



## Grant Details

### 95522 - FY21 Region/CVB Marketing Plan

101294 - FY21 Central Montana Marketing Plan and Budget

DOC Office of Tourism

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## 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?*

Our FY21 Central Montana marketing plan will guide our marketing strategy for the next 12 months.

The Central Montana board of directors has factored in the most current information about COVID-19 corona virus and has adjusted the annual budget downward to 58% of the prior year's budget.

By using the methods outlined in this plan we will continue our efforts to position Central Montana as a vacation destination. We will create awareness of Central Montana and will also reach prior visitors to keep our region top-of-mind for future visits. Our ultimate goal is to bring visitors to Central Montana and have them spend time and dollars in the region.

This plan has been developed based on Central Montana's past successes in promoting visitation to the region and also by closely aligning our strategies with those executed by the Montana Office of Tourism Business Development. Central Montana's marketing decisions are based on research available from Arrivalist, VisaVue, Destination Analysts, the Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research, and input from our engaged board of directors. Our FY21 plan will continue many of our successful projects completed in prior years and it will also incorporate new projects.

Thirteen Montana counties comprise the Central Montana tourism region. Our unique region offers a wide variety of landscapes, attractions, events and activities which can appeal to Central Montana's potential visitor. From mountainous wilderness areas to major rivers and grassy plains, we have landscapes that appeal to many. We fit well with the Montana brand offering:

- More spectacular, unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48

- Central Montana has thousands of acres of public land (short grass prairie, river breaks, mountains, lakes and forests), in addition to thousands of acres of farm and ranch land
- Vibrant and charming small towns that serve as gateways to natural wonders
  - Central Montana is comprised primarily of small charming towns located in close proximity to our unspoiled nature
- Breathtaking experiences by day, relaxing hospitality at night.
  - Central Montana's breathtaking experiences are many – from viewing spectacular art to seeing the locations where those scenes originated. Our hospitality is as varied as sleeping in a beautifully restored historic hotel or traveling with a river guide pitching a tent along a wild and scenic river. Experiences are varied with local musicians playing in a local brewery to a craft cocktail named for the nearby geography.

The Central Montana board defines their identity as follows:

*Central Montana offers visitors a remarkable experience of Montana's history, culture, clear skies and clean water, wildlife, outdoor recreation and adventure. From wide-open spaces to mountain ranges and the Missouri River and its tributaries, culturally rich towns and cities in Central Montana brush with the old west and ancient peoples. Visitors can see the landscapes and absorb the sense of place that inspired renowned western artist Charlie Russell, and walk in the footsteps of Lewis & Clark, all within reach of comfort and hospitality.*

## **Strengths and Challenges of the Central Montana Tourism Region**

### **The strengths that distinguish Central Montana include -**

- Historical and cultural sites and interpretation - home of numerous Lewis & Clark and Native American attractions and memorials, Charlie Russell, old forts and fur trade history, and National Park Service's Bear Paw Battlefield
- Kings Hill Scenic Byway and Missouri Breaks Backcountry Byway
- Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument and Wild & Scenic Missouri River
- Varied outdoor adventure and recreation with many activities offering a feeling of open spaces, yet they are still close to our communities' amenities.
- Excellent variety of fish and wildlife
- Multiple access points to the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex
- Viewable and accessible waterfalls in our mountain ranges and in Great Falls
- The iconic and sacred Sweetgrass Hills
- The Rocky Mountain Front – East slope of the Rockies
- Magnitude of birding opportunities detailed in a Central Montana birding brochure
- Spectacular geology and paleontology with 6 sites on the Montana Dinosaur Trail
- Grand and diverse scenery that typifies the "Big Sky"
- Authentic Montana lifestyle - farms and ranches, guest ranches, Native American cultures, main-street Montana, friendly people
- Unique and fun organized trails - Pie a la Road, Brewery Trail and a Barn Quilt Trail
- Easily accessible open spaces for scenic touring and wildlife viewing
- Vast public recreation lands
- Our central location in the Glacier-to-Yellowstone National Parks corridor
- Close proximity to Canada with a 24-hour port of entry at Sweetgrass/Coutts
- Many of our tourism products are viewed as budget-friendly, both regionally and nationally
- A variety of public golf courses
- Craft breweries and a distillery using locally grown products
- Central location for statewide meetings and conventions
- Unique attractions such as Havre Beneath the Streets and the Charlie Russell Chew Choo
- Unique events such as Montana Bale Trail (What the Hay), Red Ants Pants Music Festival, Montana Chokecherry Festival, Whoop Up Days, numerous art shows & auctions during the commemoration of Charlie Russell's birthday in March
- Two Amtrak stops in the northern part of the region (Havre and Shelby)
- A large, central retail hub and international airport in Great Falls
- Our strong partnerships with chambers, Tourism BIDs and other promotional groups in the region

