

# Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI)

## Tupelo Homesteads

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Southeast Region  
Natchez Trace Parkway



The National Park Service (NPS) is seeking expressions of interest for the use of eight historic houses and their associated outbuildings at the Natchez Trace Parkway. The homes are located on the east side of 145 or “Old Hwy 45” in Lee County, Mississippi. The street address is County Road 665, Tupelo, MS 38804. The NPS will consider the responses to this RFEI to plan for the use of these facilities starting in 2015. The houses were built in 1936 by the Resettlement Administration, successor to the Division of Subsistence Homesteads, as a subsistence colony. The houses were transferred to the National Park Service in 1940 and were used as employee housing. Proposals for alternative uses will be considered and the homes may be used individually or combined.

The RFEI allows interested parties an opportunity to review the property, facilities, and park area and to submit their concept(s) of potential future use of the facilities, taking into account the park's purpose. The NPS may choose all or part of the content of one or more responses to the RFEI for further consideration and possible development into a public solicitation that the NPS then would advertise to the public, inviting all qualified candidates to submit proposals for the operation. There are very limited circumstances under which the building may be reused by a non-NPS entity without a public solicitation. The precise process for soliciting and selecting proposals will depend upon the nature of the business opportunity and the legal instrument under which the proposal is issued.

The two instruments most commonly used by the NPS for facilities, such as those under consideration in this RFEI, are a concession contract and a lease. These instruments are governed by 36 CFR 51 (concession contracts) and 36 CFR 18 (leasing). The NPS may consider issuing Leases, Concessions Contracts, or Temporary Concessions Contracts for some or all of the facilities. For more information about the NPS Commercial Services Program, please see <http://www.concessions.nps.gov/index.htm>.

A concessions contract is awarded through a prospectus process and issued to provide necessary and appropriate visitor services within a park area. Concessioners pay to the NPS a franchise fee for privileges granted under the contract. The franchise fee is determined through a franchise fee analysis; consideration of revenue to the NPS is subordinate to protecting park resources and providing services to the park visitors. The franchise fee also takes into consideration that the Concessioner has a reasonable opportunity for profit related to the obligations of the contract. Concessions contracts are generally 10 years, but may be awarded for a term up to 20 years.

A lease is typically awarded through a Request for Proposal. Leased property can be used for any lawful purpose with some required determinations identified in 36 CFR 18 § 18.4. Fair market value rent is required for leases. Requirements under the lease for the lessee to restore, rehabilitate, or otherwise improve the property, however, are taken into consideration when determining the fair market value rent, as well as possible restrictions on the use of the property. A lease term may be up to 60 years in duration

**THIS IS A REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (RFEI) ONLY.** This RFEI is issued solely for information and planning purposes and does not constitute a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a promise to issue a RFP in the future. This request for expressions of interest does not commit the Government to contract for any supply or service whatsoever. Further, the NPS is not at this time seeking proposals and will not accept unsolicited proposals. Responders are advised that the U.S. Government will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFEI. All costs associated with responding to this RFEI will be solely at the interested party's expense. Not responding to this RFEI does not preclude participation in any future RFP, if any is issued. If a solicitation is released, it will be synopsized on the Federal Business Opportunities website ([www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov)). It is the responsibility of the potential offerors to monitor this site for additional information pertaining to this requirement.

