



# Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

**7B**  
Agenda Item #

**Requested Meeting Date:** September 28, 2021

**Title of Item:** Aitkin County Business Development and Recreation Grants

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	<b>Action Requested:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft)	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing* <small>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</small>
<b>Submitted by:</b> Mark Jeffers		<b>Department:</b> Administration
<b>Presenter (Name and Title):</b> Mark Jeffers, Economic Development Coordinator		<b>Estimated Time Needed:</b> 10 minutes
<b>Summary of Issue:</b> Aitkin County received 5 Grant Requests from the Business Development and Recreation Grant fund. We have \$4,600.00 in requests with \$5,400 available. Attached is a memo with the applications and Economic Development Committee recommendations.		
<b>Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:</b>		
<b>Recommended Action/Motion:</b> Approve grant requests		
<b>Financial Impact:</b> Is there a cost associated with this request? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$ Is this budgeted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i>		

Legally binding agreements must have County Attorney approval prior to submission.



## AITKIN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

Aitkin County Government Center  
307 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW, Room 305  
Aitkin, MN 56431

Mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us  
Phone: 218-927-7305  
cell: 218-513-6188

TO: Aitkin County Board of Commissioners  
FROM: Mark Jeffers, Economic Development Coordinator  
DATE: September 28, 2021  
SUBJECT: Aitkin County Business Development and Recreation Grants

Aitkin County received 5 Grant Requests for the Aitkin County Business Development and Recreation Grant fund.

We have \$4,600 in requests with \$5,400 available. Applications are attached. Grants Received are listed below with the Economic Development Committee recommendations following in yellow.

1. Unbound Adventures, Mobile Kayak Rental. \$1000 for Kayak equipment.  
The Economic Development Committee's recommendation is to fully fund this application.
2. Aitkin Chamber of Commerce, Paddle your Glass Off Event. \$1000 for event promotion.  
The Economic Development Committee's recommendation is to not fund this application at this time. The Committee completely supports this event and the group
3. Jaques Art Center, Community Canvas. \$650 for event promotions.  
The Economic Development Committee's recommendation is to not fund this application.
4. City of Palisade, Octoberfest Event. \$1,000 for event promotions.  
The Economic Development Committee's recommendation is to fully fund this application.
5. Lake Mille Lacs Scenic Byway, Bird Watching Trail. \$1,000 for website development.  
The Economic Development Committee's recommendation is to fully fund this application.

**Aitkin County**  
**Application for Aitkin County Tourism Promotion and Development Grants**  
**January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019**

**DEADLINE** Grant requests must be submitted to ACTPDG c/o Ross Wagner, Aitkin County Courthouse, 217 2nd St. N.W.#131, Aitkin, MN 56431. Funding recommendations will be considered at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Aitkin County Economic Development Committee in May. Application deadline is April 23, 2019.

Committee recommendations will be submitted to the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners for final approval.

**Event/Activity Eligibility:** Tourism Grant Funds shall be used to market tourism and related events that will benefit Aitkin County. Funds shall be targeted towards attracting new, repeat and extended stay tourism visitations to Aitkin County or activities that will enhance the Aitkin County economy. Events eligible for funding include: community/recreational events such as races, rides, tournaments, shows and exhibits; community celebrations; logistic and informational materials for tourism related information booths or trade shows and other. Eligible uses include radio, newspaper, TV, signage, internet, brochures and other related advertising; printed publications and marketing promotions.

Special consideration will be given to applications that will enhance the Northwood's ATV Trail through signage, promotion, activities or trail amenities.

Tourism grant funds shall not be used for salaries, awards, prizes or gifts. Maximum grant amount is \$1,000.00 minimum is \$100.00.

General Criteria for funding annual or repeat events. Annual events are described as events such as 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebrations, annually held races or contests and similar type events. New annual events will be considered for funding. Repeat annual events may be considered if the event changes in a significant way or if the event wants to try new advertising/promotion activities to reach a significantly new market. Tourism funds are not intended to be used an annual subsidy or line item budget amount.

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

**Note: No reimbursement grants will be awarded.**

**1. PROGRAM INFORMATION**

Project Name: Mobile Kayak Rental

Date(s) of Program: on-going Location of Program: within 30 miles of Aitkin, MN

Organization/Community Name: Unbound Adventures

Person in Charge of Project: Ashley Gustafson

Organization Mailing Address (Street Name or P.O. Box or Route and Box # and City and Zip Code):

30742 Pioneer Ave, Aitkin, MN 56431

Contact Person's Phone #: 218-839-9948

Legal Status of Organization:  Unit of Government (for example cities, townships etc.)

