6 30 2024

**South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism**

Requesting Organization Williamsburg HomeTown Chamber

Requested by Michaele Duke, Chamber Director

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 <http://www.williamsburgsc.org/>

County Williamsburg

Project Celebrating…The Good Life

Recurring Fundable Components

 Flag Day, Greeleyville, $3,500.00

 Stag Festival, Lane $3,500.00

 Shag Festival, Hemingway $3,500.00

 Pig Pickin’ Downtown $3,500.00

 Muscadine Festival, Nesmith $3,500.00 Stories of Williamsburg $2,000.00

Museum Founders Day $3,350.00 Website: Chamber and Museum $4,355.00

 Dixie Youth Sponsorship $1,355.00

American Legion Sponsorship $1,000.00

 Black River promotion $3,500.00

 Hemingway Christmas Festival $2,000.00

 Cassandra Rush Museum $2,000.00

 Kingstree Summer Events $1,650.00

Juneteeth Celebrations $2,500.00

Art Events $2,000.00

 Event promotions $10,000.00

Requested amount Total request recurring $53,210.00

**Celebrating the Good Life**

We continue to celebrate the good life in Williamsburg County and look forward to promoting our community with folks visiting for a day or for those wanting to stay for the rest of their life. A land blessed with natural resources, historical significance and incredible people, Williamsburg County has often been called a haven of solitude. Only 45 minutes south of Florence, and 90 minutes east of the state capitol, Williamsburg County is nestled northwest of Charleston and just west of the Grand Strand.

Comprised of over 900 square miles, Williamsburg County features acres of undisturbed forest, miles of the scenic Black River and small communities that offer a quiet and relaxing lifestyle.

**Living the Good Life**

In 1732 Williamsburg Township was founded along the banks of the Black River. This area proved to be quite successful due to the production of indigo, cotton, tobacco, and corn. Some of the first settlers in the area were John Witherspoon and Roger Gordon. Their descendants can still be found in the area. Many of the first families in Williamsburg fought in the Revolutionary War and some fought alongside General Frances Marion. In addition to many old families, Williamsburg County is home to many historical churches, plantations, and other historical sites. The Williamsburg Historical Society and Museum serves as an important resource for family history and preservation. The C. Williams Rush Museum promotes the cultural, artistic and heritage history of our African American citizens. There is an abundance of African American history in the county that is being studied and presented.

Williamsburgers have long been famous for their love of horses and horse racing. Colonial inventories provide ample evidence of the value of fine animals acquired by families. Horse races were paramount social events in the area. The “King’s Tree Trials came to an end this past year so we will be exploring other avenues to promote our Horse history in Williamsburg County in the coming year.

Another passion for the people of Williamsburg County would be its barbeque. Every family has its own recipe, but they all include vinegar and lots of pepper. Hogs are cooked for hours over the perfect temperature with just the right sauce for a dining experience that one will not soon forget. *The Kingstree Pig Pickin’ Festival* and the *Hemingway Barbeque and Shag Festival* observe this tradition as they bring thousands of people together to cook, dance, and eat.

*The Lane* *Stag Festival* celebrates the community being a sportsman’s paradise and kicks off the deer hunting season. The long-standing *Flag Day Festival* in Greeleyville commemorates our American heritage during their event which is held each year on Memorial Day weekend. The Williams Muscadine Vineyard in Farm in Nesmith observes their agricultural inheritance each year at the *Muscadine Labor Day* Festival.

In addition to history and festivals, the tourism board supports popular events through a student’s art contest (Pig Art displayed during the Kingstree Pig Pickin Festival), Kingstree Dixie Youth, the Scenic Black River, and Kingstree Live. Downtown Summer concerts will be promoted this year to support the Main Street Program, Hemingway’s Christmas Festival which promotes merchants and local arts and the Museum, which promotes history and serves as the protector to Williamsburg County artifacts.

In the coming years through 2033 the nation will be celebrating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolutionary War. South Carolina Patriots played a significant role in ultimately winning that war and several key events took place in Williamsburg County including battles at “Black Mingo” and “Lower Bridge”. The Tourism Board will be supporting efforts to commemorate and celebrate key events that happened during this important time in our history. Telling the stories of all involved in the fight for freedom.

**Project Mission**

The Mission of the Good Life is to market Williamsburg County, its festivals, agriculture, wildlife, African American Heritage, and local history to promote visitors, new residents and for the community. The Tourism Board continues to meet 6 times a year to carry out the functions of the mission.

**Goals for the Good Life**

* Increase publicity in Williamsburg County and South Carolina through communication and community events. In addition, the Chamber and Museum Websites and social media pages are utilized to attract visitors and those interested in the community.
* Focus on partnering with all local festivals to improve marketing, event development and participation.
* Promote the Scenic Black River and the new Black River State park as it develops over the next few years.
* Focus on Art Festival in the fall, Christmas in Kingstree, Holiday Open House, Dixie Youth and Legion sports, and Kingstree Live in the summer.
* Support local African American Heritage.
* Support Museum holiday events Past and Hemingway’s Christmas Festival.
* Develop more programs at the Museums and Thorntree by partnering with local authors, speakers, and re-enactors.

**Marketing the Good Life**

* The Pig Pickin’ Festival in Kingstree, the Hemingway Barbeque Shag Festival, The Stag Festival in Lane, The Flag Day Festival in Greeleyville, and the Muscadine Festival at the Williams Farm and Vineyard will be promoted through newsletters, newspaper, and social networking.
* Promote all festival and events on social media, website, and newsprint.
* The Chamber’s website and Facebook Page is a tool by which anyone can access information concerning events in Williamsburg County. The website is updated on a regular schedule.
* We are also looking to improve our outreach and community calendar efforts through the application of the “Locable” software program

**Performance and Accountability for the Good Life**

* The Williamsburgh Historical Museum continues to provide historical related programs to educate visitors and residents about the history of the community. All local historical and informative brochures will serve to promote the community.
* African American History and the Black River continue to be a focus and will increase diversity of participants and interest in local tourism.
* The Museum features local historical exhibits and events including a Founders Day celebrating contributions from the citizens of the past.
* Communities will promote and carry out festivals.
* Event Promotion will be used to plan and develop marketing opportunities as they come available.

**Submitted by:**

Michaele Duke Date 06.30.2024

Michaele Duke

Williamsburg Hometown Chamber