



Grant Details

80683 - FY20 Region/CVB Marketing Plan

86691 - FY20 Visit Southeast Montana Marketing Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: FY20 Visit Southeast Montana Marketing Plan
Grant Number: 20-51-004
Grant Status: Underway
Comments:
Applicant Organization: Visit Southeast Montana
Grantee Contact: Brenda Maas
Award Year: 2019
Program Area: DOC Office of Tourism

Amounts:

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Contract Dates: | Contract Sent | | Contract Received | | Contract Executed |
| Project Dates: | 06/13/2019 Proposal Date | 07/01/2019 Project Start | | 06/30/2020 Project End | |
| Grant Administrator: | Barb Sanem | | | | |
| Contract Number | 20-51-004 | | | | |
| Award Year | 2019 | | | | |

Contract Dates

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| Contract Sent | Contract Received | Contract Executed | Contract Legal |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|

Project Dates 07/01/2019
06/30/2020

Project Start Project End

Comments

Amendment Comments

Community & Brand Support

Describe your destination (who you are, who you wish to attract and why would they come) addressing your strengths, opportunities, and potential challenges. How does your destination align with Montana's brand pillars?

A BRIEF HISTORY

Originally called "Custer Country," Visit Southeast Montana began in 1984 as an organization charged with helping bring tourists to the region. It was named for one of its most famous attractions, the Little Bighorn Battlefield. In 1987 the Montana Legislature enacted a 4 percent Lodging Facility Use Tax to fund tourism promotion organizations. At that time, Custer Country became one of six state-funded tourism regions in the state. This organization continued to market the 13 counties and two Indian Reservations of Southeast Montana. The Billings Chamber of Commerce was awarded the contract from the Montana Department of Commerce in 2010 to manage the region, and the organization relocated from Forsyth to Billings. In 2012, the Custer Country Board of Directors voted to change the name of the region to "Visit Southeast Montana."

From a traveler's perspective, it may seem like there is not much "out here." The FY20 marketing plan highlights the advantageous of "getting off the beaten path" in this region where the mountains meet the prairies.

THE ORGANIZATION

Visit Southeast Montana is a private, nonprofit organization managed by the Billings Chamber of Commerce. We serve as a voice for Southeast Montana's tourism and hospitality industries, seeking to promote the region's many attractions, events and communities while ensuring that tourism is recognized as one of the region's top economic drivers, especially when changes to local and state-wide legislation are considered. Visit Southeast Montana consists of (the equivalent of) two full-time staff positions under contract with the Montana Department of Commerce and is directed by a board consisting of no more than 21 members from across the region.

Visit Southeast Montana partners with the region's three Convention & Visitors Bureaus (Billings, Miles City and Glendive) along with hoteliers, chambers of commerce and other tourism-related entities including state parks, county and federal organizations, plus private businesses ranging from coffee shops and restaurants to guide services, art galleries and private tour operators. The stakeholders and tourism partners of Southeast Montana provide the essence, flavor, identity and unique character of the region.

MISSION

The mission of Visit Southeast Montana is to increase tourism to Southeast Montana by increasing the awareness of our region, showcasing our cultural heritage, developing memorable experiences and educating our residents about the economic benefits of tourism.

IDENTITY

Key Characteristics

This vast region, blessed with a diversity of people, geography and cultures, prides itself on connecting with visitors who enjoy our six very distinctive characteristics:

1. Outdoor Recreation - There is no doubt that opportunities for outdoor recreation abound across Southeast Montana – many exist on public lands and waterways. Fisherman will appreciate the world-class fishing opportunities available along the Bighorn and Musselshell Rivers, Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area (BCNRA) and the Paddlefish Harvest along the banks of the Yellowstone River near Glendive, along with an emerging bass fishery on the Yellowstone River. Hunters continue to pay premium prices to travel to the Powder River area to bag trophy deer and antelope. The Bull Mountains near Roundup are a rising star for elk hunters, and Eastern Montana is becoming known throughout the surrounding states for being great bird hunting country, allowing hunters to stretch their hunting season with pheasant, grouse, chukers, ducks and geese. Hiking and camping enthusiasts will relish the freedom and solitude of the Custer National Forest, Chalk Buttes, Terry Badlands and Medicine Rocks State Park, along with the fore-mentioned Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. Makoshika State Park, Montana's largest state park, features some of the nation's most spectacular badlands scenery while the Terry Badlands remain pristine.

Outdoor adventure abounds within and near the city of Billings, too. Each year sees expanding trails with opportunities for biking and hiking. Plus, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) sites (Four Dances, Canyon Creek and Action Recreation Areas) include recently-developed or enhanced trails. In 2019, Yellowstone Rivers and Parks Association, in conjunction with Our Montana, will open a new river access site on the Yellowstone River just south of Billings, creating an ideal stop in the Billings area for boating, fishing, rafting, kayaking and canoeing enthusiasts.

The plethora of pristine wilderness, wide-open spaces, public land and developing infrastructure spans the region and dovetails perfectly with the recently-created Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation. Director Rachel VandeVoort spent two days in the region in 2018 and strong collaboration with that office continues.

2. Western Authenticity - Many states and regions like to think they possess true western culture, but in SEMT's rural communities, as well as the cities such as Billings and Miles City, visitors can get a true picture of everything that was right about the Old West. From Montana's largest state fair in Billings to feel-good, small-town rodeos, Southeast Montana communities have kept western hospitality alive. Standout western events include the Bucking Horse Sale in Miles City, the NILE and Chase Hawkes Rodeos in Billings and Little Bighorn Days in Hardin – from ranch rodeos to larger circuit

Professional Bull Riders, the region hosts a rodeo almost every weekend of the warm season, plus plenty in other months. Authenticity is the key word when listing this strength. Simply traveling across the region solidifies that experience when a visitor may have to wait for cowboys to herd their cattle across the road or they experience the western lifestyle while visiting Southeast Montana's small communities, where the cowboys still ride horses.

3. Historical Significance - Southeast Montana contains a wealth of historical sites which are internationally known and are of great significance to the story of America. The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, site of Custer's Last Stand and the nation's most famous Native American victory, is located in Bighorn County and is the third most-visited destination in Montana behind Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks. Pompeys Pillar National Monument bears William Clark's signature and is one of the few pieces of in-the-field, physical evidence remaining from the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Many other state parks, museums and historic sites tell their own stories of pioneer life on the prairie, the Native American struggle to leave behind their nomadic way of life and the impact of the cattle trade on the American West. From large and well-known to more intimate, all are part of the story of the American West and can be experienced in Southeast Montana.

4. Accessibility and Facilities - Southeast Montana is fortunate to contain two of the state's busiest highways, Interstate 94 and Interstate 90. Billings Logan Airport boasts United, Delta, American, Alaska/Horizon and Frontier Airlines direct service to 10 destinations, including direct service to/from Dallas/Fort Worth along with extended seasonal direct service to/from Chicago from United Airlines and the newly-added value flights to/from Denver via Frontier. Additionally, Cape Air provides Essential Air Service (EAS) to Billings from five eastern Montana communities: Glendive, Sidney, Glasgow, Wolf Point and Havre.

This brings travelers directly into Southeast Montana. Billings has the state's largest and most advanced convention facilities with capacity for up-to 700 attendees, many who will extend their professional trip with personal travel. Shoppers are also drawn to the region's boutiques and major shopping centers. Lodging opportunities in Southeast Montana are incredibly diverse, including everything from 4-star hotels, to charming bed and breakfasts, RV parks, rustic camping, hunting and fishing lodges.

5. Dinosaur Adventure - The plains, prairies and buttes of Southeast Montana are dinosaur country. Famous dinosaurs taken from the Southeast Montana area of the Hell Creek Formation include Tyrannosaurus Rex, Maiasaura and Triceratops. Walk with the dinosaurs in Makoshika State Park and visit three museums and facilities that are active members of the well-established Montana Dinosaur Trail. The museums showcase the many paleontological treasures which have been discovered in Eastern Montana. Museums of particular interest to dinosaur enthusiasts include the Carter County Museum, Glendive Dinosaur & Fossil Museum, Frontier Gateway Museum and the Makoshika State Park Interpretive Center. Individuals and families can also opt for a private fossil dig or experience a "paleo adventure" in Makoshika State Park. This broad category includes fossil and rock collectors, most notably those looking for agates and petrified wood, transported downstream.

6. Native American Culture - When visitors from the eastern U.S., Europe, and Asia visit the West, they are innately curious about American Indian culture. They grew up reading stories and watching the movies about the tribes that once dominated the western frontier. Southeast Montana is fortunate enough to play host to Crow Fair, one of the last great Native American cultural events, held annually on the Crow Reservation. This event gives visitors the opportunity to witness how Native American culture has evolved and the importance the tribes continue to place on their history and traditions. The Northern Cheyenne reservation contains an incredible variety of historical sites, as well as opportunities to purchase hand-made gifts. The history of the region is inseparable from the history of the tribes who live in it to this day.