**FACILITIES INCLUDED in RFEI**

<b>Building</b>	<b>Description</b>
House #1,	2 to 3 bedroom, 1 bath, frame on masonry foundation with brick veneer; 1,250 square feet (not counting basement)
Pump House	Unattached, frame pump house with weatherboard cladding
Car Shed	Unattached, rectangular, side-gabled frame car shed
House #2	2 bedroom, 1 bath, frame on masonry foundation with brick veneer; 1,131 square feet (not counting basement)
Pump House	Unattached, frame pump house with weatherboard cladding
Car Shed	Unattached, rectangular, side-gabled frame car shed (damaged by tornado in 2014)
House #3	2 to 3 bedroom, 1 bath, frame on masonry foundation with brick veneer; 1,250 square feet (not counting basement)
Pump House	Unattached, frame pump house with weatherboard cladding (not attached to the house)
Car Shed	Unattached, rectangular, side-gabled frame car shed
House #5	2 bedroom, 1 bath, frame on masonry foundation with brick veneer; 1,065 square feet (not counting basement)
Pump House	Unattached, frame pump house with weatherboard cladding (not attached to the house)
Car Shed	Unattached, rectangular, side-gabled frame car shed
House #6	3 bedroom, 2 bath, bonus breakfast room and glass enclosed rear porch, frame on masonry foundation with brick veneer, 1,706 square feet (not counting basement)
Pump House	Unattached, frame pump house with weatherboard cladding (damaged by 2014 tornado)
Car Shed	Unattached, rectangular, side-gabled frame car shed
House #8	2 to 3 bedroom, 1 bath, frame on masonry foundation with brick veneer; 1,250 square feet (not counting basement)
Pump House	Unattached, frame pump house with weatherboard cladding
Car Shed	Unattached, rectangular, side-gabled frame car shed
House #9	3 bedroom, 2 bath, bonus breakfast room and glass enclosed rear porch, frame on masonry foundation with brick veneer, 1,706 square feet (not counting basement)
Pump House	Unattached, frame pump house with weatherboard cladding
Car Shed	Unattached, rectangular, side-gabled frame car shed
House #10	2 bedroom, 1 bath, frame on masonry foundation with brick veneer; 1,065 square feet (not counting basement)
Pump House	Unattached, frame pump house with weatherboard cladding
Car Shed	Unattached, rectangular, side-gabled frame car shed

**Tupelo Homesteads**

**Overview**

The Federal government built the Tupelo Homesteads in 1934 and 1936 as a New Deal initiative. The community was located on 171 acres a few miles north of Tupelo, MS. There were originally 35 units with each consisting of a house and garage/barn and pump house. The aim of the initiative was to provide affordable housing to displaced workers and promote a “back to the land” philosophy. Each housing unit was located on a parcel of land that allowed them to raise livestock and gardens while working part time in local industries. By the end of 1936, there were 120 people living in the homesteads. Residents rented the houses with the option to purchase, but interest was low. A homestead association formed with the intention of buying the houses, but no progress was made.



In 1940, the NPS acquired the property and residents were allowed to live in them until the 1950s under special use permits. Several buildings were moved and joined together to form the first Natchez Trace Parkway (NATR) headquarters building. NATR employees lived in some of the houses until the last occupant moved out in 2011. The houses on the west side of Hwy 145 or “old Highway 45” have been converted into offices for Park staff. The eight remaining houses on the east side of the highway are vacant and are the subject of this request for interest. The houses are connected to the Parkway’s water supply system, but the houses are not connected to any sewer system.

The houses were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. It is important to note that all repairs and rehabilitation work must conform to the *Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* which can be found at this website: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>

**THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

America’s National Park Service was created by Congress to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” Additionally, the Congress has declared that the NPS areas should be “preserved and managed for the benefit and inspiration of all the people of the United States.”

To learn more about the NPS, visit our website at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov). This site includes information about who we are, our mission, NPS policies, and individual park information.

### **THE NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY**

The Natchez Trace Parkway was established on May 18, 1938 to commemorate the Old Natchez Trace. The Trace (another word for trail) was used by Native Americans from the Paleo-Indian Period through the Archaic and Woodland Periods, down to the Mississippian era. They used the trail for hunting, trade, and travel between villages and remote population centers. Along the Old Trace, archeologists have found hunting camps, ceremonial centers, cemeteries, and villages. Emerald, Boyd, Bynum, Bear Creek, and Pharr Mounds are just some of the archeological sites from past Native American cultures. In later years, European-Americans and African-Americans made their way west, and they too used the Old Trace in the same manner. In addition, the U.S. Government designated the road a postal route and spent funds on road improvements. Stands or inns were established to accommodate travelers and post riders. Men, such as Andrew Jackson and John Coffee, also used the trail as a military corridor during the War of 1812. In later years, Civil War soldiers passed along its route. With the advent of the steamboat and postal route changes, the Old Trace's importance waned. Some sections fell into disuse, while others were incorporated into county road systems.

