

Monroe-West Monroe Convention & Visitors Bureau

Request for Proposal

Strategic Destination Branding

March 2019

1. Purpose

The Monroe-West Monroe Convention & Visitors Bureau (MWMCVB) is seeking proposals for an agency to research, develop and implement a strategically-driven destination brand that represents Monroe & West Monroe, Louisiana in Ouachita Parish. The brand should resonate with visitors and residents alike, as well as planners, CVB partners, and community stakeholders.

The intent is for the MWMCVB to use the results of the branding process to develop the appropriate organization name, image and messaging to be used in all aspects of promoting the MWMCVB and Monroe-West Monroe as a destination.

2. Introduction & Background

The MWMCVB promotes the region as a premier destination for sporting events, conventions, meetings, leisure travel, and more. We work to give visitors a unique experience with southern hospitality and impeccable service and to increase the economic impact made by visitors in Ouachita Parish thus creating a better quality of life for our residents.

The MWMCVB has been Ouachita Parish's destination marketing organization for more than 43 years. During that time, MWMCVB has used three logos. The first featuring a commissioned design featuring cotton from a local artist. The second logo was comprised of "Monroe-West Monroe Convention & Visitors Bureau" in simple text with the use of the cotton artwork. The third and current logo features a design of text (MWMCVB) and obtuse rectangles.

The MWMCVB utilizes the domain Monroe-westmonroe.org and most recently has used Discover Monroe-West Monroe for most social channels.

The MWMCVB has never, on their own or with the assistance of an agency, developed and implemented a true, overall brand strategy.

A. Why Rebrand?

a. Destination Identification

To become recognizable to visitors and potential meeting and event planners as a destination for both leisure travel and meetings and events.

b. Determine our common thread

With multiple cities and the variety of attractors, a common theme or message has been difficult to determine. Research and brand strategy expertise will help the MWMCVB determine the best and most effective brand to represent the area.

c. Maximize our efforts

A research-based strategic brand will help us to identify who we are and who our targets should be. This will provide an opportunity to target those most likely to do business with us, so that our marketing efforts will be better directed and produce more return.

d. Local awareness

A destination brand will help us become more recognizable in our own destination as a resource for visitor information. It will also help draw attention to the economic impact brought to our area by our efforts. In addition, many people are not aware of what a convention & visitors bureau does and, subsequently, confuses our efforts and mission with that of a chamber of commerce or a convention center for example.

3. Timeline for RFP and Selection Process

The proposal submission and evaluation will consist of two phases. The schedule below outlines tentative deadlines for each of these phases. The MWMCVB reserves the right to amend the proposal at any time and any changes to this schedule will be posted to our website.

Phase I: Distribution of RFP, questions, and deadline for proposals

- Distribution of RFP: Monday, March 11, 2019
- Written questions due: Monday, March 25, 2019 to Sheila Snow at ssnow@monroe-westmonroe.org.
- Q & A returned and posted online: Friday, April 5, 2019
- Deadline for Proposals: Thursday, April 25, 2019 by 5 pm (CST) – instructions below.

Phase II: Interviews and final selection

- Invite to Interview: Thursday, May 2, 2019
- Interviews: Tuesday, May 7-Friday, May 10, 2019 (will be conducted either in person or virtually)
- Selection of Agency: Monday, May 20, 2019

4. Budget

Budget is an important factor for consideration, but it will not be the sole deciding factor in awarding this project.

Budget for Branding Research, Development, Strategy, and Implementation: \$50,000

5. Agency Capabilities

Please submit the information requested below in order to demonstrate why you have the experience, expertise, and knowledge for this comprehensive project. What can you do to help the MWMCVB stand out as a destination and organization?

Please submit:

1. Agency Introduction and background
2. Strategic destination branding plan
 - a. Branding Research
 - b. Branding project development and implementation
3. Agency's fee structure
4. List of branding clients (tourism related organizations preferred), including points of contact (name, company, and email) and brief description of project
5. Examples of at least two branding projects and how you measured success with each project

Three (3) copies must be submitted to:

MWMCVB/Attn: Sheila Snow
601 Constitution Drive
West Monroe, LA 71292

Additionally a digital copy must be submitted by email to:

Sheila Snow
ssnow@monroe-westmonroe.org

All proposals must be received by no later than **5:00 pm (CST) on Thursday, April 25, 2019.**

6. Agency Expectations

- Review most recent research and conduct additional market research as needed.
- Engage visitors, residents, planners, CVB partners, community stakeholders, board and staff in the process to strengthen the buy-in.
- Identify destination brand and develop a strategy to deliver our brand promise to the visitor, while engaging residents to enhance our reputation in the market as destination experts.
- Develop a visual and verbal brand identity that will communicate the brand.
- Develop style guides and creative for advertising, print and digital materials, e-communications, promotional items and more.
- Develop a plan for CVB partners to incorporate our brand into their own marketing efforts.
- Offer recommendations for integrating our brand into existing social media channels and online presence.
- Ability to complete the project in a timely manner. (Timeline will be determined and agreed upon after agency selection.)

A website redesign was completed in 2017 and is not included in this proposal.

7. Evaluation Process

Proposals will be evaluated by the MWMCVB based on the following criteria:

- Qualifications and experience of agency
- Ability to meet development/technical requirements of the project
- Past performance determined by client interviews and suggested methods of measurements of success
- Similar projects completed, especially related to tourism
- Ability to work within MWMCVB deadlines and budget

At the conclusion of the evaluation process, selected finalists will be invited to interview with the MWMCVB. If at any time the MWMCVB feels that no proposals meet their requirements, the process may be repeated. Following final interviews, the MWMCVB will determine their agency of choice and present their recommendation to the MWMCVB Board on Monday, May 20, 2019.

Questions can be directed to Sheila Snow, Vice President of Communications, at (318) 387-5691 or ssnow@monroe-westmonroe.org.