

2.5. Support local and Montana products and businesses to build economically vibrant towns

This Strategic Action strengthens Montana's tourism product development and marketing efforts, and builds respect for the tourism industry in Montana.

Recommended Tactics

MTOT, TAC

- » Ensure that visitor information identifies those businesses and organizations that offer local and Montana products.
- » Collaborate with programs and organizations that offer and promote Montana made and grown products to leverage those efforts.
- » Link to the Made In Montana website (www.madeinmontanausa.com) in visitor information to help visitors find retailers that carry Montana products and to encourage purchase of Montana products before, during, and after visiting the state.
- » Continue to publicize the role of tourism in expanding the market for Montana made and grown products.

Regions, CVBs, Communities, Tribes

- » Ensure that visitor information identifies those businesses and organizations that offer local and Montana products.
- » At any special events, maximize the availability of products and services that are made or grown locally or in Montana (see Strategic Action 2.7.).
- » Incorporate local producers, craftsmen, artists, and performers into the tourism offerings of the community/region.
- » Link to the Made In Montana website (www.madeinmontanausa.com) in visitor information to help visitors find retailers that carry Montana products and to encourage purchase of Montana products before, during, and after visiting the state.
- » Collaborate with programs and organizations that offer and promote Montana made and grown products to leverage those efforts.
- » Continue to publicize the role of tourism in expanding the market for Montana made and grown products.

Businesses & Organizations

- » Use and sell more local and Montana products.
- » Publicize the use or sale of local and Montana products. Inform MTOT and the Region/CVB so that the information can be included on official tourism websites.

Indicators of Success

- » Local and Montana products sold in more restaurants and shops.
- » Visitors can easily locate restaurants and shops that offer Montana and local products in official tourism information.
- » Local producers, craftsmen, artists, and performers are featured in visitor information, tourism offerings, and special events.
- » Local and Montana producers and growers recognize the role of tourism in expanding their market.

Background & Rationale

Agriculture continues to be the largest sector in the Montana economy and is the economic mainstay for many of the smaller towns in the state. Integrating agricultural production and tourism offers benefits for both sectors. The partnership with agriculture builds support and respect for tourism in the community and contributes to a more holistic and cooperative approach to economic development in communities.

Food is not just a commodity for visitors; it is part of the visitor experience. Local food appeals to the visitor's desire for authenticity and enhances the visitor experience by connecting consumers to the region and its culture and heritage. It also appeals to the recent "slow food" and "locavore" movements.

Greater use of local and Montana products by tourism-related businesses creates a larger market for those products. Research on "slow travel" and on "soft growth" identifies benefits including: keeping a larger share of each tourism dollar in the community and distributing the benefits of tourism more broadly within the community.

Similarly, promoting and selling products produced locally or in Montana benefits both the producers and the tourism industry. It offers another element of authenticity for the visitor while increasing the local economic benefits of tourism for the arts and artists, artisan producers and craftsmen, small manufacturing, and the local economy.

Resources

The Made in Montana website – www.madeinmontanausa.com – offers retail and wholesale sellers of Montana products. The Montana Departments of Commerce and Agriculture, together with the Montana Arts Council, sponsor an annual Made in Montana Marketplace (<http://www.madeinmontanausa.com/tradeshows.asp>) that can be used to help source "Made in Montana", "Grown in Montana", and "Native Made in Montana" products. Additional programs of the Montana Department of Agriculture can be leveraged to promote more local sourcing by the tourism industry. For example, collaboration with the Farm-to-Table program and Restaurant Rewards program could help incentivize more local and Montana sourcing by businesses.