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GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT PROJECT PRE-PROPOSAL FORM

Project Name: Master- and Sub-Brands Social Media Initiative

Submitting Entity: Gulf County Tourist Development Council

I. Please select one or more eligible activity that the project is classified under:

- Restoration and protection of the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, and coastal wetlands of the Gulf Coast region.
- Mitigation of damage to fish, wildlife and natural resources.
- Implementation of a federally approved marine, coastal or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring.
- Workforce development and job creation.
 - Improvements to or on State parks located in coastal areas affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.
 - Infrastructure projects benefitting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure.
 - Coastal flood protection and related infrastructure.
 - Planning assistance.
- Promotion of tourism and seafood in the Gulf Coast region.

II. Please provide an executive summary of the project. Describe/quantify the economic (jobs, infrastructure, tourism, etc.) and environmental benefits (habitat, quality, knowledge, long-term sustainability, etc.).

For years, the Gulf County Tourist Development Council (GCTDC) has been using a mix of paid mediums to promote the area to new and existing visitors in southeast markets. Outside of the funding received from BP in response to the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill in April 2010, the GCTDC's typical marketing budget is roughly \$200,000 annually. Neighboring counties (Walton, Bay and Okaloosa) have more than five (5) times this amount.

Regardless of the actual marketing dollars and media programs implemented, recent research findings from a Visitor Perception Study show existing and potential visitors are not recalling Gulf County messaging through print or broadcast media. For visitors who have been to Gulf County, only 1.5% report having brand recall to TV and Radio advertising combined, with only 11.5% recalling Gulf County via print media. For potential visitors, only 1.6% report having brand recall to TV and Radio advertising combined, with only 18.7% recalling Gulf County via print media.

It is evident the brand message through broadcast and print media is not reaching or resonating with our visitor.

Interestingly, 77.6% of visitors and 47% of potential visitors have heard about Gulf County Florida online and via family and friends. In today's world, knowing how friends and family communicate through web and hand-held devices, it is logical to glean that Gulf County messaging is being communicated through digital and social mediums.

A recently concluded Social Listening evaluation completed in Gulf County analyzed the engagement and opportunity within the social media network. In addition to analyzing the master brand (Gulf County) an additional step was taken to also analyze the sub-brands and the partner brands. During the evaluation, feedback was given to partners regarding their use and presence across the social media network and then evaluated upon concluding the study.

Over a 90-day period, engagement rates increased significantly with several partners doubling their numbers. By providing feedback to partners whose business directly influence and enhance the visitor experience, the community was able to work together to clarify and elevate the awareness of the destination.

Overall topline conclusions from the study are as follows:

- Increase Facebook reach through ads, promotion and engagement.
- Opportunity for TDC and sub-brands to work together to increase engagement - share, link, post photos. Need to further develop strategy.
- Take advantage of shoulder season to increase activity and interaction.
- Opportunity to grow reach through engagement due to changes in Facebook brand pages. Social tone is positive. Activate followers with topics / photos they find interesting.
- Pinterest has huge potential - passionate followers, organic activity.
- Use Twitter to increase Facebook followers - cross content, respond to those tweeting about you, re-tweet relevant thoughts.



By working together, the following brand character key words became relevant and prevalent to the master and sub-brands:

Cape San Blas	Port St. Joe	Natural
Dog-Friendly	Low Key	Adventure
Fishing	Un-crowded	Scalloping
Beautiful	Wildlife	



Programs hinged on social media can be very targeted but often do not gain traction because there is not enough scale to create enough meaningful awareness to drive visitation. It is critical to combine online strategies that allow us to cast a wide net among the core target of men 35-64 who are active sports and outdoor enthusiasts. A few examples in the social media world are as follows:

1. **Facebook relationship retargeting**, a new function of the social network, allows us to now cross reference our email lists with facebook fans and remind them of Gulf County across multiple channels.
2. **Facebook cross-brand targeting** – reaching those loyal brand followers of Ford Trucks (680K fans), Bass Pro Shop (2MM fans)

Part of the budgeted funds would be used to develop a branded look and feel for all social media initiatives. Recent findings show that those who have a consistent, branded message in their social media assets increase their followers and the engagement simultaneously. Increasingly, more men are engaging

in social media, however, their timing and usage varies from the female consumer. In this case, it's not only the media meeting the message...it's about timing as well.

