

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT: Wild Adventures Request for Project Approval for Georgia's Tourism Development Act Program

DATE OF MEETING: February 14, 2023

Work
Session/Regular
Session

BUDGET IMPACT:

FUNDING SOURCE:

- Annual
- Capital
- N/A
- SPLOST
- TSPLOST

COUNTY ACTION REQUESTED ON: Wild Adventures request for approval to participate in the Georgia Tourism Development Act Program

HISTORY, FACTS AND ISSUES: The Georgia Tourism Development Act (O.C.G.A. § 48-8-270 et seq) as amended by HB 318 during the 2013 Session, provides a state sales and use tax incentive program for tourism development projects to induce the creation or expansion of tourism attractions within this state in order to relieve unemployment by preserving and creating jobs that would not exist if not for the sales and use tax refund offered by the State and local government. The project must be approved by the Commissioner of Community Affairs, the Commissioner of Economic Development and the local government.

The incentive for developers of approved new or expanding tourism projects over \$1 million in costs is the ability to recover over a period of ten years, the lesser of the total amount of the increased sales and use taxes over previous uses or up to 2.5% of the project's development costs. For new or expanded tourism attractions, eligible project activities include, but are not limited to real estate acquisition, the construction and equipping of the tourism attraction and the installation of various facilities and infrastructure to support the attraction. Renovation costs for existing attractions are ineligible.

Wild Adventures is requesting approval from Lowndes County to apply for participation in the Georgia Tourism Development Act Program for the purpose of developing a campground, the Safari Campground Resort. The application process will not incur any expense on behalf of Lowndes County.

Staff has reviewed the request and is supportive of both the development of the campground and participation in the Georgia Tourism Development Program.

OPTIONS: 1. Motion for approval to participate in the above mentioned program and allow the Chairman to execute documents required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to move forward with the process.

2. Board's Pleasure

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Board's Pleasure