



May 21, 2019

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
OPERATION OF A CERTIFIED FARMERS' MARKET IN LA MESA**

BACKGROUND:

The City of La Mesa has managed a Farmers' Market since 1993, being the oldest farmers' market in the region. The Market was successfully run in the past from 2011 through April of 2018, at the Civic Center.

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce is to move the Market and manage it for the City of La Mesa. We propose continuing a Friday weekly Farmers Market and move the location to the Civic Center. There is ample parking and street visibility, which offers the opportunity to make this area a magnet for people to view as they enter La Mesa. The viability of this location offers an opportunity to enhance the exposure and image of the Market. The Market located at the Civic Center would require no temporary street closures; no need to use the City Engineering division to design a traffic control plan for those closures and the City would have any loss of parking meter revenue from street closures. Residents and neighborhoods surrounding the current Market location will have their streets back with our proposed move. Local businesses that are currently experiencing financial distress due to the current location and street closures, will again be on a level playing field on a Friday and able to compete for "happy hour" and Friday evening dining business, as well as retail shopping.

We have provided the details of our proposal, the history of our organization, our past successes and our vision for the Market for your consideration. I look forward to discussing our proposal at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mary England'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'M' and 'E'.

Mary England
President & CEO
8080 La Mesa Blvd., Ste 212
La Mesa, CA 91942
(619) 465-7700 (619) 251-7730
maryengland@lamesachamber.com

OUR ORGANIZATION/BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS:

The La Mesa Chamber filed their Articles of Incorporation in 2007, after 12 years of not having a chamber in La Mesa. In 2008 the organization hired a CEO and began the journey of building the business organization that would support, promote and serve the La Mesa community and region. The Chamber prides itself on building relationships and partnerships. This is achieved by connecting the consumer to businesses, while providing the expertise to facilitate successful events, designed to support the Chamber's on-going activities and programs. Through our past ten years we have been committed to grow and mobilize our volunteer base and have produced and executed the following:

The La Mesa Oktoberfest 2009-2014 – Throughout those six years the Chamber managed the beer garden, as well as created a food court. These efforts mobilized a total of over 190 volunteers each year from local banks, credit unions, car dealerships, churches, real estate agents, community groups and various business members. The Chamber takes pride in the fact, that we always met our financial obligations associated with this event and paid 100% cost recovery in the years 2011-2014.

The Salute to Local Heroes Recognition Dinner – For the past ten years this annual dinner recognizes those chosen by their organizations from police, fire, paramedics and volunteers from the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol. We honor them and celebrate their accomplishments and dedication to our community.

Business Expos held in April and August – These two events, for the past six years have continued to grow. These Expos allow the Chamber to invite the public and highlight 48-52 business vendors, have 13 restaurants serve items from their menu and entertain over 300 attendees. New business members are introduced to the public and over 32 volunteers are needed at each of these two activities.

Taste of La Mesa – For the past ten years this popular community activity has constantly grown and required expanding the local venue to multiple buildings at the La Mesa Community Center with over 430 people attending and utilizing 42 volunteers. Due to the growth of this event, this year we are moving to a larger venue to accommodate the number of restaurants, attendees and business vendors that participate.

We serve as a City of La Mesa tourism bureau. We send information and respond to inquiries from visitors and those planning to relocate to La Mesa. We have printed and distributed 9,000 City of La Mesa maps in the past eight years.

We believe that being a member of the community also means giving back. We have created community projects that are for the betterment of people within La Mesa. We receive tremendous support from the public, our members and those from throughout the region.

Several examples are:

Annual Homebound Senior Project – Each holiday season we adopt 24 homebound La Mesa seniors in partnership with the La Mesa Police Department and members of the RSVP program. Last year we purchased, collected and distributed a total of 3,804 items such as; canned goods, toiletries, breakfast bars, snacks, cereal, socks and more in gift bags to the seniors.

La Mesa Military Children’s Project – This annual holiday project receives great community support. Last year we purchased and collected a grand total of 2,194 toys and items for these military families. We also partner with Barnes & Noble at Grossmont Center and Carl Burger Dodge Chrysler Jeep RAM World to create the “Stuff the Jeep” book drive for these children. Last year we collected 568 books through this partnership, and celebrated our success in October by having our “Stuff the Jeep” event in the Courtyard at Grossmont Center.

OUR VISION FOR THE FARMERS’ MARKET:

(1) Continue the tradition that the City of La Mesa began 27 years ago through this free Farmers’ Market, ensuring a safe and family-friendly environment.

