



RFP: EDC Website and Marketing

VisitBoonsboro.com

Contact Information:

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Boonsboro has many attractions – natural and man-made. There is a great deal to promote to spur economic development, both by residents and regional and national visitors. Tourists are looking for more than just a place to visit. They want to know the back-story, see what makes it unique and feel they can take part of that with them when they leave.

Skipjack Web Services will create an engaging, attractive and easy-to-use online tourism presence for Boonsboro with a Word-Press-based website that promotes Boonsboro, highlighting its unique features and telling the story of our town.

About Skipjack Web Services:

Skipjack Web Services, owned by Kristin Bowl, has been in operation since 2005. With approximately 42 clients currently across a variety of industries, Skipjack builds and manages WordPress-based websites and oversees social media and mass email marketing for small businesses and organizations. Prior to founding Skipjack, Kristin worked in public relations for a large, national association and handled public affairs and communications for two members of Congress.

Note: Per the RFP, vendors must be licensed and insured, however, the State of Maryland does not offer licensing for website designers and developers, as confirmed with the state's department of licensing last week. Skipjack maintains professional liability insurance through Hiscox.

Website Features:

PLATFORM - The website will be based on WordPress (WordPress.org), the world's most popular content management platform used by small businesses and organizations. A user profile will be created for a point person on the EDC.

RESPONSIVE & MOBILE FRIENDLY - The website will be built to be responsive to all screen sizes and optimized for desktop, tablet and mobile devices.

SEO & ANALYTICS – VisitBoonsboro.com will be structured in an SEO-friendly manner with appropriate H1 headings, meta descriptions and keywords. Utilizing an SEO grading plugin, Skipjack will make sure the site grades well regarding SEO.

The website will also have a Google Analytics and a Google Search Console accounts created to monitor and evaluate traffic to the site.

DOMAIN – Several years ago, Skipjack registered the domain, VisitBoonsboro.com. We propose to use this as the primary domain.

APPEARANCE - Inviting design and user-friendly structure to make it easy for visitors to find things to do and places to visit.

SOCIAL MEDIA – VisitBoonsboro.com will link to the Town’s social media profiles and website as well as the EDC’s social media profiles.

In addition, Skipjack will include an Instagram feed embedded on the homepage of the site. While the website will have regular updates, an Instagram page is much easier to update frequently and this up-to-the-minute content will be seen on the website automatically as soon as they are posted on Instagram.

CALLS TO ACTION - Site will encourage users to take a variety of actions. Those goals to be set in conjunction with the EDC.

TOURISM TOOLS - VisitBoonsboro.com will include online itineraries for several paths that might be of interest to visitors, i.e. Food & Wine, Civil War, Outdoor Enthusiasts and will link to other area resources such as Biking the C&O Canal, hiking the AT, etc.

The site will include an interactive map that highlights areas of interest such as museums, shops, restaurants and more.

Utilizing the calendar of events created by the EDC and others, the site will include a list of upcoming events of interest. Major events, such as Boonesborough Days and BooneFest would have their own posts with information and photos, which appear on the site’s Events page. Google Map, links to GPS-guided Boonsboro Walking Tour app and Church Tour

ENGAGEMENT – To promote proactive contact and engagement, a mass email account will be created via MailChimp, or another mass email tool of the client’s choosing, and the site will include calls to action asking visitors to sign up for local news and events via an opt-in form on the site. A template, matching the branding of the website, will be created at MailChimp for mass emails and newsletters.

The site could include sign-up forms for local businesses to submit advertisements to run on the site and in mass emails. A review will be made of successful tourism websites to see how they may incorporate advertising opportunities in a way that is not cumbersome or annoying to visitors, for example as advertorials or spotlighted businesses.

Integrating MailChimp with Textedly would allow us to harness the power of SMS texting by gathering mobile phone numbers at the same time as emails via an opt-in sign up on the website.

****Note:** While MailChimp is free up to 1,000 emails per month, sending SMS texts is not. The cost to send mass texts would range from \$26 per month for 600 text messages a month to \$69 per month to send up to 2,400 text messages a month. The sign-up would include an option to pick interests and thereby allow emails and texting to be targeted to visitors with specific interests.

PAYMENT PROCESSING – Skipjack would recommend that the EDC create a Square account to accept donations, sell merchandise or tickets, accept registration fees, etc. After having used a variety of different payment processors, Square seems to be the easiest to navigate and process online as well as in-person.