### **Challenges and critical issues facing the tourism region -**

- While our vast public recreation lands are a strength, our public land managers do not have marketing and promotion budgets
- A need to develop more year-round visitor attractions and more activities in the shoulder seasons to enhance our vacation offerings
- Attractions and private businesses need longer business hours and longer seasons to accommodate visitors
- Lack of restaurants, lodging, attractions and gas stations in our small communities
- Shallow employee pool for businesses
- The need to continually educate front line personnel, not just those employed in lodging facilities, but in gas stations, grocery stores, retail businesses and restaurants
- The lack of a winter destination resort and, in some years, the lack of winter
- The need to effectively promote in Canada to reach our closest large population center, despite a fluctuating exchange rate and passport requirements
- Transportation limitations such as no public bus service to some locations and the fluctuating cost of fuel
- Cost of airfare
- Small marketing budget combined with increasing media costs
- The need to continue to strengthen our relationships and communications with the Native American tribes on our reservations and also our recently federally recognized Little Shell tribe.

**Describe your destination.**

With severe cuts to our FY21 marketing budget due to COVID-19 corona virus, Central Montana will continue with the style of ads we have been using. Our placement mix will include both print and digital, with primary emphasis on digital. We have used an uncluttered design with a stunning image, a small amount of text and a strong call to action. Playing on our strengths, images are chosen to inspire the viewer and make them want to obtain more information to plan a trip to Central Montana.

Potential visitors who see our ads will need more information about the area depicted in the photo that inspired them – the location, how do you get there, what activities can be done there and what amenities are available. Some Central Montana ads will direct viewers to click to our website home page, some marketing will direct them to a specific niche landing page (several samples attached) and all will offer the opportunity to receive our print travel planner with detailed information about the region and to sign up for our e-newsletter. In all scenarios, potential visitors will be able to learn about our vacation opportunities.

To facilitate the travel decision, visitors need only read or click through to our information. Lodging, guides and outfitters, attraction information, dining, and scenic and historic routes are highlighted in our print travel planner and on our website. Our travel planner may be downloaded or viewed as a flip book. We also have niche brochures that can be mailed, obtained at local visitor centers, viewed on our website or printed from our website as a traveler is enroute. Some of these include a detailed Central Montana birding brochure, 10 Great Rides motorcycle routes with maps, Bicycle Trails, C. M. Russell Auto Tour, Kings Hill Scenic Byway brochure, Music Concerts, Pie a la Road pie trail and the partnership brochure for the Montana Dinosaur Trail. Once visitors are in Central Montana, we urge them to seek out local tips offered by staff and volunteers at visitor centers, attractions and local businesses.

To reach some of our niche markets we will continue our bird watching promotional efforts and also offer support to the Crown of the Continent initiative. We will continue promoting travel along the Montana Dinosaur Trail and our six locations along that trail. These niche markets have been promoted via joint ventures with Montana Office of Tourism Business Development and other tourism regions and CVBs. We will continue to expand niche market information on our website and in our print material. Our website blog addresses many of the niche markets. We will continue blogging and also posting on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Our Central Montana video and photo libraries will be expanded as our FY21 budget will allow so we may reach and engage our potential visitors. We will also continue purchasing search terms.

**Optional: Include attachments here**

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

We will define geographic markets as follows: using research results from Arrivalist, Destination Analysts, VisaVue (joint venture project), from information generated through the Interactive Data link on the website for Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research, and the inquiries Central Montana receives. Our primary geographic target markets include the following states and provinces: California, Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Colorado, Utah, Minnesota, North Dakota, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Florida, South Dakota, Arizona, Texas, Wyoming, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

We will target the following demographic markets: families/kids, wildlife and bird watchers, anglers, adventure travelers, bicyclers, motorcycle travelers, scenic drivers, cultural & heritage travelers, hunters, geo/eco tourists, winter recreationists, RVers and campers, golfers, education travelers, group tours, guest ranch visitors, snowbirds, dinosaur enthusiasts and train/rail enthusiasts.

