

**From:** Sheets, Mike - Purchasing <[William.M.Sheets@wv.gov](mailto:William.M.Sheets@wv.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 29, 2019 1:33 PM  
**To:** Moore, Kara N <[Kara.N.Moore@wv.gov](mailto:Kara.N.Moore@wv.gov)>  
**Cc:** Whittaker, Frank M <[Frank.M.Whittaker@wv.gov](mailto:Frank.M.Whittaker@wv.gov)>; Ruby, Chelsea A <[Chelsea.A.Ruby@wv.gov](mailto:Chelsea.A.Ruby@wv.gov)>  
**Subject:** Emergency Approval

Kara,

Please find, attached, approval of your requested emergency.

Regards,  
Mike

W. Michael Sheets  
Director  
WV Purchasing Division  
2019 Washington Street, East  
Charleston, WV 25305

Phone: (304) 558-0492  
Fax: (304) 558-4115



April 29, 2019

Mike Sheets, Director  
Purchasing Division  
2019 Washington St., E.  
Charleston, WV 25305

*Emergency Approved /*  
*K. M. Sheets*  
*04/29/19*

Dear Director Sheets:

This letter is to request an emergency contract to extend our current Agency of Record contract with Digital Relativity until a new contract can be awarded and all projects can be completed to transferred to the new vendor. The services Tourism receives from this contract are essential to our work, and to be without them for any period would be harmful to the state's tourism industry and state park revenue.

We anticipate a gap in services of about one month due to a delay in in issuing the RFP for the new AOR contract. The delay was a result of the decision to jointly issue the RFP with the Department of Commerce Office of Marketing and Communications, which previously had its own AOR contract. Given the overlap in work between the two agencies and the timing of both AOR contracts ending, pursuing a joint AOR contract was deemed prudent. However, the process of issuing the RFP has taken longer than anticipated, resulting in this gap in service. In addition to the covering the gap, we will need a period of disentanglement during which the current vendor can transfer current and ongoing work, including website maintenance, to the new vendor.

To cover both the gap in services and period of disentanglement, we request an emergency contract that extends through July 31, 2019. No new projects would be initiated under this emergency contract; we would only continue or complete work on existing projects with release orders already on file.

The most urgent of our ongoing projects is the implementation of a new online booking engine and associated website upgrades on WVStateParks.com. Online reservations represent a significant portion of the park system's revenue, which amounted to more than \$3.5 million last year from just cabins and lodge rooms. We re-launched the site on Friday, August 26, with the addition of online camping reservations. More than 4,500 guest nights were sold online in the first 72 hours after the site went live. The current project also brings online picnic shelter reservations and some recreational activities with more planned. We are in a critical and fragile period of this project: After the public launch we are actively and intensively monitoring the performance of the new system and plan to implement updates and fixes on a weekly basis for the next month or so.

This vendor also maintains WVTourism.com, which sees more than 2 million visits per year. The Tourism Office spent millions on paid advertising last year, and all ads prompted audiences to visit the website. Tourism generates \$4.3 billion in economic activity in West Virginia each year, supporting 45,000 jobs and \$519 million in state and local tax revenue annually. Continuity of service for supporting this website is critical to sustaining this industry and ensuring advertising effectiveness.



West Virginia Tourism Office | (304) 558-2200 | WVtourism.com  
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We have a number of other projects underway as well, including a 2019-2020 event guide, environmental advertising upgrades at Yeager Airport and the Williamstown Welcome Center, and materials for the thousands of Boy Scouts from around the world who will visit the state for the International Jamboree at Summit Bechtel Reserve this summer.

We sincerely appreciate the assistance of the Purchasing Division in helping us through this transitional period.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kara N. Moore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kara N. Moore  
Deputy Tourism Commissioner

cc: Frank Whittaker, Deputy Purchasing Director  
Chelsea Ruby, Tourism Commissioner