CONTENT – Skipjack will work with the EDC to identify both evergreen content and upcoming news/events for the website as its built. Once the website is launched, the ongoing creation of fresh and regular content for the website and social media will be imperative to the long-term success of the website in reaching its goals. Skipjack is unable to be primarily responsible for the ongoing creation of content but will take provided content from EDC members and Town Alliance to implement on the site and in mass emails in a way that is SEO-friendly and interesting to visitors.

As a partner in the success of the tourism strategy, Skipjack will gladly serve as a representative on a possible Marketing Content Group that plans upcoming content and promotion opportunities and may also contribute original content and imagery for the site but does not bear the primary responsibility for content creation.

WEBSITE MAINTENANCE – Due to the popularity of WordPress as a hacking target, Skipjack **REQUIRES** all clients to have an ongoing Maintenance Agreement in place. This includes Skipjack conducting monthly maintenance on a scheduled basis to:

- 1) Make updates to WordPress, theme and plugins as well as version of php on the server at the host company
- 2) Run malware and security scan to look for problem areas that need to be addressed
- 3) Create a complete backup of the entire site, which is stored off-site in case of technical failure or hacking so that the site may be restored.

The maintenance agreement with Skipjack can be terminated at any time, however, we **STRONGLY** recommend that the site is always maintained with the actions mentioned above by a professional.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Privacy Compliance – The GDPR is an EU directive that applies to websites around the world if site visitors are citizens of the EU. Therefore, the site will include a GDPR-compliant Privacy Policy and a proactive opt-in for cookies on the website. This will also ensure compliance with new privacy laws in other states such as Virginia and California.

ADA Compliance – Being ADA-compliant means the site should be accessible and functional for all people regardless of their ability. *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0* covers a wide

range of recommendations for making Web content more accessible, including for those with blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity and combinations of these.

While it would be difficult to affordably incorporate accommodation for every disability described above, Skipjack will incorporate the following website accommodations:

- 1) All images used on the site will include ALT tags, which provide descriptions for the visually-impaired.
- 2) Skipjack will incorporate a plugin that provides a variety of tools for visual accommodation to the site including the ability for the user to increase/decrease text, apply grayscale, contrast, lighten the background and highlight links. These tools may be turned on and off by the user.
- 3) Providing a sitemap, descriptive titles and breadcrumb trail.
- 4) Providing a text prompt on any form fields.

To be further compliant would mean, for example, that the site would need to provide a spoken version of all text and that any videos created by the EDC to be placed on the site would need to have closed captions for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers, include audio descriptions and a transcript for blind users as well as utilize a media player that has keyboard-operable controls to accommodate people who cannot use a mouse. A full list of compliance parameters is available at <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20-TECHS/>.

TRAINING –

Skipjack will gladly provide training on the use of the website to 1 or 2 select representatives of the EDC. However, over time, it has become apparent with other clients that having non-professionals update the website is often detrimental to the long-term integrity of the site. Non-professionals are often unaware of the requirements of adding images (resizing, ALT tags, etc) nor the techniques of adding content in a way that will be SEO-friendly. Those not familiar with the Divi Theme Builder could delete layouts and convert pages back to Classic Editor by accident. Skipjack would prefer to handle updates in content if possible and most often can make updates within 24-48 business hours.

IMPORTANT NOTES –

Ownership - Please note that ALL accounts related to the website will be applied for in the EDC's name. While Skipjack Web Services will require access to those accounts for the purposes of creating and maintaining the site, the accounts themselves will belong to the EDC. Any tools or services that cost money would be signed up for by the liaison from the town or EDC. Any ongoing costs for such tools and accounts will be borne by the town or EDC alone, as is the responsibility for maintaining those accounts with proper billing information.

Examples of third-party tools and services might include:

- Website Hosting – Skipjack recommends BlueHost.com, which provides a reliable source of hosting at a reasonable rate with technical support accessible by phone and online chat. BlueHost often offers an introductory rate on hosting for \$4.95 per month (for 36 months). After the initial period, the rate goes to \$9.99 per month.

- Domain – If Skipjack is selected to create the website, I will transfer the VisitBoonsboro.com domain over to the EDC to own. Domains are generally \$17 to \$20 per year to renew.
- Skipjack Monthly Maintenance – \$30 monthly – see above for items included each month.
- Content or Design Updates – time billed by the hour at \$50 per hour. Otherwise, Skipjack can offer a flat rate each month based on estimated time involved.
- MailChimp – Free to up to 1,000 emails per month. Beyond that is \$13 per month for up to 5,000 emails per month.
- Textedly – If the EDC decides to use the SMS mass texting integration with MailChimp, the service costs \$26 per month for 600 text messages a month up to \$69 per month to send up to 2,400 text messages a month.
- WPForms – The site will utilize this plugin for the Contact Form. If, the paid version of the site is needed, there is an annual charge from the developer. For example, the ability to upload images with a form (if the EDC wants businesses to upload ad files along with a form).
- Interactive map – free for one map. \$99 per year for unlimited interactive maps.
- Theme and Backups - Skipjack will extend its paid subscriptions for the Divi theme and BackupBuddy to the EDC as long as Skipjack is contracted. If/when Skipjack Web Services no longer manages the website, the cost of continued use of the WordPress theme Divi and the BackupBuddy plugin which backs up the website would be borne by the client. Divi yearly access to updates is \$89 annually and BackupBuddy for 1 site is \$99 annually.

