

THE WOODLANDS

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

visitthewoodlands.com

Request for Interest

Public Relations Agency of Record

The Woodlands, Texas

Issuance Date: November 4, 2016

Due Date: December 30, 2016

Request for Interest 2017 Public Relations Agency of Record

I. BACKGROUND

In 2007, The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau (TWCVB) was created as a 501 (c) (6) organization to promote The Woodlands as a travel destination for the Greater Houston area and beyond through marketing, advertising and public relations programs as well as event programming.

Over the past years, TWCVB has experienced significant marketing and public relation successes in promoting The Woodlands as a premier destination for shopping, dining, hospitality and entertainment.

Through TWCVB's public relations campaign, hundreds of articles were generated on The Woodlands as a destination and increased exposure to a local, regional, statewide, national and international audience.

TWCVB adopted the following Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Purposes & Services, and Core Values to help direct its efforts in the coming years.

Mission Statement

To position The Woodlands as a regionally, nationally, and internationally recognized destination by developing quality marketing programs and sales outreach to attract visitors, conventions and stimulate economic development and growth.

About Mission Statement

TWCVB promotes The Woodlands as a travel destination, which can result in new revenue opportunities for businesses, and increased sales and hotel occupancy tax for The Woodlands Township's general fund. Tax revenue generated by the tourism industry is, in part, invested back into improving The Woodlands' infrastructure and programs.

Vision

TWCVB is 501 (c) (6) organization that strives fulfill the Bureau's Mission Statement.. TWCVB works with its community to create and maintain productive public and private partnerships while serving as a reliable and credible source for The Woodlands' tourism industry.

Purposes & Services

- Provide leadership for the tourism industry in The Woodlands, coordinating activities, encouraging marketing programs and projecting an appealing image on behalf of The Woodlands.

- Drive the destination of The Woodlands to meeting professionals, business travelers, tour operators and individual visitors.
- Represent hotels, facilities, attractions, restaurants, retail centers and other providers who serve visitors.
- Market transportation in The Woodlands including The Woodlands Waterway Trolleys and the Waterway Cruisers.
- Provide an array of services to meeting planners in developing tours into The Woodlands, including suggested itineraries and overnight accommodations.
- Support key signature events that promote and highlight The Woodlands as a destination for overnight stays.
- Help visitors save time and energy in looking for tourism opportunities in The Woodlands and Greater Houston area by providing visitor services.
- Work with regional partners in promoting The Woodlands as an ideal location to visit and spend the night.
- Develop and support training initiatives for hospitality employees in The Woodlands.

Core Values

- Equal Opportunity Employer
- Be Consistent and Fair in Business Relations
- Initiate and Implement Cooperative Efforts
- Promote and Encourage Collaboration
- Practice and Execute Initiative and Innovation
- Practice Budget Responsibility
- Extend and Share Expertise
- Work with Integrity in Open Records/Open Meetings Environment

Target Audience

TWCVB directs its marketing efforts locally, regionally, nationally and internationally to group and meeting planners, travel agents, tour operators, travel journalists, and the general public who directly influence visitors' choices in shopping, dining and residential living in The Woodlands.

II. PURPOSE

TWCVB is issuing a Request for Interest (RFI) for a Public Relation services related to TWCVB's destination marketing efforts. The selected Agency will need to assist in the development and management of strategic media relation responsibilities for the calendar year 2017 (December 2017-January 2017). with a possible two-year extension, at TWCVB sole discretion .

This RFI is intended to provide TWCVB's marketing team with a list of potential agencies capable of best performing the consulting tasks outlined above. TWCVB

will review all submissions to determine the Public Relations Agency of Record. TWCVB shall not consider RFI submissions to be binding.

III. SPECIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Requirements

The Agency selected should:

- Demonstrate expertise in and understanding of the tourism industry
- Have an understanding and network of travel bloggers and influencers who may fit within TWCVB's target audiences
- Understand and meet TWCVB's goals and objectives
- Have qualified and experienced personnel
 - TWCVB staff prefers conducting all phases of the contract with one account team. This team should be identified in your proposal.
- Ability of proposal to be executed within budget
- Provide a tracking tool capable of analyzing impression numbers and other measures of success when detailing results of agency or staff driven initiatives
- Provide the TWCVB acceptable proof of valid and acceptable insurance which meets or exceeds the minimum insurance requirements as provided in the **TWCVB MINIMUM RESPONDENT INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS** attached hereto as Exhibit "D".
- Any and all production and creative concepts developed pursuant to any agreement with TWCVB and any information provided in the RFI will be the sole and exclusive property of the TWCVB and will not be used or reproduced without written consent of the President of TWCVB.