The Parkway was designed to follow the general route of the Old Trace but not on the exact location thus allowing the Park to preserve the trails intact while commemorating its route. The Parkway extends 444 miles from Nashville, through Alabama and terminates in Natchez, Mississippi. It encompasses 52,000 acres and has an average right of way of 825 feet. Additional information regarding the Parkway can be found at [www.nps.gov/natr](http://www.nps.gov/natr)

### **MARKET AREA OVERVIEW**

#### **Regional and Local Market Area**

The houses are located in Tupelo, Mississippi in Lee County. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Tupelo's population was 34,546 and that of the county was 82,910. While Tupelo's numbers remained relatively unchanged between 2000 and 2010, the county's population increased by 7,155. The surrounding six counties had an average population of 36,315. Their populations remained stable between 2000 and 2010 with only slight increases and decreases.

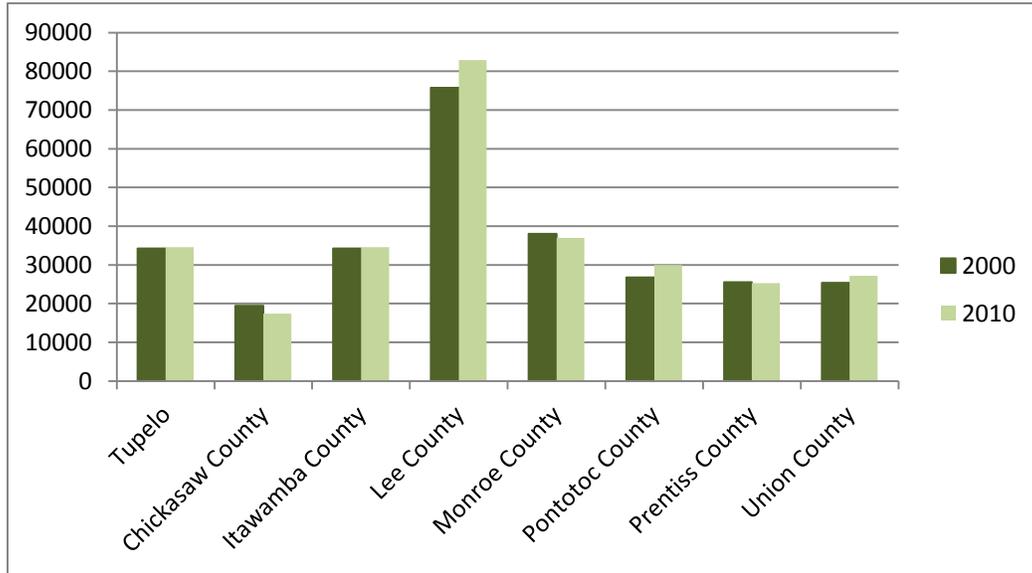
According to the American Community Survey, Lee County's major industries are educational services, health care, manufacturing, and retail trade. The North Mississippi Medical Center is a major employer in the area. It's the largest non-metropolitan hospital in the U.S. and serves north Mississippi, northwest Alabama and sections of Tennessee. Itawamba Community College and the University of Mississippi both have campuses in Tupelo while Northeast Mississippi Community College is located in neighboring Prentiss County. Local manufacturers include

Ashley and Lane furniture industries, Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Cooper Tire & Rubber Company, and Tecumseh Products.

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**Population of Counties Surrounding Parkway (2000 and 2010)**

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*Source: U.S. Census Bureau*

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**PARK VISITATION INFORMATION**