The psychographic characteristics of Central Montana's target market include those who value local businesses and locally grown or produced items, enjoy our scenic landscapes and value access to public lands, waterways and open space.

*b. What are your emerging markets?*

Texas, Arizona and Illinois markets (arriving and spending money in the region) have grown based on recent research (VisaVue) and data obtained from hotels in the region.

Areas with direct flights (United Airlines Chicago to Great Falls) are contributing to the emerging markets of Illinois (Chicago and some Wisconsin zip codes) and Arizona (Phoenix/Mesa zip codes, Allegiant Air).

While Central Montana does not have direct air flights from Texas, several Montana cities have recently acquired those, and their marketing efforts seem to have sparked interest in the entire state. Central Montana has marketed consistently to the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, Canada and we have seen interest grow from the nearby provinces of British Columbia and Manitoba. In 2019, Alberta was our top location at 10% of travelers who spent at least one night in the region. Washington state slipped to 9% after being the top state for several years.

Considering the current COVID-19 corona virus, we feel our potential for visitors from international markets will decline in FY21. Germany has registered high at several of our visitor information centers and it will be interesting to see how the pandemic affects visitation.

**Optional: Include attachments here.**

New Landing Page Samples.pdf

*c. What research supports your target marketing?*

Central Montana participated again in the Montana Office of Tourism Business Development's joint venture with VisaVue. Visa cardholders comprise

50.3% of the credit card market. VisaVue tracks purchases and cash advances made in specific contiguous zip codes. We selected 59401, 59404 and 59405 zip codes which are all in Great Falls, our largest community.

We also use the Interactive Data report builder option on the Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research along with several other niche ITRR reports to support our target marketing. Recent research done by Destination Analysts and Arrivalist have valuable data for the region, our CVBs and Tourism BIDs.

Central Montana had three counties included in MOTBD's Eastern Montana Initiative and we used specific data provided through that.

Other reports used include: Canadian Travelers in Montana: Traveler Profiles by Purpose of Trip to the State, most current Nonresident Visitation and Expenditure Estimates, Airline Passenger Deboarding by Airport, Expedia's Top Ten flights into Great Falls, and Nonresident Traveler Satisfaction & Information Sources Used. More county and community data is extrapolated by using the Interactive Data function on ITRR's website although, in many cases, the sample size is quite small.

Central Montana's FY21 goals remain similar to previous years but statistically they will be vastly different due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. *Increase four-season tourism revenues through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.*

For several years we've had small but steady yearly gains in lodging tax collections. In CY2016 we increased 1%, CY2017 increased 2%, CY2018 increased 2% and CY2019 increased 3%. Our FY21 budget is projected at 58% of our FY20 budget and we hope to not only meet, but exceed, that.

2. *Attract visitors by communicating an image that positions Central Montana as a vacation destination.*

Our positioning strategies are:

- illustrating our access to outdoor recreation, spectacular unspoiled nature and adventure
- leveraging our authentic Montana lifestyle in our vibrant and charming communities
- highlighting our historic and cultural sites, building on our Lewis & Clark and Nez Perce legacies

3. *Expand our marketing potential by participating in joint ventures with other Montana tourism organizations and businesses.*

This goal is critical to the success of Central Montana, more than ever, now that we are facing declines in travel and tourism due to the COVID-19 pandemic. By pursuing joint ventures and other partnership opportunities, Central Montana will establish and maintain strong ties to Montana Office of Tourism Business Development's programs and direction, as well as other Montana tourism organizations. In FY21 we will strive to build even more marketing partnerships with the Great Falls CVB, Havre CVB and the five Tourism BID's in Central Montana. We will also continue to explore new opportunities for partnerships in an effort to enhance our marketing budget.

4. *Grow the visitor experience and opportunities by building relationships with the ranching and agriculture industry, adding to and building on our guest ranch and agri-tourism presence.*

Many segments of our target market are looking for safe, family vacations that return them to an unhurried, more grounded experience. Highlighting rural events, lifestyles, and products produced on our region's farms and ranches will increase visitor awareness and can ultimately provide supplemental income for agricultural and ranching operations. Central Montana will continue to explore partnerships with agricultural organizations, also with Grown in Montana and Made in Montana promotional efforts, and work closely with rural community promotion groups to enhance our agritourism offerings.