Key Challenges Facing the Region

1. Perception that Montana is far away and difficult to travel to. According to the 2016 Montana Destination Brand Research Study by Destination Analytics, Montana is perceived as challenging to access with associated time and cost that prohibits visitation. Conversely, Colorado (the top regional competitor) was cited as the best destination in regard to scenic beauty, potential for vacation road trip, family-friendly environment, national parks, winter recreational activities and places "I most want to visit." However, Montana as a whole and Southeast Montana specifically are well-positioned to capitalize on Colorado's weaknesses of crowded attractions; lack of or losing authenticity; high costs and over-development. Lastly, the increase of direct flights to Billings will facilitate more tourists traveling directly to Southeast Montana. For some urban travelers, they may spend more time traveling to the airport from their home than they will actually flying to Southeast Montana.

Additionally, U.S. Highway 212 (the "Warrior Trail") from Belle Fourche, South Dakota, through Broadus, to Crow Agency was underconstruction over the past two years. During that time, Wyoming capture much of the vehicle traffic. In FY19 both Visit Southeast Montana and Visit Billings promoted this route in the Rapid City/Spearfish, South Dakota corridor.

2. "Regions" are confusing - Tourists typically do not travel via regions, but rather travel to destinations. That is where the identity starts. A marketing campaign that weaves destinations with geographic location will enhance the brand. Additionally, regional partnerships will help strengthen the brand within both the state and four-state region. While the Montana brand should, and does, include Southeast Montana, it is easy for the individuality of the region to be lost within the great whole. The challenge is to be distinctive while still be intertwined within the Montana brand.

3. Distances Between Services - Today's traveler has higher expectations in terms of cellular service and connectivity to a global network. The distances between towns and services are a challenge to Southeast Montana - yet it is that very element that also enhances its appeal, as long as travelers know what to expect. For example, placing the "get away from it all" concept into a mini-marketing

campaign that includes tear-off and downloadable maps and itineraries can help orientate the traveler. Additionally, educating the staff at the four regional Visitor Information Centers about the rest of the region will facilitate sharing of regional information.

4. Underdeveloped Tourism Product - Research from both Destination Analytics and the Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research has identified outdoor recreation as a top activity for Southeast Montana's target audience. Despite the wealth of unspoiled nature available, little infrastructure exists for many areas. Strengthening partnerships within the region will help identify tourism products that need assistance for wayfinding, signage and potential promotion. Additionally, working with these partners to secure tourism grants from the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development may help overcome the funding obstacles. The recently-created Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation is a key partnership. Additionally, as Tribal Tourism continues to slowly develop, Visit Southeast Montana has and will continue to collaborate in ways that make sense for the region.

Alignment with Montana's Brand Pillars

The Montana Brand consists of three pillars, with which Visit Southeast Montana aligns:

1. More **spectacular, unspoiled nature** than anywhere else in the lower 48;
2. **Vibrant and charming small towns** that serve as gateways to our natural wonders; and
3. **Breathtaking experiences by day and relaxing hospitality at night.**

Southeast Montana is where the mountains meet the prairies and the rivers flow. As such, the region defines "spectacular, unspoiled nature" with Glendive being a primary example of a "gateway to natural wonders" (as found in Makoshika State Park). Unspoiled nature abounds in Southeast Montana, from the Big Sky Back Country Byway and Calypso Trail near Terry, to the haunting rock formations at Medicine Rocks State Park near Ekalaka, to the immense and majestic beauty of the Bighorn Canyon. The region is dotted with charming small towns such as Broadus, where a cowboy can still turn horses-and-wagon on the extra-wide main street to Terry, the home of Eveyln Cameron - each town exudes its own personality, built by generations of families, industry and storied events.

Long-standing events such as the Bucking Horse Sale (since 1950) or Crow Fair (more than 100 years) showcase "breathtaking experiences by day" while the "relaxing hospitality by night" can be found throughout the region's unique dining experiences and array of lodging options from rustic camping to luxurious facilities like Northern Hotel in Billings. The beauty of Southeast Montana lies in its natural wonders and the plethora of options for travelers and tourists alike -- including those from across Montana itself.

Describe your destination.

The Travel Decision Process

The typical traveler makes travel decisions in a three-phase process. These phases are Inspiration, Orientation, and Facilitation.

The **INSPIRATION PHASE** is the one in which the traveler is made aware of the general product and develops a desire to visit the destination. This phase is masterfully executed by the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development, which uses Montana's key tourism draws to bring nearly 12 million visitors to the state each year. Visit Southeast Montana reinforces this inspiration with region-specific images and video.

The **ORIENTATION PHASE** is where the traveller begins researching the details of his or her trip. This phase focuses on the route the traveler will take to arrive at their chosen destination and the mode of transportation they will use to get there.

The **FACILITATION PHASE** is where the traveler tries to find things to see and do at the destination and on the way to the destination. This may include planning alternate routes and overnight stays to break the drive up into manageable daily distances.

Visit Southeast Montana will focus on the Orientation and Facilitation phases. In this way we can target the 'low hanging fruit' already traveling through our region on the way to Yellowstone National Park and other Montana destinations. Additionally, we can emphasize how Southeast Montana fits with the Montana brand for outdoor recreation, for example, without the disadvantages like over-crowding and expensive fees found with other DMOs. Finally, we will also promote the Inspiration and Facilitation phases to regional travelers, including residents of central and western Montana. We have determined this will be the most effective way to target within our limited budget.

Optional: Include attachments here

a. Define your target markets (demographic, geographic and psychographic).

By looking at everything we do through the lens of the Travel Decision Process, Visit Southeast Montana is better able to strategically focus its marketing efforts to maximize the positive economic impact through tourism to our region with our limited budget. As such, our geographic, demographic and psycho-graphic target markets parallels the target market identified by the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development, with ultra-niche markets identified here:

Geographic and Demographic

According to the 2016 Montana Destination Brand Research Study by Destination Analytics, the High-Profile Visitor (HPV) is not only attracted to Montana, he/she sees the destination as more attractive and competitive when compared to its regional competition. The HPVs are:

- City dwellers (not rural and not suburban)
- Married with children
- Well-educated
- Affluent (>\$80K)
- Younger (average age 36.4)
- Frequent travelers
- Male-oriented (54.3% male vs 45.7% female)
- Strongly attracted to and familiar with Montana's tourism offerings
- Likely repeat visitors
- Outdoor-oriented travelers (psychographic index)

The HPV's desired activity on a Montana trip relates directly to their psychographic profile of being outdoor-oriented travelers with these favored activities, as indicated in the graph on pages 44 -45 of the report, including:

#1: day hikes;

#3: dining out in restaurants;

#5: Visit Lewis & Clark-related historical sites;

#6: Drive scenic byways;

#7: Explore small towns and villages;

#8: Visit geological/dinosaur-related historical sites;

#9: Visit Native American history or cultural sites; and

#10: canoeing, kayaking or boating.

With the exception of #s 2 and 4 (GNP and YNP), all of these experiences are found in and emphasized by Southeast Montana, specifically Pompey's Pillar National Monument, Little Bighorn National Monument, Bighorn Canyone National Recreation Area and the Montana Dinosaur Trail.

It is obvious that Visit Southeast Montana has ideal offerings for the HPV, with 10 of the top 12 Desired Activities alligning with Visit Southeast Montana's pillars and regional opportunities.

Additionally, Destination Analytics identified two niche markets: Family travelers and history buffs. Both niches strongly align with Southeast Montana's strengths with history buffs fitting a cross-section of historical significance, western authenticity and American Indian culture.

Visit Southeast Montana will continue to build on these target markets as identified by MOTBD in addition to niche markets identified here.

NICHE MARKETS

Research conducted by the Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research supported a premise that many in the tourism industry have repeatedly stated: We – residents of Montana – love this vast, complex state and travel extensively throughout it. In fact, according to the 2018 Resident Travel in Montana report, including both resident and nonresident travel spending, total travel industry spending in Montana is \$6.23 billion dollars. Of that, 54 percent is contributed by nonresidents and 46 percent by resident travel within the state.

Based on this data, Visit Southeast Montana will launch a mini-campaign directed at the western side of Montana, identified as Bozeman and west. We will specifically highlight the Outdoor Recreation pillar including both soft (camping, kayaking, hiking) and rugged (hunting, fishing) activities for broad recreational appeal. In contrast to Montana's mountains, the badlands, breaks, buttes, canyons, coulees and flowing rivers of Southeast Montana offer unexplored opportunities for Montana residents and those in neighboring states.

Additionally, data requested from and compiled by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks demonstrates that hunting also bring travelers to Southeast Montana (FWP Regions 5 and 7) in October and November – specifically seeking big game. According to FWP, non-resident hunters (seeking permits in FWP regions 5 and 7) consistently originate from Washington, Minnesota and California.

Arrivalist data supports this across the majority of Southeast Montana's counties. For example, Powder River County's (Broadus) numbers peak in October - November. Both data sources re-enforce 1) Outdoor Recreation is a top activity or "reason to visit" while 2) Neighboring states (North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming) along with Washington, Minnesota and Colorado are top "arrival" markets. See attachments for graphs.

HISTORY BUFF

With the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument averaging nearly 300,000 visitors per year and Pompeys Pillar National Monument matching the "Visit Lewis & Clark historical sites" as the number 5 Desired Activity on a Montana Trip (according to Destination Analytics 2016 Montana Brand Study), Visit Southeast Montana will continue to market to the history buff in FY20.

