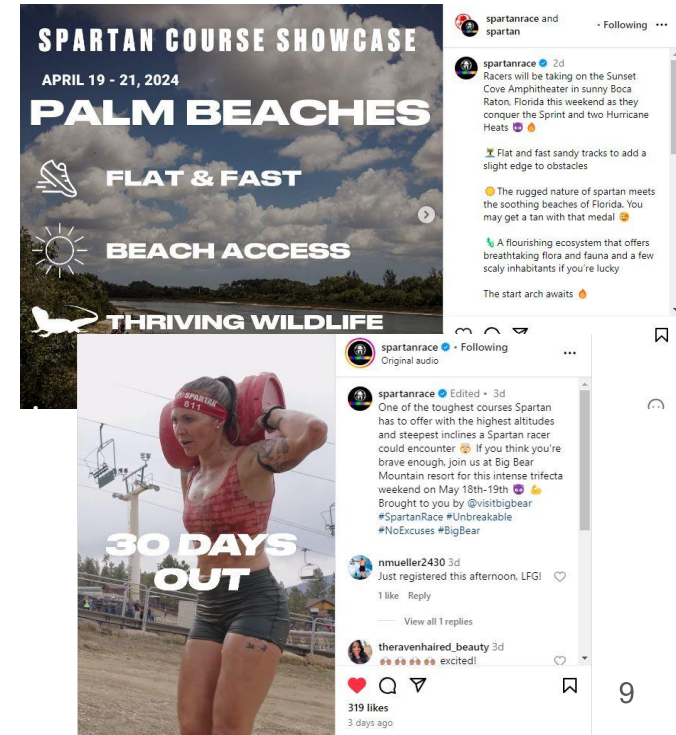
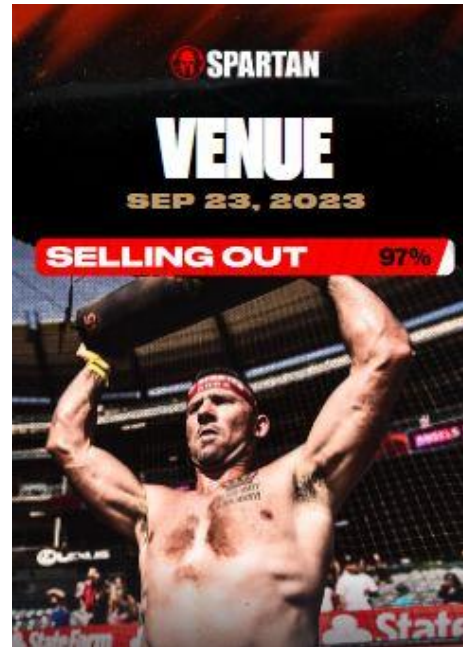
- Location past racers
- 2024 “Location” racers
- Event interest “Location”
- Viewed “Location” Race Page
- Location 200 miles



ORGANIC SOCIAL - NAM

SR

- 60 days out (graphic on stories, groups, event pages)
- 30 days out (video for all channels, updating the paid asset)
- Hype video prior to event usually just under 1 week out, but this depends on the teams bandwidth
- Course preview from the event landing pages, alongside course preview shots from events past
- 2025 Event open: Canva template graphic on stories (IG) and new FB event page, the monday following the weekend



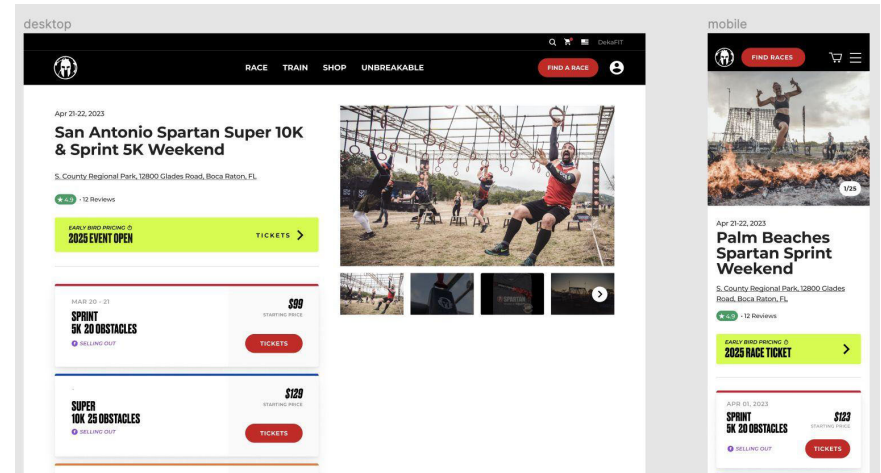
PAID MEDIA EVENT SUPPORT PHASES

EVENT OPENS	6 MONTHS OUT	90 DAYS	60 DAYS	30 DAYS
<p>APPROACH: Budget \$15,000 - Retarget registration lists from prior events and site data</p> <p>PLATFORMS: - META (FB/IG)</p> <p>AUDIENCES: - Previous Year Event Registered Racers (e.g. 2024 Palm Beaches Registered Racers) - Recent Page Visitors for Prior Year Event</p> <p>CREATIVE: - Static Images & Video - Early Bird Messaging Focused - Includes CVB Logo if applicable</p> <p>NOTES: - Runs for up to 3 weeks based on performance.</p>	<p>APPROACH: Budget \$60,000 - Localized, full funnel, omni-channel support for every event at least 6 months out from event date.</p> <p>PLATFORMS: - META (FB/IG) & GOOGLE (YOUTUBE, DISPLAY/PAID SEARCH) - TIK TOK - OUTDOOR BILLBOARDS, STREAMING VIDEO & AUDIO</p> <p>AUDIENCES: - Net New Prospects (A25-49 & 40-64) - Demo A18-64 - A18-64 Military Interests/Employment - Gym Membership/Interests e.g. Crossfit - Abandon Cart - Event Page Retargeting (180 Day) - Spartan.com 30 Day & FAR Retargeting - Handle Engagers 365 Days - 2019-2023 Past Registered Racers - Upcoming Event Registered Racers (Build Team)</p> <p>CREATIVE: - Static Images & Video, Testimonials - Event Information Focused (Location, Date), CVB Logo if applicable - First time racer focused content - Build Team, Spartan+, App Downloads</p> <p>NOTES: - Emphasis on Prospecting & Pool Building - Weekly allocation optimization based on ROAS, CAC, Registrations</p>	<p>APPROACH: Budget \$60,000 - Localization continued with emphasis on retargeting and audiences - Event spend allocation increases each month - Create urgency for events that are selling out</p> <p>PLATFORMS:čž - META (FB/IG) & GOOGLE (YOUTUBE, DISPLAY/PAID SEARCH) - TIK TOK - OUTDOOR BILLBOARDS, STREAMING VIDEO & AUDIO</p> <p>AUDIENCES: - Net New Prospects (A25-49 & 40-64) - Demo A18-64 - A18-64 Military Interests/Employment - Gym Membership/Interests e.g. Crossfit - Abandon Cart - Event Page Retargeting (180 Day) - Spartan.com 30 Day & FAR Retargeting - Handle Engagers 365 Days - 2019-2023 Past Registered Racers - Upcoming Event Registered Racers (Build Team)</p> <p>CREATIVE: - Static Images & Video, Testimonials - Event Information Focused (Location, Date), CVB Logo if applicable - Selling Out Urgency where applicable</p> <p>NOTES: - Weekly/Daily allocation optimization based on ROAS, CAC, Registrations</p>		

WEB

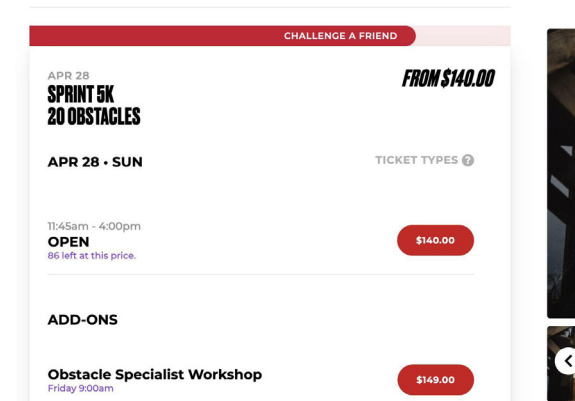
Event Open Banner

- 'new event open' banner live on current year event page
 - Ex: '2025 Event Open'
 - Duration: week of event launch
 - Links to temporary *new event* URL
- When current year event closes, *new event* url is updated to evergreen format (ex:/san-antonio)



Event Selling Out

- Ticket text (xxx left at this price)
- Subnav Banner – Event Selling Out



ADDITIONAL SALES TACTICS

Scenario: When we need to add an additional sales play to the month in order for us to reach our monthly targets...



NAM

- **More Spots Added**
 - Fake or Real: Used to drive attention towards an specific event and/or race type
 - Channels: Organic Social + Email (regional non-registered) + SMS (past racers)
 - Actions Needed:
 - If Real: Coordinate dates w/ Reg team
 - Asana requests for event-specific assets (templates already in Canva)
- **Sold Out**
 - Real 'Sold Out': when we don't have more space allowed by the venue, shuttle bus limits, etc.
 - Fake 'Sold Out' (sales tactics): I use it between 4-2.5 months before the specific race weekend. Goals:
 - Better distribute regs (ie. Sat Sprint/Sun Sprint), and/or
 - Generate sense of urgency (ie. Trifecta weekend - Sprint Sold Out... will help sell more Super/Beast to those that want to be part of the weekend –better distribute regs– and if we add "we're working on adding more spots" verbiage will generate sense of urgency when we open back up).
 - Channels:
 - Primary: Organic Social + Email (regional) + SMS (regional)
 - Secondary: Web (event page main photo + red banner + hero)
 - Actions Needed:
 - Coordinate dates w/ Reg team
 - Asana requests for event-specific assets (templates already in Canva)
- **20% Off Discount**
 - Goal: to promote an underperforming race/weekend
 - Channels: Organic Social + Email (regional non-registered)
 - Actions Needed:
 - Approval from Todd/Adolfo
 - Request code to Reg team
 - Note: If want to add a twist, announce this offer as \$20 off and let the community find out we made a "mistake" and the promo code gives 20% off.
- **Price Increase (to a single event weekend)**
 - Goal: to leverage sales on event weekends that are performing well
 - Channels: Email (regional non-registered) + SMS (regional)
 - Actions Needed:
 - Approval from Todd/Adolfo
 - Coordinate dates w/ Reg team
 - Note: Usually applicable to race weekends close to the PI fold (ie. Fayetteville on the 1st weekend of May was P5, we did a PI specific in March and raised to P6).
- **Course Map Revealed**
 - Goal: to reactivate past racers to sign up for race weekends happening at the same venue as the previous year.
 - Channels: Email (30 days out email - past racers/non-reg)
 - Actions Needed:
 - Course Map on PDF – Ask Jill Yotive or 'race-maps' Slack channel
 - Asana requests for assets (not in Canva)

DIGITAL AUDIENCE



ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST ENGAGED COMMUNITIES IN **SPORT+FITNESS** (full brand portfolio)

5

Core brands;
Spartan,
Spartan Trail,
Deka, Tough
Mudder,
Highlander

270+

Events per
year in 40+
countries.

36

Championship
Events

1.5m

Participants
and Racers
each year

7M

Highly
engaged email
marketing
database

17m+

Community of
Followers on
social media
platforms.

