

# Spirit Mountain Casino

## Sponsorship Proposal Guidelines

Spirit Mountain Casino receives hundreds of proposals for sponsorships each year. In order to streamline processing and improve activation of these opportunities, we have developed a structured sponsorship program. This program allows for a thorough, thoughtful, and balanced approach to evaluating sponsorships, as well as an effective and efficient leveraging of benefits. The end result is a program that not only benefits Spirit Mountain Casino, but also promises to create stronger and more creative partnerships.

As part of the new design of the sponsorship program, the following guidelines have been developed. Let them serve as a guide in developing your proposal.

### **First, Some Definitions...**

**Sponsor:** Refers to the organization or individual contributing money or in-kind donations in exchange for specific benefits.

**Sponsee:** The organization receiving money or in-kind donations in return for delivering specific benefits.

**Property:** The actual sponsorship opportunity (event, etc).

**Title Sponsor:** For any mention of the event, the name of the sponsor is incorporated into the name of the sponsored property (e.g., The Spirit Mountain Casino Rodeo Classic).

**Presenting Sponsor:** For any mention of the event, the sponsor has its name placed just below (or above) the sponsored property, connected by the phrase *presented by*, *presents*, or similar constructions. Verbal mentions should follow similar formats.

### **Sponsorship Evaluation Process**

The Sponsorship Coordinator first reviews each incoming sponsorship proposal. If it meets the general criteria, and most do, it is formatted for presentation to the Executive Team. This Team is comprised of the General Manager of Spirit Mountain Gaming, Inc., all department Directors, any interim Directors and other Spirit Mountain Casino Managers having relevant expertise or a stake in the proposed sponsorship. The Team meets weekly with a set agenda. This agenda includes review of sponsorships twice a month and typically reviews 5 proposals per review. The Team then provides a decision to the Sponsorship Coordinator for sponsee notification. Executive decisions will fall into three general categories: acceptance, acceptance with qualifications, or decline.

Sponsorships are looked at through many lenses prior to any decision. The following elements are all considered, but will be weighted differently depending on the sponsorship and the goals Spirit Mountain attaches to it. When writing your proposal, please be as specific as possible (e.g., number of ad insertions, minimum number of verbal mentions, logo or name listing as opposed to “recognition”).

## **Crucial Elements**

**The items listed below are factors that will be heavily weighted for all sponsorships.**

### **Image Agreement**

Any partnership must enhance Spirit Mountain Casino's image as a high quality gaming establishment. Properties that do not allow promotion of gaming activities will not be considered. Just as important, we will not sponsor events that will have a significant number of under age attendees.

### **Event History and Potential**

Established organizations and events will need to show a successful history and a potential for future growth or at least stability. New events or organizations will need to show a solid business structure and strong community support. Support from respected organizations can boost the credibility of a sponsorship property, so note your best sponsors or other significant partnerships.

### **Marketing Value**

Sponsorships are heavily weighted for their value in spreading awareness of Spirit Mountain Casino and our promotions and programs and for enhancing our image. The following are key areas on which we focus:

#### *Advertising*

The amount of targeted print, radio, and television advertising, bill boards, posters, banners, and other ad-like communication vehicles are heavily weighted. The committee typical prizes logo placement far above the listing of our name. The opportunity to include a message is optimal. Where appropriate, include numbers related to readership, viewership, listenership, impressions, or other standard media metrics. Please note that any media value quotes will be discounted according to whether they include a name listing, logo-only, or sponsor message.

#### *Direct Sales*

Opportunities for personal contact with attendees, vendors, and other sponsors are highly valued. These include booth opportunities, networking events, and use of contact lists.

#### *Promotional*

Coupons and other forms of direct response marketing are valued for their measurability and ability to drive customers to the casino. Therefore, the opportunity to distribute coupons, to have special discounts printed in ads, on flyers, or on ticket backs is heavily weighted.

#### *Target Audience Reach*

When reviewing sponsorships, the committee asks what target audience is being reached by the property and how effectively this particular opportunity reaches them. Note any relevant demographics.

### *Publicity*

Press releases are not heavily weighted, since there is little control over inclusion of sponsors in the final edited copy and editors are notorious for editing them out.

### *Exclusivity*

Category exclusivity (the only casino) is highly prized and at high relative sponsorship levels, mandatory.

### *Property Logo Use*

At the heart of sponsorships is the acknowledgement of the relationship between the sponsor and sponsee. It is therefore important the Spirit Mountain Casino has some ability to promote that relationship in its own materials.

## **Other Important Elements**

The following elements can add to the attractiveness of a sponsorship but are not by themselves sufficient for approval.

### **Tribal/Political**

*Cultural Significance.* Environmental issues, tribal history, tribal arts, and tribal history and culture could all add to the attractiveness of a sponsorship.

*Access to Decision Makers/Influencers.*

Because Spirit Mountain Casino operates in a field that includes businesses, government agencies and officials, and non-profit organizations, we look favorably upon sponsorships that provide opportunities for positive interaction with representatives from these groups. Head table seating and formal or informal networking opportunities are examples of forums that facilitate such interaction.

### **Hospitality**

Spirit Mountain Casino seeks to provide our very best players with unique or exclusive opportunities. Sponsorships frequently offer such activities. Hosted chalets, back stage passes, celebrity meet and greets, or more participatory activities such as racecar or stunt plane rides are examples of valuable hospitality-oriented activities.

### **Employee Benefits**

In addition to using event passes for our best customers, they can also be used for employee incentive programs. General admission or other low level entry tickets, provided in greater quantity than hospitality-related passes, can add value to a sponsorship.

### **Implementation Demands**

The property fee is just the beginning of the costs involved in fully activating a sponsorship. The committee also looks at the need for other resources including labor and materials related to banner creation and delivery, staffing at a booth or networking function. The more resources the sponsee can provide, such as tents, tables, chairs, and signage, the more attractive a sponsorship will be.

## **Proof of Performance**

All companies are facing increasing pressure to show a strong return on sponsorship investments. A detailed and comprehensive audit of performance with photos of banners and billboards, attendance figures, and other evidence of benefits delivered is preferred at lower levels and mandatory at high levels of investment.

## **Other Pitfalls**

The following are other issues we have come across in reviewing sponsorships:

Unclear definition of Title or Presenting Sponsor<sup>1</sup>  
No date noted for the event.  
Unspecified, vague, or ambiguous benefits or fees.  
Lack of contact information or contact is hard to reach.  
Unnecessary and hard to use multi-media presentations.  
Cumbersome binders, covers, or other presentation formats.  
Unrealistic deadlines.

***Please note that due to the high number of requests we receive, proposals and any included materials will not be returned.***

By following the above guidelines and providing as much detail as possible, your sponsorship is more likely to be reviewed in a timely manner. By building in the above elements, weighting them as indicated above, your sponsorship is more likely to be approved. Should you have other questions, please feel free to contact the Sponsorship Coordinator or send all completed proposals to the same.

Sponsorship Coordinator  
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<sup>1</sup> See the definitions at the beginning of this document.

