

INTERTRIBAL MEDIA VILLAGE



IMV Project Proposal

Prepared for: Turtle Island First Nations
Tribal Governments.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

Introducing the Intertribal Media Village a world-class media development facility. This facility will be located in the Santa Barbara area, on native Chumash land, and will cater primarily to the media needs of all Native American tribes, and secondarily to the media production community at large.

The working title for this facility is the IMV – Intertribal Media Village. The title includes the word “village”, because the IMV will be more than a production facility – which are as common as carwashes in the L.A. area. Rather, the IMV will be both an extremely advanced production and post-production facility, as well as a very special, peaceful place for talented artists, technicians and business people to gather and work together, in an environment of focused concentration, inspiration, and spirituality.

The IMV will employ the latest all-digital media technologies to develop a broad range of content – primarily on Native American themes – ranging from low-budget, high-quality ethnographic and cultural preservation projects – paid for by the tribes they benefit – to higher-budget narrative and documentary features, intended for distribution in the consumer market. The IMV facility will contain production stages, post-production facilities, indoor and outdoor stages for live events, and satellite distribution – to name just some of its capabilities.

The cost range of developing the IMV depends on many factors. The next development phase – the IMV Business Plan – will address overall development cost factors in detail. Rough cost projections – as well as Business Plan development costs – are discussed in the Development section of this proposal.

While this proposal does outline the many types of media development possible with the IMV, the value of this content in the market place – i.e. the potential ROI (Return-On-Investment) of the IMV – is too complex for this proposal, and will be addressed in the Business Plan. Suffice it to say that the IMV will be designed, built, and operated as a business – one with noble goals and positive community impact, but also earning a profit within a reasonable period of time.

While the IMV will be located on Chumash land, it will require input and resources of multiple tribes. While discussions are underway with several potential “Tribal Development Partners” they are not referred to by name in this proposal. These potential partners are Native American tribes with both surplus capital and a high level of interest in media production.

Goals

1) Appropriate Investment, 2) Preservation of Culture and Language 3) Meaningful Job Creation

Solutions

- Sound & Appropriate Investment

All tribes generating significant revenue from reservation Casinos must face the question of how to invest these funds. For some tribes, the only issue is ROI, and for these tribes traditional brokerage houses provide acceptable money management services.

For many tribes however, ROI is just one key factor – “appropriateness” being another. For instance, land acquisition would be both an excellent investment in terms of ROI and also an “appropriate” investment for Native American tribes – considering that the land being acquired was stolen from the tribes in the first place by non-native Americans, primarily during the 18th and 19th centuries. Unfortunately, current treaty regulations prohibit direct land purchases using casino-generated revenue.

Another “appropriate” investment – also offering excellent ROI – is media production. While media industry ROI is discussed in the Marketing section of this proposal, the reason media production is “appropriate” is that more than just land was stolen from the tribes. The majority of media well into the 20th century has depicted Native Americans as bloodthirsty, alcoholic, ignorant, savage, etc. Only slightly better is the more modern yet grossly simplistic New Age depiction of Native Americans as enlightened, long-suffering primitives – like Jesus in feathers and paint. The founder and Executive Director of the Native Voices Workshop, Professor Dan Hart of Montana State University, sums up the problem thusly: “Non-Indian people should not be coming into Indian communities and making films. Historically, that has been a source of damaging misrepresentation.” If Native Americans are to enjoy the nuanced, complex characterizations and cultural depictions enjoyed for decades by White America – and more recently by Black America – then Native Americans must invest in their own sophisticated media production tools – and ultimately their own distribution systems as well. Fortunately, the native community now has the capital to achieve these goals – and the IMV is the appropriate investment.

Preservation of Culture & Language

A major goal of the IMV is to preserve the culture and language of Native American tribes – either by direct documentation and storytelling using IMV resources and personnel, or by training and equipping tribes to use media to preserve their own cultures and languages.

Different types of cultural preservation will require different approaches and technologies (some of which are described in the Products and Services section). For instance, language study is highly interactive, and lends itself better to CD-ROM and other interactive media than to video. Tribal events could be presented live before audiences, recorded with multiple cameras simultaneously, as will be possible on the IMV’s production stages. To capture and convey the wisdom of tribal elders requires travel and field work; it may not be appropriate or even possible for them to journey to the IMV studios. To present tribal history and current affairs in a comprehensive manner requires full-blown documentary technique, including archival research and extensive shooting and editing.

It must be noted here that filming of tribal events is a controversial issue within the Native American community. Some feel it is sacrilegious in some sense; others that it is an important method of cultural preservation. Regardless, the decision to record or not to record tribal events should be made based on tribal concerns – not lack of technology or an appropriate facility. Furthermore, while there will always be situations where video/film is inappropriate, a facility constructed as a sacred space and staffed heavily with Native Americans is more likely to create sensitive, authentic content than a more traditional facility.