To further leverage the digital program, GCTDC would direct its own interactive budget (\$60,000) primarily to the female consumer. Funds awarded through the RESTORE Act would be heavily to the male consumer. This same approach would be taken for SEM, allowing for a broader program, aligning specific key words to specific audiences.

Based on the recent Social Listening study conducted by the GCTDC, and confirmed by the response to the Visitor Perception Study there is tremendous opportunity to utilize Social Media to help brand Gulf County Florida as a premier vacation destination. With assistance from the RESTORE Act funds, the GCTDC would develop and implement a long-term social media program, strategically aligning the master brand and the sub-brands to increase tourism in Gulf County Florida. In addition to the long-term program, the GCTDC would host a series of partner workshops aimed at developing a unified message, and creating a broader awareness of Gulf County.

III. Please provide a cost summary/budget. Detail any matching/cooperative funds available for use, and any cooperative support from governmental or other agencies.

To fully create, produce and implement a Master and Sub-Brand Social Media program within an 18-month timeframe for Gulf County, the following costs are estimated:

April 2013 – Dec 2014

Project	Cost
Social Media Plan Development	\$20,000
Social Media Brand Asset Development	\$35,000
Social Media Plan Implementation	\$150,000
Social Monitoring/Management	\$50,000
Partner Workshops	<u>\$25,000</u>
TOTAL	\$280,000

Should the GCTDC be awarded additional funding from the RESTORE Act, we will align our current social media initiatives and funding with this overall social media campaign. In addition, as a VISIT FLORIDA Partner, the GCTDC may apply for a series of matching funds grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000 during this time period. Also, the GCTDC constantly seeks strategic partnerships which will be a main component of the Social Media initiatives.

IV. Please provide a timeline for project completion. Explain the technical and environmental feasibility (including any permitting considerations) of the project.

We suggest an 18-month timeframe to create, produce and implement a Master- and Sub-Brand Social Media program:

April 2013 – Dec 2014

Project	Timing*
Social Media Plan Development	April - May 2013
Social Media Brand Asset Development	May 2013
Social Media Plan Implementation	May 2013 – Dec 2014
Social Monitoring/Management	May 2013 – Dec 2014
Partner Workshops	April 2013 – Dec 2014
Social Media Best Practices/What's New	April 2013
Customer Service Via Social Media	Sept. 2013
Social Media Best Practices/What's New	February 2014
2015 Integrated Program Planning	July 2014

***Timing is based on assumption funds are awarded and released April, 2013**

V. Please provide the qualifications of the Submitting Entity, the financial feasibility/sustainability and the economic feasibility and sustainability of the project (probability of success, etc.).

The Gulf County Tourist Development Council (GCTDC) is a division of Gulf County management developed exclusively to promote tourism and maintain the natural ecosystem of the beaches. Established in 1998, the GCTDC is funded by a \$.04 bed tax absorbed by visitors. Three (3) of the 4 cents are geared to administration and marketing efforts, and one (1) cent is geared to beach nourishment.

The mission of the GCTDC is to promote all of Gulf County to visitors outside of a 60-mile radius, prompt them to travel here for more than one night and become fully engaged so they become long-term, loyal visitors. Our marketing and promotions budget for 2012 – 2013 is \$200,000. To ensure our messaging and strategies are effective and unified, we create and implement all paid, owned, earned and shared media in house. All of our strategic marketing initiatives focus on four (4) key factors:

- Increase Visitation to Gulf County
- Increase Visitor Spending in Gulf County
- Deliver Qualified Leads to Partners
- Acquire Long Time, Loyal Visitors

Each of the above guidelines ensures measurability and accountability. If our analysis shows we are not garnering increased visitation, increased visitor spending, qualified leads, and the acquisition of long-time, loyal visitors, we are not successful.