Note that Skipjack does not bear any responsibility for the effectiveness of third-party services and tools, which are completely out of Skipjack's control.

References:

Below are references for three of my most recent websites. I have many others I can provide here in Boonsboro and in the DC area as well.

Shauna Edelen – Co-owner of Edelen Tree Experts and board member of Boonsboro Athletics Boosters Inc (BABI). Shauna has been my contact for websites for both of these entities.
admin@edelentrees.com mobile # - 301.748.8606

Cindy Rowe – Blue Mountain Wine Crafters
bluemountainwinecrafters@yahoo.com mobile # - 240.675.0845

Ruth Day – Vertical Technology Services
rdaye@verticalts.com mobile # - 301.790.3381

Schedule of Charges:

Website design and creation as described above - \$3,900 one-time fee
(Additional functionality requested by EDC may affect this estimate)

Website Deposit and Final Balance

Before work may begin, 50% (\$1,950) of the anticipated total is due as a deposit on the website. The remaining 50% (\$1,950) is due as a final balance after the EDC has given its final approval and before the site goes live.

Monthly Maintenance - \$30 per month or may be paid annually \$360

Maintenance covers backend systems with work as described above and does not include updates to content or design. If paid monthly via credit card, the charges would not start until the month after the site goes live. For example, if the site goes live in September, the charges would not start until October. If paid annually, the total amount would be added to the invoice with the final balance.

Hourly Rate - \$50

(For content updates, actual time spent is tracked using a billing app.)

Estimates for anticipated regular activities:

- Adding an event post to website - 30 min to 1 hour
- Creating an e-newsletter where content is provided – 2-3 hours depending on length
- Creating new sliders for top of website – 30 min to 1 hour
- Adding social media posts to FB and Instagram – 30 min
- Writing original blogpost to promote aspect of tourism with SEO practices – 2-4 hours

Timeline:

Schedule of work is dependent on a variety of factors, including the when the town selects a vendor, makes a deposit and signs the agreement of work as well as whether featured are added by the EDC, and the speed of input and approvals. Generally, Skipjack would plan on the timeline below with modifications if the award of the contact is later than June:

- June – Out of the country. The EDC signs Skipjack's standard agreement and sends a check in the amount of 50% of the estimate as a deposit. Any materials the EDC would like to feature on the site may be emailed to Skipjack during this time. The EDC should apply for a hosting account on which to build the site. See note above, but Skipjack generally recommends BlueHost for its features, affordability and availability of technical support. Skipjack receives nothing in return from BlueHost for recommendations.
- First week of July – Work begins by meeting with the EDC to gather input, preferences, direction, style requirements, etc. Target audiences identified and content mapped to audiences.
- Mid July – A proposed framework for content is laid out and submitted to the EDC.
- Last week in July – Assuming an approved framework/sitemap, Skipjack installs WordPress and begins creating the structure of the site.
- Second week in August – Skipjack submits a draft homepage layout to the EDC for feedback. EDC reviews and provides critique. If the EDC approves the design, Skipjack will make any requested changes and begin the design and layout of the secondary pages and functionality. If the EDC determines that another design mockup needs to be presented, Skipjack will do an alternate design at this time.

- Early September – Skipjack submits the site for the next round of review/approvals and makes any changes.
- Mid-September - Anticipated launch of website.

Note: Skipack's standard agreement is attached for reference.



Skipjack Website Agreement

Client Name: Economic Development Commission
Client Organization/Company: Town of Boonsboro
Date: 5/22/2023

Please sign and return agreement either by scanning/emailing or mailing to 800 Brookridge Dr, Boonsboro, MD 21713.

1. Authorization.

The EDC/Town of Boonsboro hereafter referred to as "The Client", is retaining Skipjack Web Services as an independent contractor for the work laid out in estimate above. The Client hereby authorizes Skipjack Web Services, and its agent Kristin Bowl, to access the Client's hosting account, and any other programs necessary, for the creation of a website. The Client authorizes the use of subcontractors deemed necessary by Skipjack Web Services to assist with or complete portions of website work. If the use of such subcontractors will result in additional cost to the Client, it will be approved by the Client before that specific work has begun.