Non-profit Tourism Association

Non-profit Association

Is your organization registered as a nonprofit corporation with the Secretary of State? NO

If yes, please include a copy of your certificate of corporation. (Local units of government do not need to file.) In multi-community/multi-organization projects, only the entity responsible for signing documents and administering funds needs to be registered. Use your registered name on all documents.

Description/focus/purpose of your organization To provide mobile (delivered directly to the customer) kayak rentals within 30 miles of Aitkin, MN.

**2. FUNDING:**

Amount requested from Aitkin County Tourism (ACTGAC)  
(Minimum \$100.00, maximum request is 1,000.00)

\$1,000

Amount of your organization's match

\$12,869

\* For kayak expansion, other rental options (bikes, paddle boards) not included in this figure



Name



Date:

6/29/21

Ashley L Gustafson

## Aitkin County Tourism Grant Application Addendum

3. Currently Unbound Adventures offers mountain bike adventure tours in the Cuyuna Country State Recreation Area. Unbound Adventures is a mobile business based out of Aitkin, MN. Booking is done by phone or online. Staff (owner/operators Ashley and Andrew Gustafson) meet clients at the trail head, provide a bike rental fitted to each rider, helmets if needed, and then provide a fully guided riding experience. The service is tailored to introducing mountain biking to new riders who would otherwise be unlikely to feel comfortable enough to try the sport. Our slogan is "We Do Everything but the Pedaling!"

Unbound Adventures opened June 2021. Initial calls to the business, monitoring of social media, and connections with the local chamber of commerce have indicated an additional market for mobile rental of other human powered recreation such as kayaks and paddle boards. Unbound Adventures would like to expand our business model to include mobile rental of gravel bikes, eBikes, kayaks, and paddle boards. Clients would call or book online to have their desired rental delivered to their home, cabin, or start location of their adventure. Unbound would pick up the equipment at the end of the allotted rental time.

There are currently no bike, kayak, or paddle board rental companies in Aitkin County despite a demand for this and prime routes for kayaking. Any approved grant dollars would be used to purchase kayaks for a rental fleet. Kayak rental (including delivery and pick up) would be available anywhere within 30 miles of Aitkin.

Unbound already has a website, memberships to several local chambers of commerce in the area, brochures, cards, google ads, Facebook, and Instagram established. Kayak rental services would be added to all marketing materials to reach the widest possible audience. The availability and marketing of kayak rentals in the Aitkin area would enhance current visitor experiences and draw additional interest to the area. Increased kayaking activity on the Ripple and Mississippi Rivers would especially benefit Aitkin area restaurant and hospitality businesses. It is anticipated that customers renting kayaks for a day trip will need to stay near Aitkin and are likely to eat out before and/or after their outing. Unbound would work to promote other area businesses to customers utilizing rental or tour services.



Total projected budget

\$ 1890.00

3. PROJECT/EVENT DESCRIPTION: Be concise and complete; attach supporting information if needed.

Kayak/Canoe Paddle on the Mississippi, beginning at Kimball Access, ending at County Campground. Participants will be shuttled from registration to launch site by volunteers. They will paddle the Mississippi, ending at the park where there will be beer, wine, and whiskey tasting. \$15 ticket includes shuttle, tasting, and branded wine glass.

What do you hope to accomplish, how it will be done and specifically how the grant funds will be used.

to promote Aitkin Co. waterways and businesses - funds will help offset insurance, porta pottie, advertising, and to supplement the cost of kayak rentals for participants who don't own their own.

Explain how your project will bring visitors to or provide a positive economic impact on Aitkin County.

The River Trails Committee Promotes Aitkin Co waterways as a destination for outdoor recreation - we also aim to introduce paddling to those new to the activity, in hopes they enjoy it and will continue using our waterways.

List target markets:

Where - geographic areas (s)

Aitkin / metro / Minnesota

List target audience:

Who - type of group or activity

Outdoor enthusiasts, and those new to outdoor rec.

Please estimate the number of people who will come from: Your local community and surrounding area: 30

From other communities in Minnesota: 30

From outside of Minnesota: a few?

4. PROJECT BUDGET: in the space below, provide a budget for the entire event.

Category	ACTGAC Funds	Applicant Funds	Total
Insurance	315.00		315.00
Liquor License		100.00	100.00
Porta Pottie	25.00	90.00	115.00
Advertising	300.00		300.00
Kayak Rentals	360.00		360.00
Insulated glasses		700.00	700.00
TOTALS	1000.00	890.00	1890.00

NOTE: A written evaluation must be completed and returned to the Aitkin County Economic Development Committee within 30 days of the completion of the project/event to be eligible to receive future funds. Submit to; ACTDGP, c/o Ross Wagner, Aitkin County Courthouse, 217 2nd St NW, #131, Aitkin, MN 56431.