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5. *Central Montana will continue to target our market as precisely as possible, assuring that our funding is spent to reach an audience that is qualified by likelihood of coming to the region, and has the discretionary income to spend significant dollars during the visit.*

Central Montana's consumer marketing plan will target those shown by research and/or past successes to have the propensity to travel to Montana, particularly to experience the kind of vacation the region offers. At this time we feel FY21 marketing will primarily target regional drive markets.

6. *Continue our successful FAM trips and travel show attendance.*

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Over the past few years our FAM trips have produced significant results in the form of print editorial, online editorial, social media posts by influencers, television and radio editorial and inquiries (both domestic and international). We will also continue to have a presence at travel and/or sportsman shows and we will partner with both the public and private sector to stretch our budget for the shows we attend.

7. *Seek ways to promote our Native American tourism potential.*

*We will work to identify opportunities to promote the cultures of our tribes and the tourism activities they offer. Past successes have included FAM trips to our Native American reservations and working with individual native entrepreneurs to showcase their talents to FAM trip participants. In FY19 we were able to secure video footage and still images to use in our marketing efforts.*

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

We have seen successes with opportunities to participate in both print and digital joint ventures offered by the MT Office of Tourism Business

Development. Our budget doesn't allow participation in all but we have approved participation in those we can afford.

The types of joint ventures we would like to participate in include print, digital, research and public relations. While joint venture opportunities currently don't exist for consumer shows, we would like to see this. Years ago this was an option and the state tourism office anchored the booth space and individual bed tax funded entities could buy in. It created a much larger presence for Montana overall at the shows and seemed to be effective.

Central Montana has participated in, and would like to continue to participate with, print and digital marketing projects and also consumer travel show joint venture marketing opportunities with the Great Falls CVB, Great Falls Tourism BID, Lewistown Tourism BID, Havre CVB and Havre TBID. We have five tourism business improvement districts in Central Montana and marketing opportunities are shared with them.

We also plan to continue to participate in joint venture opportunities for the Crown of the Continent (Glacier Country, Southwest Montana, Central Montana and Canadian provinces) and the Montana Dinosaur Trail (Montana's Missouri River Country, Yellowstone Country, Southeast Montana, Central Montana).

Although it is not a financial partnership, we will seek to coordinate attendance at travel shows with other bed tax entities and private sector businesses in Central Montana, in an effort to possibly co-locate our booths.

Central Montana is eager to secure additional partnership marketing to maximize our budget.

In FY20 we committed approximately \$21,000 to participate in both print and digital joint venture campaigns with the Montana Office of Tourism Business Development. These included Parents Magazine (print), and the following digital opportunities: TripAdvisor.com, Sojern Travel Platform Programmatic, and OnTheSnow.com.

We have been receiving leads from Parents Magazine and anticipate that those will continue for a couple of months.

We feel our participation in these joint ventures was successful. Joint ventures are a solid investment where Central Montana can receive good exposure based on our financial commitment.

**Optional: Include attachment here.**

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

We have discussed options to do a campaign with several other tourism regions promoting areas and communities that straddle the Rocky Mountains, also a press trip with two regions that would share common themes.

In order for our budget to be effective, it is important to evaluate all joint ventures and we are eager to do so.

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

Last year we wrote a grant with Missouri River Country to do a multi-pronged campaign in Canada targeting Alberta and Saskatchewan.

This campaign had impressive results. We placed native content, did social cross promotion, had native advertising via Postmedia Network, did programmatic placements in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and designed a newspaper insert covering local businesses in both regions that was placed in multiple newspapers in both provinces. A website landing page with links to both regions' tourism partners still resides on both websites.

While a bit complicated to execute, we feel the project was successful. Post-project details are attached.

