

## Matching Co-Op Program Guidelines

The matching funds program has been one of the most widely accepted and supported Department initiatives.

For the 2003-2004 Fiscal Year, the Department has revised its guidelines for the matching funds co-op program. These guideline changes are meant to further encourage and support the marketing efforts of communities all across the state in order to increase tax revenues generated by the tourism industry. The following guidelines are now in place for this vital program:

### Availability

The program is available to Tennessee convention and visitors bureaus, and other recognized no-profit county and community tourism organizations. The Department will match approved marketing projects on a one for one basis during the state's fiscal year beginning November 1, 2003 and ending June 30, 2004.

If the approved marketing project involves a media purchase, it will be your choice to (a) have your agency place the media and be reimbursed by the Department's media placement agency, or (b) the media may be purchased on your behalf by the Department's media placement agency.

Marketing projects are limited to print media, billboard, broadcast media (television and radio), cooperative media programs other than the Department's programs, and marketing projects that will have a positive impact on tourism to the area.

### Participation

To participate in the program, the tourism organization must submit a written request to Commissioner Whitaker prior to October 15, 2003, indicating the amount of the marketing project match requested, the total marketing plan, the anticipated return on the investment, and the supporting tourist trends for the past three years. In addition, the request should include who will coordinate the project including their address, phone, fax, and e-mail address. The department will accept requests to participate in the program beginning September 1, 2003. The department may approve all or a portion of any request based on the availability of funds, total number of requests to participate in the program, and anticipated return on investment.

All convention and visitors bureaus that participated in the fiscal year 2002-2003 program are eligible to receive up to the same level of funding, provided they submit a plan that meets the new 2003-2004 guidelines outlined here.

Approval of funding also requires that the tourism organization (a) place a highlighted link on their Web site's Home Page linking it to the Department's Web site, [www.Tnvacation.com](http://www.Tnvacation.com), and (b) include the state's Web site address and 1-800 number, 1-800-GO-2-TENN, on all eligible print advertising.

All print media purchased on behalf of the tourism organization must contain information on how to obtain the department's vacation guide. The necessary artwork will be provided upon approval of your marketing project.

The tourism organization must agree to provide written documentation to the Department verifying the results of the marketing project and whether or not the anticipated return on investment was achieved.

#### Ineligible Costs

The department will not match marketing plans for advertising production costs, media that is already sponsored by the department such as the vacation guide or co-op sections in publications, or expenses for bureau operations.

The Commissioner will advise the tourism organization and our media placement agency of the amount of the marketing project approved for matching. The actual reimbursement for the project or purchase of media will be coordinated by the media placement agency. In order to verify that the bureau did have expenses equal to their matching request, documentation of your marketing project purchases should be provided to the media placement agency. Failure to provide documentation of expenses equal to the amount presented in the request may prevent participation in the program.

This marketing cooperative program provides tourism organizations the opportunity to expand the impact of their marketing message, increase visitation to their community and increase travel generated revenues. We encourage your participation.