



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Regional Almaguin Highlands Business Retention and Expansion Project

March 2015

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Organization Background

The Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce (AHCC) is established as a regional not-for-profit corporation to serve the entire Almaguin area business community through advocacy, promotion and support.

The AHCC is governed by an elected Board of Directors that consists partly of the following: Emilio Foffano – President, Anthony Rizzo – Vice President, Louisa Moffit - Secretary and Tom Tota - Treasurer. The initial participants immediately recognized the importance of a well-structured, democratic organization in order to best promote the businesses and communities it represents.

The Chamber originally was created as the Burk's Falls and Area Chamber of Commerce, through financial partnership with the municipalities of Burk's Falls, Armour and Ryerson, however the organization has recognized the importance of regional collaboration and has welcomed businesses from outside of the area. As a result, The AHCC has changed their name to reflect this. The AHCC was re-created and incorporated to reflect current regional needs, recognizing that working together more can be achieved.

Today, the AHCC continues to strive in achieving its Mission Statement:

“To be the voice for a prosperous business community that fosters pride in our area; and to develop economic growth on behalf of its members and the communities it represents”.

Project Background

The Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce (AHCC) is proposing the implementation of the "Regional Almaguin Highlands Business, Retention and Expansion Project". Almaguin Highlands region is made up of 18 Municipalities from Novar to Callander, Port Loring to Kearney. This project will include the participation of 13 communities all located within the Almaguin region. These communities include the following;

The Villages of Burk's Falls, South River and Sundridge, The Municipalities of Powassan and Magnetawan, The Townships of Armour, Ryerson, Machar, Strong, Chisholm McMurrich/Monteith, and Joly and the Town of Kearney.

Economic and business development is a clear mandate for the Almaguin Region and this project will help strengthen and diversify the local economy. Engaging the business community is crucial to sustaining and growing the economy. The project will provide the needed knowledge to address any concerns, improve relationships with businesses, improve community and business competitiveness and improve capacity. The project will help develop further action plans to grow and stimulate the economy, identify and embrace opportunities and address issues or concerns.

Communities often lack the capacity to pursue and realize economic opportunities on their own. By working together, these communities can foster future growth and job creation through the pursuit of long-term, sustainable economic development.

Project Timing

This project is pending funding. As soon as all funding applications have been confirmed and approval received, the project shall commence. The consultant may be provisionally accepted prior to the funding being granted. **Submission deadline is March 20th, 2015.** Successful candidates may be contacted for interviews at the Burk's Falls Village Council Chambers, located at 172 Ontario St, Burk's Falls. It is expected that, in total, the project will run for 18+ months. The project will begin with an initial meeting between the consultant and the Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

Purpose of Consultant

To coordinate the overall Almaguin Regional BR&E project and ensure that it is designed, planned, organized and carried through to implementation and evaluation of local action plans.

Specific Tasks, Duties and Responsibilities

- Be the primary contact and spokesperson for the BR&E project,
- Organize and lead meetings regarding the project,
- Coordinate the design and planning of the project,
- Review BR&E survey and develop local community questions (if applicable)
- Dedicate sufficient time to manage and implement activities,
- Coordinate data collection and manage access to the data,
- Collect contact information for targeted businesses, print surveys and cover letters,
- Coordinate volunteer activities associated with business visits with the assistance of local economic development officers and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
- Coordinate Taskforce activities associated with business visits,
- Collect and review completed surveys,
- Assist with responses to immediate business concerns,
- Manage the data entry and analysis process,
- Write the final report action plan,
- Coordinate action planning, program assessment and reporting,
- Sign and implement confidentiality contract,
- Train and assist the taskforce members where necessary:
 - Complete a series of practice business visits,
 - Lead the taskforce BR&E through project specific training.