DIGITAL MARKETING PERFORMANCE



2025 DIGITAL PERFORMANCE

PRE-RACE MARKETING

Event Page Views: 155,548
Digital Paid Impressions Meta: 9,327,374
Digital Paid Impressions Google: 104,024
Organic Impressions: 182,000
Engagements: 3,140
Total: 9,772,086

EVENT WEEKEND REACH

Social Impressions: 95,100
Engagements: 1,350
Total: 96,450



Spartan Sponsored ·

Ready to race Florida December 13-14? See for yourself why Spartans love this race...

- 🕒 Flat and fast course
- ☀️ Enjoy the warm Florida weather in December
- 🏆 Spartan Triecta Weekend

DEC 13 - 14, 2025
CENTRAL FLORIDA
SPARTAN TRIECTA WEEKEND

SPARTAN
CENTRAL FLORIDA
DEC 13-14, 2025

TRIFECTA WEEKEND
SILVER
SILVER
SILVER
SILVER
SILVER

spartan.com
Central Florida Spartan Triecta Weekend [Sign up](#)

spartan.com
Central Florida Spartan Triecta Weekend [Sign up](#)

BUDGET AND ROI JUSTIFICATION



Digital Marketing Budget and ROI Overview

Total Budget Request: \$135,000

All funds are allocated exclusively to digital marketing efforts designed to drive out of market participation, overnight visitation, and measurable tourism impact.

Detailed Budget Allocation

• Paid Social Advertising (Meta, TikTok, YouTube): \$54,000

Highly targeted campaigns focused on key feeder markets to drive awareness, consideration, and race registrations using demographic, interest based, and geographic targeting.

• Paid Search and Google Display Network: \$40,500

High intent keyword targeting capturing users actively searching for endurance events, obstacle course races, and destination based travel during the event window.

• Digital Video and Streaming (Connected TV, Pre Roll): \$27,000

Premium video placements to extend reach, reinforce destination awareness, and support multi touch conversion paths across devices.

• Campaign Management, Analytics, and Optimization: \$13,500

Ongoing optimization, performance monitoring, creative testing, reporting, and attribution analysis tied directly to registrations and geographic origin.

Key Performance Metrics and ROI Projections

- **4,000 to 5,000** incremental registrations driven by digital marketing
- **95%** of participants traveling from outside the local market
- **2.3 nights** average length of stay per participant
- **1.8 spectators** accompanying each participant on average
- **7,500** estimated total room nights generated
- **8 to 10 million** targeted digital impressions delivered in feeder markets

Measurement and Accountability

- Channel level attribution across all digital platforms
- Geographic origin tracking for participants and spectators
- Registration driven ROI modeling and estimated room night reporting

This digital only investment delivers scalable reach, efficient audience targeting, and clear, measurable tourism impact fully aligned with TDC objectives.

MEASURING SUCCESS



SPARTAN

**TOUGH
MUDDER**



SPARTAN TRAIL



DEKA

Measuring Success Metrics & Reporting

Campaign Objectives

- Convert paid digital marketing into verified race registrations
- Drive out of market visitation and overnight stays aligned with TDC goals

Success Metrics

- Paid digital conversions to registration
- Total registrations attributed to paid marketing channels
- Percentage of out of market participants based on ZIP code data
- Estimated room nights generated using survey results

Data Drivers

- Registration source and marketing conversion tracking
- Participant ZIP code data collected at registration
- Post event participant surveys validating length of stay and lodging behavior

Tracking and Reporting Approach

- UTM and platform level attribution across all paid channels
- Paid click to registration conversion tracking
- ZIP code mapping to identify out of market visitors
- Survey based modeling of room nights and visitation impact
- Comprehensive post event report provided to the TDC to support reimbursement determination

Item 5B



Event: FL PGF Softball (April 25-26, May 9-10, Sep 12-13, Oct 10-11, Nov 14-15)

Amount Requested:

2026: \$40,000 (\$20,000 (grant) + \$20,000 (1,000 verified room nights))

2027: \$32,000 (\$10,000 (grant) + \$22,000 (1,100 verified room nights))

2028: \$34,000 (\$10,000 (grant) + \$24,000 (1,200 verified room nights))

Criteria for Evaluation of Applications: New Event Grant Program

- I. Commitment to the Expansion of Tourism in Highlands County: **25**
 - II. Soundness of Proposed Event
 - a. Objective Worksheet: **5**
 - b. Additional Funding Sources/Budget: **10**
 - c. Out of County Advertising/Marketing Plan: **10**
 - III. Stability & Management Capacity
 - a. Digital Presence: **10**
 - b. Event History: **5**
 - c. Visitor Survey: **0**
 - IV. Quality of Proposed Event: **5**
- Bonus Points: **0**

TOTAL SCORE: 55 (eligible for 75% requested base funding)

To be eligible for maximum funding, scores must be at least 85. Scores of 50 or less will not be eligible for funding. Scores from 55-80 will be eligible for 75% of requested funds.

Staff recommendation/suggested motion:

Move to approve the grant funding request from Premier Girls Fastpitch for the FL PGF Softball events as a three-year New Event Grant, with funding amounts as follows:

- Year 1 (2026): Up to \$35,000 total— including up to \$15,000 based on the scoring of the application, and up to an additional \$20,000 based on verified room nights (up to 1,000 verified room nights at \$20 per room night).
- Year 2 (2027): Up to \$29,500 total— including up to \$7,500 based on the scoring of the application, and up to an additional \$22,000 based on verified room nights (up to 1,100 verified room nights at \$20 per room night).
- Year 3 (2028): Up to \$31,500 total— including up to \$7,500 based on the scoring of the application, and up to an additional \$24,000 based on verified room nights (up to 1,200 verified room nights at \$20 per room night).

All grant funds are reimbursable and may be used for umpires, facility fees, marketing of the events, and shirts, signage, and awards if they feature the Visit Sebring logo in a pre-approved design.

Funds to come from Cost Center 5305 for Marketing & Events.



APPLICATION

HIGHLANDS COUNTY TDC NEW EVENT GRANT APPLICATION

Funding Event is Requesting of TDC: _____

Year 1: \$ 40,000 (\$ 20,000 Base + \$ 20,000 from 1,000 room nights at \$20/night)
Year 2: \$ 32,000 (\$ 10,000 Base + \$ 22,000 from 1,100 room nights at \$20/night)
Year 3: \$ 34,000 (\$ 10,000 Base + \$ 24,000 from 1,200 room nights at \$20/night)

I. Applicant Information

1. Name of Applying Organization: Premier Girls Fastpitch
2. Complete address of Applying Organization: 12595 Achasta Blvd, Hudson, FL 34669
3. Website for Applying Organization: premiergirlsfastpitch.com
4. Social Media for Applying Organization: _____
5. Grant Contact
 - a. Name: Kristine Dolunt
 - b. Title: Assistant State Director, FL
 - c. Phone: 313-319-0731
 - d. Email: Kristineflpgf@gmail.com
6. If different from above, Name of Event Director/Coordinator (onsite Point of Contact):
 - a. Name: Bill Hoopes
 - b. Title: State Director, FL
 - c. Cell Phone: 704-807-5663
 - d. Email: akhoopes@gmail.com
7. Details about Applicant: (describe your business or organization)
We are a softball tournament company that focuses on getting players exposure and to have an enjoyable experience while growing in the game of softball

II. Event Information

1. Name of Event: FL PGF Softball
2. Type of event: Softball tournament
3. If sport, Level of Event (ex. Youth 13U, Adult Amateur, Etc.) Youth, 10U to 18U
4. If sport, is this event an elimination tournament? Yes
5. Dates of Event: 2/28-3/1, 3/28-29, 4/25-26, 5/9-10, Sep 12-13, Oct 10-11, Nov 14-15 all 2026
6. Location of Event: Highlands County Sports Complex
7. Event Website: premiergirlsfastpitch.com
8. Event Social Media Handles/Pages: _____
9. Event Admission Price (if applicable): _____
10. Schedule of Event: (or can attach separately) 8-8 on Saturday, 8-4 on Sunday

III. Event History & Economic Impact

1. Has this organization received funding from the TDC for any events in past? No
 - a. If yes, please provide the following information:
 - i. Event Name: _____
 - ii. Event Dates: _____
 - iii. Room Nights Generated: _____
 - iv. Reimbursement from TDC: _____
 - v. How is this event different from those previously held in Highlands County? _____
2. Has this event been held in another destination prior to Highlands County? No
 - a. If yes, please answer the following:
 - i. Previous Destination: _____
 - ii. Dates: _____
 - iii. Venue: _____
 - iv. Total Room Nights Generated: _____
 - v. Economic Impact (if available): _____
 - vi. List of funding from outside entities, like a TDC, with entity names and amounts: _____
3. Projected number of attendees: 2,500
4. Percentage or number of attendees from outside of Highlands County: 100%
5. Guaranteed minimum number of paid room nights the Event will bring to Highlands County: 1,000
6. Please complete the table below.

Category	Type	# of Adult	# of Youth
Total # Expected Participants (includes competitors, coaches, trainers, officials, etc.)	Out-of-State		
	In-State & Staying Overnight		1,000
	In-State & Day Tripping		
	Highlands County Residents		
Total # Expected Fans (family, friends, etc.)	Out-of-State		
	In-State & Staying Overnight	1,500	
	In-State & Day Tripping		
	Highlands County Residents		
Total # Expected Media	Out-of-State		
	In-State & Staying Overnight		
	In-State & Day Tripping	10	
	Highlands County Residents		

7. Beyond the Post-Event Report and Room Certification Forms required by the grant, how will you verify and document the attendees that traveled into Highlands County and stayed overnight? Are you willing to share your findings with the TDC?

Our registration platform helps us to verify room nights and we are used to this process in other counties

IV. Event Budget Summary

EVENT REVENUE

This grant cannot be the sole source of revenue. Please list all Event revenue sources, types and amounts, including grants, sponsorships, registration fees, and in-kind services provided from public agencies, such as Police Department, Fire Rescue, etc. Please designate hard dollars versus in-kind.

Income Source & Type (i.e. Publix Sponsorship or Attendee Registration Fees)	Income Amount (or In-Kind Amount)
Registrations	\$70,000
Merchandise	\$7,500
Visit Sebring/TDC Funding Request	+ \$
TOTAL INCOME ALL SOURCES	= \$

EVENT EXPENSES

Provide an itemized summary of all Event expenses, then indicate those which are intended use of TDC funds at the bottom of this page. Please be as detailed as possible, including intended media outlets, promotional materials, etc. and the dollar amount that will be expended (tentatively) for each category. This chart will reflect the total amount of the grant you have requested. Use additional sheets if necessary. Please refer to the list of Ineligible Expenses in the grant guidelines.

Expense Type (Facility Rental, Event Speakers, Signage, Insurance, etc.)	Expense Amount
Facility Rental	\$10,000
Umpires	\$17,000
Lodging	\$6,000
Awards	\$700
Equipment	\$3,000
Insurance	\$2,000
Marketing	\$1,500
Signage (visit Sebring included)	\$2,000
Promotional shirts (visit Sebring)	\$14,000
TOTAL EVENT EXPENSES	\$ 56,200
Intended Use of Tourist Development Tax Funds (provide details)	Amount
Promo shirts	\$14,000
Signage	\$2,000
Umpires (permissible for tourism events per FS 125.0104)	\$17,000
Awards	\$700
Marketing	\$1,500
Facilities	\$10,000
TOTAL EXPENSES TO BE REIMBURSED BY TDC	\$ 45,200

Grant Application Checklist

Please initial next to each item and fill in the blanks below. This list must accompany your grant application.