Budget

TWCVB's budget for 2017 Public Relations expenses is \$50,000.

Scope of Services

The Public Relations Agency of Record will be expected to work with TWCVB's marketing team on the following activities:

- Develop and manage media planning process
- Develop and execute a strategic travel writer visitation plan including frequency of visits (two per quarter minimum)
- Develop and distribute written materials (e.g. press releases, editorials) to media when instructed by TWCVB
- Pitch and arrange media coverage
- Track media on The Woodlands in different outlets
- Identify public relations opportunities that fit within TWCVB's current framework as well as pose new opportunities in a growing and changing market
- Research, evaluate and recommend travel writers, bloggers and influencers who may become brand ambassadors for the destination

- Book and manage qualified travel writers, bloggers and influencers on media trips to The Woodlands destination
- Develop monthly reports that detail agency objectives and relay impression rates and other measures of success to staff to be received by the Friday of the first week every month

IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

Submission

In order to be a considered response to this RFI, Respondents are urged to submit a proposal that includes, at minimum, the “RFI Packet” consisting of the following information and forms:

- I. Letter of Interest
- II. General Company Information
- III. Response Criteria (Exhibit “A”)
- IV. Cost Response Form (Exhibit “B”)
- V. References Form (Exhibit “C”)

Due Date

The letter of interest and any attachments should be delivered or mailed to the individual listed below (under Contact Information) and received no later than 4:00 p.m., on **Friday, December 30, 2016**. Late proposals will not be considered. All costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal to this RFI will be the task of the Respondent and will not be reimbursed by TWCVB.

Contact Information

Please address all correspondence and requests to the following individual:

Nick Wolda, President
The Woodlands Convention & Visitors Bureau
2801 Technology Forest Blvd.
The Woodlands, Texas 77381

Phone: 281-210-3475
Fax: 281-210-3499
E-mail: Nick.Wolda@thewoodlandscvb.com

Questions

Questions concerning this RFI should be addressed to Mr. Wolda by Monday, December 19, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. After this time, TWCVB reserves the right to deny response to submitted inquiries. **Inquiries should be submitted by email only.**

Post-Submittal

TWCVB will review RFI submissions during January 2017. TWCVB Board of Directors will receive a presentation of the Respondent recommended by TWCVB staff in January 2017.

Disclaimer

This RFI in no manner obligates TWCVB to pursue or enter into any contractual relationship with any entity that responds to this RFI. TWCVB further reserves the right to cancel this RFI at any time at its sole discretion.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS
REQUEST FOR INTEREST
TABULATION FORM**

Service	Points Awarded	Maximum Points
1. Experience, Reporting and Other Required Services		15 Points
2. Understanding The Woodlands as a Destination and Unique Ideas to bring to TWCVB		15 Points
3. Experience booking qualified travel writers, bloggers and influencers on media trips		15 Points
4. Corporate References and Staff Experience		15 Points
5. Cost		40 Points
Total		100 Points

I, _____, (herein referred to as the “Respondent”) certify that this submission is made without prior understanding, agreement or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting a submission for the services and is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. I agree that and all information that I have provided including references are true and correct and accurately reflect my skills and ability and the quality of my public relations services. I agree to abide by all conditions of the RFI Packet and certify that I am authorized to sign this submission for the Respondent. I hereby acknowledge that any and all information provided pursuant to this RFI will be the sole and exclusive property of the TWCVB where or not Respondent is selected to provide services to TWCVB.

DATE

SIGNATURE

PRINT/TYPER NAME

TITLE

COMPANY

EXHIBIT "A"

TWCVB RESPONSE CRITERIA FORM Public Relations Agency of Record

Responses to the below questions will be scored by TWCVB marketing team. Failure to respond will result in an incomplete submittal.

1. Experience, Reporting and Other Required Services.
 - a. Describe how the Respondent has supplied expertise for similar (e.g. other Travel, Convention & Visitors Bureaus; municipalities; non-profits corporations; governmental or quasi-governmental entities; etc.) contracts and work related to planning, coordinating, implementing and managing public relations efforts.
 - b. Describe business philosophy on Public Relations as it pertains to the frequent changes in the media industry and demonstrate the strength of the media connections.
 - c. Describe how the Respondent will maintain strategic direction and manage aggressive, proactive media outreach in order to sustain visibility on clearly definite subjects and to clearly defined audiences for greatest success.
 - d. Describe how Respondent documents organization's experience in providing concrete, pre-determined, measureable deliverables regarding Returns on Investment "ROI" (weekly and monthly reporting)
 - e. Provide samples of collateral press releases, non-traditional media outreach or leveraged media coverage demonstrating strong writing techniques, partnership with influencers and media outlets, and other travel or destination related material.
 - f. Explain ability to enhance TWCVB branding efforts through strategic media outreach in such a way that this unique destination stands out.
 - g. Describe short and long term goals for guiding TWCVB to a stronger position in travel and tourism industry, in local, state, national and international markets.