ROAD-TRIPPERS

Also identified in the 2016 Montana Destination Brand Research Study by Destination Analytics, Inc., the road-tripper market includes travelers from Midwestern states who drive through the Southeast Montana region on the way to Yellowstone and Glacier national parks.

INTERNATIONAL

The Montana Travel Trade Office identifies the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia as the top three international target markets and Visit Southeast Montana will continue its strong collaboration with this group.

According to ITRR's 2017 Nonresident Visitation, Expenditures & Economic Impacts study, Overseas Visitors averaged \$1,015 per trip with an average stay of 5.82 days, compared to \$635 total per trip for an average of five days for Domestic Visitors. Therefore, aligning with the Montana Travel Trade Office's focus on UK, Germany and Australia is logical and continuous..

b. What are your emerging markets?

Considering the plethora of outdoor adventure opportunities, in FY20 Visit Southeast Montana will continue to look at mountain bikers and OHV (off-highway vehicles) riders under its Outdoor Recreation Pillar as emerging market. Additionally, astrotourism (travel specifically related to nighttime viewing of stars, moon, planets, sky) is emerging as a viable market across the state, with the plains and less rural areas having the greatest opportunities. We will look at this market in conjunction with other regions, MOTBD and Montana State Parks.

Work is currently underway, with an application to be submitted in August, 2019, for Medicine Rocks State Park to be designed as an International Dark-Skies Association park. This designation will support Southeast Montana as a destination for night-sky viewing.

Optional: Include attachments here.

c. What research supports your target marketing?

The report, *Montana: Destination Brand Research Study*, which was funded by MOTBD and completed by Destination Analytics, Inc. (attached) provides valuable information about the state's brand along with opportunities that align with Visit Southeast Montana's offerings.

SEMT also incorporates ITRR data, when applicable, to further enhance understanding of the target market along with newly-acquired data from Arrivalist located at <https://marketmt.com/Programs/Marketing/TourismResearch> (select Southeast Montana and/or county). While the region's visitation peaked in mid-summer, as expected, many counties actually had highest concentration of visitation in fall (late Oct - Nov), which is hunting season. By drilling down to the county level and observing trends over time, we can better understand the impact this niche market has on the region along with where they originate.

Hunting and fishing target marketing research from the Montana FWP is shown below.

| General Deer | | General Elk | | Turkey | | Migratory Bird | |
|--------------|------|-------------|------|--------|----|----------------|------|
| WA | 4942 | WA | 2446 | MN | 96 | WA | 2446 |
| CA | 2934 | CA | 1984 | WA | 80 | CA | 1984 |
| MN | 2682 | MN | 1770 | CA | 58 | MN | 1770 |
| WI | 2023 | WI | 1324 | PA | 44 | WI | 1324 |
| ND | 1557 | ND | 1270 | ND | 40 | ND | 1270 |
| PA | 1412 | PA | 1102 | WI | 36 | PA | 1102 |

Lastly, Visit Southeast Montana is intricately involved with the Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative and plans to fully integrate the results of this project into the regional marketing plan and budget wherever applicable, when the data becomes available.

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. GROW IN-REGION PARTNERSHIPS

A region as physically large as Southeast Montana is truly diverse, and as the foundation of Visit Southeast Montana, regional partners and stakeholders must be committed and strong. It is also within this diversity that the region's strength lies.

To grow and further enhance those relationships, we will focus on:

FY20 ACTION

- a) Connect with more Tourism Partners, sharing valuable resources and gaining more confidence in the value that tourism can bring to a community.
- b) Continuing with the herculean effort to reach each Tourism Partner – new and existing – to realize the full potential of strong relationships.
- c) Collaborate with Voice of Tourism to promote the opportunities and value of tourism within the region.
- d) Spend quality time within the region, presenting Visit Southeast Montana's successes and emphasizing the advantages of working with the region on joint, no-cost ventures such as the website. These quality interactions will also develop stronger inter-region communication to feed website, social media and earned media content.
- e) Evaluate Tourism Partner Workshop surveys from FY20 to develop additional, ready-to-implement topics and workshops for Partners.
- f) Continue efforts to connect with and assist Tribal Tourism, especially as it pertains to promotion of events and listings on southeastmontana.com and visitmt.com.
- g) Reinforce Tourism Partners website, emphasizing the tools for Partners, such as ordering bulk guides, *News You Can Use* (eblasts) and no-cost business listings.

FY20 MEASUREABLES

- a) Track number of presentations (plus attendance at each) to in-region partners such as chambers, civic groups and the like. Give 6 presentations in FY20, with at least (2) in conjunction with Voice of Tourism.
- b) Increase visitation to Tourism Partner segment of new website by 25% and increase open rate of *News You Can Use* to 16.5%.
- c) Add 4 more SEMT Film Ambassadors to list at Montana Film Office.
- d) Build master list (spreadsheet) of Visit Southeast Montana Tourism Partners – have at least 10 partners confirmed in each community.
- e) Conduct marketing workshop for Tourism Partners (in 1-3 locations across SEMT) with at least 20 attending each session.

2. DEVELOP MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS

Rather than be an island looking for visitors, we will reach outside the region to facilitate and strengthen relationships with neighboring states, regions and DMOs along with MOTBD bureaus and programs. Initial steps could be a regional familiarization tour (“fam”), working cooperatively at larger leisure travel shows and/or initiating new cooperative marketing campaigns such as downloadable and/or printed inter-regional maps and itineraries. Working under the Montana brand we have and will continue to promote Southeast Montana as a destination to international markets, specifically UK, Germany and Australia, via the Montana Travel Trade Office. Additionally, we will:

FY20 ACTION

- a) Invite other Montana regions (specifically Missouri River Country, Southwest and Central) to collaborate on initiatives targeted specifically to the History Buff market (i.e. battlefields or Lewis & Clark sites).
- b) Continuing the Montana Dino Trail relationship (includes three locations in SEMT, plus three other MT regions).
- c) Work with connections specifically with tourism contacts in Sheridan, Cody and Gillette, Wyoming; Rapid City/Black Hills and/or State of South Dakota; and, Theodore Roosevelt NP, Medora and/or State of North Dakota.
- d) Connect with Tribal Tourism and collaborate when fits target market.
- e) Strengthen burgeoning relationship with Montana Film Office.
- f) Increase collaborative projects with Montana State Parks, including advertising and/or earned media efforts.

FY20 MEASUREABLES

- a) Produce thematic-specific itineraries and/or blog post (i.e. history) in collaboration with other regions.
- b) Collaborate with Montana State Parks to collaborate on at least (2) media opportunities.

3. SUPPORT TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Growing in terms of service and sophistication is necessary for success in today's tourism market. Travelers expect the conveniences of home with a authentic yet urban edge to their experience. As thus, we will support the development of new tourism products, as allowed within regulations, plus share our knowledge, expertise and influence to move a project forward. By focusing on Goal #1, we will be able to identify and refer tourism projects to MOTBD for further assistance. Additionally, we will monitor legislative policies that could affect tourism.

FY20 ACTION

- a) Continue to share the established public policy statement across the region, specifically in presentations (see above).
- b) Seek projects that need assistance or development. For example continue recent conversations about a “Night Skies Trail” in the plain of Montana (working title and current conversations), potentially developing a destination based on astrotourism.
- c) Ensure that all legislators and county commissions are included on *News You Can Use* and invite them attend regional presentations.

FY20 MEASURABLES

- a) Share new public policy statement, which reflects Visit Southeast Montana's mission, with Tourism Partners via website and public presentations (as outlined in “Grow In-Region Partnerships” above).
- b) Work with at least (1) Tourism Partner to submit a grant for funding from MOTBD.

4. PRODUCE QUALITY MARKETING INITIATIVES

Visit Southeast Montana's marketing methods will continue to follow the Inspiration- Orientation-Facilitation strategy outlined in this Marketing Plan. A key component, however, will be the integration across platforms along with branding and consistent messaging. For example, while social media may highlight upcoming events, it will incorporate the evergrowing photo library while weaving pre-designated messages (i.e. Southeast Montana is not as far away as you think; a trip #OutHereMT is worth the drive/flight) into the overall landscape. This seamless melding of messaging will be subtle but consistent from advertising, to social media, to branding and collateral, to media relations and appeal to the ever-growing global market.