VI. Please provide the anticipated results of the project, and whether it is included in a City of Port St. Joe, City of Wewahitchka or Gulf County Comprehensive and Mitigation Plan?

The results of the Master- and Sub-Brands Social Media Initiatives should be reflected in growing bed tax revenues, increased engagement via social networks, strong brand affinity and long-term growth in new and existing markets. By approaching Social Media as a unified effort with the Gulf County Florida Brand and the sub-brands, we are creating a strategic communications mechanism that reaches our visitor network on a broader basis with clear, concise messaging. Our goal is to see an increase in bed-tax revenues by Spring of 2014 and have continual growth on a year-round basis. This program aligns with City and County plans as Tourism growth is essential to the growth and stability of Gulf County Florida.

Submitted By:



Signature

1/15/13

Date

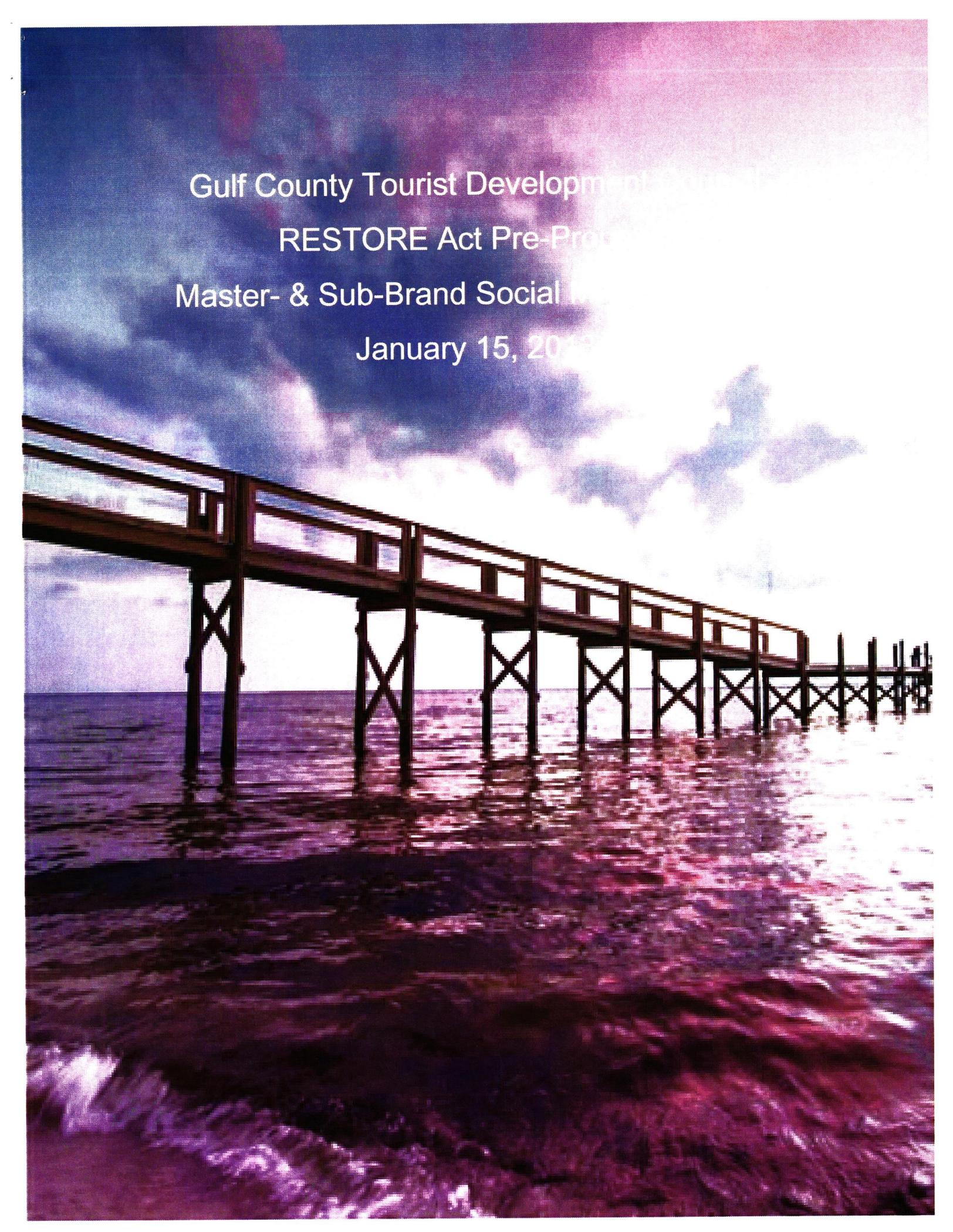
Gulf County Tourist Development Council
Company Name