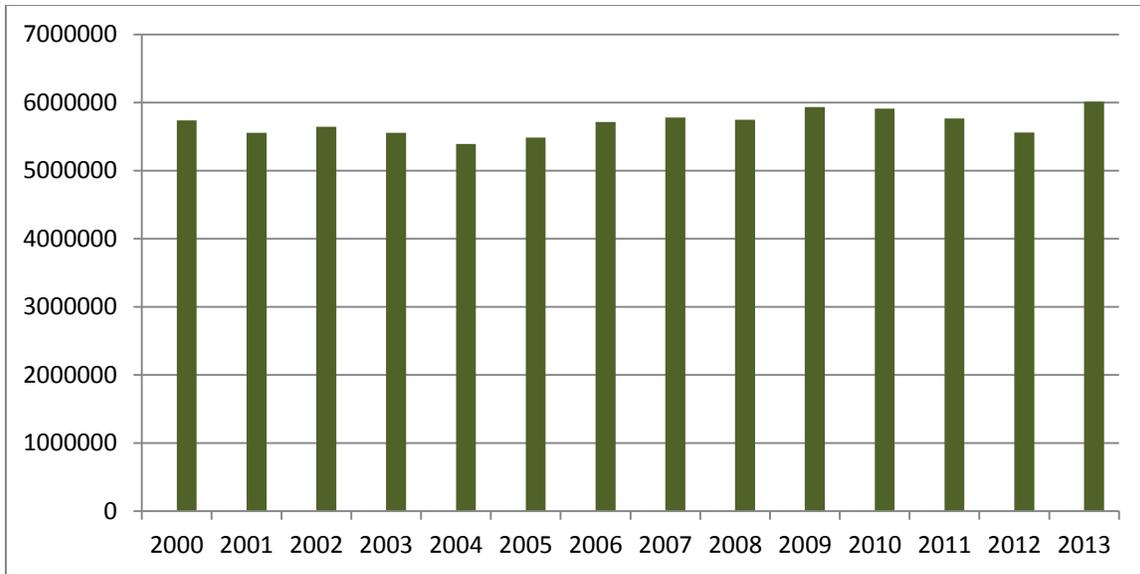
The Service bases recreation visitor counts on data from traffic counters placed across multiple points along the Parkway. For more information on how the Service collects and reports recreation visitor counts, please visit <http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/index.cfm>.

From 2000 to 2013, the Parkway averaged close to 6 million recreational visitors annually. For the same time period, the average monthly visitation is in the 400,000 to 500,000 range. Non-recreational visitors, primarily those who use the Parkway as a commuter route, accounted for an average of 6 million between 2000 and 2013. The average monthly non-recreational visitation was 550,000. According to a new NPS report, visitors contributed an estimated \$198 million to local economies in 2014.

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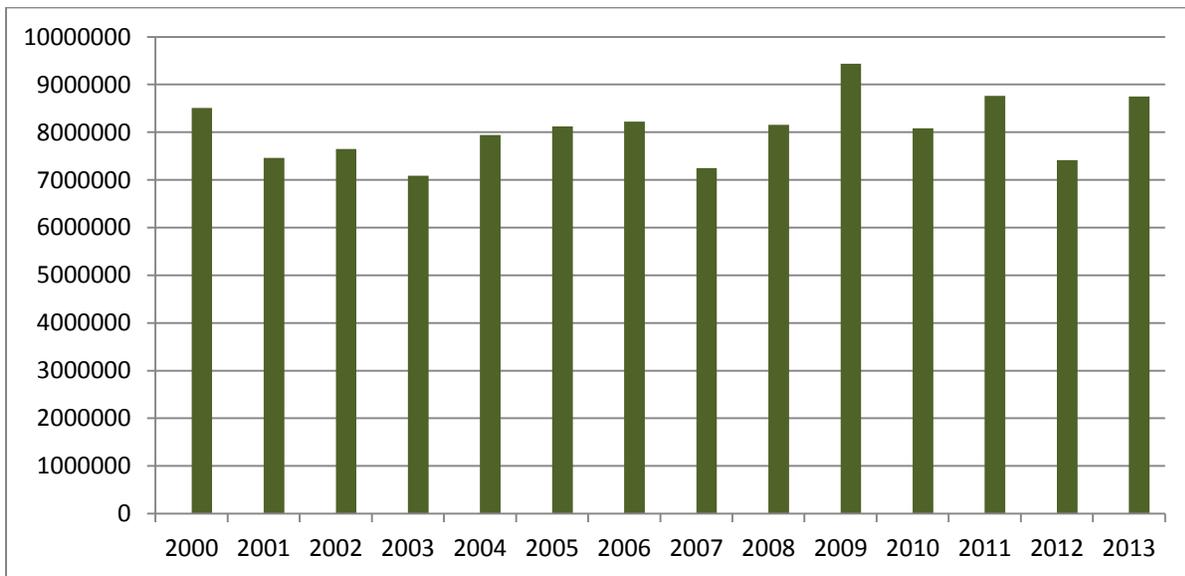
**Natchez Trace Parkway Recreational Visitation, 2000-2013**