FY20 ACTIONS MARKETING STRATEGIES

- a) MARKETING SUPPORT: Visit Southeast Montana will continue to operate out of the shared offices in Billings; the close proximity to Visit Billings staff facilitates collaboration and promotion of Southeast Montana when larger groups and tours stop in Billings or with media groups that move through the region. Additionally, we will continue to work with MOTBD's international market specialists to enhance the United Kingdom, German and Australian marketing efforts. Within the region, we will continue to serve our tourism partners both formally and informally by being a point of contact, sharing information from MOTBD along with social media opportunities, a quarterly newsletter and low-cost marketing strategies.

b) CONSUMER TRADE SHOWS: In terms of leisure travel shows, this year we will attend an outdoor recreation show in Minneapolis, Denver, Chicago and/or other regional shows, including those in western Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota or North Dakota. We will explore opportunities to attend larger shows cooperatively with other regions or CVBs and invite Board members or Tourism Partners (including the Office of Outdoor Recreation and MOTBD), where appropriate, to share their regional expertise with show attendees. We will also explore the option of a history-travel show as it fits the above-identified market.

c) PUBLICITY, SOCIAL MEDIA & MEDIA RELATIONS: With the expanding website, we will continue to increase focus on earned media in FY20, regionally, nationally and internationally, by selectively nurturing relationships, including publications/editors, freelancers and social influencers, that fit the Visit Southeast Montana pillars of outdoor recreation; western authenticity, historical adventure, dinosaur experiences and American Indian culture. The service from Cision (earned media tracking & media/freelancer database service) is a key component to this strategy. The blog (launched in January, 2019) will continue to facilitate interest and will be promoted socially. With the Travel Blog Exchange (TBEX) conference scheduled for Billings in September of 2019, will have intimate access to 400-450 bloggers, social media influencers and the like. We will optimize that exposure with several pre- and a post-conference(s) that highlight the "Wild, Wacky and Wonderful of Southeast Montana." Post-conference we will build on this exposure and momentum with continued focus and effort on content creators, leveraging the networking opportunity of TBEX. Lastly, we will collaborate with state and regional micro-influencers to delve into the western Montana and regional markets in an impactful fashion.

d) CONSUMER ADVERTISING: The bulk of the budget lies within this realm and will focus on the audiences identified above via very targeted digital advertising. We will also use a combination of digital, print and potentially geo-fencing to target the audiences described above. In partnership with Windfall, SEMT's agency of record, we will vet qualified leads from both the call center and from Yellowstone Country and Glacier Country's opt-in lead lists to target those with plans to visit Montana, those who have visited one of the national parks and/or those who will drive through Southeast Montana to get to a national park (i.e. Midwestern states), thus enhancing the "Accessibility" strength identified above.

e) PHOTO LIBRARY: Stunning imagery is a key element to the inspirational piece of the marketing funnel. During FY19, we put a concerted effort into revitalizing the photo library, adding more than 70 images plus creating a photo policy, which identifies three tiers. The third tier are photos available to Visit Southeast Montana's tourism partners. Additionally, we shot video while on photo shoots, to further leverage that budget. In March, 2019 we launched a general inspirational video across all channels. Moving into FY20, we will continue to expand the photo/video library. These images will be used across all platforms including social, paid and earned media in addition to printed materials, tradeshow support, fairs (as requested), e-newsletters, blog posts and the ever-expanding website.

f) PRINT PROJECTS: The Visit Southeast Montana Travel Guide is the foundation of all marketing efforts—it tells the story of Southeast Montana. This piece has evolved from being a bi-annual guide with no advertising to an annual, private-funded project with a sophisticated magazine-style format. In FY20, we will again leverage private funds to produce and print the guide but use marketing funds to ship and distribute this keystone piece, which functions as the heart of SEMT's print collateral.

Additionally, we will develop and print other collateral to fit niche markets. For example, thematic itineraries, like history, as developed for the travel guide and website can also be printed for distribution at a specific trade show or mailing. Producing collateral across channels (print and digital) further stretches marketing dollars.

g) TELEMARKETING/FULFILLMENT: The travel guides and other collateral must get into the hands of the traveler. To facilitate that, we have dedicated additional funds fulfillment and distribution (contracts to be considered as they approach renewal dates). Additional collateral (such as thematic maps and itineraries) will be available from distribution center, regional VICs and via download from the website. Tourism Partners can also order the travel guide in bulk.

h) WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT: While VisitMT.com, the MOTBD's website may serve as the first point of contact for Montana visitors, the Southeast Montana website provides more details along with regional-specific inspiration, orientation and facilitation. In FY18, Visit Southeast Montana's agency of record, Windfall, created a new website, which "scrapes" content from VisitMT.com but still allows for more creative and timely control at the regional level. In FY19 the website was further built out and optimized. We launched a blog in January 2019, which leads consumers from the e-newsletter to the blog on southeastmontana.com.

In FY20, we will continue to strengthen the site by adding content, images and video, both via the blog and with more layers of information, adding content and keeping the site fresh and up-to-date, evolving as new tourism products develop. Additionally, funds will be used to continually enhance SEO and other optimization techniques. The new blog and calendar of events will further enriching the user's experience.

FY20 MEASURABLES

a) Increase media tours and social influencer visits to 7 fair tours.

b) Increase social media numbers, i.e. followers, engagement, shares by 25%.

c) Increase number of consumers in database by 5,000 and open rate to 17%.

d) Increase earned media, I.E. 10 national articles/segments and 20 regional articles/segments.

e) Update website and increased traffic numbers by 35%.

f) Establish CTR on digital media of .35%

g) Establish 16% open rate on Consumer eblasts.

In summary, Visit Southeast Montana will leverage focused advertising with publicity and earned media efforts in FY20. The travel guide will remain a private fund project, which allows us to dedicate more funds to the detailed marketing strategies outlined in this plan.

Visit Southeast Montana will distribute funds according to the detailed marketing strategies outlined in this plan as highlighted here:

- Dedicate majority of funds to advertising.
- Retain travel guide as private fund project.
- Use travel guide savings to leverage focused advertising with publicity.
- Optimize the September 2019 Travel Blog Exchange Conference in Billings.
- Continue to built out and optimize southeastmontana.com, including blog and other content.

a. In what types of co-ops with MTOT would you like to participate?

We would like to continue working with the MOTBD on co-ops in national print and online publications. We have found the online co-ops with the state to be particularly effective in driving traffic to our website.

Social media influencers are an emerging marketing strategy, and we would like to partner with MOTBD to explore options that are very specific to the Southeast Montana experience.

Co-ops in the form of journalist and tour operator fam trips through the Visit Southeast Montana region have also been beneficial and we would like to see those continue along with attending the Rocky Mountain International Roundup show.

We are open to all opportunities, including non-traditional and experiemental marketing methods, particularly those those align with Road Trippers, History Buffs and other markets identified under Niche and Emerging Markets.

SEMT Social Media-Admin Position.pdf

Optional: Include attachment here.

Montana Brand Exploration Research - Final Report of Findings V2 - Novme... (004).pdf

b. In what other types of co-ops would you like to participate? (Regions/CVBs, etc.)

As noted in Visit Southeast Montana's Overall Goals above, we will actively seek relationships with both inter-region CVBs and DMOs and with neighboring states, regions and DMOs. The continued success of the Dino Trail is an excellent example of a Joint Venture between regions, CVBs and DMOs in Montana. Additionally, creating itineraries for those traveling between YNP - Black Hills/Mount Rushmore - Theodore Roosevelt National Park in addition to newly-initiated efforts with the Office of Outdoor Recreation and the Montana Film Office. We also seek to collaborate with Tribal Tourism entities to continue to promote Native American events and venues for visitors.

Overall, Visit Southeast Montana will consider any and all Joint Ventures, especially those outline above or those relating to emerging markets -- most notably astrotourism as destination development.

c. What types of co-ops have you done in the past? Were they successful - why or why not?

As noted above, the Montana Dinosaur Trail, which includes three locations in Southeast Montana and has regional support, is an excellent example of a successful Joint Venture; it continues to move forward in a robust fashion. This consortium recently collaborated to update the Trail's website (via a tourism grant) plus create a video of each of the 14 facilities. In 2018, the Trail had its second best visitation year (334,544 travelers visited 14 locations) over a 14 year span, plus it was a record year for passport completion. Since the Trail promotion program began in 2005, visitation has increased by almost 123,000 visitors, a 58% increase or average of 5.5% growth per year.

In FY18, Visit Southeast Montana partnered with Southwest Montana to advertise (print & digital) in True West magazine to target the History Buff market, highlighting the Little Bighorn and Big Hole Battlefields. This partnership produced amazing result with 2.95% CTR on Facebook posts and 2.16% CTR on the native article. We repeated this partnership (including Missouri River Country) in FY19 will results to be provided in the completion report.

Additionally, Visit Southeast Montana continues to work both intra- and inter-region and with other tourism entities (MT State Parks and MOTBD) to leverage limited budgets. All of these efforts were amazing opportunities and data is still being collected.

In June of this year (FY19) Visit Southeast Montana, along with MOTBD, Montana State Parks and Central Montana, will host a blogger specific to family travelers and the Montana Dinosaur Trail (results to be reported in FY19).

We have engaged in out of home, national print, national and regional online, Fam Tours and trade shows with MOTBD and FWP. Of these the online, fam tours and tradeshow components were the most successful, though we wouldn't consider any of the co-ops we've engaged in with the state to be failures; some are simply stronger than others but all have benefit.

Overall, we plan to continue with joint ventures whenever possible and feasible.

Optional: Include attachments here.

