

Dear Mr. Mayor, City Council members and other Overland Park city officials,

It is with great pride and respect that we present to you the Great Midwest Balloon Fest, the first annual hot air balloon festival for the Kansas City metro that will be held in the City of Overland Park.

Since this is the first year for the event, we are relying on different sources to present our case for a positive economic impact on the city. Our credibility is substantiated because of our sponsors and the publicity that will promote the event. The Overland Park Convention and Visitors Bureau is publicizing the event through their website (creating a micro site specifically about the festival) and printed material. Time Warner Cable is a Presenting Sponsor and will publicize the event on their cable channels throughout the month of August and the first two weeks of September. They will also send out a flyer about the event in 300,000 bills to their subscribers and publicize us in all seven of their stores. Sun Publications, a Presenting Sponsor, is doing a series of four articles about the event and will do a special program section prior to the event. Fox 4 TV has agreed to be a media partner and will publicize this on the air. The other TV and Radio stations will also be promoting this. There will be additional publicity in the Kansas City Star and other print media. Other sponsors include Shawnee Mission Medical Center, Deffenbaugh Industries, New Theatre Dinner Playhouse, Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, Lakeview Village Retirement Center, Brookdale Retirement Center, St. Joseph Medical Center, Mark One Electric, and many others.

Specifically to the subject of economic impact and return on investment for the city:

We spoke to the Executive Director for the National Balloon Classic festival in Indianola, Iowa. Indianola is located outside of Des Moines. This year was their 41st annual event. They have grown into a 9 day event. The estimated revenue to

Indianola and Des Moines is \$1.9-3.6 million. Spectators at the event are between 70,000-90,000 annually (depending upon weather). Other events in Iowa are another July weekend event in Ft. Madison, Iowa, Balloons Over the Mississippi; Lighter Than Air Balloon Fair in Council Bluffs; and My Waterloo Days Festival in Waterloo. The number of events in Iowa alone, a mid-western state with a smaller metropolitan city of Des Moines than Kansas City and similar or worse weather than our area, indicates the likelihood of this event being a huge benefit to the City of Overland Park.

St. Louis, Missouri, has their annual Forest Park balloon festival that has been going on for over 35 years. The event has become a fixture in the St. Louis area and the Mayor and the city are very much a part of the festivities. They usually get about 75-80,000 people at the Balloon Flow (they have one and we will have two); although they have children's activities (as we will), they have no craft fair booths (we will). The event, according to Edward Staley, one of the founders and coordinators of the event, said that the Forest Park balloon festival has been a great vehicle for promoting the city. The event has been featured in many publications including airline magazines which help bring visitors to the city. There are about 125,000 at the event the day of the balloon competitions. Estimates of the impact on the city of St. Louis is in the millions of dollars annually.

Finally, Jerry Cook, Elizabeth Butler and Kelly Peetoom of the Overland Park Convention and Visitors Bureau, estimate an economic impact figure for the balloon festival of \$1.8 million. Their economic impact formula takes into account spending by each attendee including lodging, meals, transportation and other discretionary expenses such as shopping.

We are asking the City Council to waive the fees that the city requires for such an event regarding police, fire, traffic control and emergency services etc. for the following reasons:

1. The Great Midwest Balloon Fest was not made aware of the

fee structure that was initiated in an ordinance approved in March until the middle of July. We have been working on the event since January trying to handle all the logistics and challenges of producing such a spectacular event and were not made aware of these fees that would greatly impact our budget.

2. All proceeds for this first year event will benefit The Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City, Kansas City Hospice and the American Stroke Foundation. Everyone involved in the event is working on a voluntary basis to help make a significant contribution to, not only these three charities, but to the City of Overland Park as well.

3. We would be honored and pleased to rename this event the **Overland Park Great Midwest Balloon Fest**. This would not only give added recognition and identity to the city, but also form a lasting partnership that would emulate the successful balloon festivals in other cities across the country. If indeed the city chooses to become a partner in this event on an ongoing basis, then together we would formulate a plan that would more directly benefit the city while still maintaining a positive economic impact on the two or three designated charities.

We look forward to our formal presentation to you on August 2.

Thank you for your consideration. We also invite you to visit our website at www.greatmidwestballoonfest.org

Sincerely,

Robbie Small
Chairman
Great Midwest Balloon Fest