



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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**File #:** 18-703A, **Version:** 1

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### **Subject:**

Fiscal Year 2019 Elite Event funding recommendations from the Tourist Development Council.

### **Recommended Action:**

Approval of the Tourist Development Council's (TDC) funding recommendations for FY19 Elite Events.

This program provides funding for eligible major events that generate a large number of attendees and substantial room nights in the County.

As the funding agreements are negotiated consistent with Board approval, each will be delegated to the County Administrator for execution and will appear as a Non-Purchasing Delegated Item on a Board meeting agenda.

### **Strategic Plan:**

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.6 Support a vibrant community with recreation, arts, and culture to attract residents and visitors

### **Summary:**

With Board of County Commissioners (Board) approval, the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) staff will administer The Elite Event Program, which provides funding to qualified, high-profile events that meet the minimum criteria for room night generation and attendance, as well as media and/or marketing exposure for the County.

CVB staff will negotiate the terms and final funding amounts of each agreement for increased tourism promotional benefits.

### **Background Information:**

This is one of the marketing programs administered by the CVB on behalf of the TDC. On December 12, 2017, the Board approved revisions to the Elite Event Funding Guidelines. The most substantial revisions include expanding the program from two to three categories, revising attendance and room night criteria, adding a sunset provision, codifying the Elite Event Committee composition, and assigning responsibility for contract negotiations and final funding to CVB staff. The TDC is planning to review and discuss additional revisions to the Elite Event Funding Guidelines during a joint workshop with the Board in the coming months.

The approved guidelines require Category 1 events to generate at least 50,000 unique attendees and at least 25,000 room nights, Category 2 events at least 20,000 attendees and 10,000 room nights, and Category 3 events, at least 10,000 attendees and 5,000 room nights.

The CVB received a total of 16 Elite Event Applications for FY19; two requesting Category 1 funding, ten requesting Category 2 funding, and four requesting Category 3 funding. Three applications did

not meet the eligibility requirements as set forth in the Guidelines and one application was withdrawn.

On April 13, 2018, the TDC's Elite Event Committee met to announce scores, rank each event and vote on recommended limits for funding. The committee could not consider funding for Festivals of Speed, Ribfest or Pier Fest Grand Opening because these events did not meet the minimum scoring criteria for funding eligibility.

On April 18, 2018, during the regular TDC meeting, representatives from Ribfest and Pier Fest Grand Opening requested the TDC reconsider and approve funding for the events. After discussion, the TDC voted to uphold the Elite Committee's recommendation.

In early June 2018, staff received notice from the event organizer of the Bad Boy Mowers Gasparilla Bowl that the game venue will be shifted from Tropicana Field to a stadium in Tampa. On June 20, 2018, the TDC discussed the notice, requested additional information from the event organizer for discussion at the July 2018 TDC meeting, and unanimously approved pulling this event from the recommended Elite Event Funding List. If approved, this event will be forwarded separately to the Board for consideration.

The TDC has unanimously approved maximum (or "up to") funding amounts for the following events:

Total Category 1 Events: \$250,000

\$125,000 Valspar PGA Championship

\$125,000 Pure Silk Saint Pete Clearwater LPGA Classic

Total Category 2 Events: \$502,900

\$ 75,000 Outback Bowl/Clearwater Beach Day

\$ 75,000 Hooters Clearwater Super Boat National Championship

\$ 75,000 Clearwater Jazz Holiday

\$ 75,000 Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival

\$ 75,000 Clearwater Seafood & Blues Festival

\$ 52,900 St. Pete Pride

Total Category 3 Events: \$75,000

\$ 25,000 Sanding Ovations

\$ 25,000 King of the Beach (Fall)

\$ 25,000 King of the Beach (Spring)

Total Category 1, 2, and 3 Events: \$752,900

**Fiscal Impact:**

FY19 Elite Event maximum expenditure: \$752,900

Funding to support Elite Events is provided through the CVB's Annual Operating Budget. The source of funding is the Tourist Development Tax.

**Staff Member Responsible:**

David Downing, Director, Convention and Visitors Bureau

**Partners:**

Tourist Development Council

**Attachments:**

Elite Event Funding Guidelines