150 Captain Fred's Place
Address

Port St. Joe, FL 32456
Address

850-229-7800
Telephone Number

jennifer@visitgulf.com
E-mail Address (if applicable)

A photograph of a long wooden pier extending from the foreground into the ocean. The pier has a railing and is supported by vertical posts with cross-bracing. The sky is filled with large, dramatic clouds, and the water is dark with some white foam from waves in the foreground.

Gulf County Tourist Development Council
RESTORE Act Pre-Project
Master- & Sub-Brand Social Media
January 15, 2019

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA
RESTORE ACT COMMITTEE (R.A.C.)

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**PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY AND PUBLIC ACCESS ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR
GULF COUNTY RESTORE ACT APPLICANTS**

I, Jennifer Jenkins the undersigned authority and/or representative of the entity Gulf County TDC and or the individual who has submitted the Gulf County RESTORE Act Proposal/Pre-Proposal, titled Master and Sub-brand Social Media hereby acknowledge, consent and accept the following representations that coincide with my/our submission for consideration, evaluation and possible recommendation and approval by the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners for funding from the RESTORE Act distribution that strictly complies with the guidelines and regulations set forth under the Restoration and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012:

1. I/We am the authorized representative of the application/pre-proposal referenced above.
2. I/We have thoroughly reviewed and familiarized myself and/or my entity on which I have submitted the application/pre-proposal on behalf of with the entirety of the Gulf County Public Records policy.
3. I/We have thoroughly reviewed and familiarized myself and/or my entity on which I have submitted the application/pre-proposal on behalf of with the entirety of the Florida Statute Chapter 119 which controls and permits public access to information.
4. I/We hereby acknowledge, consent and agree to the controlling policies and statutes above as well as the free and open exchange of any and all submissions provided hereunder this application/pre-proposal and all information exchanged hereafter including but not limited to further amendments to these proposals as well as surveys, studies, research, data production, books, drawings, property records, work papers, county owner lists, files, forms, reports, accounts, documents, manuals, handbooks, instructions, printouts relating in any manner for the production of the application. In addition, all papers, notes, data, reference material, documentation, programs, printouts, and all other media and forms of expression that in any way include, incorporate or reflect any confidential information of what ultimately shall become the Gulf County plans for use and application of the RESTORE Act funding.
5. I/We acknowledge, agree and fully consent to cooperate with the appointed Gulf County RESTORE ACT committee, county officials and staff as a continuing obligation and condition of final review for this RESTORE Act application/pre-proposal.
6. I/We have submitted this acknowledgment to Gulf County RESTORE Act Committee and the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners for the purpose and intent of receiving an evaluation, review and possible recommendations for anticipated funding from the Restoration and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012.


Signature of RESTORE Act Applicant

Date: 1/17/13

Jennifer Jenkins
Printed Name