Advanced Media Training

As “Native Americans have become politically chic. Witness the recent features and documentaries about Indians on HBO, public television, Netflix and online streaming . But the absence of working Native American film producers, directors, and writers continues to be a problem.” To correct the deficit of Native American representation in world media, it’s not enough simply to possess tools of production; it’s also necessary to know how to use these tools for storytelling – whether narrative or documentary. The operation of media production tools – like carpentry tools – can be learned on a basic level in a matter of months. However, creating high end quality content requires far more extensive training and practice. Native American cultures have a rich tradition of apprenticeship and mastery of a wide range of arts and crafts. The IMV shall carry this tradition forward into advanced media production, by bringing together promising artist, storytellers and students from all Nations, with talented and experienced media professionals of both native and non-native ancestry. For more information on training, see the Services section of this proposal.

Meaningful Job Creation

A major goal of the IMV is to create meaningful work for Native Americans, offering simultaneous training in contemporary technologies, as well as cultural immersion in Native arts and mythology. In time, the IMV could employ hundreds of indigenous writers, artists and technicians, creating a combined profit center, storytelling forum, and “wisdom bank” for both present and future generations.

Products and Services

The following is an outline of the potential products and services of the IMV. There are three main departments: Original Development, Services, and Distribution – each one of which breaks down into multiple divisions. In operation, these departments – and the divisions within them – will often work together:

Original Development Department

As the name implies, the Original Development Department will engage in the production of original media projects – using both in-house and sub-contracted talent. What distinguishes the Original Development Department from the Services Department is that the former will produce content using IMV resources – including capital – and will own some or all of the resulting product, while the latter will generally perform work for cash or other payment but will not own the product. Specific original

product suggestions will be included in the IMV Business Plan. The following are divisions within the Original Development Department:

- Services Department

The IMV will offer a standardized menu of services to both the Native American community and the media production community at large. For accounting purposes, the Services Department will also treat the Original Development Department as a client, tracking and billing for all services. These services will be grouped into divisions: Production, Post-Production, Interactive Services, Ethnographic Services, Equipment Sales, and Training/Consulting.

- Production Division

This division will engage in media production on contract - any format and any content (meeting basic guidelines to be established). This will include narrative and documentary features for studios and independents.

- Post-Production Division

This division will engage in non-linear and on-line editing on contract – also in any format and any content.

- Animation & FX Division

This division will develop computer-generated 2D and 3D animation and special effects on contract – also in any format and any content.

- Interactive Services Division

This division will engage in production of interactive content on contract – in the same formats as the Original Development Interactive Division.

- Ethnographic Services Division

This division will provide inter-tribal ethnographic services on contract – for use in interactive local-language projects "Wisdom of the Elders" projects, Tribal Treasures etc. The Ethnographic Services Division will either provide all required services, or interface with the client tribe's existing media capabilities. This division will either directly deploy an ethnographic production team to the client site, coordinate deployment of a team from the Production Division, or coordinate on-site IMV hosting of the client tribe – for use of IMV facilities. The Ethnographic Services Division will also provide archival interactive DVD and DVD-ROM pre-mastering and mastering services of cultural content in conjunction with the Interactive Services Division. See Appendix B for explanations of DVD and other technology. The Ethnographic Services Division should support client tribes in movement toward greater media sophistication, by coordinating acquisition of media tools with the Equipment Sales Division, and media training with the Training/Consulting Division. - The Equipment Sales Division will stock pre-configured DV/DV-CAM production packages and DVD/DVD-ROM playback systems in multiple grades, and coordinate inter-tribal sale. Client tribes will be able to acquire media tools gradually, beginning with basic production equipment, which they will be able to use to capture their own ethnographic content. When the client tribes are ready, they will be able to log their materials using

software supplied by the Equipment Sales Division, then transmit the content to the IMV Post-Production Division for editing. If necessary, the Interactive Services Division could master the client tribe's ethnographic content onto DVD or DVD-ROM disks, whereupon the Equipment Sales Division could sell the client tribe DVD playback systems. By functioning as an equipment retailer, the IMV will obtain equipment at wholesale prices from manufacturers, passing on some of the savings to client tribes. This approach will also propagate a standard equipment configuration throughout the Native American production community, which will simplify the sharing of content and expertise.

- Training/Consulting Division

"As far as Hollywood goes...I think we're overlooked for the most part," says Salish Indian and film producer Roy Bigcrane. "There is some effort by certain people to include Native American script [writers, technicians, and actors], but I think America as a whole feels we're not qualified to tell our own story. That's ... one of the big issues of our people." To address both the perceived and actual knowledge gap, the IMV Training/Consulting Division will offer production and post-production training programs at different levels – ranging from multicam HD down to single-chip DVC camcorders – along with interactive training. Training can be provided on a cash basis for any interested party, both native and non-native. Ongoing training can and should be provided on a grant basis to talented individuals within the Native American community, regardless of resources (this is not just altruism, but talent development for future use). And of course, all IMV departments must provide regular training for each other – to propagate knowledge and coordinate methodologies throughout the organization. The Training/Consulting Division may not be a major profit center for the IMV, but this division has an extremely important job to perform nonetheless. An army of consultants, technicians, sales people, producers and others must be trained in IMV capabilities in particular and media production in general, in order to do their jobs. This is long-term investment in human capital – without which the IMV cannot attain its long-term goals.

InterTribal Media Village -Eco-Sphere