**Optional: Include attachments here.**

**Optional: Include attachments here.** FY19 Canadian JV Report - CM&MRC.pdf

**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

Consumer	Print Advertising	<p>Our print paid media will target primarily leisure travelers.</p> <p>We first analyze past print campaigns for their performance. We use our target market data and we have also sought partnerships for print with the Montana Office of Tourism/Business Development, other tourism regions and CVBs within Central Montana.</p> <p>Recommendations from our agency of record, including publications, ad size and cost, are presented to a committee of the board. They discuss options and a final plan is presented to the entire board.</p>	<p>We use ITRR's interactive data report builder (nonresident travel study) for the top states that spent a night in Central Montana.</p> <p>We subscribed to VisaVue in partnership with MT Office of Tourism/Business Development and Great Falls CVB. In this we can see the top states for spending dollars in the region.</p> <p>Arrivalist and Destination Analysts data is used and it fits with both ITRR and VisaVue.</p>	<p>We track all responses to our print ads from signing up for our e-newsletter, calling for more information or viewing our travel planner flipbook online. Our auto guest book on our website has all of our marketing vehicles listed and people are asked to check where they found out about Central Montana.</p> <p>We will base success individually on the publications we choose. Cost per inquiry is our primary method. In the past we have had CPIs of \$2.24 and we have also had a partnership with MOTBD with a CPI of \$13.96.</p> <p>Of the print media placed we will measure overall success by an average CPI for all print no higher than \$7.50,</p>	<p>While we continue to budget less for print advertising, the Central Montana board still feels there is value in print. With the severe decline in budget for FY21 we will only place \$15,000 worth of print ads.</p> <p>Print reaches an audience of all ages, but we feel it addresses more of an older, possibly retired market. This market can help our shoulder seasons, loves to visit and explore our history, has kept interest in our Lewis &amp; Clark and Charlie Russell offerings and our birding trails. Since they have more time we feel they may stay longer and explore more.</p> <p>We will consider print for some of our niche markets (birding is a good example).</p>	\$15,000.00		
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	<p>We will search online advertising that matches the profile of our visitor and then place digital media. Overall, the campaign is multi-pronged including banner ads, native content, search term purchase and HTML newsletters.</p> <p>After a review of past digital campaigns is conducted we will choose where to place media for FY21.</p> <p>Once placement is finalized it is shared with CVBs and businesses in our tourism region.</p>	<p>ITRR Trip Planning Research including activities to do while here, Destination Analysts, Expedia top inbound states via air traffic, MT FWP top states for UGB hunting license purchase and MT FWP top states for big game hunting license purchase.</p>	<p>There are a variety of ways to measure success of digital, based on the vehicle used.</p> <p>We embed pixels on our website for some ads and can see how many clicked through to that page. Tracking length of time on the website and pages viewed is another method.</p> <p>For HTML newsletters we track open rates and subsequent click-throughs to our website. For these newsletters we also track if the recipient orders a print travel planner.</p> <p>Each measurable method has a different cost per inquiry. We always seek to achieve above benchmark status.</p>	<p>The budget for digital advertising is \$60,000, the largest of our marketing vehicles.</p> <p>We feel we reach niche markets more cost effectively through digital advertising and reach a market that is incredibly mobile friendly. If there are joint venture options available for digital advertising we will research those.</p> <p>Overall, the Central Montana board feels digital advertising not only gives the region the greatest value for our budget but the greatest opportunity to target and reach potential visitors.</p>	\$60,000.00		
		The amounts budgeted in FY21 for agency						

<p>Consumer</p>	<p>Ad Agency Services</p>	<p>creative and production are \$2,000 for Print services and \$5,000 for Digital services.</p> <p>With the large decline in our budget we felt we can re-use previous creative for print although the agency typically needs to make minor modifications in size for different publications. We may be able to swap an image or make minor tweaks to existing ads. It's a small budget for the creative edits but we are going to make it work.</p> <p>For digital creative we also hope to re-use some previous ads or, similar to print, do minor changes or image swaps. Native content can possibly be updated and repurposed.</p> <p>Our ad agency is well aware of what we feel we can budget in FY21 and they are completely on board with making it work for Central Montana.</p>	<p>Social Media Today touts the benefit of strong images in ads, also in creating good design attributes.</p>	<p>We will measure the return on our investment of the ads placed (CPI, Click-throughs, View Rate) and those actions are primarily a result of good ad design. Our measureable statistic will be to see if CPI, click-throughs and view rate improve by 1% over FY20 statistics.</p>	<p>Central Montana does not have in-house design capabilities. We also feel that our ad agency is able to secure bulk buying rates and bonus add-ons with some of the media we place.</p>	<p>\$7,000.00</p>		
<p>Consumer</p>	<p>Website/Internet Development/Updates</p>	<p>Our website URL is CentralMontana.com and with this budget we also do video production through the same contractor. We strive to have new content going on our website as frequently as manageable. This content is written by Central Montana admin now, and posted by the website contractor.</p> <p>Our blog has new content going on at least monthly and many times there are two posts done in a month.</p> <p>We are about 70% complete on developing a brewery landing page that clicks in to other content. The page is live but our executive director is visiting each of our breweries, sampling their brews, taking photos, and then writing a blog that is clickable from the brewery landing page - an enjoyable part of the executive director's job! This is similar to Central Montana's pie trail.</p> <p>We also have new images going on our home page whenever a photo on Instagram is tagged #CentralMontanaSkies. This will continue to</p>	<p>ITRR trip planning research and Google research support the fact that websites are the number one planning tool for potential visitors.</p>	<p>Central Montana uses Google Analytics to track statistics for our website and our goal is to have an increase of 2% in total visitors over FY20. We will also track length of time spent on the website, number of pages viewed and their location by state.</p>	<p>Central Montana's website covers so many bases in our marketing. It is where all of our media directs potential visitors. It can be for inspiration, orientation or facilitation depending on the phase the user is in. Some ads direct users to the home page, other niche marketing ads will direct users to a specific landing page.</p> <p>Since many users visit the website more than once we need to continually keep it</p>	<p>\$21,000.00</p>		

