

Profile

Applicant: Event Application

Grant Manager: Dave Spooner

Name of Organization: Northern Maine Development Commission

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Date of Incorporation: November 15th, 1969

EIN: 22-2635303

What were the top three highlights from the previous fiscal year?

For the past 15 years due to a volunteer committee and support from the local business community that include multinational corporations such as Irving Woodlands and TD Banknorth, the Can Am Crown Sled Dog Races held in Fort Kent have become an internationally recognized event. One of the three races, the Can Am 250, is a qualifying race for the Iditarod and Yukon Quest sled dog races. The 2007 event drew a record high number of teams participating, with a full slate of 90 teams in the three races and received 121 registration requests, bringing mushers from as far away as Minnesota, Wisconsin, Montana, Ontario Canada and other states. Over 5,000 spectators attended the event; the largest crowd to date, with an estimation that over half were not local.

Another highlight was the increased participation by Fort Kent organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, offering activities to compliment the races. These events gave spectators an appreciation of the St. John Valley's spirit and provided an opportunity to enjoy other outdoor activities. Innovative activities included a snow golf tournament, cross-country ski and snow shoe races, and a bonfire with chili cook-off. A sponsor banquet was held to honor the event sponsors and included special guests such as Governor John Baldacci and State Representatives from Aroostook County.

The third highlight, the race's website, is an important aspect of the event with information and features being continually improved. Global Positioning System technology was used to map the course and added to the site. A major upgrade was completed for 2007, allowing users to select which musher to track, view that team's speed, latitude and longitude, how many dogs were utilized for that leg of the race and the map changed from light to dark, depicting the time of day. The website's use increased substantially receiving 22,514 hits from mid-February through mid-March 2006 and 32,260 hits during the same 2007 time frame.

Please state your three primary goals for the next year and how you expect them to increase tourism revenue for the region with cooperative funds.

The following goals directly benefit the Can Am Crown Sled Dog Races as well as the St. John Valley, Aroostook County, and the areas of Maine spectators and participants travel through to attend the event.

Goal 1: First, the Can-Am Sled Dog Race Committee believes the creation of a video/cd product that captures the excitement of the event will be critical in strengthening the marketing reach to broader media formats. Expanding the media tools will help draw a tourist demographic not previously reached and will help accomplish the goal of increased event spectators.

Goal 2: The second goal is to expand the marketing efforts to reach a larger geographic area. This expansion will expose and educate potential attendees as to what northern Maine offers - a unique winter destination with a myriad of outdoor activities. This marketing expansion will increase both the number of tourists attending and their length of stay in the region.

Goal 3: The last goal geared toward increasing tourism is to enhance the Can-Am Sled Dog Race website, providing more information to race participants and spectators. Improving the website by increasing the information available and making it more interactive will entice participation in the event from both race entrants and spectators.

Please describe the overall strategy you will implement to achieve these goals.

Goal 1: Producing a video documentary of the 2008 race for use in 2009 marketing is essential in raising awareness. A firm that specializes in multimedia and video production services would design and produce media marketing pieces that would educate the public about the race and expose northern Maine's abundant winter activities such as snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and snow shoeing. The marketing pieces to be developed using 2008 footage include a 52-minute documentary video; 30-second public service announcements; 4-minute marketing video; video business card cd and 30-second flash web advertising spots.

Goal 2: To expand 2008 race marketing, advertisement must occur beyond the previously used local Maine media. By utilizing print, radio, and television media outlets and/or trade show presence in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New England states and international markets in Toronto and Montreal Canada, an untapped group of spectators would be reached. The committee's goal is to increase the number of spectators by 10% for 2008. Marketing efforts would promote outdoor recreational activities with the Can-Am Sled Dog Race as the signature event. Trade show promotion would be organized with Aroostook County Tourism to share the cost, achieving the goal of a multidimensional marketing effort.

Goal 3: As the trend of tourists researching destinations via the internet continues, the race committee recognizes the importance of creating and maintaining a user friendly interactive web site for spectators. The race committee prioritized the following improvements: enhance the tracking of the teams during the race to include elevation profiles on the course and the location of the team on the profile; redesign the race logo to retain the background and place a photo of the first dog to cross the finish line in the forefront; purchase a web camera to broadcast the live sights and sounds of the race start displayed in real time on the website home page.

How do these goals and strategies fit with the Office of Tourism's?

These goals and strategies of the Can-Am Sled Dog Race mirror the goals that have been prioritized by the Maine Office of Tourism. In the Five-Year Strategic Plan, the major objectives of generation of positive awareness of Maine as a destination of choice, increasing first time visitors, stimulating interest for both domestic and international consumers to visit Maine, maximize the length and frequency of stay, and repeat visitation are all met by this event. The marketing efforts that the Can-Am Race Committee would like to embark on would benefit Maine as a whole and would offer visitors a unique opportunity to experience Maine's natural resources in the winter, thereby mirroring the state's initiatives regarding natural resource based tourism.

Please describe how the financial resources will be monitored by your organization.

Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) will act as grant administrator for the state funds and has for some time monitored Aroostook County Tourism's financial resources via a Services Agreement between the two organizations. The Commission uses Generally Accepted Accounting Principles to ensure compliance with governmental contracting requirements and documentation of the funds. This includes an annual audit of all NMDC programs in addition to Aroostook County Tourism funds. NMDC is qualified to administer many types of federal and state economic and community development programs.

NMDC is designated as an accredited Economic Development Organization by the American Economic Development Council, making it one of only 21 AEDOs in the nation who are recognized for professional excellence in administering economic development programs.

Primary Analysis

Research

Is your region or event conducting any research initiatives this year?

No

If you have Research Initiatives, please state the purpose and give a brief description of each.

(No Response)

Public Relations

Who is the person/company that is responsible for your PR program?

Company: David Spooner/Northern Maine Development Commission

Address: David Spooner/Northern Maine Development Commission

Phone: 207-498-8726

Email Address: dspooner@nmdc.org

Would you be interested in participating in a two-hour public relations workshop?

Yes

Would you like to be contacted regarding PR efforts?

Yes

Please provide a list of editorial contacts:

(No Response)

Please provide a list of publications and/or broadcast outlets you would most like to target:

For the 2008 Can Am Sled Dog Races, the organizing committee would like to target outdoor recreation publications and other print media such as feature newspaper articles. We would also like to target television stations in Maine, throughout New England and expand into New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Toronto Canada and Montreal Canada.

Co-Op Efforts

In what type(s) of co-op effort, if any, is your group participating?

External, e.g. Partnerships with other groups.

Please describe in further detail your co-op efforts:

The Can Am Sled Dog Race committee will work collaboratively with Aroostook County Tourism to jointly attend trade shows, therefore sharing the cost of attending these shows. Additionally, the committee will work with local area businesses to ensure availability of complimentary events during the races. In order that the Sled Race is experienced as part of a wider community event, the committee will work with the local Chamber of Commerce to expand and promote other community events occurring during the Race.

Northern Maine Development Commission has offered several internal cooperative advertising opportunities in the past few years including but not limited to, Maine Invites You, DownEast Magazine, Bangor Daily News, Snowgoer Magazine, Winter Activities Guide, and Portland Magazine. Going forward, the region will continue to explore cooperative advertising opportunities as they become available. The region has also participated with the Maine Office of Tourism in PSA campaigns.

Website Development & Maintenance

If you currently have a website, please provide us with your URL:

URL: can-am.sjv.net; visitaroostook.com; visitnorthernmaine.com

Please provide a brief description of the overall goal of your site and the functionality that the site offers to its visitors:

The website for the Can Am Sled Dog Race provides a wide variety of useful information regarding the race. In addition to up to the minute information as the race occurs, the website also provides historical data, providing details for both spectators and entrants to the race. The Aroostook County Tourism website provides current information and web-links to members' sites, an expanded calendar of events listing, new and rotating photography, and a home page with the ability to be modified regularly.

Please provide a brief description of the intended strategy for improvement over the next one to two years:

The two webmasters of the race website have an aggressive vision of improvements. These include improving the registration process for the mushers so they may complete their application and submit it electronically and include a help button to display a sample completed entry form with a drop down list of prominent races and numbers of entries. A secure site would be purchased for receipt of the forms to ensure the security of confidential information such as credit card numbers and social security numbers. Other enhancement plans include enhancement of the race animation that would include a zoom feature, elevation profiles of the race course, and depict scratches that occur on the trail during the race. Other plans include revising the Can Am logo as previously discussed which would keep a recognizable logo that is unique for every year and developing an audio and video summary of the race rules in both English and French that would include a slide show of required equipment.

Visitor Database

Do you collect and compile information on your visitors (names, addresses, areas of interest, etc.)?

Yes

If so, please describe how the database is currently structured and how it is used for marketing and communication initiatives:

The Aroostook County Tourism's website accomplishes this task. This information is used to send out tourism newsletters and information about regional events or promotions.

Budget Summary

Current Projects

Project 1: Administrative Costs

Description: The Administrative fee is 20% of the regional grant allocation and does not require a match.

MTMPP Award: \$11,000.00

Project 2: Can-Am Sled Dog Race Marketing

Project Type: Advertising

Description: To build national and international awareness of the Can-Am Sled Dog Races.

Element 1: Video Production and Promotion

Project: Can-Am Sled Dog Race Marketing

Element Description: This element would provide funding for the production and airing of a 52-minute documentary video of the 2008 race, as well as generate video media marketing materials such as public service announcements, multi-use marketing video, and Flash web advertising spots.

Timeline: The documentary and advertisement footage would be shot during the 2008 race, from March 1 through March 3, 2008. The marketing materials generated would be used for promotion of the 2009 race event, with promotion beginning early summer 2008 and continuing up to the 2009 event.

Tracking: The primary means to track the effectiveness will be to measure the increase in spectators and media coverage from 2008 to 2009.