2. Understanding The Woodlands as a Destination and Unique Ideas to bring to TWCVB.
 - a. Describe Respondent's knowledge and understanding of The Woodlands' current amenities and offerings.
 - b. Describe why the Respondent is interested in taking on the Public Relations for The Woodlands and reasons why the Respondent believes he or she would be successful.

- c. Explain the proposed project vision, including key messages and strategies for promoting The Woodlands as a destination to key travel writers, influencers, bloggers and media outlets in local, state, national and international markets.

3. Corporate References and Staff Experiences.

- a. Complete the TWCVB Reference (Exhibit "C"), by providing three (3) references from clients who received similar services.
- b. Submit resumes on all proposed professional staff members who will be performing under the agreement.

4. Cost.

- a. Complete Cost Response Form (Exhibit "B") for development of public relations plan.

EXHIBIT "B"

COST RESPONSE FORM
Public Relations Agency of Record

The Respondent listed below submits the following firm, fixed hourly rate to be charged for all work done on a monthly basis.

Hourly Rate \$ _____

The Respondent listed below submits the following approximate budget for the following work done.

A. Administration \$ _____

B. Travel \$ _____

C. Production \$ _____

D. Other (please specify)

E. _____ \$ _____

F. _____ \$ _____

G. _____ \$ _____

H. _____ \$ _____

I. _____ \$ _____

EXHIBIT "C"

REFERENCES FORM
Public Relations Agency of Record

Please provide the following information for three (3) clients for whom you have provided Public Relations Services. You may also attach to this References Form, any letters of recommendation from the below-named clients.

1. Agency/Company: _____
Contact Name: _____
Contact Phone: _____ Contact Email: _____
Date(s) of Services Rendered: _____ Total Invoice for Services Rendered \$ _____
Brief Description of Specific Public Relations Services Rendered: _____

2. Agency/Company: _____
Contact Name: _____
Contact Phone: _____ Contact Email: _____
Date(s) of Services Rendered: _____ Total Invoice for Services Rendered \$ _____
Brief Description of Specific Public Relations Services Rendered: _____

3. Agency/Company: _____
Contact Name: _____
Contact Phone: _____ Contact Email: _____
Date(s) of Services Rendered: _____ Total Invoice for Services Rendered \$ _____
Brief Description of Specific Public Relations Services Rendered: _____

EXHIBIT "D"

***TWCVB MINIMUM RESPONDENT INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS
Public Relations Agency of Record***

Respondent agrees to maintain and require its subcontractors to maintain at all times during the Service Year 2017 the following coverage at no less than the limits indicated:

<u>Worker's Compensation Insurance</u>	Statutory
Employers Liability	\$100,000
 <u>Automobile Liability</u> (Including Owned and Non-Owned autos)	
Bodily Injury	\$250,000 each person
	\$500,000 each occurrence
Property Damage	\$100,000 each occurrence
 <u>Commercial General Liability</u>	
Combined Single Limits for Bodily Injury and Property Damage:	
Each occurrence for premises/operations:	
Broad form CGL liability coverage	\$1,000,000
Products/ Operations aggregate	\$1,000,000
Advertising Injury	\$1,000,000
General Aggregate	\$2,000,000
 <u>Umbrella Liability</u>	
	\$1,000,000 each occurrence
	\$1,000,000 annual aggregate
	\$ 25,000 self insured retention

Respondent's coverage must be written on an Occurrence (not claims made) basis with companies acceptable to TWCVB, must stipulate that no take-out endorsements are included on the General Liability policy, and each policy providing coverage hereunder shall contain provisions that no cancellation or material reduction in coverage in the policy shall become effective except upon thirty (30) days prior written notice thereof to TWCVB, who shall be named as additional insured with respect to liability imposed upon it resulting from the performance of Work under this Agreement. There shall be no right of subrogation against TWCVB and this waiver of subrogation shall be endorsed upon the policies. Prior to the commencement of performance of the Public Relations Services, Respondent shall furnish certificates which shall identify TWCVB as an additional insured to TWCVB in duplicate, evidencing compliance with all requirements herein. **The limits of such insurance shall in no way be construed as limiting Respondent's obligation to completely defend, indemnify and hold harmless TWCVB.**