Deadline for Submittal Extended to July 24, 2020

Project Overview

The Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) is inviting contractors to submit a proposal to design a new website. RCWD seeks a website that will provide an engaging user experience, deliver clear messaging to diverse stakeholders, and reflect the priorities of the watershed district. The final product should be visually interesting, easy to navigate and accessible to all users (including individuals with disabilities and users of mobile devices), and efficient to maintain and update.

Organizational Background

The RCWD is a special-purpose unit of government (not a non-profit) that was established by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources in 1972. RCWD is approximately 186 square miles of urban, suburban, and rural lands in Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey, and Washington Counties. There are 28 cities and townships completely or partially within RCWD boundaries.

The RCWD mission is to manage, protect, and improve the water resources of the District through flood control and water quality projects and programs. RCWD manages a number of programs and implements projects that support priorities in nine management categories. These categories include public drainage systems and District facilities; flooding; water quality management; regulatory; funding; and collaborations, communications, outreach, and education.

Current Site and Content

The current RCWD website (www.ricecreek.org) is hosted and supported by GovOffice. Staff are currently able to make limited updates and change content. RCWD does not need to stay with the current web host and are open to alternatives.

The current site is very “content heavy.” Much of the content on the current site is outdated and in need of revision, removal, or replacement. RCWD has some internal capacity for creating web content.

Project Goals

RCWD will have a website that is clear, interesting, user-friendly, and represents the priorities of the watershed district. It must provide a platform for legal notices and requirements, regulatory support (and forms), information on programs and projects, increased public engagement, and improved “customer service.”

The following objectives must be met:
- Accessible to mobile technology and individuals with disabilities
- User-friendly navigation and experience
- Reflect the District’s priorities and brand
- Incorporate on-line forms for regulatory documents
- Include a content management system (CMS)
  - RCWD is open to all CMS options as long as all needs are met

RCWD staff provided feedback on additional priorities for the website:
- Improved and simplified organization and appearance of the website
- Frequently asked questions
- RCWD mission, goals, priorities, and general information
- Staff and Board information
- Education and outreach – including upcoming workshops and public opportunities
- Feature projects and programs
- Increase public engagement
- Resources, forms, and permit / regulatory information

The “Are You In the RCWD” feature will be removed from the website.

**Preliminary Scope of Work**

The selected contractor will design and implement a new website for RCWD. The contractor will be responsible for working with RCWD staff to assess website needs, evaluate and make recommendations on (graphic) design and information architecture, conducting wireframing and creating mockups, developing the website, and conducting quality assurance testing.

The contractor will also provide assistance and guidance to RCWD staff with content writing and assembly but will not be responsible for creating all content.

Ongoing website support should be included but as a separate option / package in the bid.

**Evaluation of Proposals**

Proposals will be reviewed by RCWD Board and staff. Proposals will be evaluated based upon, but not limited to, demonstrated success on similar projects (or for similar organizations), qualifications and expertise of the staff assigned to the project, budget detail, overall cost, and references. An interview may be part of the evaluation process.

At a minimum, the selected contractor will demonstrate expertise in the following areas:
- Web development
- Graphic design
- Responsive web design
- Accessibility / ADA standards
- Content management systems
- Information architecture
Preference may be given to contractors that also demonstrate expertise in user research, usability testing, content strategy, and other areas related to the project.

**Budget**

The RCWD has identified an undisclosed budget amount for this project. Proposed budgets will be considered but will not be the sole criteria for selecting a contractor. Proposed budgets associated with all project activities must be clearly identified.

If additional tasks are required or recommended, a justification and associated cost should be included. As stated in the “Preliminary Scope of Work,” ongoing website support should be included but identified as a separate option / package in the bid.

**Anticipated Timeline**

RCWD would like the redesigned website to launch in 2021 Quarter One or early Quarter Two.

**Key Dates:**

- **July 24, 2020** – EXTENDED Deadline for electronic submission and postmark date for required hard copy submittals (see Submission Requirements)
- **July 24 – August 4, 2020** – Staff review of proposals
- **August 10, 2020** – Staff present proposals to the Board at their monthly workshop; the Board may request interviews prior to final action
- **August 12 and 26 and September 8 and 9, 2020** – Possible Board workshop and meeting dates where additional discussion or action may be taken; the meeting and agenda will be announced

**Submission Requirements**

Five (5) paper copies of proposals should be submitted to the RCWD office with a postal date stamp no later than May 15, 2020. An electronic copy should also be sent via email to Beth Carreño (bcarreno@ricecreek.org) by 4:30pm on May 15, 2020.

Rice Creek Watershed District
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**Questions and Project Contact**

Questions should be directed to Beth Carreño, Communications and Outreach Coordinator, at 763-398-3073 or bcarreno@ricecreek.org.