SUMMARY STATEMENT

ITEM NO.                           SUBJECT: South Jersey Tourism Corporation Funding

COMMITTEE:                        Operations & Maintenance

COMMITTEE MEETING DATE:           October 17, 2007

BOARD ACTION DATE:                November 14, 2007

PROPOSAL:                         That the DRPA Commission authorize staff to prepare an operating grant for general operations and marketing activities of South Jersey Tourism Corporation (SJTC).

PURPOSE:                          The continued funding of SJTC will build on the positive impact the agency has had the economy of the five-county region it serves. This economic impact can only increase with a continued, coordinated, and sustainable regional effort to increase the number of visitors to the region and related visitor spending. SJTC has identified existing tourism-related opportunities and supports the development of new tourism assets (i.e. historic sites, arts and cultural activities and agri-and eco-tourism) in participating in a burgeoning tourism industry. SJTC also has developed a South Jersey By Rail program which guides residents and visitors to explore the region using DRPA’s PATCO Speedline and the NJ Transit Riverline. Finally, with Pennsylvania being the second largest feeder state to New Jersey, SJTC’s marketing success will bring more visitors to the New Jersey over the DRPA’s four bridges.

BACKGROUND:                      Tourism is the third largest industry in New Jersey accounting for over $37 billion in annual expenditures. While the tourism industry has demonstrated continued growth over the last decade, it is also experiencing intense competition. To remain competitive, tourism development and promotion needs to increase throughout the state, including the region served by South Jersey Tourism Corporation. Tourism impacts a broad spectrum of stakeholders, from large corporations to small businesses and non-profit institutions and cultural, heritage and arts organizations. It involves transportation, economic development, infrastructure, promotion of regional assets and direct impact on the region’s economic health and image. Tourism assets are proven to have a direct positive impact on the quality of life for the region’s residents.

SUMMARY STATEMENT                 South Jersey Tourism Corporation
The number and quality of tourism assets in the core counties of the Delaware River region have improved substantially in the last decade. The region’s location across the Delaware River from Philadelphia and along a major north/south transportation corridor makes it easily accessible to an excursion market of over 26 million people. Hotel rooms in SJTC’s region are plentiful, with over 13,000 hotel rooms with an average occupancy rate of 66%.

SJTC has developed a heritage tourism asset inventory with over 80 sites and towns. One of the more compelling, and as of yet untapped, tourism draws is the vast amount of African American heritage and Underground Railroad sites in southern New Jersey. In addition, the Camden Waterfront is an emerging regional destination, attracting over 3 million visitors annually.

SJTC provides a coordinate, streamlined and integrated tourism development and marketing program. South Jersey has the potential to be a viable tourism destination now and a magnetic one in the future. Economic development projects throughout the region, many invested in and fueled by the DRPA, have gained the momentum necessary to create critical mass and synergy among the core counties. Competition for the tourism dollar is fierce; those regions with professional tourism marketing agencies will earn their share of those dollars and enjoy the positive economic impact of tourism.

**SUMMARY:**

- **Amount:** $200,000
- **Source of Funds:** 2001 NJ Swap Fund
- **Capital Project #:** N/A
- **Master Plan Status:** N/A
- **Other Fund Sources:** N/A
- **Duration of Contract:** Grant Completion
- **Other Parties Involved:** SJTC
RESOLUTION

RESOLVED: That the appropriate officers of the Delaware River Port Authority be and hereby are authorized to execute an operating grant for general operations and marketing activities of South Jersey Tourism Corporation (SJTC).

RESOLVED: The Chair, Vice Chair and the Chief Executive Officer must approve and are hereby authorized to approve and execute all necessary agreements, contracts, or other documents on behalf of the DRPA. If such agreements, contracts, or other documents have been approved by the Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Executive Officer and if thereafter either the Chair or Vice Chair is absent or unavailable, the remaining Officer may execute the said document(s) on behalf of DRPA along with the Chief Executive Officer. If both the Chair and Vice Chair are absent or unavailable, and if it is necessary to execute the said document(s) while they are absent or unavailable, then the Chief Executive Officer shall execute such documents on behalf of DRPA.

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