



**DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Date: June 11, 2009

To: Delia Briones, County Clerk

From: Rosemary V. Neill

Re: Commissioners Court Agenda

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Please place the following item on the Commissioners Court agenda for June 15, 2009:

Discuss and take appropriate action on administrative procedures to support the FY 10 acceptance, review, and screening of applications for Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds from the County of El Paso.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rosemary V. Neill", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Rosemary V. Neill

Director

# Memorandum

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**To:** County Judge Anthony Cobos, Commissioner Anna Perez,  
Commissioner Veronica Escobar, Commissioner Willie Gandara, and  
Commissioner Daniel Haggerty

**From:** Rosemary Neill

**Date:** 6/11/2009

**Re:** Administrative Procedures for the Screening and Review of FY 10 Hotel  
Occupancy Tax Applications

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## **Action Item**

Discuss and take appropriate action on administrative procedures to support the FY 10 acceptance, review, and screening of applications for Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds from the County of El Paso.

## **Fiscal Impact**

The Auditor's Office certifies the funds available during the budget process.

## **Background Information**

The Department of Family and Community Services requests Court authorization to accept applications for hotel occupancy tax funds from July 1 to July 31, 2009. This gives the Court an opportunity to consider any awards from this funding source during its regular budget cycle. The Court formalizes awards when it adopts its budget. This enables staff to present contracts authorizing use of the funds during the fiscal year.

Staff recommends maintaining the three tier system the Court authorized last year. This allows the Court to consider applications in a priority order. The Court's first priority is to certain functions or assets that are integral to the County's tourism promotion strategy.

These grants support statutory functions, County historic assets, or prior obligations. The organizations that represent these functions or assets are the

El Paso County Historical Commission, the Concordia Heritage Association and the San Elizario Genealogy and Historical Society. In addition, the Court places a priority on the historic preservation of the following registered historic sites, the San Elizario Jail, Los Portales, and Casa Ronquillo.

The County completes a four year financial obligation to promote the United States Bowling Congress on December 15, 2009. The tournament is the 2010 Women's Championship Tournament. This award was \$70,312.50 each year.

The second tier is for organizations that have previously received County HOT funds. These organizations have successfully mounted events and have discharged their contractual duties to the County. The final tier is reserved for groups and organizations that have a limited track record, either for the event or for an event funded by hotel occupancy tax revenues. The Court considers these requests as funds are available after awards in the first two tiers.

The Court continues to perfect its measures for the use of these funds. The Court encourages applicants to block rooms for their events, maintain logs of out of town guests, or use surveys to signify impact. Organizations are encouraged to work with the Convention and Visitors Bureau and use any of their available services.

Last year the Court made 22 awards for \$888,413. This year's available sum is likely to be less because of economic conditions and because the County's contractual obligation to the El Paso Sports Commission to operate the County Coliseum is increasing.

This year staff will work with ITD staff to post the application online. Staff will instruct applicants to submit one electronic and one hard copy application. Staff will also limit the application to the form and two budget submissions, an organizational budget and an event budget. Staff will not accept other material.

The Court at its option can consider additional measures for the disbursement of these funds. It can cap awards at the upper or lower levels. It can appoint Commissioners to work with staff to develop preliminary awards which the Court can ratify. It can determine if it chooses to hear from applicants or simply review their applications.

Staff appreciates any recommendations to ensure a sound process for the distribution of these important funds.