Optional: Include attachments here. Copy of SEMT FY20 Proposed Budget - Pie Chart.xlsx

Optional: Include attachment here:

Marketing Segment, Method & Budget

| Marketing Segment | Marketing Method | Describe your method. | Provide supporting research/statistics. | How do you plan to measure success? | Provide a brief rationale for this method. | Estimated budget for method. | Marketing Method Evaluation | Add'l Attchmnt |
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| Consumer | Opportunity Marketing | Opportunities that arise will be considered by how it fits within the existing marketing plan, media plan and budget. | This will be determined when/if the opportunity arises. | To be determined prior to implementation and included in the Opportunity Request. | Opportunity Marketing is just that -- an opportunity that arises that was not anticipated at the the time of marketing plan development. | \$5,000.00 | TBD | |
| | | We hope to incorporate Out of Home Advertising into the Visit Southeast Montana marketing plan if increased budget allows. We will | Data from Phocuswright shows that 38% of tour and activity bookings are happening on the same day | We can measure ROI using traffic | The research noted above ties Out of Home advertising to the Road Tripper market | | | |

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| Consumer | Billboards/Out-of-Home | collaborate on outdoor space, if possible. Additionally, we will also look for opportunities to influence on-the-ground travelers within or about-to-enter the region. | or up to two days before the activity. Many of these bookings take place in-destination, while consumers are already traveling. | counts (vehicles) and landing page analytics, if applicable. | identified on pages 7-8 of the FY19 Marketing Plan (attached). This is a placeholder if the budget allows. | \$100.00 | TBD | | |
| Consumer | Print Advertising | As an important element of Visit Southeast Montana's media mix, regional media will primarily promote events and weekend/short-vacation travel. Some ads may be produced as a co-op with MOTBD, others in conjunction with regional partners. For example, collaborative efforts within-region can maximized budget while intra-region collaboration will provide a bigger picture of Southeast Montana within the tourist's National Park itinerary (i.e. the road-tripper audience as identified by the 2016 Montana Brand study and further detailed in the attached Visit Southeast Montana Marketing Plan). Other niche markets like history buffs or sportsmen/women also fit well with the print | <p>Print advertising remains relevant, especially for niche markets.</p> <p>People are still reading print publications. According to a 2016 Nielsen report, 169 million Americans still read newspapers regularly and three-fourths of that group reads the print edition specifically. Additionally, unlike a digital ad, a print ad stays around as long as the publication is around. This is especially relevant when looking at publications like magazines and travel planners.</p> <p>Consider the following statistics for print products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Americans spend an average of 15 minutes reading a magazine on a daily basis in 2018. (Statista) Affluent magazine readers are likely to spend \$5K to \$10K on vacations. (MagazineMedia) 61% of consumers trust newspaper advertisements, compared to 42% for online. (JPLocalBusiness) For each \$1 spent on advertising, 4.8 people are impacted on magazines, followed by TV (0.8) and internet (0.3). (PRWeb) For each dollar spent on magazines advertisement, an average return of \$3.94 is expected. (MagazineMedia) <p>Additionally, a 2015 study by Temple University Fox Center</p> | <p>Success will be measured based on circulation and readership. Additionally, we will track website traffic and lodging tax dollars for an over-all look at marketing plan success.</p> | <p>Print advertising allows us to reach a different audience than online advertising while also complimenting online ads with an integrated approach. We will spend a slightly larger percentage of our budget on online advertising; however, we will favor print ads that include an editorial component, thus creating more opportunity to inspire and motivate the niche audience while including facilitating details. A good example of this strategy includes a print ad in <i>True West</i> magazine. The FY18 multi-media buy, in collaboration with Southwest Montana, was based on a print ad and reached 915,000 consumers with a passionate</p> | \$60,000.00 | TBD | | |

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| | | <p>medium. Additional print ads may focus on niche and/or emerging markets, specifically mountain bikers and OHV riders (as identified under "Emerging Markets").</p> | <p>for Neural Decision Making used neuroscience to gauge how people responded to physical and digital ads. In short, respondents spent more time reviewing the print ads; print ads yielded higher levels of recall; and print ads caused more activity in brain areas associated with value and desire, key markers of purchase interest.</p> <p>Furthermore, 2015 research conducted by Millward Brown Digital found that print achieved the highest levels of brand favorability and purchase intent of any measured media.</p> <p>Information collected from ITRR and Destination Analytics also support this method.</p> | | <p>interest in Western American History and Heritage Travel - a perfect fit for two regions that include two major battlefields (Little Bighorn & Big Hole). The results of 2.95% CTR on Facebook posts and 2.16% CRT on native article supports this integrated method.</p> | | | |
| Consumer | Online/Digital Advertising | <p>Online advertising will be used to promote Visit SEMT to all targeted markets identified in the FY20 Marketing Plan during all three phases of the travel decision process. The strategy includes native ads, some banner ads and re-targeting, plus digital paid content. Online advertising will be both regional and national and will direct traffic directly to the Visit Southeast Montana website and, in some cases, to the SEMT Facebook page.</p> <p>Additionally, a portion of the budget may be dedicated to the direct flight markets, which will bring travelers directly into Southeast Montana. This is an ideal opportunity to collaborate with Visit Billings CVB.</p> <p>The digital advertising</p> | <p>Advertising has always been about location, location, location. And digital advertising has the flexibility to be at the right location at the right time. A recent study by Deloitte found that Americans collectively check their smartphones nearly 8 BILLION times per day -- that provides ample opportunity for Visit Southeast Montana to be in front of the identified target throughout the entire travel-decision process, from inspiration on forward.</p> <p>According to <i>Digital Advertising</i>, 70% of website visitors who are re-targeted with ads are likely to visit your site. And, according to 2016 report from <i>MarkMonitor</i>, 68% of global consumers book their travel online.</p> <p>We use this research to very specifically target our advertising on websites where users are in the process of planning a vacation, or may be planning a vacation. In late FY19, we added video to</p> | <p>Success will be measured by comparing to FY19 metrics, for year-over-year trend improvements. Additionally, we will measure Visit SEMT's web analytics via Google Analytics . Each online advertisement can be tracked and its success or failure will be determined in this fashion.</p> | <p>Online advertising is by far the best way to reach -- and track result of -- a targeted audience. The analytics we receive from our website give us valuable information as to the engagement the target market has with each ad and whether it leads them to spend significant time on our website learning about SEMT.</p> | \$123,000.00 | TBD | |

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| | | strategy likely includes TripAdvisor and Sojern, plus other Joint Venture opportunities that leverage funds. | Southeast Montana's integrated digital approach with strong results (to be reported in FY19 Completion Report). | | | | | |
| Consumer | Travel/Trade Shows | <p>Consumer shows, such as the Northwest Sportshow in Minneapolis, primarily target directly to the leisure traveler, allowing us to provide specific guidance and printed information in a one-on-one arena, often to people who are already planning trips to Yellowstone or Glacier and are in the Orientation and Inspiration phases of the travel decision process. This also aligns with the Road Tripper market and Outdoor Recreation pillar. The same could be true for shows in Denver and other direct-flight markets and/or regional shows like those based in Western Montana.</p> <p>Travel tradeshows are appointment-based shows and target international tour operators. The Great American West Roundup International Conference is only for tour operators/receptives who focus on the five-state region (MT, SD, ND, WY and ID) and offers an excellent opportunity to develop relationships with these quality operators. The International Powwow, attending in conjunction with MOTBD, is a bigger conference, yet exposes the region to an even broader</p> | <p>Based on data from Montana FWP, we know that non-resident hunters arrive in Montana (FWP Regions 5 & 7 specifically) from Minnesota, Washington and California. We can also use Arrivalist data (provided by MOTBD) to monitor top arrival states and DMAs. We will then determine domestic tradeshow(s) according to top markets and activities.</p> <p>Additionally, we are taking information about outdoor adventures directly to the high potential visitor (HPV) as identified by the Destination Analysts, Inc. study.</p> <p>As mentioned in our narrative, one of the aspects of our target market is that they are already considering a trip, or a return trip, to Montana. We travel to these shows to provide orientation and facilitation to those already somewhat familiar with the region.</p> <p>Regarding international shows/meetings, according to ITRR's 2017 Nonresident Visitation, Expenditures & Economic Impacts study, Oversees Visitors averaged</p> | <p>As per conversations during the MOTBD monthly calls, shows are notoriously difficult to measure; however, we strongly believe that being present contributes to awareness and brand lift for both travel trade shows and leisure travel shows.</p> <p>Additionally, we can measure success by tracking attendance and/or meeting numbers (in the appointment-style shows such as Great American West Roundup), noting the time spent interacting one-on-one with the tour operator, including follow-up communication.</p> | <p>These shows allow us to build relationships and speak face-to-face both with the potential traveling public and tour operators who bring a number of international travelers to our state each year. At these venues we can ask the operator specific questions about their clients' needs or ask the traveler what interests them (outdoor adventure, history, Native American culture, dino trails, dining/night life, etc.) and tailor our responses to specifically and accurately promote what Southeast Montana offers that coincides with their wants and needs. The tour operators are always asking, "What is</p> | \$8,600.00 | TBD | |