Expected Results

- Overall progress of the project will be regularly tracked and monitored and communicated to all participating communities,
- Local action plans will be developed and implemented in response to survey findings,
- Evaluation will occur to determine the extent to which actions/projects are achieving desired objectives and to reflect on the reasons for success and/or lack of success,
- Regional/community reports developed

Qualifications and Skills Required

- Experience in coordinating and leading BR&E community Projects,
- Experience in community/economic development,
- Skills in planning, organizing, designing, implementing and evaluating,
- Management skills (project management, holding meetings, involving people, planning and BR&E volunteer training)
- Strong communication skills,
- Conflict resolution skills,
- High degree of professionalism when representing the communities for the project,
- Able to respect and exercise confidentiality,

Time Commitment

- 200+ Hours over 12-18 months,
- Additional hours required during the implementation process,

Benefits and Rewards

- Be involved in a highly successful project,
- Increased visibility in the regional business community,
- Increased knowledge and understanding of the businesses in the community,
- Opportunity to make a significant impact to the local economy,
- Promote business development and job creation in the region,
- Opportunity to work with many regional stakeholders, and
- Identify partners for new projects,

Project Oversight and Reporting Relationships

The Consultant will be retained by The Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce. For administrative and contract purposes, the Consultant will report to Anthony Rizzo, Vice President. Please address all enquiries to Anthony Rizzo. All work must be performed to the satisfaction of The AHCC.

Anthony Rizzo
Vice President
Almaguin Highlands Chamber of Commerce
Box 544 – 113B Yonge St
Burk's Falls, ON P0A 1C0
705-349-0503
info@doelake.on.ca

Throughout the work process, The AHCC, through telephone or email communications, may contact the Consultant with regard to any updates, questions or concerns. It is expected that the Consultant will be available to provide updates to such requests in a timely manner. The Consultant shall provide to AHCC, via Anthony Rizzo, hard copies and electronic copies of all final reports. The Consultant shall be prepared to make presentations to the AHCC and other stakeholders.

Public Participation

This project will rely largely on interactions between a Taskforce and local business owners and operators. The Taskforce will consist of AHCC Members, Economic Development staff members, and community volunteers.

Format for Proposals

Proposals must clearly indicate how the Consultant will carry out the tasks set out and should include, but are not limited to, the following information:

- Letter of Transmittal
- Executive Summary
- Brief Organizational Profile (including background and experience)
- Proposed Project Schedule
- Project Management (including key staff)
- Timelines and Milestones for Completion of Work
- Proposed interim invoicing stages, if any
- A list of three references from projects of a similar nature
- Appendices (resumes of person(s) performing the work)
- Cost Estimates and Typical Billing Rates (consultants are encouraged to provide a matrix for the project billing, outlining the days of effort, resulting fees and expenses, and responsibilities at each stage of the project, for each member of the consultant team)
- Travel reimbursement will be aligned with the Government of Ontario travel and meal directive.
- All prices must be quoted in Canadian dollars (indicate taxes separately)

- Signature by Authorized Official

Submission Conditions

1. It is understood that the project is subject to funding approval
2. No payment will be provided for the preparation and submission of proposals
3. Final selection will be based on the assessment of the merits of the proposal provided
4. The AHCC reserves the right not to accept the lowest, or any, proposal
5. Eight copies of the proposal must be received in a sealed envelope at the Village of Burk's Falls Office no later than 3:00 PM on March 20, 2015:

Anthony Rizzo
Vice President
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6. Any proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. No proposal will be opened until the deadline has passed.

Proposal Selection and Evaluation

Proposals will be reviewed using a quality based evaluation process. The AHCC will evaluate each proposal based on the documentation requested herein, utilizing criteria, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Previous Experience with comparable work
- Timelines and Milestones for Completion of Work
- Knowledge and skills of the consultant, including:
 - Understanding of BR&E project process and financing,
 - Experience working with regions of our size,
 - Data collection and compilation,
 - Experience developing action plans,
 - Price (indicate taxes separately)
 - Project Timing (including Milestones)

Once the most qualified proposals have been identified, the staff will contact and schedule interviews with no more than three selected firms to be hosted by The AHCC.