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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 23, 2024

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Public Relations Liaison Darcy Ellis, (760) 878-0292

County Awards Groups Almost \$100,000 in Grant Funds Aid Includes \$40,000 in Competitive Grants

With spring on the horizon, residents and visitors can expect to start seeing the return of beloved annual events and the emergence of some new and unique community projects and programs.

To help ensure the success of these endeavors, Inyo County has awarded a total of \$93,600 in grants to local non-profit entities through its annual Community Project Sponsorship Program (CPSP), which supports annual fishing derbies and perennial events like Mule Days, and also has a competitive grant component.

Ten different organizations are receiving competitive CPSP grants in 2024, for projects spanning from Bishop to Lone Pine. The Inyo County Board of Supervisors approved a total of \$40,000 for the competitive portion of the program in the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget.

The competitive grants can be used to fund a variety of projects, programs or events. In general, the CPSP program is focused on helping local organizations promote activities and programs that bring visitors to the area, and supports events and programs that enhance the cultural and recreational quality of life of the county's residents.

This year's program was highly competitive. The County received 16 applications from 11 different organizations seeking a combined \$115,800 – almost three times the amount of funding available. The independent review panel – non-affiliated community members from different parts of the county – had a difficult task and ultimately focused on the proposals with the strongest applications, the most likelihood of success, and those that showed the best leveraging of resources – including seeking volunteer efforts and additional funding from other sources.

The panel also leaned towards digital/online projects, and those most likely to gain widespread interest from visitors.

Following is the approved distribution of the funding, based on the review panel's recommendation:

- Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association – \$2,500 for its Eastern Sierra Youth Outdoors program that takes local teens on a six-day rock-climbing/backpacking adventure;
- Eastern Sierra Pride – \$6,000 to support the 2024 Festival;
- Friends of the Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fair – \$5,000 for another series of Friday Night Markets in Bishop;
- Friends of the Inyo – \$4,000 to support the 2024 Owens Lake Bird Festival;
- Friends of Lone Pine Airport – \$5,000 for the Terminal Building Restoration Project;

- Lone Pine Chamber of Commerce – \$4,000 for the Music in the Courtyard summer concert series;
- Lone Pine Film Festival – \$5,000 for the 2024 event;
- Museum of Western Film History – \$3,000 for another round of Movies at the Museum in Lone Pine;
- Mule Days – \$2,500 for digital marketing; and
- Search and Rescue – \$3,000 for the Range of Light Trail Races that raise funds for the volunteer organization.

“Our Board is excited and proud to be able to continue offering support for local promotional efforts through this grant program,” said Board Chair Matt Kingsley. “Each year seems to bring out so many creative ideas and proposals, and it’s heartening to see these organizations put so much effort into helping to promote and enhance our communities.

“The volunteer panel of community members responsible for reviewing and scoring the applications certainly had a daunting task, and we appreciate their careful and thorough consideration of each request,” he continued. “While it’s unfortunate the County could not fund every request this year, we thank everyone who applied and encourage them to do so again in the future.”

The next application period for CPSP Competitive Grants, for 2025, will be this fall.

The CPSP program also includes Fishing Promotion, which provides \$35,000 for four local fishing derbies and other promotional events during the Fishing Season, and \$53,600 in Line Item Grants which fund well-established, ongoing promotional efforts or events such as the Images of Inyo Photo Contest, Death Valley and Inyo County online visitors guides, Wild Wild West Marathon in Lone Pine and the California High School Rodeo Association State Finals in Bishop.

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