		<p>freshen the home page. Seasonal photos on the home page are also refreshed throughout the year.</p> <p>In FY21 we hope to expand on our motorcycle rides and possibly add another backcountry drive and refresh our hunting content.</p> <p>We will be doing a video at Bear Paw Battlefield and plan to schedule at least one more video during FY21. If our budget increases we would expand and do another video.</p> <p>Central Montana receives a minimum of 10 still images from each video so our photo assets increase at the same time we produce videos.</p>			<p>fresh with new content and beautiful images.</p> <p>Central Montana's videos are on our website in addition to on our YouTube channel.</p>			
Consumer	Travel/Trade Shows	<p>Central Montana has budgeted to attend one consumer show in FY21 although we usually attend four shows. If our overall budget increases we could add funds to attend a second show.</p> <p>We typically find a booth partner to share exhibiting expenses and we select shows based on the strengths in our tourism region. We consider our top states, the ease with which people can travel to our region and the strength of the marketing the show promoter is doing.</p> <p>In FY20 we attended outdoor recreation, travel and sportsmen shows. One on one interaction with show attendees is incredibly valuable for a region like Central Montana that doesn't have the name awareness of those named similar to our national parks.</p>	<p>Since the focus of consumer shows varies, we match different research for each one.</p> <p>If we are attending a sportsman show with an emphasis on hunting, we get updated research from MT FWP on the top states that purchased nonresident hunting licenses. We review two reports - one for UGB and one for big game.</p> <p>We use ITRR's report on visitors to national parks realizing that many from the midwest may consider visiting Central Montana, especially if they are driving to Glacier Natl Park.</p> <p>Another report we consider is Expedia's annual report on the top states for flying to Great Falls.</p> <p>Our website statistics for top states are also reviewed.</p>	<p>Central Montana considers the total show attendance, the amount of literature shipped and handed out, and the level of interest at our booth when measuring the success of each show.</p> <p>We seek information from our guides and outfitters to see if any of their bookings (river trips, hunting trips, guided hiking trips) mentioned that they found out about them while at our booth at a consumer show.</p> <p>Our goal is to disburse all of the literature we shipped to a show and, if it is a show we have attended in the past, we would like to see overall attendance increase of 1%.</p>	<p>When we talk with people interested in visiting Montana, we can offer route suggestions that pass through portions of Central Montana. We answer questions they have about the amenities along the route and tell them about our hidden gems.</p> <p>While we are there to promote visitation to our tourism region, we obviously answer any questions we can about the state and places to visit outside our region.</p> <p>For one of the lesser known and lesser traveled regions, consumer shows have been valuable for us.</p>	\$3,000.00		
		<p>Everything we do to promote Central Montana needs an inspiring image.</p> <p>Since 2012 we have set aside budget to compensate photographers for images we can own. We don't buy exclusive rights to images but we</p>	We don't have research					