Initials

BH This application is being submitted at least four months (120 days) prior to the event start.

Date of Event: Multiple dates

Date of Application: 1/12/2026

BH I understand that the reimbursement request must be completed and submitted to the Tourism Office with all back up and supporting material no later than 60 days after the event ends, which will be on 1/12/2027 (date 60 days after event ends).

BH I have included an IRS **W-9 Form** and a **copy of the Florida Division of Corporations (or similar) form** with the application.

BH I have included a detailed **Business Plan** for the Event that outlines how the event will increase out-of-county visitors each year.

BH I have included a detailed **Marketing Plan** for the Event.

BH I have included a sample **Visitor/Attendee Survey** for the Event and will submit survey results to the Visit Sebring office no later than 60 days after the event takes place.

BH I have completed and included the **SMART Objective Worksheet**.

BH I understand, if awarded the grant, the signee of the agreement between the County and my business/organization can only be an individual listed on the Florida Division of Corporations (or similar) as an Authorized Agent of the applying organization.

BH I understand that someone representing this grant application must be available at the TDC meeting when it considers the application for funding or the application will not be considered.

BH I understand that the "Visit Sebring" logo must appear in any print advertisements that are funded by the TDC. For digital ads, the "Visit Sebring" logo must either be featured on the advertisement or on website/landing page linked to the ad or the ad must link to the TDC's website, VisitSebring.com. **I will also use the #VisitSebring hashtag on social media posts related to this event.**

BH I understand that no expenses incurred **before** the TDC recommends approval of the grant application will be reimbursed **under any circumstances**. I also understand that no funding has been approved until an authorized signee for the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approves execution of the Grant Contract and that no

expenditures will be reimbursed if the BOCC designee does not approve execution of the Grant Contract.

BH I understand that reimbursements following the event will only be made for itemized, authorized expenses approved by the TDC, and authorized designee of the BOCC in the fully executed Grant Contract.

BH I agree that the funds I receive will ONLY be used in accordance with the eligible and ineligible uses of funds as listed in the grant policies and guidelines.

BH I understand each reimbursement request must include copies of paid invoices, screenshots of digital ads, copies of the ad/tear sheets, invoice for reimbursement amount to the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners, copy of front and back of cleared checks paying for advertising, and outreach figures identifying the number of people your ad reached outside Highlands County and inside Highlands County. I also understand cash receipts will not be accepted.

BH I understand that all approved expenses will only be reimbursed after the event is complete and all post-event reporting is submitted to, then audited and verified by TDC staff. And I understand reimbursement tied to room nights will only be provided at a rate of \$20/verified room night.

BH I understand that I am required to submit a **Room Night Certification Form** from each participating hotel/accommodation in order to track the number of hotel room nights the Event produces in order to receive reimbursement.

BH I understand that I can use the online **Visit Sebring Attendee Survey** as another method of capturing room nights generated by my event. I understand that only results submitted **within 10 days** of the completion of the event will be considered valid. I also understand that Visit Sebring will look at the higher results between the survey and the Room Night Certification Forms to award any reimbursement based on verified room nights.

BH I acknowledge that I am required to submit the **Post-Event Report Form** for the Event within 60 days after completion of event to receive reimbursement.

BH I have reviewed the **Highlands County Special Event Permit Flow Chart** and will proceed with any required county permits. (Contact: Melony Culpepper; (863) 402-6638). I understand that this event may require a Highlands County Special Event Permit, and it is up to me to complete that permit request and pay the required permit fee.

BH I understand **all** insurance expectations required by the County and will provide the TDC office with **all** required Certificates of Insurance (COIs) naming "Highlands County" as additionally insured no later than 15 days before the event begins. If required, I will also provide the TDC office with a General Liability Certificate of Insurance (COI) naming "Florida Sports Foundation" as additionally insured no later than 15 days before the event begins.

BH I acknowledge that any material made or received by Highlands County in connection with my request for Event funding is a public record and subject to public inspection

unless there is a legislatively created exemption that makes it confidential and not subject to disclosure. I acknowledge that I cannot dictate to Highlands County what material is open to public inspection or the circumstances under which material is deemed confidential.

BH I understand that as a requirement to receiving funding, I will execute a release to permit Highlands County to photo and/or record the Event and I must make Event invitees aware of this and make the signing of a release a requirement to participate in the Event.

BH I understand that all funds received are subject to audit by the Highlands County Clerk of the Court – Internal Auditor or other representative as Highlands County may designate.

BH I have reviewed and understand the scoring rubric pertaining to this grant.

BH I have reviewed and understand **all** policies and guidelines pertaining to this grant.

Authorized Agent: Bill Hoopes

Title: State Director

Date: 1/12/2026

Authorized Agent Signature: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Hoopes". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned over a horizontal line that serves as the signature line.

SMART Objective Worksheet

Draft Goal:

Create a perpetual softball tournament in Sebring where both sides of this partnership flourish

Definition	Your Objective
<p>Specific</p> <p>What do I want to accomplish with this event? Why? What is the desired result?</p>	<p>I want to help our softball tournament grow and become a staple of Highlands County. We want to also help young women play great competition</p>
<p>Measurable</p> <p>How will you quantify (numerically or descriptively) success? How will you measure progress?</p>	<p>Success will be quantified by bringing in more than 2,000 Room Nights by year 4. For year 1 we want 1,000</p>
<p>Achievable</p> <p>What skills are needed? What resources are necessary? What factors impact goal achievement? Does the goal require the right amount of effort?</p>	<p>Marketing skills</p> <p>Softball equipment, lined fields</p> <p>Enjoyable stays in Sebring will impact goal achievement</p>
<p>Relevant</p> <p>Is the goal aligned with the overall mission or strategy to increase economic activity in Highlands County?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Time-bound</p> <p>How much time will be available to complete this SMART Objective? Is the deadline realistic?</p>	<p>We work on it daily and we have the ability to put on successful tournaments in under a month if necessary so our deadline is realistic</p>

Final Goal:

Make Highlands County the crown jewel of PGF softball



Premier Girls Fastpitch – Sebring Softball Tournaments Business Plan

Organization: Premier Girls Fastpitch
Website: www.premiergirlsfastpitch.com
Location of Events: Sebring, FL
Events per Year: 7 tournaments
Target Participants: 1,500 players plus families

Executive Summary

Premier Girls Fastpitch (PGF) seeks to host seven softball tournaments annually in Sebring, FL, attracting players and families from outside Highlands County. These events are designed to **boost local tourism, hotel occupancy, restaurant sales, and retail revenue**. PGF projects that **over 1,500 participants and their families** will travel to Sebring each year, generating significant economic impact. Over a three-year period, PGF aims to **grow out-of-county visitors by 10–15% per year**, solidifying Sebring as a premier youth sports destination.

Business Objectives

1. **Short-Term (Year 1):**
 - Successfully host 7 tournaments in Sebring.
 - Attract 1,500 participants and families from outside Highlands County.
 - Generate measurable economic impact on local businesses.
 2. **Medium-Term (Years 2–3):**
 - Increase out-of-county visitors by 10–15% annually.
 - Expand hotel partnerships and sponsorships.
 - Strengthen Sebring's brand as a sports tourism hub.
-

Market Analysis

- **Target Market:** Youth softball teams (ages 10–18) from Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and surrounding regions.
- **Tourism Potential:** Each tournament can draw ~200–250 teams and families, staying in Sebring hotels, dining locally, and shopping.
- **Competitive Advantage:** PGF is a nationally recognized softball organization known for high-quality tournaments, attracting serious players and family participation.



Economic Impact Projection:

Y	Estimated Out-of-County Visitors	Avg. Daily Spending per Visitor	Estimated Total Economic Impact
1	1,500	\$250/day × 2 nights = \$500	\$750,000
2	1,650 (+10%)	\$500	\$825,000
3	1,800 (+10%)	\$500	\$900,000

Assumes 2-night average stay per event, including lodging, food, and local spending.

Marketing and Promotion Plan

Goals: Maximize team registration, increase out-of-county attendance, and raise awareness of Sebring as a destination.

Channels:

- Digital: Social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok), Google Ads, email newsletters.
- Local Partnerships: Hotels, restaurants, Sebring Chamber of Commerce, tourism board.
- Media & PR: Local newspapers, radio, TV, youth sports blogs.
- Content: Highlight Sebring attractions, participant testimonials, and tournament experience.

Promotional Tactics:

- Early registration incentives.
- Tournament-branded merchandise.
- “Sebring Experience” packages combining lodging, dining, and local attractions.
- Social media contests and campaigns (#PlayInSebring, #PremierGirlsSebring).

Operational Plan

- **Venues:** Local Sebring softball fields (coordinate with parks department).
- **Staffing:** PGF event staff plus local volunteers.
- **Logistics:**



- Team registration & scheduling
- Field maintenance & safety
- Hospitality for participants (welcome packets, local guides)

Event Calendar: 7 tournaments evenly spaced throughout the year to maximize seasonal attendance.

Financial Plan

Revenue Sources:

- Team registration fees
- Sponsorships and local business partnerships
- Merchandise and concessions

Expenses:

- Venue rental & maintenance
- Staffing & security
- Marketing & advertising
- Merchandise and event materials

Projected ROI:

With each participant spending approximately \$500 locally, the tournaments are expected to generate significant economic activity exceeding operational costs, providing measurable return to the Sebring community.

Economic & Tourism Impact

Year 1: Establish baseline with 1,500 out-of-county visitors.

Year 2: Increase visitors by 10% through expanded marketing, hotel partnerships, and improved participant experience.

Year 3: Continue growth by 10–15% with additional tournaments or enhanced events, creating recurring tourism revenue and reinforcing Sebring as a sports destination.

Community Benefits:

- Increased hotel occupancy and restaurant revenue
 - Boost to retail and local attractions
 - Greater media exposure for Sebring
 - Opportunities for local businesses to sponsor and engage with families
-



Risk Management

- **Weather:** Backup dates and indoor facilities for rescheduling.
 - **Competition:** Highlight unique PGF brand and quality tournament experience.
 - **Operational Risks:** Experienced PGF staff ensures smooth logistics and field management.
-

Conclusion

Premier Girls Fastpitch tournaments in Sebring provide a **strategic opportunity to increase out-of-county tourism** consistently over three years. By attracting families and teams from across the region, the city will benefit economically while gaining recognition as a youth sports destination. PGF is committed to delivering a professional, high-quality tournament experience that drives **economic impact, community engagement, and tourism growth**.



Premier Girls Fastpitch – Sebring, FL Marketing Plan

Objective: Increase tourism and local economic impact in Sebring by hosting 7 softball tournaments annually, attracting ~1,500 players plus parents.

Target Audience:

- **Primary:** Female softball teams (ages 10–18) and their families in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and surrounding states.
- **Secondary:** Local businesses, hotels, restaurants, and city tourism boards.

Key Messages:

- “Premier Girls Fastpitch brings high-level softball action to Sebring.”
- “Experience top-tier youth softball while enjoying the heart of Florida.”
- “Play, stay, and explore: Sebring is your tournament destination.”

Marketing Channels:

1. Digital Advertising:

- Social media campaigns (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) targeting youth sports parents.
- Google Display & Search ads targeting travel + softball tournament keywords.
- Email marketing to Premier Girls Fastpitch mailing list and local sports clubs.

2. Local Partnerships:

- Collaborate with Sebring hotels, restaurants, and attractions for packages or discounts.
- Partner with the Sebring Chamber of Commerce and tourism board for promotion.

