The background is a dark teal color. It features several decorative elements: a large teal circle on the left, a large teal circle on the right, and a smaller teal circle at the bottom right. A red vertical rectangle is positioned in the top right corner. The text is centered in the middle of the slide.

Independence Convention & Visitors Bureau Proposal

Convention & Visitors Bureau

- ▶ Current Status/Operations
 - ▶ Tourism Division
 - ▶ Advisory Commission Appointed
 - ▶ Staff – City Division
 - ▶ Promotion of businesses and historic sites
- ▶ Economic Development Council
 - ▶ Volunteer Commission
 - ▶ Separate Legal Entity
 - ▶ Funded by City, School Districts
 - ▶ 150 private investors

Current Operations

- ▶ Tourism
 - ▶ Contract with Madden Media for marketing
 - ▶ Maintenance/Preservation of Historic Sites – Parks Department
 - ▶ Funded by Hotel/Motel tax
 - ▶ Annually \$1.5 to \$2 million

Current Operations

- ▶ Economic Development
 - ▶ Economic Development Council for Independence
 - ▶ Annual budget approximately \$280,000
 - ▶ City funds \$170,000 annually
 - ▶ Independence School District
 - ▶ Fort Osage School District
 - ▶ Blue Springs School District
 - ▶ Private Businesses - Paying Members

Why Promote Tourism?

- ▶ Brings Visitors to City
 - ▶ Stay in Hotels
 - ▶ Spend dollars in shops
 - ▶ Eat at Restaurants
 - ▶ Brings tourism jobs
- ▶ Promotes Community – Axios Study
 - ▶ Welcoming community
 - ▶ Interesting and vibrant place to live and work
 - ▶ Top of Mind – Promotes historic sites
 - ▶ Initial Marketing to Companies and Employees

Why Promote Economic Development?

- ▶ Brings Jobs
- ▶ Opportunities for Youth
- ▶ Decreases Taxes on Families
 - ▶ Grow tax base, Lower Living Costs for all Citizens

Independence Examiner: "A recent study commissioned by Independence Power & Light shows that IPL's average rates are high compared with neighboring and peer utilities ... To get to the 10-cent median among the compared utilities, the study showed, IPL would need to add 33,300 residential customers or 4,000 commercial customers or 27 industrial customers."

- ▶ Growth in Neighboring Communities
 - ▶ Belton, Raytown, Lee's Summit, Gardner, Blue Springs, Olathe
- ▶ Best Way to Grow Community
 - ▶ Manufacturing and Distribution
 - ▶ Offices impacted by COVID-19

Challenges to Tourism

- ▶ Recommended Change is premised on Tourism PowerPoint
- ▶ Separation from City as a division or department
 - ▶ More flexibility
 - ▶ More grants, funding, allow for paying membership
- ▶ Form a 501(c)(6)
- ▶ Members of Tourism Commission
 - ▶ Still involved
 - ▶ Stay in place

Introduction

- Pandemic has hit the Tourism Industry harder than most other industries nationwide
- Competition for tourism-related visits will be even more intense in the years to come
- Independence is traditionally at a competitive disadvantage due to funding and our current structure
- Time to explore other operating models focused on increasing revenue and improving our competitive position

Visitors Bureau – Stand Alone Model

- Creation of a VB as a 501(c)(6) Organization
- City of Independence would contract with the VB to serve as its Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)
- Governed by Board of Directors
- Multiple Funding Sources: portion of Transient Guest Tax, grants, partnerships, memberships

VB Benefits

Stand Alone VB

- Eligible for additional tourism grants & programs
- Allows the VB to operate in accordance with standard tourism industry best practices
- Levels the playing field and makes our tourism efforts more competitive
- **Improves visibility and visitor perception**

Challenges to EDC

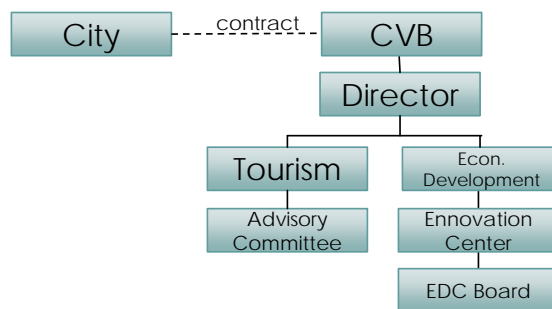
- ▶ Funding and Memberships
- ▶ Very good at keeping and growing existing base
- ▶ Need to focus on large business attraction
 - ▶ Valley investment by City
 - ▶ Roads, sewer, electricity
 - ▶ Housing study
 - ▶ Focus on specific industries and sites
- ▶ Competition from other Cities
 - ▶ Better funded
 - ▶ Ready product-sites and buildings
- ▶ Recent Projects
 - ▶ Logistics Facility, 100,000 sq. ft. existing facility, 200 jobs
 - ▶ Contact Center, 40,000-80,000 sq. ft. 600 jobs

Proposal - CVB

- ▶ Opportune Time
 - ▶ Vacancy at Tourism Department
 - ▶ Vacancy at ICED
- ▶ Do Something Different
- ▶ Independence Examiner, August 23-28, 1971:
 - ▶ “INDUSTRIAL PARK NEED IN COUNTY, CITIES TOLD” – Failure of a new industry in Independence recently was due to the city’s “not being ready for industrial growth.”
 - ▶ Use Hotel/Motel Tax
 - ▶ Ballot Language
 - ▶ Shall the City of Independence levy a tax of six and one-half percent (6½%) on each sleeping room or campsite occupied and rented by transient guests, which are used by transients for sleeping in the City of Independence, where the proceeds shall be expended for the promotion, operation, and development of tourism?

Proposal - CVB

- ▶ Contract with CVB



- ▶ Patterned after Olathe and other cities

- ▶ Olathe, pop. 142,199 - \$1,800,000.
- ▶ Shawnee, pop. 65,540 - \$453,000.
- ▶ Overland Park, pop. 201,034 - \$575,000.
- ▶ St. Joseph, pop. 75,913 – Between City and county tax, funding is over \$1,000,00.

Transition

- **Current Operations:**
 - Tourism is a division of Parks/Recreation/Tourism
 - Tourism Division is comprised of two functions:
 - Historic Sites/Museum
 - Sales & Services/Marketing
- **Proposed Operations:**
 - Historic Sites would then be operated & maintained under Parks/Recreation/Historic Sites – same budget as current
 - Under Stand-Alone Model, Sales & Services/Marketing functions would be performed under newly formed VB

Board of Directors

- ▶ Structure – Independence Events Center CID model
 - ▶ President
 - ▶ Vice President
 - ▶ Treasurer
 - ▶ Board Member
 - ▶ Board Member

Proposal - CVB

- ▶ Economic Development Strategy
 - ▶ Cities investigated: Blue Springs, Raytown, Liberty, Columbia, Lee's Summit, Springfield, Olathe, Overland Park, St. Joseph,
 - ▶ People contacted
 - ▶ 12 organizations
- ▶ Citizens Involved: Mary McNamara, Brian Johanning, Jason Snodgrass, Jodi Krantz, Tom Waters, Dale Herl

Next Steps

- ▶ Form CVB with Tourism & EDC
- ▶ Have Sample Bylaws and Operating Guidelines
- ▶ Develop Contract with specific performance measures
- ▶ Recruit/hire a director
 - ▶ Could be from within or outside

Questions?