Consumer	Photo/Video Library	<p>do purchase unlimited use for them.</p> <p>We seek out people whose images we see from a variety of sources. To date, we have about 15 photographers in our core group that we contact every year when we begin requesting submissions for this project. Central Montana board members are also asked if someone in their area should be added to the request for submissions.</p> <p>Submissions are limited to 20 per photographer and we usually receive about 250 images to review. A committee of Central Montana board members does the review and chooses which they would like to purchase.</p>	<p>that supports this but we understand that photography helps people visualize our area, and scenic attributes are one of Central Montana's greatest strengths.</p> <p>Potential visitors will see the photo before they see the text. In order to get our message out we need both.</p> <p>The Montana Brand also stresses use of strong images to inspire potential visitors.</p>	<p>We will measure success of this project by the ability to purchase at least 40 images.</p>	<p>The first sentence in our strategy says it all - Everything we do to promote Central Montana needs an inspiring image.</p> <p>We also hope to cover a variety of activities in all 13 counties of our tourism region. By working with a variety of photographers we have been able to do this.</p>	\$2,000.00		
Consumer	Travel Guide	<p>This strategy will be different from what we have done in the past. Typically, Central Montana produces a new travel planner every year. With the projected decline in bed tax revenues we aren't planning to produce a new planner for 2021.</p> <p>With this budget we will update the travel planner's calendar of events for 2021 and have it designed as a two-page spread similar to the 2020 spread. Our agency that designs the travel planner will then have it inserted into the flipbook that is available on our website. The outdated calendar will be removed from the flipbook.</p> <p>A small supply of the updated calendar will be printed and can be inserted in planners mailed out individually. Area visitor centers may also have copies of the updated calendar to distribute.</p> <p>While this is primarily a budget decision, it is also an ethical decision. The majority of our travel planners are picked up off brochure racks in Montana, also in a few locations in Idaho and North Dakota. With a projected decline in visitation, we feel we could have as many as 40,000 travel planners that would not be used</p>	<p>ITRR's report of Traveler Characteristics shows that people do pick up travel information enroute to Central Montana and while in the region.</p> <p>The inspirational phase of the travel planning decision is more likely when a travel planner is received through the mail. Acquiring a travel planner enroute would be the orientation and facilitation phase.</p>	<p>We will measure success of this project by the amount of travel planners we disburse. Our goal is to use the entire supply whether they are mailed out one by one or picked up off brochure racks.</p>	<p>Our rationale is two-pronged - get detailed information to Central Montana's potential visitors and also those in the region.</p> <p>Our travel planner has detailed information about our communities and also niche information (eating pie, drinking local brews, birdwatching, wildlife watching). We highlight scenic drives, historic drives, detailed Lewis &amp; Clark information and our centerfold is a two-page Montana map to</p>	\$12,000.00		

		<p>and therefore recycled.</p> <p>Central Montana's travel planner project has been supported by revenue from ads sold and we feel this coming fall will be a difficult time to recruit advertisers. All of the ad revenue goes back in to the project and we don't feel there would be sufficient revenue to help with the overall cost of the project.</p> <p>We will continue our brochure rack distribution via Certified Folder Display in an effort to use the supply of travel planners we have. We will also use the travel planner as our primary response piece to inquiries and at the consumer show we have budgeted for.</p>			<p>make trip planning easier.</p> <p>All of the details in our travel planner are geared to helping the traveler plan their trip.</p>			
Marketing Support	Administration	<p>Central Montana's Administrative budget is 20% of the total \$200,000 projected for FY21.</p> <p>The \$40,000 budget will cover a monthly contract fee for the independent contractor who serves as executive director, basic office costs such as phone, internet, required insurance for the board of directors (commercial general liability and directors &amp; officers insurance), 990 tax preparation, Constant Contact e-newsletter annual fee, Dropbox annual fee, miscellaneous travel for the executive director not covered by projects and office postage.</p>	<p>There are no research statistics for Administration.</p>	<p>The past fiscal year is reviewed at the tourism region's annual meeting in June. Updates are given relating to projects, although many may still be running.</p> <p>The Administrative Contractor gives an update on the basic duties she has performed for the region, successful grants written, marketing partnerships finalized and any other revenue generated. Success is measured based primarily on the reports.</p> <p>Prior to the annual meeting the executive committee does an annual review of the Administrative Contractor and presents that to the full board. A motion to either continue or cancel the contract is presented at the annual meeting. Contract compensation for the next year is also voted on at that time. The contract can run for a period of seven years and then a Request</p>	<p>Costs included in Central Montana's Administrative budget are basic necessities to conduct the business of the tourism region.</p>	\$40,000.00		