3. Content Marketing:

- Highlight “Player & Parent Experience” stories on website and social media.
- Showcase Sebring attractions via blog posts, short videos, and local guides.

4. PR & Media:

- Press releases to local media: newspapers, radio, and TV.
- Event announcements in youth sports magazines and blogs.



Promotional Tactics:

- Early registration incentives for teams.
- Tournament-branded merchandise for participants.
- Special “Sebring Experience” packages: hotel + meals + local attractions.
- Social media contests and hashtags (#PremierGirlsSebring, #PlayInSebring).

Metrics & KPIs:

- Number of teams registered per tournament.
- Attendance of players and parents.
- Hotel bookings and local restaurant participation.
- Social media engagement and website traffic from Sebring campaigns.

Timeline:

- **Pre-Event (3–6 months prior):** Launch registration & promotions, hotel partnerships, media outreach.
- **During Event:** Live social media updates, press coverage, sponsor activation.
- **Post-Event:** Share highlights, gather testimonials, track economic impact, promote next Sebring event.

Budget Considerations:

- Digital marketing: 40%
- Local partnerships & packages: 30%
- PR/media: 20%
- Event activation & merchandise: 10%

Outcome Goal:

- Attract 1500 players plus families per year.
- Drive hotel occupancy, restaurant visits, and local retail sales in Sebring.
- Position Sebring as a premier youth sports destination in Florida

Item 5C



Event: Gville 7v7 Sebring Classic (May 30-31)

Amount Requested:

2026: \$40,000 (\$20,000 (grant) + \$20,000 (1,000 verified room nights))

2027: \$30,000 (\$10,000 (grant) + \$20,000 (1,000 verified room nights))

2028: \$30,000 (\$10,000 (grant) + \$20,000 (1,000 verified room nights))

Criteria for Evaluation of Applications: New Event Grant Program

- I. Commitment to the Expansion of Tourism in Highlands County: **25**
 - II. Soundness of Proposed Event
 - a. Objective Worksheet: **5**
 - b. Additional Funding Sources/Budget: **10**
 - c. Out of County Advertising/Marketing Plan: **10**
 - III. Stability & Management Capacity
 - a. Digital Presence: **0**
 - b. Event History: **0**
 - c. Visitor Survey: **0**
 - IV. Quality of Proposed Event: **5**
- Bonus Points: **0**

TOTAL SCORE: 55 (eligible for 75% requested base funding)

To be eligible for maximum funding, scores must be at least 85. Scores of 50 or less will not be eligible for funding. Scores from 55-80 will be eligible for 75% of requested funds.

Staff recommendation/suggested motion:

Move to approve the grant funding request from Gville 7v7 Sebring Classic events as a three-year New Event Grant, with funding amounts as follows:

- Year 1 (2026): Up to \$30,000 total— including up to \$15,000 based on the scoring of the application, and up to an additional \$20,000 based on verified room nights (up to 1,000 verified room nights at \$20 per room night).
- Year 2 (2027): Up to \$22,500 total— including up to \$7,500 based on the scoring of the application, and up to an additional \$20,000 based on verified room nights (up to 1,000 verified room nights at \$20 per room night).
- Year 3 (2028): Up to \$22,500 total— including up to \$7,500 based on the scoring of the application, and up to an additional \$20,000 based on verified room nights (up to 1,000 verified room nights at \$20 per room night).

All grant funds are reimbursable and may be used for officials, facility fees, marketing of the events, and shirts, equipment and awards if they feature the Visit Sebring logo in a pre-approved design.

Funds to come from Cost Center 5305 for Marketing & Events.



APPLICATION

HIGHLANDS COUNTY TDC NEW EVENT GRANT APPLICATION

Funding Event is Requesting of TDC: _____

Year 1: \$ 40,000 (\$ 20,000 Base + \$ 20,000 from 1,000 room nights at \$20/night)
Year 2: \$ 30,000 (\$ 10,000 Base + \$ 20,000 from 1,000 room nights at \$20/night)
Year 3: \$ 30,000 (\$ 10,000 Base + \$ 20,000 from 1,000 room nights at \$20/night)

I. Applicant Information

1. Name of Applying Organization: Florida Prep Lax
2. Complete address of Applying Organization: 304 Marsh Cove Dr, Ponte Vedra, FL 32082
3. Website for Applying Organization: www.northfloridaelite7v7.com
4. Social Media for Applying Organization: _____
5. Grant Contact
 - a. Name: Tom West
 - b. Title: Organizer
 - c. Phone: 386-931-8503
 - d. Email: tom@floridapreplax.com
6. If different from above, Name of Event Director/Coordinator (onsite Point of Contact):
 - a. Name: _____
 - b. Title: _____
 - c. Cell Phone: _____
 - d. Email: _____
7. Details about Applicant: (describe your business or organization)
We are a Florida based 7 on 7 tournament organizer

II. Event Information

1. Name of Event: G-ville 7 on 7 Sebring Classic
2. Type of event: Flag football tournament
3. If sport, Level of Event (ex. Youth 13U, Adult Amateur, Etc.) Youth
4. If sport, is this event an elimination tournament? Yes
5. Dates of Event: 5/30-31, 2026
6. Location of Event: Highlands County Sports Complex
7. Event Website: www.northfloridaelite7on7.com
8. Event Social Media Handles/Pages: _____
9. Event Admission Price (if applicable): _____
10. Schedule of Event: (or can attach separately) We will go 8-6 on 5/30 and 5/31

III. Event History & Economic Impact

1. Has this organization received funding from the TDC for any events in past? Yes
 - a. If yes, please provide the following information:
 - i. Event Name: Lax on the Lakes 2025
 - ii. Event Dates: June 6-8, 2025
 - iii. Room Nights Generated: 1,700
 - iv. Reimbursement from TDC: \$56,000
 - v. How is this event different from those previously held in Highlands County? This is a 7 on 7 football event rather than a lacrosse event
2. Has this event been held in another destination prior to Highlands County? No
 - a. If yes, please answer the following:
 - i. Previous Destination: _____
 - ii. Dates: _____
 - iii. Venue: _____
 - iv. Total Room Nights Generated: _____
 - v. Economic Impact (if available): _____
 - vi. List of funding from outside entities, like a TDC, with entity names and amounts: _____
3. Projected number of attendees: 3200
4. Percentage or number of attendees from outside of Highlands County: 99%+
5. Guaranteed minimum number of paid room nights the Event will bring to Highlands County: 1,000
6. Please complete the table below.

Category	Type	# of Adult	# of Youth
Total # Expected Participants (includes competitors, coaches, trainers, officials, etc.)	Out-of-State		
	In-State & Staying Overnight		1,280
	In-State & Day Tripping		
	Highlands County Residents		
Total # Expected Fans (family, friends, etc.)	Out-of-State		
	In-State & Staying Overnight	1,920	
	In-State & Day Tripping		
	Highlands County Residents		
Total # Expected Media	Out-of-State		
	In-State & Staying Overnight	20	
	In-State & Day Tripping		
	Highlands County Residents		

7. Beyond the Post-Event Report and Room Certification Forms required by the grant, how will you verify and document the attendees that traveled into Highlands County and stayed overnight? Are you willing to share your findings with the TDC?

Our registration form will ask about lodging

IV. Event Budget Summary

EVENT REVENUE

This grant cannot be the sole source of revenue. Please list all Event revenue sources, types and amounts, including grants, sponsorships, registration fees, and in-kind services provided from public agencies, such as Police Department, Fire Rescue, etc. Please designate hard dollars versus in-kind.

Income Source & Type (i.e. Publix Sponsorship or Attendee Registration Fees)	Income Amount (or In-Kind Amount)
Registrations	64,000
Sponsorships	5,000
Visit Sebring/TDC Funding Request	+ \$ 40,000
TOTAL INCOME ALL SOURCES	= \$ 109,000

EVENT EXPENSES

Provide an itemized summary of all Event expenses, then indicate those which are intended use of TDC funds at the bottom of this page. Please be as detailed as possible, including intended media outlets, promotional materials, etc. and the dollar amount that will be expended (tentatively) for each category. This chart will reflect the total amount of the grant you have requested. Use additional sheets if necessary. Please refer to the list of Ineligible Expenses in the grant guidelines.

Expense Type (Facility Rental, Event Speakers, Signage, Insurance, etc.)	Expense Amount
Visit Sebring Tournament Jersey	\$21,000
Facility Rental	\$2,500
Officials	\$15,000
Staff	\$15,000
Equipment transportation	\$2,000
Equipment	\$1,000
Insurance	\$2,500
Awards	\$500
Out of county marketing	\$3,000
AV Rental	\$6,000
TOTAL EVENT EXPENSES	\$ 69,000
Intended Use of Tourist Development Tax Funds (provide details)	Amount
Marketing	\$3,000
Tournament Jerseys	\$21,000
Facility	\$2,500
Awards/equipment	\$3,500
Officials	\$15,000
AV	6,000
TOTAL EXPENSES TO BE REIMBURSED BY TDC	\$ 40,000

Grant Application Checklist

Please initial next to each item and fill in the blanks below. This list must accompany your grant application.

Initials

TW This application is being submitted at least four months (120 days) prior to the event start.

Date of Event: 5/30-31, 2026

Date of Application: 1/12/2026

TW I understand that the reimbursement request must be completed and submitted to the Tourism Office with all back up and supporting material no later than 60 days after the event ends, which will be on July 29, 2026 (date 60 days after event ends).

TW I have included an IRS **W-9 Form** and a **copy of the Florida Division of Corporations (or similar) form** with the application.

TW I have included a detailed **Business Plan** for the Event that outlines how the event will increase out-of-county visitors each year.

TW I have included a detailed **Marketing Plan** for the Event.

TW I have included a sample **Visitor/Attendee Survey** for the Event and will submit survey results to the Visit Sebring office no later than 60 days after the event takes place.

TW I have completed and included the **SMART Objective Worksheet**.

TW I understand, if awarded the grant, the signee of the agreement between the County and my business/organization can only be an individual listed on the Florida Division of Corporations (or similar) as an Authorized Agent of the applying organization.

TW I understand that someone representing this grant application must be available at the TDC meeting when it considers the application for funding or the application will not be considered.

TW I understand that the "Visit Sebring" logo must appear in any print advertisements that are funded by the TDC. For digital ads, the "Visit Sebring" logo must either be featured on the advertisement or on website/landing page linked to the ad or the ad must link to the TDC's website, VisitSebring.com. **I will also use the #VisitSebring hashtag on social media posts related to this event.**

TW I understand that no expenses incurred **before** the TDC recommends approval of the grant application will be reimbursed **under any circumstances**. I also understand that no funding has been approved until an authorized signee for the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approves execution of the Grant Contract and that no

expenditures will be reimbursed if the BOCC designee does not approve execution of the Grant Contract.

TW I understand that reimbursements following the event will only be made for itemized, authorized expenses approved by the TDC, and authorized designee of the BOCC in the fully executed Grant Contract.

TW I agree that the funds I receive will ONLY be used in accordance with the eligible and ineligible uses of funds as listed in the grant policies and guidelines.

TW I understand each reimbursement request must include copies of paid invoices, screenshots of digital ads, copies of the ad/tear sheets, invoice for reimbursement amount to the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners, copy of front and back of cleared checks paying for advertising, and outreach figures identifying the number of people your ad reached outside Highlands County and inside Highlands County. I also understand cash receipts will not be accepted.