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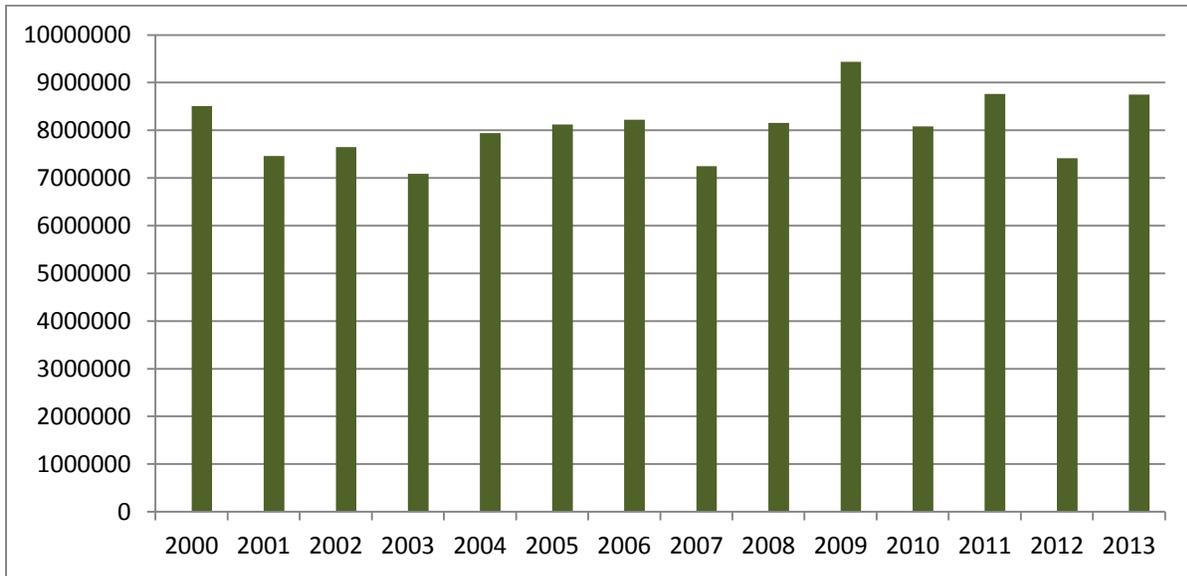
Source: National Park Service

