City of Benson
City Council Communication

Regular Meeting **August 12, 2013**

To: Mayor and Council Agenda Item #3

From: Jim Cox, Interim City Manager

Subject:

Discussion and possible direction to Staff regarding the Annual Bluegrass Festival

Discussion:

This item is being placed on the agenda because the City needs to contract with the Promoter if the event is going to be staged next year.

The City has sponsored the Annual Bluegrass Festival event for the past eight years. Expenditures for the 2013 event exceeded revenues by about $9,000. The event also requires about 500 man hours of City employee time.

Special events sponsored by the City are designed to provide entertainment for Benson area residents and to attract tourists. The goal is to stimulate local business and increase sales tax revenues during the events.

The Bluegrass Festival attracts a loyal group of tourists who follow the Bluegrass circuit. They typically travel in RVs from concert to concert. During the day they attend the concert. Evenings are spent with fellow travelers in jam sessions or just visiting. They typically do not spend a lot of money while here and leave as soon as the event is concluded.

The festival does not draw a large local crowd because the ticket prices are too high for most Benson area families and Bluegrass music is not especially popular in southern Arizona.

Staff feels that the money and Staff time spent on the Bluegrass Festival could be put to better use on events that will draw more tourists who spend more money locally and/or events that provide affordable entertainment for local residents.

Other events that the City could sponsor could be an RV show, concert featuring local talent, etc.

Staff Recommendation:

Council pleasure