TW I understand that all approved expenses will only be reimbursed after the event is complete and all post-event reporting is submitted to, then audited and verified by TDC staff. And I understand reimbursement tied to room nights will only be provided at a rate of \$20/verified room night.

TW I understand that I am required to submit a **Room Night Certification Form** from each participating hotel/accommodation in order to track the number of hotel room nights the Event produces in order to receive reimbursement.

TW I understand that I can use the online **Visit Sebring Attendee Survey** as another method of capturing room nights generated by my event. I understand that only results submitted **within 10 days** of the completion of the event will be considered valid. I also understand that Visit Sebring will look at the higher results between the survey and the Room Night Certification Forms to award any reimbursement based on verified room nights.

TW I acknowledge that I am required to submit the **Post-Event Report Form** for the Event within 60 days after completion of event to receive reimbursement.

TW I have reviewed the **Highlands County Special Event Permit Flow Chart** and will proceed with any required county permits. (Contact: Melony Culpepper; (863) 402-6638). I understand that this event may require a Highlands County Special Event Permit, and it is up to me to complete that permit request and pay the required permit fee.

TW I understand **all** insurance expectations required by the County and will provide the TDC office with **all** required Certificates of Insurance (COIs) naming "Highlands County" as additionally insured no later than 15 days before the event begins. If required, I will also provide the TDC office with a General Liability Certificate of Insurance (COI) naming "Florida Sports Foundation" as additionally insured no later than 15 days before the event begins.

TW I acknowledge that any material made or received by Highlands County in connection with my request for Event funding is a public record and subject to public inspection

unless there is a legislatively created exemption that makes it confidential and not subject to disclosure. I acknowledge that I cannot dictate to Highlands County what material is open to public inspection or the circumstances under which material is deemed confidential.

TW I understand that as a requirement to receiving funding, I will execute a release to permit Highlands County to photo and/or record the Event and I must make Event invitees aware of this and make the signing of a release a requirement to participate in the Event.

TW I understand that all funds received are subject to audit by the Highlands County Clerk of the Court – Internal Auditor or other representative as Highlands County may designate.

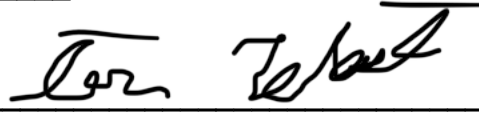
TW I have reviewed and understand the scoring rubric pertaining to this grant.

TW I have reviewed and understand **all** policies and guidelines pertaining to this grant.

Authorized Agent: Tom West

Title: Organizer

Date: 1/12/2026

Authorized Agent Signature: 

SMART Objective Worksheet

Draft Goal:
Bring tourism to Highlands county

Definition	Your Objective
<p>Specific</p> <p>What do I want to accomplish with this event? Why? What is the desired result?</p>	Bring tourism through football
<p>Measurable</p> <p>How will you quantify (numerically or descriptively) success? How will you measure progress?</p>	<p>We want to bring over 1,000 room nights and have a successful event.</p> <p>We will measure through registrations</p>
<p>Achievable</p> <p>What skills are needed? What resources are necessary? What factors impact goal achievement? Does the goal require the right amount of effort?</p>	<p>Good understanding of football and marketing.</p> <p>Good marketing will help with success</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Relevant</p> <p>Is the goal aligned with the overall mission or strategy to increase economic activity in Highlands County?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Time-bound</p> <p>How much time will be available to complete this SMART Objective? Is the deadline realistic?</p>	2-3 months should be sufficient.

Final Goal:
We will bring tourism to Highlands County successfully and run a great event.

Gville 7v7 Classic – Business Plan

Event Location: Sebring, Florida

Host Organization: Gainesville-based football events group

1. Executive Summary

The **Gville 7v7 Classic** is a large-scale, co-ed youth football tournament hosted annually in **Sebring, Florida**, featuring **128 teams** across **14U, 16U, and 18U divisions**. Although headquartered in Gainesville, the organization intentionally brings teams from across the state to a centralized destination to maximize participation, efficiency, and tourism impact.

The business objective is to operate a profitable, repeatable event while generating **1,000+ hotel room nights** annually and scaling year-over-year.

2. Event Description

- **Format:** Team-based 7-on-7 football tournament
 - **Divisions:** Co-ed 14U, 16U, 18U
 - **Duration:** 2 days (Saturday–Sunday)
 - **Teams:** 128
 - **Total Athletes:** ~1,500
-

3. Market Opportunity

Industry Demand

- Continued growth in offseason football participation
- 7v7 as a low-cost, low-injury alternative
- Strong demand for centralized, neutral-host events

Location Advantage (Sebring)

- Affordable hotel inventory

- Ability to absorb large team volumes
 - Support from tourism and hospitality partners
-

4. Economic Impact

Room Night Generation

- Target: **1,000+ room nights annually**
- Based on 128 teams, 2-night stays, 4–5 rooms per team

Ancillary Spending

- Food & beverage
 - Fuel & transportation
 - Retail and entertainment
-

5. Revenue Model

Primary Revenue

- Team registration fees
 - Estimated range: \$700–\$1,000 per team

Secondary Revenue

- Sponsorships
 - Vendor fees
 - Merchandise sales
-

6. Cost Structure

- Field rentals and preparation
- Officials and event staff
- Insurance and permits
- Marketing and technology
- Equipment and operations

7. Operations Plan

Staffing

- Event Director
- Operations Manager
- Field Coordinators
- Certified officials

Scheduling

- Pool play followed by bracket play
 - Guaranteed games per team
 - Championship fields featured
-

8. Risk Management

- Weather contingency scheduling
 - Clear refund and cancellation policies
 - Athletic trainers onsite
 - Emergency action plans
-

9. Growth & Scalability Plan

Year	Teams	Room Nights	Revenue Growth
Year 1	128	1,000+	Baseline
Year 2	144	1,200+	+10–15%

Year 3 160 1,400+ +15–20%

Expansion Opportunities

- Additional age groups
 - Girls-only divisions
 - Multi-weekend formats
 - Skills showcases
-

10. Long-Term Vision

The Gville 7v7 Classic is designed to become a **long-term annual football tourism asset** for Sebring, delivering predictable room nights, growing participation, and sustained economic benefit while reinforcing the host organization's statewide leadership in football events.

11. Business Conclusion

With a proven event size, conservative room-night targets, and scalable operational model, the Gville 7v7 Classic is positioned for long-term success and year-over-year growth while consistently delivering measurable tourism impact to Sebring, Florida.

Gville 7v7 Classic – Marketing Plan

Event Location: Sebring, Florida

Host Organization: Gainesville-based football events group

Event Size: 128 teams | Co-ed 14U, 16U, 18U

Primary Objective: Generate **1,000+ hotel room nights** in Sebring while establishing a scalable, annual 7-on-7 football destination event.

1. Marketing Purpose & Goals

Primary Goals

1. Attract **128 teams from across Florida** to a centralized Sebring location
2. Generate a **minimum of 1,000 hotel room nights**
3. Position the Gville 7v7 Classic as a **repeatable annual football event**
4. Build a pipeline for **year-over-year growth** in teams, divisions, and room nights

Secondary Goals

- Establish Sebring as a trusted host city for football events
 - Build long-term relationships with hotels, tourism partners, and programs
 - Grow brand equity statewide
-

2. Event Positioning & Brand Strategy

Brand Positioning Statement

“Statewide Competition. Central Florida Destination.”

Although headquartered in Gainesville, the Gville 7v7 Classic is intentionally hosted in **Sebring** to:

- Provide a neutral, centralized location
- Reduce travel bias toward major metro areas
- Deliver an affordable, family-friendly football weekend

Competitive Differentiators

- 128-team capacity (one of the largest in the region)
 - Co-ed divisions (14U, 16U, 18U)
 - Efficient scheduling and guaranteed games
 - Lower hotel and travel costs than major cities
-

3. Target Market

Primary Audience

- 7-on-7 football programs
- Middle & high school offseason teams
- Football training organizations
- Programs from:
 - North Florida
 - Central Florida
 - South Florida
 - Panhandle

Secondary Audience

- Football families
 - Apparel and equipment brands
 - Recruiting services and evaluators
-

4. Room Night Generation Strategy

Room Night Target

- **Goal:** 1,000+ room nights

Assumptions

- Average stay: **2 nights** (Friday & Saturday)
- Average rooms per team: **4–5**
- Percentage of traveling teams: ~90%

Conservative Calculation

- 128 teams × 4 rooms × 2 nights = **1,024 room nights**

Supporting Tactics

- Friday check-in required for Saturday pool play
 - Early-morning start times limiting same-day travel
 - Preferred hotel partner program
 - Clear communication of lodging benefits to teams
-

5. Marketing Channels & Execution

A. Direct Team Recruitment (Primary Driver)

- Direct outreach to program directors and coaches
- Email, text, and phone campaigns
- Loyalty incentives for returning programs

B. Digital Marketing

- Event landing page with registration + hotel info
- Paid social ads (Facebook & Instagram)
- Geo-targeting across Florida football hotbeds

C. Social Media Strategy

- Instagram & X (Twitter) for announcements
- Weekly team reveals and division updates
- Short highlight videos and countdown posts

D. Strategic Partnerships

- Visit Sebring / Highlands County
 - Local hotels and hospitality partners
 - Regional football trainers and facilities
-

6. Annual Growth Strategy (Marketing)

Year	Teams	Room Nights	Notes
Year 1	128	1,000+	Baseline event

Year 2	144	1,200+	Added divisions
Year 3	160	1,400+	Multi-weekend option

7. Key Marketing Metrics

- Teams registered
 - Room nights booked
 - Geographic diversity of teams
 - Return rate year-over-year
 - Social engagement and reach
-

8. Marketing Conclusion

The Gville 7v7 Classic marketing strategy leverages statewide relationships, centralized geography, and football-first programming to consistently deliver **1,000+ room nights** while building a scalable, repeatable event model that benefits Sebring for years to come.

Item 5D



Event: Cinco de Mayo (May 2-3, 2026)

Staff recommendation/suggested motion:

Move to approve the Facility Rental Fee Grant Request from USFA in an amount of up to \$5,000 for their Cinco de Mayo Softball Tournament taking place on May 2-3, 2026 at the Highlands County multi-sports complex.

Funding shall be paid through an internal transfer from the Tourist Development Office to the Parks & Facilities Department to cover eligible facility rental fees, in accordance with the TDC's Facility Rental Fee Grant Funding Program.

Funds shall be paid from Cost Center 5305 – Marketing & Events.