(2) Make this weekly activity a memorable experience and exceed all expectations of the City of La Mesa and guests. To create a marketing strategy that will be infused with high energy, visible signage, a proactive marketing campaign and a welcoming environment when guests enter.

(3) Capitalize on the character and charm of the City of La Mesa that people have grown to enjoy while attending this weekly event. We will make necessary modifications to the venue to enhance the success of the vendors, as well as providing a delightful experience for them and the consumer. We plan to maximize our resources and partnerships with various local and regional media.

This will include but is not limited to:

Discovering My City Magazine, Newspapers, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, our data base of members/followers, and our media partner--Passport to San Diego.

(4) Create a partnership with the current vendors and make them a part of the process. They have been doing this event for years. What modifications would they like to see? What is working? What is not? Their success will be our success. Invite vendors that have left the Market to join us and be a part of this newly energized weekly event in La Mesa and listen to them.

(5) Introduce ourselves as the Market Manager and the booking agent for the Market. The Chamber would be responsible for the cash management of the Market, as well as the set up and tear down. We would work with the vendors to be sure all La Mesa Farmers Market fire safety conditions are adhered to, as well as all aspects of the management of the Market.

(6) Have our teams of volunteers perform various duties throughout the event. The first and foremost duty will be to welcome visitors as they arrive. This will create a warm and inviting atmosphere that will reinforce the revival of the weekly Market.

(7) We plan to add an enhanced marketing opportunity for La Mesa businesses. We will launch our “Shop Local – Shop La Mesa” campaign at the Market. This will allow La Mesa businesses from throughout the city to have a presence at the Market. We will share this concept with them, as well as assist them in developing their marketing collaterals. Those collaterals can be distributed and spotlight their specials, discounts and provide other items to be given away. The purpose is to introduce our Market attendees to those businesses and share the goods and services that they offer.

(8) We would also like to create the opportunity to spotlight businesses from different areas of La Mesa during the upcoming months. For instance, we could have a “Highlight of Lake Murray Businesses.” This would focus on businesses from that area. They would be invited to participate, either as a vendor or provide the collaterals for us to distribute on their behalf. This concept will allow the Market to be a useful benefit to the many business areas throughout La Mesa.

(9) Our on-going marketing strategy will allow the businesses in the Village to have a presence at the Market weekly. Those businesses will be introduced to our “Shop Local – Shop La Mesa” concept. We are hopeful that those businesses being in close proximity to the Farmers’ Market will wish to rent a vendor table or want to provide us their marketing coupons, pamphlets and collateral which we will gladly distribute.

(10) Periodically we would like to add face painters to the venue and other types of entertainment to enhance the experience for families and children. We will pattern those modifications based on the changing trends of successful Certified Farmers’ Markets within the region. We realize that consumers can change their expectations. We shall be sensitive to those expectations and when appropriate or feasible, we will strive to make necessary modifications. We are involved and connected to our community. That will be an enormous benefit as we manage the weekly Market.

OUR MARKET MANAGER:

Our Market Manager will be our President and CEO, Mary England. She worked with the City of La Mesa and managed the Oktoberfest beer garden from 2009 - 2014. That professional management allowed the Chamber to successfully entertain an approved occupancy of 2,200 people until midnight in that beer garden. The Chamber was also granted the operation of a food court on La Mesa Boulevard during the Oktoberfest activities. Under her guidance the Chamber immediately began to grow their volunteer base that supports the Chamber's various events and projects. In addition to quality management of activities and events, sponsors are garnered through the cultivation of relationships.

In addition to working for the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce, Ms. England has owned her own event planning and fundraising business, Mary England Enterprises, Inc. Through years of developing relationships, she has worked for various clients: Supervisor Dianne Jacob, San Diego District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis, Supervisor Greg Cox, State Assemblywoman Shirley Horton, Councilmember Kevin Faulconer, Camp Hope, Coming Together, San Diego Crime Commission, and the Kiwanis Club of Lemon Grove Sunrise. Ms. England has volunteered her services for various charities and causes over the past twenty-five years. Some of these are: The Lemon Grove car show, "Blast from the Past," the Telephone Pioneers of America, the Lemon Grove Education Foundation, the Lemon Grove Chamber of Commerce, and secured sponsorships for community events for the City of Lemon Grove as a seated Council Member from 2000-2012. A volunteer highlight was successfully co-chairing the Lemon Grove School Bond Measure, Proposition LL, which won with an 81% voter approval rate in 1998.

In summary, the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce is held in high esteem for producing quality events within the area. We will be committed to ensuring this signature event continues to be executed in a quality manner.