_____ (client initial)

2. Development.

The use of the following programs or websites and may be used in developing a website: Adobe Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Illustrator, PayPal, Microsoft Word, Adobe Reader, Backup Buddy, iThemes Security, WordFence, Elegant Themes, WinZip, Word Press, FileZilla, or others deemed necessary to the creation of the site. While Skipjack Web Services will make reasonable efforts to design a fully-functional website that is compatible with a number of major web browsers, Skipjack Web Services does not cover AOL, text-based browsers or any special effects we advise against. _____ (client initial)

3. Copyrights and Trademarks.

The Client unconditionally guarantees that any elements of text, graphics, photos, designs, trademarks, or other artwork furnished to Skipjack Web Services for inclusion in the website are owned by the Client, or that the Client has permission from the rightful owner to use each of these elements, and will hold harmless, protect, indemnify Patrick and Kristin Bowl and Skipjack Web Services from any liability (including attorney's fees and court costs), including any claim or suit, threatened or actual, arising from the use of such elements furnished by the Client. Any photos purchased by Skipjack Web Services by a stock photography are used under license of that company and retain that company's ownership. The use of such photos are conditional upon their license. _____ (client initial)



Although a website may utilize a Word Press theme and have a similar look to an existing website(s) Skipjack Web Services will not substantially copy another website. _____ (client initial)

4. Web Site Maintenance.

Skipjack Web Services requires a maintenance agreement with all new and newly-designed websites that use WordPress. As a continually evolving system, it is imperative that you continue to have maintenance (updates, malware scans and complete backups) on the website in order for it to function properly and to provide protection from hackers. You may cancel at any time with notice via email, but Skipjack strongly advises monthly maintenance on all WordPress websites.

5. E-mail and Applications

Many hosting companies offer e-mail and other applications such as website statistics, among their services, and are often included with a hosting account. If requested, we will be glad to set-up Google Analytics for the client, but we are not responsible for any failures by Google.

Skipjack Web Services is not responsible in any way for the reliability or technical support related to e-mail services provided by the host company. If Skipjack Web Services assists the client with setting up an e-mail account through the host company's e-mail application, Skipjack Web Services is not responsible for configuring such e-mail through Microsoft Outlook, mobile devices, software, networks or equipment. _____ (client initial)

6. Hosting

Skipjack Web Services does not provide hosting services. Hosting costs are completely separate from this estimate and payable directly by the Client to the hosting company. Skipjack Web Services is not responsible for the performance of hosting and external applications such as e-commerce applications, storefront applications, e-mail, content management systems, hosted photo galleries, analytical services, ftp services, hosted databases, domain services, or any other functions provided by a third party. Skipjack Web Services may provide advice or assistance, but is not responsible for the performance of or support for such products or applications. The Client may provide Skipjack Web Services access to a hosting account for the purposes of creating and maintaining the website but the account and any charges therein are solely the responsibility of the client. _____ (client initial)

7. Search Engine Optimization

Skipjack Web Services will make suggestions and incorporate into the site any methods we believe may help with the rankings of your website by Google and other search engines. Skipjack Web Services will submit the Client's completed site for inclusion in search engine



results, but cannot guarantee the ranking of your site by such search engines since this is completely out of Skipjack Web Services' control. _____ (client initial)

8. Completion Date.

Skipjack Web Services and the Client will work together to complete the website in a timely manner. If the client does not supply information, images, or provide reviews/approvals in a timely manner, this will cause delays in the completion of the site. If 30 days pass from the time the materials or review were requested without response by the client, the entire deposit amount of the agreement shall be retained by Skipjack Web Services as liquidated damages and the contract shall become null and void, at Skipjack Web Services' option. In addition, Skipjack Web Services will issue an invoice to include any charges for work incurred beyond the deposit. Once the client re-engages in the process, Skipjack Web Services will finish the work to launch a completed site. _____ (client initial)

9. Project Delivery.

The final web site design project will be published to the hosting service agreed upon by the client and Skipjack Web Services. A final invoice will be sent upon completion and the client agrees to pay the remaining balance BEFORE the site may go live. _____ (client initial)

10. Legal Responsibility

The Client agrees that the Client is solely responsible for complying with any laws, regulations, taxes, or tariffs applicable in any way to the website or any other services contemplated herein, and will hold harmless, protect, and defend Patrick and Kristin Bowl and Skipjack Web Services and its subcontractors from any claim, suit, penalty, tax, fine, penalty, or tariff arising from the Client's exercise of Internet electronic commerce and/or any failure to comply with any such laws, regulations, taxes, and /or tariffs. This includes compliance with privacy and/or accessibility laws and regulations. _____ (client initial)