AVON PARK & LAKE PLACID, FL

APPLICATION

**HIGHLANDS COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ("TDC")
FACILITY FEE EVENT GRANT**

Funding amount requested: \$ 5,000

I. Applicant Information

1. Name of Applying Organization: USFA LLC
2. Official Name of Organization as registered with the Florida Division of Corporations: Rising Stars Softball LLC
3. Complete address of Applying Organization: 1862 Eagle Hammock Blvd Eagle Lake FL 33839
4. Website for Applying Organization: USfastpitch.com
5. Social Media for Applying Organization: USfanational
6. Applicant Contact Information
 - a. Name: Kim Largin
 - b. Title: Director
 - c. Phone: 352-255-7806
 - d. Email: Kim.Largin@USfastpitch.com
7. If different from above, Name of Event Director/Coordinator (onsite Point of Contact):
 - a. Name: _____
 - b. Title: _____
 - c. Cell Phone: _____
 - d. Email: _____
8. Details about Applicant: (describe your business or organization)

Softball tournament

II. Event Information

1. Name of Event: Cinco De Mayo
2. Type of Event: softball tournament
3. Level of Event (ex. Youth 13U, Adult Amateur, Etc.): Youth 6-18
4. Is this Event an elimination tournament? Yes
5. Dates of Event: May 2; 3, 2026
6. Location of Event: Highlands County sports complex
7. Event Website: USfastpitch.com
8. Event Social Media Handles/Pages: USfanational
9. Event Admission Price (if applicable): 0

10. Schedule of Event: (can provide in separate attachment/document if needed)

III. Event History & Economic Impact

1. Has this organization received funding from the TDC for any events in past?

Yes No

a. If yes, please provide the following information:

- i. Event Name: _____
- ii. Event Dates: _____
- iii. Room Nights Generated: _____
- iv. Reimbursement from TDC: _____

2. Has this event been held in another destination prior to Highlands County?

Yes No

a. If yes, please answer the following:

- i. Previous Destination: _____
- ii. Dates: _____
- iii. Venue: _____
- iv. Total Room Nights Generated: _____
- v. Economic Impact (if available): _____
- vi. List of funding from outside entities, like a TDC, with entity names and amounts: _____

3. Projected number of attendees: 200

4. Percentage or number of attendees from outside of Highlands County: 75%

5. Guaranteed minimum number of paid room nights the Event will bring to Highlands County: 50

6. To be eligible for financial support from Highlands County for future events, you must **first** provide data to the Highlands County Tourism office in a post-event report for this event. In addition to the Post-Event Report and Room Certification Forms required by the grant, how will you verify and document the attendees that traveled into Highlands County and stayed overnight?

team survey

7. Has this organization held events on Highlands County property before?

Yes No

a. If yes, please answer the following:

i. Are/Were you in compliance with all County agreements to pertaining to said event(s)?

Yes No

ii. Are/Were you nondelinquent on the payment of facility rental fees and all associated fees pertaining to said event(s)?

Yes No

Grant Application Checklist

Please initial next to each item and fill in the blanks below. This list must accompany the Grant Application.

Initials

KL

I have included the following required documents (check circle for each provided):

- IRS W-9 Form
- Copy of Florida Division of Corporations Form (or similar from other state) providing names of authorized agents for organization

KL

I understand that under this grant program, the grant will ONLY cover expenses for facility rental for this singular event, and that the payment of the approved facility rental fee will be handled internally between the Highlands County Tourism office and the Highlands County Parks & Facilities Department. I understand neither I nor my Organization will directly receive any grant funds from Highlands County for this grant.

KL

I understand that if the pricing for the facility rental changes between the time of this application approval and the payment due date, that any overages are my responsibility and not that of Highlands County. If the amount is less, Highlands County will only pay the required amount and any additional funding that was approved by way of this application is forfeited.

KL

I understand that I am responsible for providing the Highlands County Tourism office with all information regarding the facility rental fees and payment requirements at least one week (seven days) prior to the payment due date.

KL

I understand that I am responsible for scheduling and confirming the use of the facility with the Highlands County Parks & Facilities department for this event. Scheduling my event and specific needs of my event with the Parks & Facilities Department is **not** part of the responsibility of the TDC, Highlands County Tourism, nor any County staff.

KL

I understand that in order to rent a Highlands County facility, I will be required to enter into a Facility Use Agreement provided by the Highlands County Parks & Facilities department, agreeing to comply with the Highlands County Facility Rental Terms and Conditions.

KL

I understand that if this application is approved, Highlands County Tourism is only responsible for paying for the facility rental fee and that any further details regarding my event's use of the facility should be communicated directly with the Highlands County Parks & Facilities department.

KL

I understand that I am responsible for ensuring that all necessary accommodations for my event are booked at the facility **before** the Highlands County Tourism division makes payment for the facility rental. This includes field readiness, use of lighting, concession space, etc.

kl

I understand that any additional costs incurred after Highlands County Tourism makes payment for the facility rental are my financial responsibility, and not that of the TDC or Highlands County. This includes the addition of lighting usage, or additional expenses for cleaning beyond normal use of facility.

kl

I understand that any costs incurred for a late cancellation or rescheduling of the event are my responsibility to pay, and not that of the TDC or Highlands County.

kl

I understand that any price negotiation will not be responsibility of or involve the TDC or Visit Sebring staff.

kl

I understand that someone representing this grant application must be available at the TDC meeting when it considers the application for funding or the application will not be considered.

kl

I understand that the "Visit Sebring" logo must appear in any print advertisements that are funded by this grant. For digital advertisements, the "Visit Sebring" logo must either be featured on the advertisement or on the website/landing page linked to the advertisement, or the advertisement must link to the Highlands County Tourism's website, VisitSebring.com. **I will also use the #VisitSebring hashtag on social media posts related to this event.**

kl

I acknowledge that I am required to prepare and submit the **Post-Event Report Form** for the Event within thirty (30) days after the finish of the Event to be eligible for future grant funding from Highlands County Tourism. If there is another event for which my Organization is to receive funds from Highlands County Tourism before the thirty (30) days expires for the grant that is the subject of this application, I will first submit the Post-Event report for the grant with the earlier deadline.

kl

I have reviewed the **Highlands County Special Event Permit Flow Chart** and will proceed with any required county permits. (Contact: Melony Culpepper; (863) 402-6638). I understand that this event may require a Highlands County Special Event Permit, and it is up to me to timely complete that permit request and pay the required permit fee.

kl

I understand **all** insurance expectations required by the County and will provide the Highlands County Tourism office with **all** required Certificates of Insurance (COIs) naming "Highlands County" as additional insured no later than fifteen (15) days before the Event begins.

kl

I acknowledge that any material made or received by Highlands County in connection with my request for grant funding is a public record and subject to public inspection unless there is a legislatively created exemption that makes it confidential and not subject to disclosure. I acknowledge that I cannot dictate to Highlands County what material is open to public inspection or the circumstances under which material is deemed confidential.

kl

I understand that as a requirement to receiving grant funding, I will execute a release to permit Highlands County to photograph and/or record the Event and I must make Event invitees aware of this and make the signing of a release a requirement to participate in the Event.

KL

I understand that all grant funds received by my Organization are subject to audit by the Highlands County Clerk of the Court – Internal Auditor or other representative as Highlands County may designate.


KL

I have reviewed and understand all policies and guidelines pertaining to this grant.

Authorized Agent (Print name): Kim Largin

Title: Director

Date: 1/16/26

Authorized Agent Signature: 

Item 5E



Event: Summertime Softball (June 13-14, 2026)

Staff recommendation/suggested motion:

Move to approve the Facility Rental Fee Grant Request from USFA in an amount of up to \$5,000 for their Summertime Softball Tournament taking place on June 13-14, 2026 at the Highlands County multi-sports complex.

Funding shall be paid through an internal transfer from the Tourist Development Office to the Parks & Facilities Department to cover eligible facility rental fees, in accordance with the TDC's Facility Rental Fee Grant Funding Program.

Funds shall be paid from Cost Center 5305 – Marketing & Events.



AVON PARK & LAKE PLACID, FL

APPLICATION

**HIGHLANDS COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ("TDC")
FACILITY FEE EVENT GRANT**

Funding amount requested: \$ 5,000

I. Applicant Information

1. Name of Applying Organization: USFA LLC
2. Official Name of Organization as registered with the Florida Division of Corporations: Rising Stars Softball LLC
3. Complete address of Applying Organization: 1862 Eagle Hammock Blvd Eagle Lake FL 33839
4. Website for Applying Organization: USfastpitch.com
5. Social Media for Applying Organization: USFA national
6. Applicant Contact Information
 - a. Name: Kim Largin
 - b. Title: Director
 - c. Phone: 352-255-7806
 - d. Email: Kim.largin@USfastpitch.com
7. If different from above, Name of Event Director/Coordinator (onsite Point of Contact):
 - a. Name: _____
 - b. Title: _____
 - c. Cell Phone: _____
 - d. Email: _____
8. Details about Applicant: (describe your business or organization)
Softball tournament

II. Event Information

1. Name of Event: Summertime Softball
2. Type of Event: Softball tournament
3. Level of Event (ex. Youth 13U, Adult Amateur, Etc.): Youth U-18
4. Is this Event an elimination tournament? Yes
5. Dates of Event: 6/13-14/26
6. Location of Event: Highlands County Sports Complex
7. Event Website: USfastpitch.com
8. Event Social Media Handles/Pages: USFA national
9. Event Admission Price (if applicable): 0

10. Schedule of Event: (can provide in separate attachment/document if needed)

III. Event History & Economic Impact

1. Has this organization received funding from the TDC for any events in past?

Yes No

a. If yes, please provide the following information:

- i. Event Name: _____
- ii. Event Dates: _____
- iii. Room Nights Generated: _____
- iv. Reimbursement from TDC: _____

2. Has this event been held in another destination prior to Highlands County?

Yes No

a. If yes, please answer the following:

- i. Previous Destination: _____
- ii. Dates: _____
- iii. Venue: _____
- iv. Total Room Nights Generated: _____
- v. Economic Impact (if available): _____
- vi. List of funding from outside entities, like a TDC, with entity names and amounts: _____

3. Projected number of attendees: 200

4. Percentage or number of attendees from outside of Highlands County: 75%

5. Guaranteed minimum number of paid room nights the Event will bring to Highlands County: 50

6. To be eligible for financial support from Highlands County for future events, you must first provide data to the Highlands County Tourism office in a post-event report for this event. In addition to the Post-Event Report and Room Certification Forms required by the grant, how will you verify and document the attendees that traveled into Highlands County and stayed overnight?

team survey

7. Has this organization held events on Highlands County property before?

Yes No

a. If yes, please answer the following:

- i. Are/Were you in compliance with all County agreements to pertaining to said event(s)?
 Yes No
- ii. Are/Were you nondelinquent on the payment of facility rental fees and all associated fees pertaining to said event(s)?
 Yes No

Grant Application Checklist

Please initial next to each item and fill in the blanks below. This list must accompany the Grant Application.

Initials

KL

I have included the following required documents (check circle for each provided):

- IRS W-9 Form
- Copy of Florida Division of Corporations Form (or similar from other state) providing names of authorized agents for organization

KL

I understand that under this grant program, the grant will ONLY cover expenses for facility rental for this singular event, and that the payment of the approved facility rental fee will be handled internally between the Highlands County Tourism office and the Highlands County Parks & Facilities Department. I understand neither I nor my Organization will directly receive any grant funds from Highlands County for this grant.

KL

I understand that if the pricing for the facility rental changes between the time of this application approval and the payment due date, that any overages are my responsibility and not that of Highlands County. If the amount is less, Highlands County will only pay the required amount and any additional funding that was approved by way of this application is forfeited.

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I understand that I am responsible for providing the Highlands County Tourism office with all information regarding the facility rental fees and payment requirements at least one week (seven days) prior to the payment due date.

KL

I understand that I am responsible for scheduling and confirming the use of the facility with the Highlands County Parks & Facilities department for this event. Scheduling my event and specific needs of my event with the Parks & Facilities Department is not part of the responsibility of the TDC, Highlands County Tourism, nor any County staff.

KL

I understand that in order to rent a Highlands County facility, I will be required to enter into a Facility Use Agreement provided by the Highlands County Parks & Facilities department, agreeing to comply with the Highlands County Facility Rental Terms and Conditions.