**Natchez Trace Parkway Average Monthly Recreational Visitation, 2000-2013**



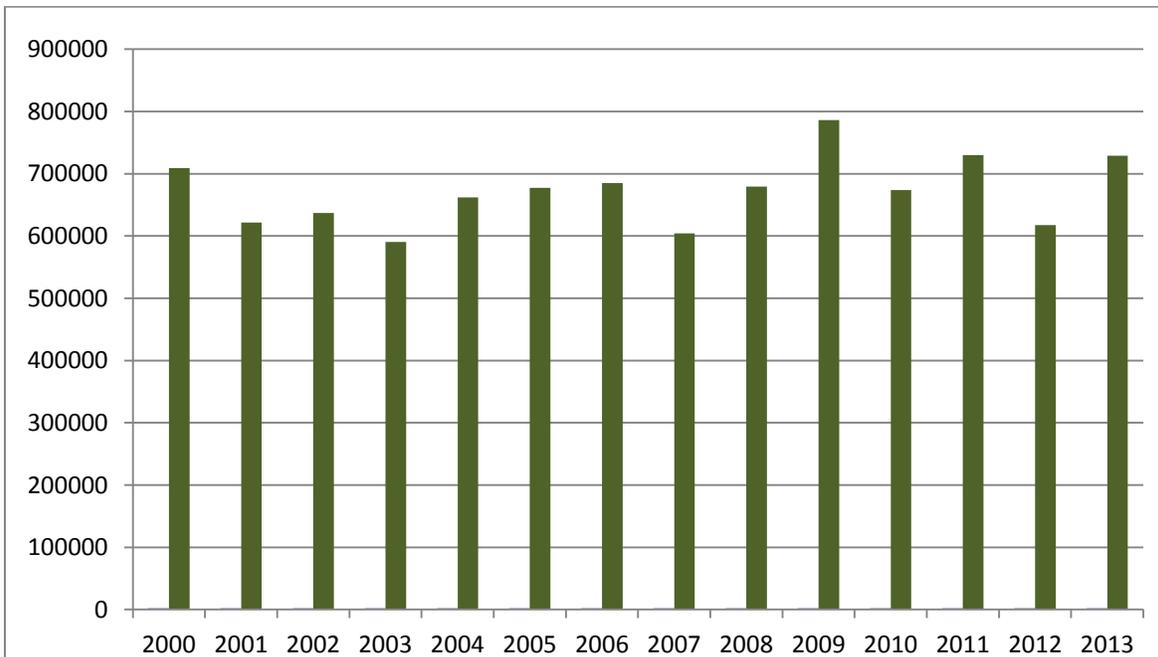
Source: National Park Service

**Natchez Trace Parkway Non-Recreational Visitation, 2000-2013**



Source: National Park Service

**Natchez Trace Parkway Average Monthly Non-Recreational Visitation, 2000-2013**



Source: National Park Service

## FINANCIAL REQUIREMENT

Financial requirements vary based upon the legal instrument under which the proposal is issued and may be based on fair market lease value or a financial analysis of the business opportunity. In general, the financial requirements for use of one of these facilities would include investing in the operation and maintenance of the facility to NPS standards.

## TERM LENGTH

Term length will be determined by the NPS. Depending upon the instrument used, the shortest term may be a 3 year temporary contract, and the longest could be up to a 60 year lease. If temporary concession operators are used, they will have the opportunity to bid on a full term contract (10 years).

## SITE VISIT

A site visit is scheduled for 1:00 CDT on Wednesday May 27, 2015. All parties intending to attend scheduled site visits must RSVP by email to Christina Smith at [christina\\_smith@nps.gov](mailto:christina_smith@nps.gov) by Friday, May 22, 2015

## CONSIDERATIONS

Uses of federal land must be authorized by law and comply with the law under which the use is authorized.

Uses of federal land under NPS management must meet certain criteria. For the Natchez Trace Parkway, this means that the use must:

- Not degrade or unduly impair the park's resources and values;
- Be compatible with the programs of the NPS;
- Be consistent with the purposes established by law for the park area in which it is located; and,
- Ensure the preservation of any historic property involved with the proposed use.

Additionally, the use must follow all applicable local, state, and federal laws, such as health, safety, food handling, and labor and employment law. Uses must be compliant with environmental and historic preservation policy. The NPS will consider the responses to this RFEI to plan for the use of these facilities starting the spring of 2016. The pertinent laws, regulations, and policies, can be found at: <http://home.nps.gov/applications/npspolicy/index.cfm>  
More information about the NPS commercial services program can be found at: [www.concessions.nps.gov](http://www.concessions.nps.gov).  
Information about other ways to do business with the NPS can be found at:  
[www.nps.gov/aboutus/doingbusinesswithus.htm](http://www.nps.gov/aboutus/doingbusinesswithus.htm).

Information specific to Natchez Trace Parkway is available at: [www.nps.gov/blri/parkmgmt/businesswithpark.htm](http://www.nps.gov/blri/parkmgmt/businesswithpark.htm)

**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Respondents are encouraged to provide input that demonstrates how their concept will support the park's purpose. Responses should not exceed 15 pages total. Any viable option will be considered. Please submit:

- A description of your interest in use of facility(ies), and which facility(ies) you are interested in;
- A transmittal letter indicating your name, company or organization, legal structure, and contact information for representative(s) including email address;
- Previous NPS Concessions or Leasing operation experience, if any; and,
- Any other pertinent points or conditions.

Please indicate in your submission whether you would like the NPS to retain your contact information and notify you of future Business Opportunities.

Please submit your response no later than 4:00 PM EDT on July 8, 2015 to Mark Morgan at the address below. Please submit two (2) identical hard copies and one electronic copy, identical to the hard copy. The electronic copy must be in a format that can be shared and copied.

The NPS will acknowledge your submission after receipt. Within 60 days of the submission date the NPS will provide a publically available description of the next steps in the process and notify all respondents by email.

**FOR RESPONSES, QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS  
PLEASE CONTACT**

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