



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

February 1, 2019

Contact:

RFP Contact: Wendy Thomas
Southeast Tourism Society
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Background

About Southeast Tourism Society

Southeast Tourism Society is a 501(c)(6), formed in 1983 when a small group of industry leaders from the Southeast gathered for the purpose of organizing Southeast Tourism Society (STS). Those charter members shared the mutual belief that regional promotion of tourism, via a partnership between states, would create a powerful marketing alliance unparalleled throughout our country. More than thirty years later, their vision continues as STS has established itself as a leader among travel organizations.

Our mission

Dedicated to improving the economic vitality of the Southeast by uniting all segments of the Travel and Tourism Industry; promoting tourism within our member states, fostering cooperation, sharing resources and providing continuing education.

Our vision

To create, maintain and promote a cohesive membership organization responsive to the development of travel and tourism professionals and organizations within the southeast United States of America.

Pillars of focus - Organized in 2008

Education - STS hosts annual events to provide educational opportunities for travel and tourism professionals. These events consist of the STS Annual Meeting, Workshops, Webinars and STS Marketing College®, a program designed for seasoned and new industry professionals that allow graduates earn certification as a "TMP", Travel Marketing Professional.

Advocacy - Tourism community leaders have a powerful voice with elected officials at all levels of government. STS's advocacy program works to amplify the voice of tourism by developing platforms and events to allow grassroots leaders to share their success stories and challenges and to build relationships with elected officials. We have two biennial publications that serve as information resources for Members of Congress, the Federal Tourism Directory and *Tourism Works!*.

Recognition - There are multiple opportunities to recognize industry leaders via our award programs. The STS Top 20 Festivals and Events Award program is awarded quarterly, whereas the STS Shining Example Award Ceremony, recognizing the best and brightest in travel and tourism, takes place during the STS Connections.

Networking - Noted by our members as one of the top reasons to join STS, our annual events are a time to share ideas and catch-up on the latest industry news with your travel and tourism peers.

About Our Members

The STS region includes twelve states and the respective tourism offices of: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. The majority of our members are from these states.

STS has 388 member organizations and over 900 individual active members. Approximately 72% of our members are destination marketing organizations (DMO). The remaining 28% are a combination of industry service providers, attractions, associations, and lodging.

Project Requirements

Escape to the Southeast® Mission Statement

The mission of ETTS is to (1) promote leisure tourism within and to our member states and (2) provide STS members with a member benefit of discounted ETTS advertising offers and no-cost listings to promote their destination, product, or attraction.

ETTS Objectives

STS considers this a successful project if:

1. Leisure tourists and AAA offices utilize this resource for travel planning;
2. The STS members find value in the ETTS products;
3. The members and advertisers gain measurably increased traffic to their destinations, attractions and websites;
4. The ETTS products generate revenue for both STS and the selected vendor(s).
5. The project(s) generate enough revenue to eliminate the need for an initial financial investment from STS.

Project Scope

STS desires to have a printed publication, and a website with corresponding content, by January 2020.

1. ETTS Products

Both products require that the selected vendor(s) be able and are willing to provide the following:

- Product Development –Vendor will design, develop, implement and maintain ETTS product at the vendor's expense. STS will not provide funding for product development, maintenance or materials.
- Content Creation – Vendor will source, vet and provide engaging, current and enticing story and/or editorial content about destinations, attractions and travel in and to the STS states. STS will provide recommendation and final content approval while collaborating with the vendor(s) on theme and content. The travel guide and website will be a persuasive and useful resource for leisure travelers.

- Ad Sales –Vendor will develop advertisement offerings, solicit advertisers, manage advertising contracts, payment collections, etc. STS will receive detailed reporting of all ad sales, compensation, trade or other ad placement. STS will communicate these opportunities to its members.
- Minimum 3 (three) Year Commitment – The uniqueness of this opportunity and the STS commitment to its members requires that STS has a vendor willing to develop and evolve the ETTS brand for mutual benefit and success.

2. Annual Printed ETTS Travel Guide

The travel guide is designed to inspire and encourage leisure travel to and within the 12 STS member states. The editorial design should be reflective of this and cross promote the ETTS website for additional information while also driving traffic to member websites.

The guide’s editorial content will be generated and supplied by a selected vendor with limited STS guidance; however, STS will retain final editorial review and approval of the guide.