11. Designs and Drafts

Copyright to any design drafts or ideas shown to the client, as well as the finished web design produced by Skipjack Web Services will be owned by Patrick and Kristin Bowl and/or Skipjack Web Services. The Client will own the website design, once final payment under this agreement and any additional charges incurred have been paid. Rights to any photos or text owned by the Client remain the property of the Client. Images supplied by Skipjack Web Services are through a subscription with stock images company. Ownership of these images does not transfer to the client. They may be used on the website, but may not be used in separate projects or purposes by the client, including printed brochures and social media, etc. Website projects will contain a small link to the Skipjack Web Services website at the bottom of the front page of the site. Skipjack Web Services may also include the completed site as an example of our work on our own website. If the Client would prefer not to have their site included, the Client should notify Skipjack Web Services in advance. _____ (client initial)



12. Estimates.

Skipjack Web Services makes every effort to make an accurate estimate of the work involved in this website project, based on conversations with the Client regarding their needs and expectations for the website. In the event that the scope of the project changes per the Client's wishes or additional unanticipated work becomes necessary in order to produce the site, the Client agrees that Skipjack Web Services may increase the charge for the website project. Any additional charges will be discussed with the Client before such work is completed. _____
(client initial)

13. Payments.

Payments must be made promptly based on the terms of this website. Skipjack Web Services reserves the right to remove any website or project from viewing on the Internet if monies owed are more than 30 days overdue. In case collection proves necessary, the Client agrees to pay all fees (including all attorney's fees and court costs) incurred by that process. This agreement becomes effective only when signed by Skipjack Web Services. Regardless of the place of signing of this agreement, the Client agrees that for purposes of venue, this agreement was entered into Washington County, Maryland and any dispute will be litigated or arbitrated in Washington County, Maryland and the Client hereby consents to the personal jurisdiction of the Maryland State Courts. Furthermore, the Client waives any right to or claim of sovereign immunity. _____ (client initial)

14. Payment Schedule.

Payment for services provided hereby shall be made in accordance with the conditions contained in this contract, and estimate attached hereto and made a part of this agreement hereof. Notwithstanding any prices listed in literature or on Web pages, the Client and Skipjack Web Services agree to the services described in this contract, and the estimate. _____
(client initial)

15. Cancellation

Once this agreement is signed and work has begun, the client is obligated to pay Skipjack Web Services for work performed. In the creation of the site, Skipjack may extend its paid subscriptions to certain applications for use on the website. As an example, Skipjack may use a paid theme or plugin to provide functionality on the site. Typically, as long as the client remains with Skipjack for Monthly Maintenance, the use of those applications will continue. However, if the Monthly Maintenance is cancelled, the client is then responsible for the ongoing cost of any applications used on the site. Skipjack Web Services does not guarantee in any way shape or



form the ongoing use of third-party applications and may revoke them at any time without written explanation.

16. Legal Notice.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this contract, neither Skipjack Web Services nor any of its employees or agents warrants that the functions contained in the website will be uninterrupted or error-free. Efforts will be made by Skipjack Web Services to ensure the accuracy of information on the site. The entire risk as to the quality and performance of the website, however, is with the Client. In no event will Patrick and Kristin Bowl or Skipjack Web Services be liable to the Client or any third party for any damages, including, but not limited to, service interruptions caused by Acts of God, the Hosting Service or any other circumstances beyond our reasonable control, any lost profits, lost savings or other incidental, consequential, punitive, or special damages arising out of the operation of or inability to operate this website, failure of any service provider, of any telecommunications carrier, of the Internet backbone, of any Internet servers, your or your site visitor's computer or Internet software. _____ (client initial)

17. This Agreement.

This agreement constitutes the sole agreement between Skipjack Web Services and the Client regarding this website project. Any additional work not specified in this contract or any other amendment or modification to this contract must be authorized by a written request signed by both Client and Skipjack Web Services. All prices specified in this contract and estimate will be honored for 60 days. _____ (client initial)

The undersigned hereby agree to the terms, conditions and stipulations of this agreement on behalf of his or her organization or business.

This Agreement constitutes the entire understanding of the parties. Any changes or modifications thereto must be in writing and signed by both parties.

AGREED TO:

Client:

(Signature) By _____ Date _____

(Print) Authorized Representative: _____



Title: _____

Skipjack Web Services

By _____ Date _____

Kristin Bowl, Authorized Representative