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| | | <p>audience, including potential international media. For both international conferences, building relationships over time and keeping Southeast Montana's opportunities in front of these operators is an on-going process. Over the past year, we have noticed more interest in routing from YNP to TRNP in North Dakota - with a perfect transition through the SEMT region. Additionally, conversations in May of 2019 about astrotourism and International Dark-Skies Association sparked great interest.</p> | <p>\$1,015 per trip with an average stay of 5.82 days, compared to \$635 total per trip for an average of 5 days for Domestic Visitors. Therefore, aligning with the Montana Travel Trade Office's focus on UK, Germany and Australia makes sense and has the potential for a strong ROI.</p> | | <p>new?" and by being present, we can answer and increase interest during personal dialogue. It is important to note that these international shows/meetings are relationship-building opportunities -- it is not a one-and-done.</p> | | | |
| | | <p>Stunning photography and video is a key element to the inspirational piece of the marketing funnel. In FY18-19 we will dedicated significant funds to boost the Visit Southeast Montana photo library, seeking to own photos for multiple uses (i.e. advertising, travel guide, travel show booth, social media, etc.) rather than purchase for one-time uses. That process continues each year..</p> <p>Inspring still and video images are integrated into every aspect of Visit Southeast Montana's comprehensive marketing plan. For example, an image may be placed in print advertising, digital advertising, the travel guide, the website and</p> | <p>Fresh, inspirational imagery is crucial to strong marketing initiatives and provide the Inspiration piece of the funnel. Research conducted by Visit SEMT staff at tradeshow events, in visitor information centers and other places has shown that there is a need for fresh, quality awe-inspiring photots to promote the region.</p> <p>Studies show that while people only remember 10% of things they hear and 20% of what they have read, around 80% of people remember things they see or do. And, <i>Simply Measured</i> found that</p> | <p>We will measure this method on a cost per basis, with goal of purchasing quality images at or less than \$500 (on average) while maximizing the budget. We can also measure video (completed and distributed via paid promotions) via digital analytics.</p> <p>Advertising is a multi-faceted beast and a successful advertsing campaign works, in part, because of</p> | <p>In FY18-19, we greatly expanded the Visit Southeast Montana image library. Then, in FY19 the SEMT Board crafted and approved a Photo Library Usage Policy, and in March 2019 we launched a promotional video based on the #OutHereMT campaign.</p> <p>In marketing and</p> | | <p>TBD</p> | |

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| Consumer | Photo/Video Library | <p>in eblasts and blogs. The same images may be used during one-on-one meetings to inspire international operators to work a location into a tour itinerary or the video will be used across social media platforms.</p> <p>Additionally, we will incorporate photo rights into social influencers agreements when and where possible, thus stretching those dollars. We will continue to shoot video and still images, based on the marketing 'wants and needs' list. For example, we will actively seek images/video to promote to the emerging astrotourism market.</p> | <p>there was not only a 46% increase in content engagement for brands but an additional 65% increase in photo and video engagement.</p> <p>For example, one of our new tradeshow booth "skins" shows an image of a man and dog, pheasant hunting. Since this change, we have received far, far more questions about upland bird hunting at that show (Northwest Sportshow in Minneapolis) than in the previous year. While this is "unofficial" research, the value and message of imagery cannot be disregarded.</p> | <p>strong and message-integrated images/video. While most photographs are simply part of brand lift and new creative, some images, particularly those shared via social media, can be measure by analytics as can those on <i>southeastmontana.com</i>. However, without stellar images, Visit Southeast Montana's message would be only words and thus, would struggle to inspire.</p> | <p>advertising, images are king, with video is rapidly becoming the king of kings. And, Visit Southeast Montana must continue to "feed the beast" with new, fresh images and video, while still maximizing the budget to continue building a robust and diverse photo library.</p> | \$7,500.00 | | |
| Consumer | Website/Internet Development/Updates | <p>In FY18, we opted to move the Visit Southeast Montana website away from the MOTBD website umbrella to allow for more control and creativity. While still maintaining the Montana brand, the new SEMT website aligns with the Visit Southeast Montana brand and creative. In FY19 Visit Southeast Montana expanded and enhanced the website, including newly-developed itineraries, blog and video.</p> <p>In March 2019, the blog was noted as #5 in page visits, so the infant strategy has demonstrated initial</p> | <p>Research has shown that the most commonly used source for travel planning is online research using DMO websites and other online sources.</p> <p>According to TrekkSoft.com's <i>Travel Trend Report 2018</i>, 82% of tour and activity bookings processed by TrekkSoft take place on a company's website or mobile app, with 64% being researched and booked by women (with 64% being age 34 or younger). Additionally, AARP's <i>2017 Travel Trends Report</i>, notes that 41% of</p> | <p>Success will be measured based on increases in key web analytics.</p> | <p>A vibrant, fresh website is simple crucial in today's environment. To be without is suspect and, frankly, likely considered "not real."</p> | \$16,000.00 | TBD | |

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| | | <p>success.</p> <p>A website is amazingly dynamic and this strategy includes continuous optimization, plus SEO and SEM to assist with organic searches and placement.</p> | <p>Boomers will book at the airline/hotel/car website.</p> | | | | | |
| Consumer | Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast | <p>Consumer-facing E-newsletters will be sent out frequently (typically monthly or twice-monthly, depending on season) to inform those in our consumer database of interesting tourist attractions in SEMT, as well as upcoming events. This keeps blog content fresh and relevant. This strategy will be used in conjunction with social media, blog, news releases and hallmark event promotion.</p> | <p>Research shows that online research is the number one way visitors plan future vacations. Our E-Blasts use this media to inspire and guide potential visitors to relevant areas of our website where they can be inspired to visit Southeast Montana and research information for planning their trip.</p> <p>It has been proven that email marketing is the king of the marketing kingdom with a 4,400% ROI and \$4 4 for every \$1 spent, as noted on CampaignMonitor.com.</p> | <p>Success will be measured by CTR with an FY20 goal of 17%. Additionally, the e-blasts drive traffic to the blog on <i>southeastmontana.com</i> so those analytics may also be used to determine success.</p> <p>The email campaign also provides brand lift in the consumer world.</p> | <p>Email is a convenient medium to help inform our database of upcoming events which are time sensitive. Additionally, we will incorporate newly-acquired photos into this method and tie it to social media campaigns.</p> <p>Additionally, while we do grow the database organically, in the past Visit Southeast Montana has gain leads (email addresses) via print advertising purchases (i.e. Yellowstone Journal). Using this method, we essentially re-target those planning a trip to YNP with inspiration and information about the Southeast Montana region.</p> | \$2,100.00 | TBD | |
| | | | Print remains a viable and | | | | | |

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| Consumer | Printed Material | <p>This line item provides for funds to produce targeted print pieces promoting more specific aspects of Visit Southeast Montana (as noted on page 13 of the attached FY19 Marketing Plan). These print pieces may include, but are not limited to, rodeo calendars of events for cowboy-related events, hunting and fishing information and targeted itineraries that include SEMT but encompass a broader region (i.e. travel to/from YNP or travel between National Parks and Monuments).</p> <p>Additionally, these items could include cooperative efforts with intra- and inter-region organizations. The budget also shipping and costs for the FY20 travel guide.</p> | <p>important piece of tourism marketing, most especially the Orientation and Facilitation part of the funnel. Consider that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures, maps and travel guides are the #1 in-market influence. (Bentley University) • 65% of tourists used brochure display racks during travel. (BrochureManagement) • 65% of tourists plan to purchase tickets and merchandises after picking up a brochure. (Bentley University) <p>Additionally, our own research conducted at travel trade shows and other events has shown that small, targeted pieces grab attention. For example, we gave away ~ 1,500 thematic maps over 2 days at the Northwest Sportshow in Minneapolis -- potential visitors were very interested in the region-specific scenic map. By producing smaller pieces with more specific information that meets the needs or wants of the reader, they will be more inspired to take action.</p> | <p>Success will be measured based on reports from staff attending events where the pieces are handed out, along with quantities distributed and/or attendance.</p> <p>Optionally, if we use a landing site URL on the specific piece, we will track those web analytics to determine whether the printed product is driving traffic to the SEMT website.</p> | <p>Supplementary printed materials will compliment and work in conjunction with the expanding Visit Southeast Montana website. Or, we may opt to create and print niche pubs for ultra-targeted audiences (i.e. emerging market of astrotourism).</p> | \$5,000.00 | TBD | |
| Consumer | Ad Agency Services | <p>Visit Southeast Montana communicates desires and outcomes to the Agency of Record; they meet annual to strategize the media plan with the Visit Southeast Montana marketing manager bringing in-depth regional knowledge to the table, coupled with marketing skills, which are complimented by the Agency's team of experts.</p> <p>For example, the Agency likely has more buying power than an individual organization in relation to media buys.</p> | <p>ROI is a key component in measurement. The return on investment for an Agency is revealed by how much they save in media buying while simultaneously creating and implementing a strong and effective marketing plan.</p> | <p>We will measure success based on the the media plan savings equaling or exceeding Agency fees. For example, if the Agency is paid \$60,000 for creative and media services, and Visit Southeast Montana's media buy savings equals or exceeds \$60,000 then the method is successful.</p> | <p>The Agency of Record performs creative and professional marketing duties in tandem with, and as directed by, the Visit Southeast Montana marketing manager. Their professional expertise is intended to operate in full collaboration, functioning as one team to promote the destination.</p> | \$60,000.00 | | |
| | | This is simply a placeholder | This is simply a placeholder - to be | This is simply a placeholder - to be | In today's marketing world, a multi-channel approach | | | |