KL

I understand that if this application is approved, Highlands County Tourism is only responsible for paying for the facility rental fee and that any further details regarding my event's use of the facility should be communicated directly with the Highlands County Parks & Facilities department.

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I understand that I am responsible for ensuring that all necessary accommodations for my event are booked at the facility **before** the Highlands County Tourism division makes payment for the facility rental. This includes field readiness, use of lighting, concession space, etc.

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I understand that any additional costs incurred after Highlands County Tourism makes payment for the facility rental are my financial responsibility, and not that of the TDC or Highlands County. This includes the addition of lighting usage, or additional expenses for cleaning beyond normal use of facility.

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I understand that any costs incurred for a late cancellation or rescheduling of the event are my responsibility to pay, and not that of the TDC or Highlands County.

kl

I understand that any price negotiation will not be responsibility of or involve the TDC or Visit Sebring staff.

kl

I understand that someone representing this grant application must be available at the TDC meeting when it considers the application for funding or the application will not be considered.

kl

I understand that the "Visit Sebring" logo must appear in any print advertisements that are funded by this grant. For digital advertisements, the "Visit Sebring" logo must either be featured on the advertisement or on the website/landing page linked to the advertisement, or the advertisement must link to the Highlands County Tourism's website, VisitSebring.com. I will also use the #VisitSebring hashtag on social media posts related to this event.

kl

I acknowledge that I am required to prepare and submit the Post-Event Report Form for the Event within thirty (30) days after the finish of the Event to be eligible for future grant funding from Highlands County Tourism. If there is another event for which my Organization is to receive funds from Highlands County Tourism before the thirty (30) days expires for the grant that is the subject of this application, I will first submit the Post-Event report for the grant with the earlier deadline.

kl

I have reviewed the Highlands County Special Event Permit Flow Chart and will proceed with any required county permits. (Contact: Melony Culpepper; (863) 402-6638). I understand that this event may require a Highlands County Special Event Permit, and it is up to me to timely complete that permit request and pay the required permit fee.

kl

I understand all insurance expectations required by the County and will provide the Highlands County Tourism office with all required Certificates of Insurance (COIs) naming "Highlands County" as additional insured no later than fifteen (15) days before the Event begins.

kl

I acknowledge that any material made or received by Highlands County in connection with my request for grant funding is a public record and subject to public inspection unless there is a legislatively created exemption that makes it confidential and not subject to disclosure. I acknowledge that I cannot dictate to Highlands County what material is open to public inspection or the circumstances under which material is deemed confidential.

kl

I understand that as a requirement to receiving grant funding, I will execute a release to permit Highlands County to photograph and/or record the Event and I must make Event invitees aware of this and make the signing of a release a requirement to participate in the Event.

YL

I understand that all grant funds received by my Organization are subject to audit by the Highlands County Clerk of the Court – Internal Auditor or other representative as Highlands County may designate.

KL

I have reviewed and understand all policies and guidelines pertaining to this grant.

Authorized Agent (Print name): Kim Largin

Title: Director

Date: 1/16/26

Authorized Agent Signature: 

Item 5F



Move to approve the Sport or Special Event Grant Request from Florida Prep Lacrosse in an amount of up to \$20,000 reimbursed at \$20 per verified room night for their Crabs Summer Slam Tournament taking place on May 9-10, 2026 at Lake June Park.

All grant funds are reimbursable and may be used for officials, facility fees, event fees, marketing of the events, and shirts, signage, and awards if they feature the Visit Sebring logo in a pre-approved design.

Funds shall be paid from Cost Center 5305 – Marketing & Events.



APPLICATION

HIGHLANDS COUNTY TDC SPORT OR SPECIAL EVENT GRANT

Funding Event is Requesting of TDC: \$ \$20,000

I. Applicant Information

1. Name of Applying Organization: Florida Prep Lacrosse
2. Complete address of Applying Organization: 304 March Cove Dr, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
3. Website for Applying Organization: www.floridapreplax.com
4. Social Media for Applying Organization: _____
5. Grant Contact
 - a. Name: Tom West
 - b. Title: Organizer
 - c. Phone: 386-931-8503
 - d. Email: tom@floridapreplax.com
6. If different from above, Name of Event Director/Coordinator (onsite POC):
 - a. Name: _____
 - b. Title: _____
 - c. Cell Phone: _____
 - d. Email: _____
7. Details about Applicant: (describe your business or organization)
We are a lacrosse organization that specializes in prep lacrosse,
helping young men grow in the game and in life.

II. Event Information

1. Name of Event: Crabs Summer Slam
2. Type of event: Showcase
3. If sport, Level of Event (ex. Youth 13U, Adult Amateur, Etc.) Youth
4. If sport, is this event an elimination tournament? No
5. Dates of Event: May 9-10, 2026
6. Location of Event: Lake June Park
7. Event Website: www.floridapreplax.com
8. Event Social Media Handles/Pages: _____
9. Event Admission Price (if applicable): _____
10. Schedule of Event: (can provide in separate attachment/document if needed)
Setup on May 8 late afternoon. Run from 8-6 on the 9th and 8-6 on the 10th as well.

III. Event History & Economic Impact

1. Has this organization received funding from the TDC for any events in past? Yes
 - a. If yes, please provide the following information:
 - i. Event Name: Lax on the Lakes
 - ii. Event Dates: June 2025
 - iii. Room Nights Generated: Over 1,000
 - iv. Reimbursement from TDC: \$56,000

2. Has this event been held in another destination prior to Highlands County? No
 - a. If yes, please answer the following:
 - i. Previous Destination: _____
 - ii. Dates: _____
 - iii. Venue: _____
 - iv. Total Room Nights Generated: _____
 - v. Economic Impact (if available): _____
 - vi. List of funding from outside entities, like a TDC, with entity names and amounts: _____

3. Projected number of attendees: 1,600
4. Percentage or number of attendees from outside of Highlands County: 100%
5. Guaranteed minimum number of paid room nights the Event will bring to Highlands County: 1,000
6. Please complete the table below.

Category	Type	# of Adult	# of Youth
Total # Expected Attendees/ Participants (includes competitors, coaches, trainers, officials, etc.)	Out-of-State		200
	In-State & Staying Overnight		800
	In-State & Day Tripping		
	Highlands County Residents		
Total # Expected Fans/Additional Travelers (family, friends, etc.)	Out-of-State	150	
	In-State & Staying Overnight	800	
	In-State & Day Tripping		
	Highlands County Residents		
Total # Expected Media	Out-of-State		
	In-State & Staying Overnight	20	
	In-State & Day Tripping		
	Highlands County Residents		

7. Beyond the Post-Event Report and Room Certification Forms required by the grant, how will you verify and document the attendees that traveled into Highlands County and stayed overnight? Are you willing to share your findings with the TDC?
We find this through hotel relationships and registrations. We will share with the TDC.

IV. Event Budget Summary

EVENT REVENUE

This grant cannot be the sole source of revenue. Please list all Event revenue sources, types and amounts, including grants, sponsorships, registration fees, and in-kind services provided from public agencies, such as Police Department, Fire Rescue, etc. Please designate hard dollars versus in-kind.

Income Source & Type (i.e. Publix Sponsorship or Attendee Registration Fees)	Income Amount (or In-Kind Amount)
Registration Fees	\$30,000
Visit Sebring/TDC Funding Request	+ \$ 20,000
TOTAL INCOME ALL SOURCES	= \$ 50,000

EVENT EXPENSES

Provide an itemized summary of all Event expenses, then indicate those which are intended use of TDC funds at the bottom of this page. Please be as detailed as possible, including intended media outlets, promotional materials, etc. and the dollar amount that will be expended (tentatively) for each category. This chart will reflect the total amount of the grant you have requested. Use additional sheets if necessary. Please refer to the list of Ineligible Expenses in the grant guidelines.

Expense Type (Facility Rental, Event Speakers, Signage, Insurance, etc.)	Expense Amount
Staffing	\$15,000
Equipment Transportation	\$2,000
Tryout Jerseys with visit Sebring logo	\$15,000
Insurance	\$1,000
Promotional material both digital and print	\$10,000
Signage	\$1,000
Facility Rental	\$2,500
Awards	\$1,000
Officials	\$5,000
Lodging	\$10,000
AV Equipment	\$6,000
TOTAL EVENT EXPENSES	\$ 68,500
Intended Use of Tourist Development Tax Funds (provide details)	Amount
All of the above minus lodging, insurance and staffing	20,000
TOTAL TDC EXPENSES	\$ 20,000

Grant Application Checklist

Please initial next to each item and fill in the blanks below. This list must accompany your grant application.

Initials

 TW This application is being submitted at least four months (120 days) prior to the event start.

Date of Event: 5/9-10,2026
Date of Application: 1/12/2026

 TW I understand that the reimbursement request must be completed and submitted to the Tourism Office with all backup and supporting material no later than 60 days after the event ends, which will be on July 9, 2026 (date 60 days after event ends).

 TW I have included an IRS **W-9 Form** and a **copy of the Florida Division of Corporations (or similar) form** with the application.

 TW I have included a detailed **Marketing Plan** for the Event.

 TW I have included a sample **Visitor/Attendee Survey** for the Event and will submit survey results to the Visit Sebring office no later than 60 days after the event takes place.

 TW I understand, if awarded the grant, the signee of the agreement between the County and my business/organization can only be an individual listed on the Florida Division of Corporations (or similar) as an Authorized Agent of the applying organization.

 TW I understand that someone representing this grant application must be available at the TDC meeting when it considers the application for funding or the application will not be considered.

 TW I understand that the "Visit Sebring" logo must appear in any print advertisements that are funded by the TDC. For digital ads, the "Visit Sebring" logo must either be featured on the advertisement or on website/landing page linked to the ad or the ad must link to the TDC's website, VisitSebring.com. **I will also use the #VisitSebring hashtag on social media posts related to this event.**

 TW I understand that no expenses incurred **before** the TDC recommends approval of the grant application will be reimbursed **under any circumstances**. I also understand that no funding has been approved until an authorized signee for the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) approves execution of the Grant Contract and that no expenditures will be reimbursed if the BOCC designee does not approve execution of the Grant Contract.

TW I understand that reimbursements following the event will only be made for itemized, authorized expenses approved by the TDC, and authorized designee of the BOCC in the fully executed Grant Contract.

TW I agree that the funds I receive will ONLY be used in accordance with the eligible and ineligible uses of funds as listed in the grant policies and guidelines.

TW I understand each reimbursement request must include copies of paid invoices, screenshots of digital ads, copies of the ad/tear sheets, invoice for reimbursement amount to the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners, copy of front and back of cleared checks paying for advertising, and outreach figures identifying the number of people your ad reached outside Highlands County and inside Highlands County. I also understand cash receipts will not be accepted.

TW I understand that all approved expenses will only be reimbursed after the event is complete and all post-event reporting is submitted to, then audited and verified by TDC staff. And I understand Reimbursement will only be provided at a rate of \$20/verified room night.

TW I understand that I am required to submit a **Room Night Certification Form** from each participating hotel/accommodation in order to track the number of hotel room nights the Event produces in order to receive funding.

TW I understand that I can use the online **Visit Sebring Attendee Survey** as another method of capturing room nights generated by my event. I understand that only results submitted **within 10 days** of the completion of the event will be considered valid. I also understand that Visit Sebring will look at the higher results between the survey and the Room Night Certification Forms to award any reimbursement based on verified room nights.

TW I acknowledge that I am required to submit a **Post-Event Report Form** for the Event within 60 days after completion of event to receive payment.