Target Market: These marketing efforts will be to raise awareness from the media to increase the coverage of the event, as well as tourists with an affinity for winter outdoor recreational activities.

- Rationale:** Increased media exposure of this international event will be a tourism draw to Northern Maine during the winter months and help package the region as a diverse outdoor recreational wonderland.
- Media Type:** Television markets on the local, state, regional and national level would reach a large audience. Website promotion would be accomplished through the Northeast Journal and Wildfire websites
- Co-op Opportunity:** The Can-Am Sled Dog Race Committee will partner with other outdoor recreation organizations such as snowmobile clubs, Nordic skiing organizations and Aroostook County Tourism to expose tourists to the abundance of outdoor recreational activities in Northern Maine, thereby marketing well beyond the race itself.
- Budget Description:** Using the 2008 race for 2009 advertising with the airing of the documentary on Maine and New England broadcasts and cable television networks nation-wide; provide master and 100 packages DVD copies of the documentary; production of (2) 30-second PSA television advertising spots; airing of (1) 30-second PSA ad spot per show in the Northeast Journal and Wildfire television programs for 4 months; production of (1) 4-minute multi-use marketing video; production of 1 master and 1,000 copies of a video business card cd; production of (2) 30-second flash web advertising spots; production of 1 flash web version of promotional video and web link on Northeast Journal and Wildfire websites. Cost: \$67,000.
- MTMPP Award:** \$20,000.00
- Cash Match:** \$47,000.00
- In-Kind Match:** \$0.00

Element 2: Direct print and television marketing and trade show presence

Project: Can-Am Sled Dog Race Marketing

Element Description: This element will provide funding to drastically increase the amount of advertisement for the event and allow the branching out into new geographic markets.

Timeline: Promotional work for the event would be disseminated beginning August 2007.

Tracking: The primary means of tracking effectiveness will be the increase in spectators, with a goal of a 10% increase in 2008 compared to 2007 attendance.

Target Market: Potential spectators that reside in markets not previously utilized such as New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Toronto Canada and Montreal Canada. Marketing would continue in Maine and New England.

Rationale: An increased marketing presence within the State of Maine, New England, and the new markets stated above will further tout Northern Maine as a choice winter destination. Marketing this unique event will draw spectators that were not previously aware of this exciting international event.

Media Type: Print markets such as newspapers, journals, and magazines and television markets that target Maine, New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Toronto Canada and Montreal Canada would be utilized. Attendance at trade shows in Maine, Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania are being planned by Aroostook County Tourism.

Co-op Opportunity: Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) and Aroostook County Tourism (ACT) will coordinate the trade show presence, with preliminary plans to attend major snowmobile trade shows in Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania. The Can-Am Sled Dog Race Committee would work collaboratively to have a presence at these events with NMDC and ACT. Additionally, NMDC and ACT would coordinate winter cooperative advertisements that highlight winter festivals and events that the Can-Am committee would participate in.

Budget Description: Print and television advertisements for the 2008 race throughout New England and Canada –Cost \$20,000. Attendance at relevant trade shows – Cost \$2,000.

MTMPP Award: \$22,000.00

Cash Match: \$0.00

In-Kind Match: \$0.00

Project 3: Can-Am Sled Dog Race Website Enhancements

Maine Tourism Marketing Partnership Program



Project Type: Website Development

Description: The Can-Am Sled Dog Race website would be improved to better serve the needs of spectators and race entrants to entice visitation to northern Maine.

Element 3: Website Improvements

Project: Can-Am Sled Dog Race Website Enhancements

Element Description: The race website would be improved to ensure ease of use and increase the interactivity for both race entrants and spectators.

Timeline: Improvements to the website would begin as soon as the grant is awarded with completion by mid-February 2008.

Tracking: The means of tracking this element would be by the number of hits the website receives before, during and after the event, with a goal of a 20% increase in the number of hits over the previous year.

Target Market: Potential spectators, confirmed spectators, and race participants.

Rationale: An ever evolving website presence is crucial to ensure race participants and spectators are receiving important information, as well as serving as a tool to draw spectators to the event. Continuing to improve the website to ensure the timeliness of information, as well as ease of use ensure a positive experience for those visiting the website.

Budget Description: Website Enhancements - \$2,000.

MTMPP Award: \$2,000.00

Cash Match: \$0.00

In-Kind Match: \$0.00

Project Quick Reference

	<u>MTMPP Award</u>	<u>Cash Match</u>	<u>In-Kind Match</u>
Administrative Costs			
Administrative Costs	\$11,000.00		
Can-Am Sled Dog Race Marketing			
Video Production and Promotion	\$20,000.00	\$47,000.00	\$0.00
Direct print and television marketing and trade show presence	\$22,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Can-Am Sled Dog Race Website Enhancements			
Website Improvements	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Budget Summary

Proposed MTMPP Award:	\$44,000.00
Administrative Costs:	\$11,000.00
Cash Match:	\$47,000.00
In-Kind Match:	\$0.00
Total Match:	\$47,000.00
Total Proposed Budget:	\$91,000.00