Signature: Official person for community/organization, who will be responsible for the funding request and returning the evaluation to the Aitkin County Tourism Grant Advisory Committee.

Kathleen Ryan 02/10/2021



5/26/2021

Tourism Board  
Aitkin County

Dear Board Members,

Thank you for the tourism grant to the Jaques Art Center to help us advertise our 'Happy Trials' Juried Art Exhibit. We had our biggest response to our theme with 57 artists and 104 pieces!

The opening was on 5/7/21 and the opening reception the next day on Sat. 5/7/21. We think the advertising we were able to do, because of your generosity, has caught the Aitkin community, county and surrounding areas attention and we are delighted with the response we have received so far.

Please know that you are invited to your Art Center anytime. Our hours are Tuesdays – Saturdays from 11am to 4pm.

Again our thanks,

Pamela Andell  
Executive Director  
Jaques Art Center

Advertising costs through grant funds:

The Guide:	\$559.00
Aitkin Age:	\$ 59.00
Promotion	\$ 32.00
Total:	\$650.00



*In 5/8 Bargain Hunter  
 2021  
 Summer Guide  
 Promotion Costs*

*59-  
 559-  
 32-  
 -----  
 \$ 650*



Jaques Art Center  
 121 2nd St. NW  
 Aitkin, MN 56431  
 Celebrating 26 Years

**Aitkin County**  
**Application for Aitkin County Tourism Promotion and Development**  
**Grants**  
**January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021**

**DEADLINE:** Grant requests must be submitted to ACTPDG c/o Mark Jeffers, Aitkin County Courthouse, 217 2nd St. N.W.#131, Aitkin, MN 56431 or EMAIL to [mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us](mailto:mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us). Funding recommendations will be considered at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Aitkin County Economic Development Committee in May. Application deadline is September 7, 2021.

Committee recommendations will be submitted to the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners for final approval.

Event/Activity Eligibility: Tourism Grant Funds shall be used to market tourism and related events that will benefit Aitkin County. Funds shall be targeted towards attracting new, repeat and extended stay tourism visitations to Aitkin County or activities that will enhance the Aitkin County economy. Events eligible for funding include: community/recreational events such as races, rides, tournaments, shows and exhibits; community celebrations; logistic and informational materials for tourism related information booths or trade shows and other. Eligible uses include radio, newspaper, TV, signage, internet, brochures and other related advertising; printed publications and marketing promotions.

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General Criteria for funding annual or repeat events. Annual events are described as events such as 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebrations, annually held races or contests and similar type events. New annual events will be considered for funding. Repeat annual events may be considered if the event changes in a significant way or if the event wants to try new advertising/promotion activities to reach a significantly new market. Tourism funds are not intended to be used an annual subsidy or line item budget amount.

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

***Note: No reimbursement grants will be awarded.***

**1. PROGRAM INFORMATION**

**Project Name:** Promote Palisade

**Date(s) of Program:** 2021

**Location of Program:** Palisade

**Organization/Community Name:** City of Palisade

**Person in Charge of Project:** Maureen M. Mishler

**Organization Mailing Address (Street Name or P.O. Box or Route and Box # and City and Zip Code):**

304 Main Street, P.O. Box 144 Palisade, MN 56469

**Contact Person's Phone #:** 218.845.2051

**Legal Status of Organization:**

**Unit of Government (for example cities, townships**

**etc.) Non-profit Tourism Association**

**Non-profit Association**

**Is your organization registered as a nonprofit corporation with the Secretary of State?** \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please include a copy of your certificate of corporation. (Local units of government do not need to file.) In multi-community/multi-organization projects, only the entity responsible for signing documents and administering funds needs to be registered. Use your registered name on all documents.

**Description/focus/purpose of your organization:**

To provide a well-rounded series of events that promote tourism in Palisade and our surrounding area.

**2. FUNDING:**

Amount requested from Aitkin County Tourism (ACTGAC) \$ 1000.00  
(Minimum \$100.00, maximum request is 1,000.00)

Amount of your organization's match \$ 500.00

**Total projected budget** \$ 1500.00

**3. PROJECT/EVENT DESCRIPTION: Be concise and complete; attach supporting information if needed.**

The City of Palisade is looking to host one major event (Octoberfest), and promote other City events and activities. Palisade has much to offer including scenic beauty in our City and the surrounding area along with the Great River Road. We have customer centric businesses to feed and entertain tourists, and provide a welcoming place to visit.