TW I have reviewed the **Highlands County Special Event Permit Flow Chart** and will proceed with any required county permits. (Contact: Melony Culpepper; (863) 402-6638). I understand that this event may require a Highlands County Special Event Permit, and it is up to me to complete that permit request and pay the required permit fee.

TW I understand **all** insurance expectations required by the County, and will provide the TDC office with **all** required Certificates of Insurance (COIs) naming "Highlands County" as additionally insured no later than 15 days before the event begins. If required, I will also provide the TDC office with a General Liability Certificate of Insurance (COI) naming "Florida Sports Foundation" as additionally insured no later than 15 days before the event begins.

TW I acknowledge that any material made or received by Highlands County in connection with my request for Event funding is a public record and subject to public inspection unless there is a legislatively created exemption that makes it confidential and not subject to disclosure. I acknowledge that I cannot dictate to Highlands County what

material is open to public inspection or the circumstances under which material is deemed confidential.

TW I understand that as a requirement to receiving funding, I will execute a release to permit Highlands County to photo and/or record the Event and I must make Event invitees aware of this and make the signing of a release a requirement to participate in the Event.

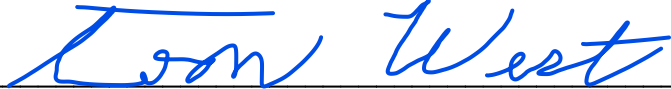
TW I understand that all funds received are subject to audit by the Highlands County Clerk of the Court – Internal Auditor or other representative as Highlands County may designate.

TW I have reviewed and understand all policies and guidelines pertaining to this grant.

Authorized Agent: Tom West

Title: Organizer

Date: 1/12/2026

Authorized Agent Signature: 

Item 5G



STATEMENT OF WORK

December 30, 2025

City Of Sebring
Attn: Scott Noethlich, City Administrator

Re: City of Sebring- Sports Facility Consulting

Mr. Noethlich,

Synergy Sports Charlotte, LLC (“Synergy”) has enjoyed the opportunity to work with the City through the first phase of assessment to determine the viability of sports assets in Sebring. Synergy is deeply committed to bringing sports, education, and enrichment opportunities to deserving communities and sees enormous value in giving back in meaningful ways and providing unparalleled programming and facilities. We are pleased to present this engagement letter to you for the next stage of assessing new & expanded sport opportunities in the City.

This Letter Agreement outlines the framework of the relationship between Synergy and the City of Sebring for the next Phase of the project, which includes detailed work surrounding the renovation of the current Max Long Sports Complex.

Broadly speaking, Synergy will collaborate with, and provide services to, the City of Sebring in the following areas:

- Expanding on the previously developed Sports Feasibility Study and related work to include:
 - Outreach to specific rental user groups, tournament organizers, and community users to develop a realistic operations plan and use schedule. Secure LOIs for potential users
 - Development of a conceptual tournament schedule based on outreach to user groups and organizers
 - Development of a detailed financial model based on actual users, expected fees, and known and estimated operating expenses
 - Development of a detailed Economic Impact Analysis to show unique and total visitors, jobs created or supported, dollars coming into the area, additional hotel stays, restaurant visits, etc.
 - Conceptual Architecture
 - Detailed Site Plan based on environmental considerations, topography, etc.
 - 3-5 Exterior Renderings
 - Development of a digital presentation deck
 - Development of an accurate cost estimate for construction, surfacing, equipment, etc.
 - Provide detailed financing and funding options
 - Up to 3 site visits to include meetings with key stakeholders and community members, presentations to County Commission and other municipal entities, etc.
 - Virtual presentations as needed
- Additional sports development opportunities that materialize within 6 months of the Date of Execution can be included in the above Scope of Work.



COST PROPOSAL

Cost: \$37,500 (inclusive of travel)

Terms: Balance due upon completion

The timeline to complete the above and deliver the final assets (including site visit) is estimated to be 60- 90 days from the Date of Execution. This timeline assumes periodic calls as necessary, timely access to client provided data and information, etc.

To get started, please sign, and return this Letter Agreement, indicating acceptance of the fees proposed, timeline, and overall scope. Payment for the services will be due as outlined. This phase will provide key financial information needed for financing and/ or funding, presentation ready materials for key stakeholders and community groups, economic and community impact assessments, and proof of a viable endeavor.

Information and general costs associated with successive phases will be determined and outlined as the project progresses.

Please sign this letter and return it to me by email. We look forward to working with you on this amazing project.

Sincerely,

Jason Boudrie, Founder & CEO
Synergy Sports Charlotte, LLC

I agree to and accept the terms of this Letter Agreement:

Scott Noethlich
City Administrator

Date

Jason Boudrie
Founder & CEO, Synergy Sports Charlotte, LLC

Date

Item 5H



STATEMENT OF WORK

December 30, 2025

Highlands County, FL
Attn: Laurie Hurner, County Administrator

Re: Highlands County Sports Complex Expansion

Ms. Hurner,

Synergy Sports Charlotte, LLC (“Synergy”) has enjoyed the opportunity to work with you through the first phase of assessment to determine the viability of sports assets in Highlands County. Synergy is deeply committed to bringing sports, education, and enrichment opportunities to deserving communities and sees enormous value in giving back in meaningful ways and providing unparalleled programming and facilities. We are pleased to present this engagement letter to you for the next stage of assessing new & expanded sport opportunities in Highlands County.

This Letter Agreement outlines the framework of the relationship between Synergy and Highlands County for the next Phase of the project, which includes detailed work surrounding the expansion of the current County Sports Complex.

Broadly speaking, Synergy will collaborate with, and provide services to, Highlands County in the following areas:

- Expanding on the previously developed Sports Feasibility Study and related work to include:
 - Outreach to specific rental user groups, tournament organizers, and community users to develop a realistic operations plan and use schedule. Secure LOIs for potential users
 - Development of a conceptual tournament schedule based on outreach to user groups and organizers
 - Development of a detailed financial model based on actual users, expected fees, and known and estimated operating expenses
 - Development of a detailed Economic Impact Analysis to show unique and total visitors, jobs created or supported, dollars coming into the area, additional hotel stays, restaurant visits, etc.
 - Conceptual Architecture
 - Detailed Site Plan based on environmental considerations, topography, etc.
 - 3-5 Exterior Renderings
 - Development of a digital presentation deck
 - Development of an accurate cost estimate for construction, surfacing, equipment, etc.
 - Provide detailed financing and funding options
 - Up to 3 site visits to include meetings with key stakeholders and community members, presentations to County Commission and other municipal entities, etc.
 - Virtual presentations as needed
- Additional sports development opportunities that materialize within 6 months of the Date of Execution can be included in the above Scope of Work.



COST PROPOSAL

Cost: \$37,500 (inclusive of travel)

Terms: Balance due upon completion

The timeline to complete the above and deliver the final assets (including site visit) is estimated to be 60- 90 days from the Date of Execution. This timeline assumes periodic calls as necessary, timely access to client provided data and information, etc.

To get started, please sign, and return this Letter Agreement, indicating acceptance of the fees proposed, timeline, and overall scope. Payment for the services will be due as outlined. This phase will provide key financial information needed for financing and/ or funding, presentation ready materials for key stakeholders and community groups, economic and community impact assessments, and proof of a viable endeavor.

Information and general costs associated with successive phases will be determined and outlined as the project progresses.

Please sign this letter and return it to me by email. We look forward to working with you on this amazing project.

Sincerely,

Jason Boudrie, Founder & CEO
Synergy Sports Charlotte, LLC

I agree to and accept the terms of this Letter Agreement:

Laurie Hurner
Highlands County Administrator

Date

Jason Boudrie
Founder & CEO, Synergy Sports Charlotte, LLC

Date

Item 6A

TDC MEMBERS& TERMS

Chris Campbell – County Commissioner (TDC Chair)

Josh Stewart – Elected Official, City of Sebring - Term Expires: 05/02/2027 (Vice Chair)

Debra Worley – Elected Official, Town of Lake Placid - Term Expires: 06/20/2026

Cynthia Garren – Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at South Florida State College, Involved and Interested in Tourism Development - Term Expires: 05/02/2027

Andy Kesling - Pinecrest Golf Club, Involved and Interested in Tourism Development - Term Expires: 05/02/2027

Elizabeth Compton - Sebring International Raceway, Involved and Interested in Tourism Development - Term Expires: 05/02/2029

Lydia Capote - Tru by Hilton and Marriott Residence Inn Sebring, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations - Term Expires: 05/02/2027

Christine Hatfield - Inn on the Lakes, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations - Term Expires: 05/02/2027

Kristyn Robbins - Holiday Inn Express Sebring & Lake Placid, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations - Term Expires: 05/02/2029

Item 6B



2025 Executive Market Summary

Prepared by Key Data Dashboard™ | © KEY DATA DASHBOARD



ADR ⓘ			RevPAR ⓘ		
\$237 primary	▼2%	\$243 compare	\$80 primary	▼1%	\$81 compare
Occupancy ⓘ			Revenue ⓘ		
33.6% primary	▲1%	33.3% compare	\$1.3M primary	▲1%	\$1.3M compare
Avg. Length of Stay ⓘ			Guest Nights ⓘ		
4.2 primary	▲4%	4.0 compare	5.5K primary	▲4%	5.3K compare
Avg. Booking Window ⓘ			Nights Available ⓘ		
36 primary	▼13%	41 compare	13.4K primary	▲10%	12.2K compare



ADR ⓘ			RevPAR ⓘ		
\$273 primary	▲6%	\$257 compare	\$59 primary	▼18%	\$72 compare
Occupancy ⓘ			Revenue ⓘ		
21.7% primary	▼23%	28.2% compare	\$579.9K primary	▼14%	\$678.2K compare
Avg. Length of Stay ⓘ			Guest Nights ⓘ		
4.6 primary	▼14%	5.3 compare	2.1K primary	▼20%	2.6K compare
Avg. Booking Window ⓘ			Nights Available ⓘ		
43 primary	▼11%	48 compare	7.7K primary	▲4%	7.4K compare



Headline: Balanced Volume Growth and Expansion-Led Gains Across Platforms

Airbnb Performance Highlights (62% of Inventory)

- **ADR increased +7%**, supporting continued pricing strength
- **RevPAR increased +9%**, driven by higher rates and improved occupancy
- **Occupancy improved (+2%)** alongside modest supply growth (+2%)
- **Revenue grew +12%** to \$14.4M

Interpretation:

Airbnb anchored the market with stable, broad-based growth, delivering reliable revenue gains across the majority of Sebring's short-term rental inventory.

VRBO Performance Highlights (38% of Inventory)

- **Revenue surged +31%** to \$7.7M
- **Guest nights increased +34%**, supported by significant supply expansion (+34%)
- **Occupancy improved (+9%)**, despite slight ADR softening (-2%)
- **RevPAR increased (+6%)**, reflecting improved demand efficiency

Interpretation:

VRBO drove incremental growth through expansion, successfully converting new inventory into booked nights and revenue.



What This Means

- **Airbnb** provided stability and pricing discipline at scale
- **VRBO** delivered outsized growth from a smaller base, expanding Sebring's reach
- **Together, the platforms supported:**
 - Strong revenue growth
 - Increased visitation
 - A broader traveler mix

Bottom Line

In 2025, Visit Sebring benefited from a well-balanced platform mix — with Airbnb driving consistent performance and VRBO accelerating expansion-led growth — resulting in a healthier, more resilient short-term rental market.



**Item 6C & D
(verbal update)**