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| Consumer | Multi-Media Marketing | - to be provided if/when the method is implemented. | provided if/when the method is implemented. | provided if/when the method is implemented. | frequently produces strong results. This is a placeholder for a multi-media opportunity. | \$100.00 | TBD | | |
| Marketing Support | Research | This line is simply a placeholder for potential research project(s), particularly one in conjunction with a CVB or another region. | Research always makes a marketing segment more valuable. | To be determine if/when a research project is embarked upon. | This is simply a placeholder. Rationale will be provided if the segment is employed. | \$100.00 | TBD | | |
| Marketing Support | Outreach | We will use this segment to offer support to Visit Southeast Montana's Tourism Partners and build internal (regional) awareness. This fits the "...educating our residents about the economic benefits of tourism" segment of Visit Southeast Montana's mission statement. Plus, it just makes sense. For example, in FY18 we offered (2) workshops specializing in Digital Marketing Strategies; in FY19 Visit Southeast Montana again sponsored marketing workshops and attendance increased. | By offering our expertise and marketing support to Visit SEMT's Tourism Partners, we strengthen the entire region and industry. This collaboration logically flows directly into the Visitor Facilitation piece of the funnel. | We will track attendance at workshops, presentations and meetings along with post-workshop surveys to determine success. | Please see the narrative on page 10 of the attached FY19 Marketing Plan for details. | \$3,000.00 | TBD | | |
| Marketing Support | Marketing Plan Development | The Visit Southeast Montana Board will gather to evaluate MOTBD's reports and determine how it corresponds with the organization, marketing plan and future strategies. This segment also includes a placeholder for a Crisis Communication Plan. | According to managementhelp.org a strategic plan should be reviewed at least every three years. It has been at least that long since Visit Southeast Montana reviewed its plan and post-Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative provides the ideal opportunity. | This method will be successful if a majority of the Board attends the strategic planning session | After research and reports of the Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative are complete, Visit Southeast Montana will take the time to revisit the organization's strategy as it correlates to the new information and sustainable practices | \$4,100.00 | TBD | | |

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| | | | | | recommended. | | | |
| Marketing Support | Administration | In our FY20 Marketing Plan Budget, Visit Southeast Montana is budgeting the full 20% allowable for Administrative Expenses. Our strategy in doing so is to take a conservative stance in terms of how much of the Administrative Budget will ultimately be used. By budgeting for the full 20%, we don't run the risk of going over budget for allowable Administrative expenses. | This is recommended and allowable by TAC Rules & Regulations. | Success for this method is difficult to measure. As long as the administrative side of SEMT continues to run smoothly, and the funds are used in a responsible matter, we will continue the method to be a success. | Administrative expenses, including mileage reimbursements for travel to stakeholders and events across this vast region, are necessary for the fulfillment of Visit Southeast Montana's mission. | \$113,400.00 | TBD | |
| Marketing Support | Marketing/Publicity Personnel | Visit Southeast Montana will employ a full-time Marketing Manager and a part-time Social Media/PR Manager in FY19. The Marketing Manager is responsible for implementation of marketing and public relations projects as assigned. A full job description is attached. The Social Media/PR Manager assists the Marketing Manager and will develop, manage and monitor publicity and communications projects and programs. A complete job description is attached. | All of our research has shown that it is necessary to market a region to travelers in order to encourage them to visit and to see sights and attractions which might not otherwise be known to them. Marketing staff is necessary in order to facilitate the many projects and tasks needed in order to accomplish this, in addition to managing the Agency of Record. | Success will be measured dependent on annual marketing goals set by the SEMT Board of Directors. Marketing Personnel are also evaluated annually by John Brewer, CEO of Visit Southeast Montana. | These positions are a very efficient and cost effective means to handle our marketing. The value of the local knowledge of the region, relationships with stakeholders and familiarity with events cannot be overstated. | \$80,000.00 | TBD | SEMTMarketingManager.pdf |
| Marketing | TAC/Governor's Conference | Staff from Montana's tourism regions are required to attend the Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Tourism Advisory | A value network allows individuals to share information as well as know peers, thus saving time and money when working collaboratively. Operating in a silo is counter-productive. Attending TAC meetings and the Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism provides information peer | Success will be measured by attendance at TAC meetings and the | Funding is needed for car rentals, mileage, hotel reservations, food per diem, and other misc. | \$2,500.00 | TBD | |

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| Support | meetings | Council meetings. This line item sets aside funding to allow us to do so. | training and familiarization along with an opportunity to learn new marketing or management tools at a relatively low cost. Additionally, research indicates that attendance at the TAC meetings is required. | Montana Governor's Conference. | expenses during travel to TAC and Governor's Conference meetings. | | | |
| Marketing Support | Professional Development | This line item provides funds for Visit Southeast Montana staff to attend Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI), Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Conference on Travel & Tourism, or similar industry-specific training and/or leadership/management training. | According to www.go2hr.com, A recent survey indicates that 40% of employees who receive poor job training leave their positions within the first year. Figures vary, but it can cost as much as \$2,500, depending on the position, to replace a frontline employee. That is a hefty price to pay for not training staff. Training is a recruiting tool. Today's young workers want more than a paycheck. They are geared toward seeking employment that allows them to learn new skills. You are more likely to attract and keep good employees if you can offer development opportunities. | Success will be measured via a report from the Visit Southeast Montana staff member who attends the conference as to what they learned and how they will apply the knowledge to promoting the region. | Industry-specific conferences provide staff with the opportunity to network with fellow DMO employees and to learn about new trends, opportunities and technology in the destination marketing industry. It's important that staff remain up to date on what is happening amongst other DMOs from states throughout the nation. | \$5,000.00 | TBD | |
| Marketing | Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call | This method covers expenses to field inquires (calls, email) from potential visitors and provide them with requested printed material via mail. Expenses include agency fees, shipping, postage and storage. | According to nonstopsigns.com, travelers do gather information while "on the ground" in their travel destination. Consider that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures, maps and travel guides are the #1 | Success will be measured based on the number of calls and/or email inquiries fielded and material sent. | Some ads and printed material, plus the website, feature a toll-free number encouraging travelers with questions to call and/or request a travel guide. It's important we continue to provide this service to potential visitors. We add the collected email addresses to the Consumer e- | | TBD | |

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| Support | Center | <p>This method also covers the cost to distribute the Visit Southeast Montana travel guides to locations across Montana, Wyoming and South Dakota, primarily to locations frequented by travelers.</p> | <p>in-market influence. (Bentley University)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65% of tourists used brochure display racks during travel. (BrochureManagement) | <p>Additionally, we will track travel guide quantities and rack locations.</p> | <p>blast database, continuing to grow that communication line.</p> <p>Additionally, we distribute travel guides to locations throughout Montana, Wyoming and South Dakota to keep that inspirational and guiding piece at the forefront of travelers' minds.</p> | \$38,400.00 | | | |
| Marketing Support | VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage | <p>This method may fund grants to Visit Visit Information Centers to help them maintain operations and/or pay for improvements (within the state rules and regulations including signage) so they can better meet the needs of Visit SEMT visitors. As the eastern gateway of the state, it is vital that the VICs receive visitors, at least during warm season.</p> | <p>Research conducted by the Montana Office of Tourism has shown that VICs are important and that it is vital to provide VICs and their staff with the tools and knowledge they need to provide a good experience to the visitor. Without support from Visit SEMT, these VICs would have drastically reduced staffing/open hours.</p> | <p>Success will be measured based on feedback from the VICs, which is gathered from first-hand experiences and signup information sheets from visitor interaction, that will be submitted in report format and will included total numbers of seasonal visitors.</p> | <p>A visitor's experience once they arrive in the region is vital in encouraging them to make a return trip. VIC's are the first place visitors go with problems or questions, and it is important to insure that they have the resources to maintain regular hours and to properly staff their visitor centers.</p> <p>Visit Southeast Montana supports VICs in Hardin (Big Horn Co); Broadus (Powder River Co) and Wibaux (Wibaux County).</p> | \$15,000.00 | TBD | | |
| | | | | | <p>We have found Joint Ventures with the MOTBD to be extremely effective in fulfilling our mission and marketing Visit</p> | | | | |

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| Marketing Support | Joint Ventures | <p>Visit Southeast Montana considers the Joint Ventures line item a vital budget segment because it is basically a "2 for the price of 1" opportunity, plus Joint Ventures allow us the look both within and beyond the region to find similarities (ie: Little Bighorn and Big Hole Battlefields) and market thematically. These funds are specifically designated for use in joint marketing projects with lodging tax entities, including CVBs, Regions, the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development or related entities like Montana State Parks.</p> | <p>Statistically and mathematically, by participating in Joint Ventures, Visit Southeast Montana will double its investment -- leveraged or matched funds go farther, so this \$5,000 budget line becomes \$10,000 or more.</p> | <p>Plans to measure success for projects utilizing Joint Venture funds will be determined, depending on the details of each project.</p> | <p>Southeast Montana to the largest number of targeted potential visitors. We feel that by also participating in Joint Ventures with CVBs and Regions, we can further expand the success we've seen working with MOTBD. Collaboration simply makes sense. Joint Ventures also foster the partnering relationship that remains vital across the state.</p> <p>The 14-year-old Montana Dinosaur Trail is an excellent example of an incredibly successful Joint Venture Project with 334,544 individuals visiting rural communities across northern and eastern Montana. The combined effort of many entities made this possible.</p> | \$5,000.00 | tBD | |
| | | <p>As previously stated, collaboration makes sense. In the past Visit Southeast Montana has offered Cooperative Marketing Grants to non-profit tourism</p> | | | <p>Most of the applicants for Cooperative Marketing funds are from small communities attempting to increase tourism to their town. Often times they would be unable to move forward</p> | | | |

