

Podcasting Across Nebraska

2006-2007 Application

Applicant: Downtown Grand Island
c/o Chamber of Commerce

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1. Is this application from:

A single community

A single community with multiple partners (Please list partners below.)

A regional group of communities (Please list participating communities and organizations below.)

Participating communities and organizations:

Chamber of Commerce
Downtown Grand Island
Hall County Historical Society
International Visitors
City of Grand Island
Convention & Visitors Bureau
Stuhr Museum

Who will act as the lead for this project? Downtown Grand Island

Where will the equipment be housed? Grand Island Chamber of Commerce

2. Why is your community or region interested in podcasting?

With our recent designation as a Main Street Community, downtown Grand Island is re-energizing itself to propel our downtown to the next stage of growth. Our downtown has remained relatively strong despite an outpouring of growth and development along the Highway 281 corridor. Approximately 90% of our downtown buildings are occupied. However we continue to identify ways to create a "sense of place" in the downtown area in order to encourage more customers to the heart of the community.

One area of potential enhancement is capitalizing on the historic buildings in our community. For years, we have held downtown walking tours, originally developed by historian Bob Manley. As is true in many downtowns, there are several unique architectural structures downtown and many with quite an interesting, even colorful past. By offering information on the downtown via podcasting, we will be able to extend our

“marketing arm” for the downtown far beyond the community, state and region. For example, we envision developing a podcast to:

- 1) capture the historic information and stories and make these available for expanded viewing via several Grand Island/Hall County organization web sites
- 2) cross promote other attractions in the area (Stuhr Museum, Heartland Shooting Park, agri tourism, etc.) to develop a broad range of entertainment possibilities for visitors
- 3) provide a means for downtown businesses, and the general Grand Island community as a whole, to keep up to date on the growth, development and activities within the downtown area

3. Please describe how your community or region plans to use audio and/or video content to promote tourism, events, recreation, historic sites, and other activities. Please include project goals (i.e. to promote the county fair) and expected outcomes (i.e. an increase in visitors from outside the county) for at least two podcasts which will be made available over the internet.

Downtown Grand Island – Downtown Grand Island currently has an underutilized walking tour in place. Podcasting would allow us to make this tour easily accessible to more people. The tour could also feature our upper level housing development and serve as an excellent marketing/development tool for these revitalization efforts.

Downtown Growth – As new businesses and people locate in downtown, the podcast would be an excellent way to notify “neighbors” of these newcomers and their services. Developing a sense of community and support for new businesses is critical to their understanding of the special benefits and challenges of locating in a downtown. It would also be an excellent way to provide “tips” for businesses, cross market events/sales, and generate enthusiasm.

Downtown Events – Annual Downtown events include Pumpkin Painting, Old Fashioned Christmas, Sidewalk Chalk Art Festival, and Upstairs Downtown (tour of upper level spaces). Capturing the sounds of downtown events as well as the enthusiasm and energy in the conversation via the podcast, would certainly produce an increase in participation and business support for the events, resulting in an even more vibrant downtown.

Our community partners such as Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer and regional attractions (Hastings Museum) could also use this mechanism to market their market their museums and historic reenactment events. This will result in an outcome of increased visibility and generation of more visitors to the museums.

4. How do you plan to promote the podcasts through this project?

Our Chamber distributes a weekly update via email each week. We also have a very dynamic web site which includes information on a variety of topics. We envision adding the podcast to our web site and directing our community to that site. Downtown Grand Island also has a web site that would be ideal to host this information.

In addition, the Chamber participates in a weekly radio news show and would be able to promote the podcast through this venue.

Community partners such as the City of Grand Island, Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Economic Development would also be likely venues for hosting the podcast. Our

City has a governmental educational television station (GITV) and an "interview" and information could be shared with the viewing audience in this fashion.

5. Please list the regional or community Web sites which could link to the podcasts through this project?

Chamber of Commerce – www.gichamber.com

City of Grand Island – www.grand-island.com

CVB – www.visitgrandisland.com

Downtown – www.downtowngi.com

Economic Development Corporation – www.grandisland.org

6. Will this project involve youth? If so, how will they be involved?

The Chamber of Commerce has a great relationship with our local high schools. As such, we can envision a number of ways the youth could be involved. For instance, students interested in research, architecture, marketing or communications could be involved in the collection of information, compilation, and writing. Students in the information technology class could help with the actual logistics of the system and speech students could record the messages.

7. Are any other uses of podcasting within your community or region in place or planned?

The Chamber of Commerce itself is very interested in podcasting as another means of community with the business community and our membership. While no specific timeline is scheduled for podcasting due to budget, there are any number of opportunities, including development resources, property availability, labor market information, and marketing seasonal attractions (crane migration, for example).

We are unaware of any other podcasts within the Grand Island community and are very excited to think we may be the first.

E-mail completed applications to anne.byers@cio.ne.gov by 5:00 CT, October 13, 2006.