Layout, design and advertisement consideration should include, but is not limited to:

- State driven sections
- STS region and state maps
- Integrated content and ad placement
- State Travel Office – content and lead generation offer
- STS Member Benefit offer
- Lead generation for advertisers

Current Print Specs and Quantity

- The 2020 print quantity will be a minimum of 50,000 copies
- The below specifications are provided for reference, planning, and consideration and should not be considered an exact requirement

Trim Size: 8 3/8 x 10 3/4
 4/4
 72 Pages or 80 Pages (Need quote for both)
 Plus UV Coat Cover
 Print and bind-in BRC Card
 Saddlestitch

Paper:
45# gloss (Text)
100# gloss (Cover)

BRC Card (if needed)

6" x 9 1/2"
Vertical kiss perforation
binds between C1 & Page 1 / Last Page & C3
7 pt BRC card stock

Carton Pack approximately 80-100 copies. Estimated shipping costs to be provided in the proposal.

Current Distribution

Consumer Requests

- An average of 5,000 per year
- Bulk mailed through vendor fulfillment

STS anticipates distribution to the following:

- 588 AAA Travel Offices
- 237 Hotels in the Southeast
- 47 Armed Forces Travel Agencies
- 34 Consumer Travel Shows
- 62 Leisure Travel Agencies
- 56 Visitor Centers in the Southeast

3. EscapetotheSoutheast.com Website

The ETTS website editorial content will be generated and supplied by a selected vendor with limited STS guidance; however, STS will have the ability to request removal of content that STS considers to reflect negatively on the organization, its mission, its members, or the region.

Layout, design and advertisement consideration should include, but is not limited to:

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) plan
- Google Analytics integration plan & reporting
- Site-wide search / Search friendly architecture and content optimization
- Social media sharing
- Email and “print this page” functionality
- Click to call / Click to map for mobile devices
- Contact Us / About Us strategy
- Request an ETTS Travel Guide

- Calendar of Events promotion and submission strategy
- STS Top 20 Festival and Events listing, links and promotion
- State Travel Office – content and lead generation opportunity
- Lead generation for advertisers

User interface / User Experience

The proposed site must be a **responsive web design** for all platforms / best experience via phone or tablet. Use of brand messaging, colors, logo and logo elements must be integrated into the site design. The site should also incorporate the following concepts:

To the leisure visitor

- Credible, trustworthy, helpful and welcoming
- Intuitive navigation / Easy to find what the user wants
- Consistent, clean layout, well organized and legible
- The print publication should be available to consumers on EscapeToTheSoutheast.com in the following formats
 - As an online publication (flip book) viewable on mobile, tablet and desktop services;
 - As a downloadable PDF by page(s) selected by the user; or
 - Opportunity to request a mailed, hard copy of the publication

To the advertiser/STS Member

- ETTS member/advertiser log-in
- Ability to view reports regarding site analytics and request for brochures/mailings
- Ability for STS members to update or add event calendar information or a direct feed from existing member calendars

Project Due Date

The 2020 ETTS printed Travel Guide will be published and ready for distribution by **January 2020**.

The ETTS website redesign would need to be completed by **December 2019/January 2020**.

Submission Information

Evaluation Schedule

RFP Issued:	February 1, 2019
Question Deadline:	February 18, 2019
Submission Deadline:	March 25, 2019, 5 PM EST
STS Staff proposal review:	March 26, 2019
Select and contact final candidates:	April 9, 2019
Final 3 candidates present at STS office:	Week of April 22, 2019
Negotiate and Award partnership:	May 3, 2019

Submission Requirements

Each proposal should be prepared simply and economically, avoiding the use of elaborate promotional materials beyond those sufficient to provide a complete presentation.

Deadline: **March 25, 2019, 5:00 PM EST**

Email: Wendy@Southeasttourism.org
Subject Line: ETTS RFP

Submission Address: Wendy Thomas
ATTN: ETTS RFP
555 Sun Valley Drive, Suite E5
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Evaluation Criteria

- Project Understanding/Approach (30%)
- Member Benefit & Revenue Strategy (30%)
- Qualifications & Experience (30%)
- References (10%)

Approach/Methodology

- Understanding of project requirements
- Proposed timeline to meet project requirements
- Suitability of proposed services, comprehensiveness of the work processes, and quality assurance
- Methods proposed to meet STS's objective
- The originality of concepts and approach to reach desired objectives
- Completeness, adequacy, and responsiveness to RFP

Member Benefit & Revenue Strategy

- Overall understanding of project value to the STS members and the promotion of tourism in the southeast
- State Travel Office member benefit proposal
- STS Member benefit proposal
- Revenue sharing model for STS, based on a draft budget or actual budget from a similar product
- Sales strategy to promote ETTS and ad sales

Staffing, Qualifications, Experience

- Qualifications of individual key staff
- Successful firm/team experience of projects of similar scope and complexity
- Knowledge of STS and the tourism industry
- Experience working in the tourism industry

References

- Provide a minimum of 3 (three) references that are using services of the type proposed in this RFP