Request for Proposals (RFP)
Website Design, Development, and Digital Brand Implementation

1.0 Introduction & Project Overview

Commerce Chenango, the premier tourism and business development organization for Chenango County, is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit proposals from qualified marketing and web development firms. We are seeking a partner to design, develop, and launch a new, modern website and to implement the new brand identity for "Chenango" across our core digital assets.

The new website will serve as the primary digital front door for Chenango County, inspiring potential visitors, engaging residents, and serving as a vital resource for local businesses. The project goal is to create a visually compelling, highly functional, and user-friendly platform that drives tourism, supports economic growth, and captures the unique character of our region.

The total budget for all phases of this project is between $20,000 to $40,000.

2.0 About Commerce Chenango / Chenango

Commerce Chenango is dedicated to fostering a prosperous community by promoting economic development, supporting local businesses, and marketing Chenango County as a premier destination to visit, work, and live. We serve as the county's designated Tourism Promotion Agency, Development Agency, IDA, and Chamber of Commerce, providing resources, advocacy, and marketing initiatives that benefit the entire community. This proposal relates directly to Tourism Promotion as Chenango County looks to build their Destination Marketing Organization, "Chenango".

3.0 Project Goals & Objectives

The primary objectives for this project are to:

- **Inspire Travel:** Create an immersive and visually rich experience that showcases the beauty, attractions, and unique offerings of Chenango County, converting online interest into actual visits.
- **Drive Economic Impact:** Generate qualified leads for local businesses, including lodging, dining, retail, and attractions, through a robust and easy-to-navigate directory and events system.
- **Establish a Central Information Hub:** Position the website as the definitive source for information on events, business listings, and trip-planning resources for visitors and residents alike.
- **Modernize Digital Presence:** Replace our current platform with a modern, mobile-first, and accessible website that reflects a cohesive and professional brand identity.
- **Empower Internal Teams:** Implement an intuitive Content Management System (CMS) that allows Chenango DMO staff to easily update content, manage listings, and post events without technical expertise.

4.0 Scope of Work

The selected firm will be responsible for the full project lifecycle, from strategy and design through development, launch, and training. The core components of the scope are detailed below.

4.1 Strategy & Design

- **Discovery & Strategy:** Conduct stakeholder workshops to define user personas, journey maps, and key performance indicators (KPIs).
- **Information Architecture:** Develop a sitemap and wireframes that prioritize user experience and intuitive navigation.
- **Visual Design:** Create a full visual design concept that applies the "Chenango" brand identity to the new website, focusing on compelling photography, videography, and clean typography.

4.2 Website Development & Implementation

The platform should be built on a user-friendly and widely supported CMS (e.g., WordPress, Craft CMS). Proposers should recommend a platform and justify their choice. Key features include:

- **Homepage Experience:**
  - A dynamic hero section capable of supporting high-resolution images and video.
  - Clear calls-to-action (e.g., "Plan Your Trip," "Explore Events").
  - Featured content modules for highlighting key attractions, stories, or seasonal campaigns.
- **Core Navigation & Structure:**
  - A sticky, multi-level dropdown navigation menu for desktop.
  - A responsive, mobile-friendly "hamburger" menu.
  - A "Saved Items" or "Itinerary Builder" functionality allowing users to bookmark listings and pages, with a visible counter.
- **Events System:**
  - A visually appealing events calendar and listing page with filtering by date, category, and location.
  - A public-facing "Submit an Event" form with an administrative approval workflow.
  - Individual event pages with detailed information, imagery, and mapping.
- **Business & Attraction Directory:**
  - A searchable directory with categories (e.g., Stay, Dine, Shop, Play).
  - Robust filtering options within the directory.
  - Detailed individual listing pages featuring:
    - Business name, address, phone number, and website.
    - Image gallery and logo.
    - "Save to Itinerary" functionality.
    - Integrated map location.
- **Content & Storytelling Features:**
  - Flexible page templates for creating rich content pages (e.g., blogs, landing pages).
  - Integrated image galleries and video embeds.
  - Functionality for a downloadable digital visitor guide.

4.3 Technical Requirements

- **Mobile-First Responsive Design:** The site must function flawlessly across all devices (desktop, tablet, and mobile).
- **Accessibility:** The site must be built to meet WCAG 2.1 AA standards. Compatibility with accessibility overlay tools like accessiBe is required.
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** The site must be built with SEO best practices, including clean URL structures, editable metadata, schema markup for events and businesses, and fast load times.
- **Analytics:** Full integration with Google Analytics 4 (or similar platform) to track KPIs.
- **Compliance:** Integration of a cookie consent banner and privacy policy.

4.4 Brand Implementation & Training

- **Digital Asset Integration:** Utilize the newly designed branding assets including logos, color palettes, fonts, etc. for key digital pieces that align with the new website's branding (e.g., email newsletter template, social media graphic templates).
- **Training & Documentation:** Provide comprehensive training for Chenango DMO staff on using the CMS and managing all aspects of the website.
- **Launch Support:** Provide technical support during the website's launch and for a 30-day post-launch period.

5.0 Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals must include the following sections to be considered:

1. **Company Overview:** A brief history of your firm, your mission, and what makes you a good fit for this project.
2. **Relevant Experience & Portfolio:** Provide at least three examples of similar websites you have developed, preferably for tourism or economic development organizations. Include links and a brief description of your role.

3. **Project Approach:** Describe your proposed methodology for strategy, design, and development. Include your recommended CMS and rationale.
4. **Proposed Timeline:** A detailed project timeline from kickoff to launch.
5. **Detailed Cost Proposal:** A line-item budget that clearly breaks down costs for all major phases and deliverables.
6. **Project Team:** Biographies of the key team members who will be assigned to this project.

6.0 Anticipated Timeline

- **RFP Issued:** January 23, 2026
- **Deadline for Questions:** February 10, 2026
- **Proposals Due:** March 9, 2026
- **Finalist Interviews:** Week of March 16, 2026
- **Firm Selection & Notification:** April 3, 2026
- **Project Kickoff:** Mid-April 2026

7.0 Contact Information

Please direct all questions regarding this RFP in writing via email to:

Sophia Root she/her

Marketing & Communications Coordinator

Tourism Director

Commerce Chenango

19 East Main Street, Norwich NY 13815

607-334-1429

We look forward to receiving your proposals and finding a partner to help us showcase the best of Chenango County.