

City pursuing a 2020 Olympics marketing consultant

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The Crescent City Council moved Nov. 4 to hire a consultant to increase the community's exposure during the 2020 Olympics.

The city would chip in \$15,000 to hire the consultant, in collaboration with the Crescent City/Del Norte Chamber of Commerce and other community organizations.

"In order to get this done, it (must be) a collaboration of multiple partners: the city, the county, the harbor, the school district and private businesses as well," said City Manager Eric Wier. "That's why the vehicle for this is the chamber. That is where the \$15,000 proposal comes in."

Wier said that in conjunction with the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, NBC Sports wants to spotlight Crescent City's relationship to its sister city in Japan, Rikuzentakata, as one of the network's "feel-good" stories connecting the two nations.

"So, Crescent City and Del Norte County will be featured in the 2020 Olympics. It's an amazing opportunity. The economic opportunities through the Olympics are like the Super Bowl," Wier said.

He said the city's planning began during interviews with firms to prepare the city's Economic Development Strategic Action Plan.

After hiring Planwest Partners Inc. to develop the plan, staff asked one of the partners, Rob Homlund of Malex Consulting, to outline an extensive list of responsibilities the proposed consultant would perform before, during and after the Olympics.

Homlund said, "Expect an increase in tourism to Crescent City and Del Norte County due to global exposure. If one million people watch (the Olympics), and .01% of them consider coming, your hotels would be filled instantly for years.

"So global exposure is something you don't get that often," Homlund said.

To maximize this unique opportunity, the city first will need to provide excellent resources and experiences to the NBC Sports production crew and other interested media, Homlund said. "I can tell you from experience, sometimes media go off on their own tangents, so the better experience you can provide them while they're here, the better it will be for everyone."

Doing so would include creating promotional materials across all sources of social media, including special publications, video productions and web content.

Said Homlund: "There's a guy sitting in Pittsburg that's excited about the Olympics. He's going to watch the Olympics. Once he's done and sees the story and wants to go on vacation and packs his family into the RV, make sure you have materials for that guy to find so he can bring his family here, because you don't want to lose that opportunity."

He estimated the cost for a consult and related services to total at least \$59,000.

Wier said that's just the starting point. "The \$59,000 can be expanded, (because) there is even more we could be doing."

That's why he recommended reaching out to the other organizations. But it has to be done quickly, Homlund said. "You're already really late. The delegation is coming in mid-December. NBC Sports will be here then.

"So, you have six weeks to affectively get a third of this work done," he said.

Wier will be addressing other city and county organizations in the upcoming week. If they decline to join in hiring a consultant, he said, the city would have to revisit the scope.

"If the city is the only contributor, then I don't think we would go through the chamber anymore. The city would reevaluate the scope, the amount of money we're putting in, and determine what would be the most efficient way to make this a city project," he said.

Homlund suggested that if the city had to pursue a consultant on its own, "I would hire the slickest San Francisco or New York City public relations firm I could. They have a list of journalists they know that they have an immediate access to. The rest is all local labor companies.

“You want somebody that has the connections to get the San Francisco Chronicle to Crescent City. It’s hard to get them to even answer the phone. But a public relations firm can do it. So, if you were to do even one thing, that’s what I would recommend.”