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Six organizations received a boost for their events/programs Monday night when the Burleson City Council approved \$72,700 in funding through hotel/motel occupancy tax funds. An additional \$17,500 was earmarked for sports tournament promotion, historic tourism and arts-related tourism.

Hotel occupancy tax revenue is generated by each hotel room stay in Burleson. The City levies a 7 percent tax that results in approximately \$140,000 in revenue each year. The City received 10 applications from eight organizations that totaled more than \$176,000.

The City's use of funds collected through the Hotel/Motel Occupancy Tax is governed by Chapter 351 of the Tax Code. The primary use of the funds is to benefit the convention and hotel industries through the promotion of tourism to the City.

There is a two-part test. First, the expenditures must directly enhance and promote tourism and the convention and hotel industry and secondly, each expenditure of the Hotel/Motel Occupancy Tax grant must clearly fit into one of the statutorily provided categories for expenditure. Those categories include Visitors Information Center; furnishing of facilities and registration of visitors; advertising/promotional programs and activities; arts promotion; historical restoration and preservation; and tourist transportation systems.

If you want to mark your calendars now, the events that council approved to receive fiscal year 2015 hotel occupancy tax funds include:

Salsa/Margarita Festival and 5K Run

Applicants: Natalie McKenzie and Kandice Gant, owners of Ellison Street Blow Dry Bar & Lash Lounge

Date: April 18, 2015, in Old Town Burleson

Received \$3,200 in hotel/motel funds

Red Hot Balloon Festival

Applicant: City of Burleson Parks and Recreation Department

Date: May 29-31, 2015 at the Chisenhall Fields Sports Complex

Received \$25,000 in hotel/motel funds

Honey Tour Bike Ride

Applicant: Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce
Date: May 23-24, 2015 at Centennial High School
Received \$12,500 in hotel/motel funds

Tourism Initiative

Applicant: Burleson Area Chamber of Commerce
Forming a steering committee to identify a strategy to promote tourism in Burleson

Whataburger Girls & Boys Basketball Tournament (three-day event in December 2014) and AAU Track Meet in June 2015

Applicant: Burleson Independent School District
Received \$5,000 in hotel/motel funds

Promotion of Old Town and Burleson, including reprinting 2013 brochures

Applicant: Burleson Heritage Foundation
Received \$10,000

Burleson Wine Crawl

Applicant: Ritz Event Company
Date: November 8, 2014
Received \$10,000 in hotel/motel funds