**What do you hope to accomplish, how it will be done and specifically how the grant funds will be used.**

We hope to create a fun-filled family day with activities for the young and young at heart. We expect to draw tourists from the surrounding area through advertising on the radio, flyers, and social media ads. We will pay for entertainment, bouncy gym activities and perhaps pumpkin decorating and prizes for creativity and participation.

**Explain how your project will bring visitors to or provide a positive economic impact on Aitkin County.**

We would be drawing people from Aitkin County and the surrounding counties during a time when fall travel will be at a peak and local businesses will benefit from the added traffic.

**List target markets:**

**Where - geographic areas (s)**

Aitkin, Itasca, and Crow Wing Counties and the city of Palisade.

**List target audience:**

**Who - type of group or activity**

All ages, especially multi-generational families

**Please estimate the number of people who will come from: Your local community and surrounding area:**

From other communities in Minnesota: 200

From outside of Minnesota: 40

**4. PROJECT BUDGET: in the space below, provide a budget for the entire event.**

Category	ACTGAC Funds	Applicant Funds	Total
Music- Entertainment	500.00	100.00	600
Bouncy Gym (3)	500.00	400.00	900
<b>TOTALS</b>	1000.00	500.00	1500

NOTE: A written evaluation must be completed and returned to the Aitkin County Economic Development Committee within 30 days of the completion of the project/event to be eligible to receive future funds.  
Submit to; ACTDGP, c/o Mark Jeffers, Aitkin County Courthouse, 217 2<sup>nd</sup> St NW, #131, Aitkin, MN 56431or  
EMAIL: [mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us](mailto:mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us)

Signature: Official person for community/organization, who will be responsible for the funding request and returning the evaluation to the Aitkin County Tourism Grant Advisory Committee.

Name Therese M. Mott Date: Sept 7, 2021

## Mark Jeffers

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**From:** Steve Dubbs <jsdubbs@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 07, 2021 4:43 PM  
**To:** Mark Jeffers  
**Subject:** Tourism Grant  
**Attachments:** attachment 1.pdf

[NOTICE: This message originated outside of the Aitkin County Mail System -- DO NOT CLICK on links or open attachments unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Mark-

Attached is an application for the tourism grant program. The Lake Mille Lacs Scenic Byway would like to develop a bird trail along the scenic byway.

Mille Lacs is renowned for its diversity, abundance and rarity of the birds that are attracted to the it. In fact, the Audubon Society has declared Mille Lacs an "Important Bird Area. We would like to attract more birders to the area to help diversify the areas tourism by educating people about the uniqueness of Mille Lacs.

The grant will help us with our phase 1 activities which include:

- A) Development meeting with partners, MN DNR, MLB DNR, U.S.Fish & Wildlife, and the Audubon Society.
- B) Creation of a bird check list identify birds that can be spotted. Including where and when.
- C) Identification of sites to see birds.
- E) Website Development. (most of the funds spent here)

Future phases will include printed materials, signage at sites with QR code, interpretive narratives and a area birding event.

Thanks you for your consideration,

Steve Dubbs  
Lake Mille Lacs Scenic Byway Council  
612.805.4738

**Description/focus/purpose of your organization:**

**2. FUNDING:**

Amount requested from Aitkin County Tourism (ACTGAC)  
(Minimum \$100.00, maximum request is 1,000.00)

\$ 1000

Amount of your organization's match

\$ 1000

**Total projected budget**

\$ 2000

**3. PROJECT/EVENT DESCRIPTION: Be concise and complete; attach supporting information if needed.**

Develop a Bird Watching Trail Along the Lake Millelacs Scenic Byway to highlight the abundant birding opportunities in the area. The Audubon Society calls Millelacs an "Important Bird Area"

**What do you hope to accomplish, how it will be done and specifically how the grant funds will be used.**

1) Create a partnership w/ Aitkin, MN DNR, Millelacs DNR, US Fish and Wildlife to create bird list & birding sites 2) signage 3) website development

**Explain how your project will bring visitors to or provide a positive economic impact on Aitkin County.**

Birding is the #2 pastime in America. we plan to attract birders from around the country by promoting the unique birding of Millelacs

**List target markets:**  
Where - geographic areas (s)

5 states area

**List target audience:**  
Who - type of group or activity

Birders  
Nature Lovers

**Please estimate the number of people who will come from: Your local community and surrounding area:**

From other communities in Minnesota: 1005

From outside of Minnesota: 1005

**4. PROJECT BUDGET: in the space below, provide a budget for the entire event.**

Category	ACTGAC Funds	Applicant Funds	Total
Voucher Books	N/A	N/A	\$
Website Development	\$1600	\$1000	\$2000
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>\$2000</b>

