

MANATEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT INTENT TO NEGOTIATE

SUBJECT	Marketing Research Services	DATE POSTED	Date Posted on mymanatee.org <u>11/5/13</u> <i>use</i>
PURCHASING REPRESENTATIVE	Deborah Carey-Reed, 941/749-3074	DATE CONTRACT SHALL BE AWARDED	To be determined after negotiations.
DEPARTMENT	Convention and Visitors Bureau	CONSEQUENCES IF DEFERRED	N/A <i>Mimi H. Waller</i>
SOLICITATION	Request For Proposal #13-2582DC	AUTHORIZED BY	Melissa M. Wendel, Purchasing Official Date: _____

ACTION APPROVED

Authorization to commence negotiations, for the purpose of entering into an Agreement, with Research Data Services, Inc., Tampa, Florida, to provide marketing research services and data targeting Manatee County as a tourist destination.

ENABLING/REGULATING AUTHORITY

Federal/State law(s), administrative ruling(s), Manatee County Comp Plan/Land Development Code, ordinances, resolutions, policy.)

Manatee County Code of Law

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

- The BACVB is committed to maintaining a premiere tourism destination with an objective to increase tourism in the County. To assist the BACVB in achieving its objective, it is the purpose of this RFP to secure marketing research services for data that will provide the County insight in making marketing decisions in promoting Manatee County a tourist destination in this competitive market.
- The RFP was advertised on the Manatee County website, DemandStar, in the Bradenton Herald and the Tempo News and was also provided to the Manatee County Chamber of Commerce for release to its members. Three proposals were received:
 - Equation Research, Estes Park, Colorado
 - Research Data Services, Inc., Tampa, Florida
 - Strategic Marketing & Research, Inc., Carmel, Indiana

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ATTACHMENTS: (List in order as attached)	INSTRUCTIONS:
None	N/A
COST	SOURCE (ACCT# & NAME)
Annual estimate of \$94,000	Professional Services
COMMENTS	AMT./FREQ. OF RECURRING COSTS
N/A	N/A

- The Evaluation Committee Members consisted of:
 - Debbie Meihls, Bradenton Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (BACVB)
 - Karen Stewart, Neighborhood Services
 - Deborah Carey-Reed, Contracts Negotiator, Purchasing
- The Evaluation Committee convened on October 18, 2013 to discuss the offers based on the stated requirements in the RFP, continuing the acquisition process, and determining a recommendation to the County Administrator. The Committee unanimously voted that oral interviews would not be required; the proposals included sufficient information to evaluate the qualifications and process of the proposers.
- The Committee ranked the firms as follows for the purpose of negotiating a contract with the top ranked firm, Research Data Services, Inc.
- **Firm A – Research Data Services, Inc. (RDS)**

RDS demonstrated exceptional qualifications via their extensive experience in Florida tourism industry. Their proposal not only specified in-depth focus groups and online surveys and visitor tools, but also detailed innovative tourism research services that included the social network, telephone, as well as face-to-face sessions, sporting events research. The professional expertise required to complete the RFP scope of services is available within RDS. RDS is the incumbent and has proven to be a dependable asset in the development and implementation of integrated destination market research. As the market realities change, RDS has changed its approach in calibrating the County's research program focusing on the current needs and challenges of the County's tourism industry. The annual total cost proposed by RDS is \$94,895.
- **Firm B - Strategic Marketing & Research, Inc.**

Strategic possesses over 20 years experience in marketing research, but this experience is not centered in the Gulf Coast (Florida). Their references are with large (state level) clients; not many comparable to the size of Manatee County. Strategic will employ a subcontractor to provide travel impact research. The annual total cost proposed by Strategic is \$112,000.
- **Firm C – Equation Research**

Equation's proposal was deemed non-responsive pursuant to Section C of the RFP.