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| Marketing Support | Cooperative Marketing | <p>related businesses throughout the region. Successful applicants must demonstrate that the project (for which funds are being requested) will benefit Visit Southeast Montana by increasing tourism to the region. All TAC regulations must be met in order for funding to be given and the committee favors new projects and events over others.</p> <p>This segment includes \$10,000 of intentional rollover from FY19 for projects that will not be complete until after July 1, 2019 (FY20).</p> | <p>Each organization which receives Cooperative Marketing Funds must provide research showing how the funds provided helped increase tourism to Visit Southeast Montana. Over the past several years, the research we've received has clearly shown that by providing funding for projects, we are indeed leveraging our tourism dollars in the most effective way possible</p> | <p>Plans to measure success for projects utilizing Cooperative Marketing funds will be made depending on the details of the project, as approved by the Visit Southeast Montana grants committee. Typical measurements included increased attendance at events, increased paid admission to a facility or creation or improvement of a tourism entity.</p> | <p>with their project without the matching grant funds we supply. By offering Cooperative Marketing funds, we are helping to improve Southeast Montana's tourism infrastructure and promotion of small events and communities in a way we could not if we were to undertake the projects alone. In addition, Cooperative Marketing reinforces strong partnerships within the region and that helps tourism overall.</p> | \$20,000.00 | TBD | |
| Marketing Support | Crisis Management | <p>This is a placeholder. To be provided if method is implemented.</p> | <p>To be provided if method is implemented.</p> | <p>A fully-developed Crisis Communication Plan is the desired outcome.</p> | <p>If time and budget allow, Visit Southeast Montana will take the time to revisit the organization's strategy as it correlates to Crisis Communications.</p> | \$100.00 | TBD | |
| Publicity | Press Promotions/Media Outreach | <p>Public relations, earned media and media tracking are all strategies that allow Visit Southeast Montana to stretch the marketing dollar. Hosting media events for new tourism products or collaborating to bring media to a major or new event will leverage even</p> | <p><i>Marketshare</i> notes that word-of-mouth has been shown to improve marketing effectiveness by up to 54%. And, again, Nielsen study shows that 92% of consumers believe suggestions from friends and family more than other advertising.</p> | <p>We will measure success by the quantity and quality of articles, blogs, content, images and video produced directly from our PR and media efforts.</p> | <p>This strategy includes cooperatively contracting a media tracking and database service with Visit Billings. This massive database allows us to mine for writers, bloggers, influencers and the like to cover very specific topics. We'll once again use</p> | \$9,000.00 | tbd | |

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| | | more dollars into trackable product. This strategy compliments the Fam strategy. | | | the history buff example, noting that different writers may have a similar interest but a variety of outlets. | | | |
| Publicity | Social Media | Funds in this segment support efforts in the social media realm including social media influencers, event promotions or "boosts" and other ways to enhance organic social media content throughout the region. This strategy also includes paid social media to specific target markets (such as the FY19 Dallas/Fort Worth paid social campaign that produced a CTR of .79%) and travel for staff to create social media content. | <p>Research also shows that social media, including social media influencers, supports brand lift, places opportunities in front of followers and inspires "followers" to act. Nearly 70% of people would rather learn about products through good content. And 68% of consumers spend time reading blog content and other content from a brand that they find interesting.</p> <p>Additionally, according to the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research, 77% of millennials make a purchase both online and in-store after viewing something on Facebook. <i>Fluent</i> noted that the top three social media for Millennials and non-Millennials (age 35+) are Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.</p> | Social media analytics will provide a solid measure of success as will increased attendance at promoted events or offerings. Plus, quality social media content continually provides a strong brand boost. | Social media continues to gain in popularity and markets. While the majority of content will be created and/or gathered in-house, we will sometimes contract with social influencers to supplement and gain access to different audiences. Plus, social media is an ever-changing, ever-growing platform that allows for creativity and experimentation, often a "soft" forerunner of trends. | \$8,000.00 | TBD | |
| | | This method sets aside funds for familiarization tours through Southeast Montana for tour operators, journalists, bloggers, free-lance writers, video producers, photographers and other content creators. It also includes promotional giveaways for welcome packets given to specific individuals or groups visiting the region plus includes a placeholder for film recruitment. | <p>Statistics have shown that international visitation to the United States and Montana in particular is increasing. Fam tours allow tour operator to personally experience the region, our "product" in a more intimate and influential situation.</p> <p>Research also shows that earned media, an article or</p> | | Fam tours are an important method of educating potential tour operators to bring groups into SEMT. Operators rarely are willing to add an area to their product line unless they have | | | |

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| Publicity | Fam Trips | <p>These fam tours are often performed as a co-op with MOTBD or with other tourism entities including CVBs.</p> <p>The value of WOM - Word of Mouth - marketing cannot be fully understood (although some methods do try to monetize each "produced piece"). It is traditional and long-trusted. We will employ significantly more effort into WOM in the future.</p> <p>In FY20, Visit Billings will host the Travel Blog Exchange (TBEX) Conference in September. Approximately 400-450 bloggers, social media influencers and content creators from across North American will be in Billings, in the Southeast Montana region. Plans are already well underway for Visit Southeast Montana to collaborate with Visit Billings by hosting (3) pre-fam trips into the region and (2) post-fams via application-based awardees. This budget provides support for these fams, which will yield results for months and years post-conference.</p> | <p>video produced by a journalist, retains stronger media value than paid advertising. A Nielsen study shows that 92% of consumers believe suggestions from friends and family over advertising. WOM - Word of Mouth - is a crucial component of a comprehensive campaign.</p> <p>Additionally, Visit Southeast Montana will maximize TBEX and other Fam trips because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have a 434% higher chance of being ranked highly on search engines if you feature a blog as part of your website (Tech Client). Businesses using blogs as part of their content marketing mix get 67% more leads than those who don't (Hubspot). Bloggng drives audience to the website. Research shows that 75% of users don't scroll beyond the first page of search results. 52% of respondents on a recent content marketing survey agreed that blogging is their most critical content marketing tactic. Blogging was followed by email newsletters (40%), social media content (40%), then ebooks, in-person events, and webinars. | <p>Success will be measured based on earned media (articles, videos, blogs and the like) written by hosted journalists, photographers and other content creators.</p> | <p>experienced it personally. Competition with other states often means that regions such as ours must compete to bring operators to Visit Southeast Montana.</p> <p>Fam tours remain an important PR tool in that journalists can be provided with unique experiences. These experiences often result in articles being written by journalists in various publications which can be worth tens of thousands of dollars, if not more, in media impressions and credibility. Photographers and video producers are included in this group -- this inspirational component will be amplified.</p> | \$10,000.00 | TBD | | |
| | | | | | | \$601,000.00 | | | |

Marketing Method Evaluation Attachments

Attachment 2

Attachment 3

Attachment 4

Attachment 5

Attachment 6

Attachment 7

Attachment 8

Attachment 9

Attachment 10

Marketing Method Budget

| Marketing Segment | Marketing Method | Bed tax funded budget | Non bed tax funded budget (optional) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Consumer | Print Advertising | \$60,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Consumer | Online/Digital Advertising | \$123,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Consumer | Photo/Video Library | \$7,500.00 | \$0.00 |
| Consumer | Travel/Trade Shows | \$8,600.00 | \$0.00 |
| Consumer | Website/Internet Development/Updates | \$16,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Consumer | Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast | \$2,100.00 | \$0.00 |
| Consumer | Printed Material | \$5,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Consumer | Billboards/Out-of-Home | \$100.00 | \$0.00 |
| Consumer | Multi-Media Marketing | \$100.00 | \$0.00 |
| Consumer | Travel Guide | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Consumer | Ad Agency Services | \$60,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| | | \$282,400.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | Outreach | \$3,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | Opportunity Marketing | \$5,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | Administration | \$113,400.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage | \$15,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | Marketing/Publicity Personnel | \$80,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | Joint Ventures | \$5,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | Cooperative Marketing | \$20,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | TAC/Governor's Conference meetings | \$2,500.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | Professional Development | \$5,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center | \$38,400.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | Marketing Plan Development | \$4,100.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | Research | \$100.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | Crisis Management | \$100.00 | \$0.00 |
| | | \$291,600.00 | \$0.00 |
| Publicity | Press Promotions/Media Outreach | \$9,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| Publicity | Social Media | \$8,000.00 | \$0.00 |

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| Publicity | Fam Trips | \$10,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| | | \$27,000.00 | \$0.00 |
| | | \$601,000.00 | \$0.00 |

Miscellaneous Attachments

| Description | File Name | File Size |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------|
| 2016 Montana Brand Research | Montana Brand Exploration Research - Final Report of Findings V2 - Novme... (004).pdf | 3.0 MB |
| SEMT Marketing Plan Funnel | SEMT Marketing Plan Funnel - FY19.pdf | 12 KB |

Reg/CVB Required Documents

| Description | File Name | File Size |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| FY20 Required Documents | FY20_SEMT_Application_Docs.pdf | 721 KB |