				<p>for Proposals needs to be done.</p> <p>If the board feels the Administrative Contractor has performed successfully, the contract is renewed as long as it is within the maximum seven years. Success will be measured by having all required reports to MT Office of Tourism/Business Development filed on time.</p>				
Marketing Support	Cooperative Marketing	<p>Central Montana budgets for Cooperative Marketing to assist nonprofit partners in the region to carry out a tourism marketing project. An application is submitted, reviewed by a committee, then placed on a board meeting agenda.</p> <p>We are allowed to pay up to 50% of the co-op marketing partner's cost. Our guidelines state we will typically not exceed \$2,500 for our portion of the project since our overall budget isn't that large.</p> <p>Co-op marketing projects need to be submitted to the Central Montana office two weeks prior to a regularly scheduled board meeting.</p>	Supporting research/statistics will be provided once we receive and approve applications for this funding.	We will determine how to measure success of each co-op marketing application once they are received and approved.	<p>Central Montana covers thirteen counties with many small towns. Two communities qualify for a bed tax funded CVB but others lack sufficient funds to market their events and communities.</p> <p>Assisting communities with this type of marketing has helped to grow and expand several events in the region.</p> <p>Sharing costs on co-op marketing projects with bed tax funding has also helped build goodwill for the tax.</p>	\$2,000.00		
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	<p>Central Montana's Opportunity Marketing budget is for those projects that come up during FY21 that we weren't aware of at the time of writing this marketing plan.</p> <p>Strategy will be defined once the project is determined.</p>	Research statistics will be submitted when we have a project to fund.	We will determine how to measure success once a project is identified.	Rationale for Opportunity Marketing will be developed as the project is identified.	\$2,000.00		
		<p>Specific duties for marketing projects will be assigned to a marketing contractor.</p> <p>Included will be writing posts for Central</p>	<p>Earned media gained from hosting media personnel is viewed as more valid than a paid ad - Social Media Today.</p> <p>Content placed, such as a paid e-newsletter to an opt-in subscriber base, has higher engagement - Social</p>	For FAM trips organized, marketed and hosted by the marketing contractor we will track the amount and type of earned media. If the medium used by someone hosted is print, we want to see at least one print article. If the medium used by someone hosted is social, we want to see a minimum	The tasks outlined in the above strategy are specific to marketing instead of administration. They may be carried out by the same contractor. Supporting documentation for each task paid from this budget will be logged hourly on a time			

Marketing Support	Contracted Services	<p>Montana's blog, developing itineraries for FAM trips, recruiting media for the trips and conducting the trips, doing follow up with media to evaluate the effectiveness of the trip, writing content for a variety of media placement, writing content for the website, writing a marketing plan, writing an e-newsletter, taking and securing photos for the region to use, and attending and reporting on consumer shows.</p>	<p>Media Today. This also proves true when we compare statistics from our e-newsletter generated in-house to paid e-newsletters.</p> <p>Website content and blog - Google Analytics shows an increase in length of time spent on pages when new content is read.</p> <p>Taking photos for use in all of Central Montana's marketing efforts - a stunning image is worth a thousand words. Destination Marketing Association International.</p>	<p>of 2 daily posts during the FAM trips and a minimum of 2 posts after the trip.</p> <p>Content - we will track statistics on all paid content and will measure by the percentage of comments, engagement, and views. We hope to exceed 18% open rate on paid 100% Share of Voice newsletters edited by the marketing contractor.</p> <p>Website content - we track all activity on our website and would like to see website visits increase by 3%.</p>	<p>sheet. When Central Montana did a recent RFP for an administrative contractor it became apparent that there were two skill sets needed to carry out the job.</p> <p>Writing a line item for a marketing contractor will enable the Central Montana board to compensate either one person who can do both admin and marketing, or secure two contractors to accomplish both administrative and marketing duties.</p>	\$18,000.00		
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	<p>Central Montana's primary contact will attend Tourism Advisory Council meetings and the Governor's Conference on Tourism &amp; Recreation. Tourism Advisory Council meetings are required by the bed tax regulations.</p> <p>Information and updates are presented at all meetings and are beneficial to Central Montana's operation.</p> <p>Knowledge gained at these meetings is shared with the board of directors at the next board meeting.</p>	<p>There is no supporting research for this project although the TAC meetings and annual tourism conference have proven to be helpful.</p>	<p>While it is difficult to measure success of attending Tourism Advisory Council meetings they are critical for the efficient operation of Central Montana.</p> <p>The Governor's Conference on Tourism is educational and ideas are brought back from that and presented at Central Montana's board meetings.</p> <p>We will primarily measure the success of TAC meetings and the annual conference by the quality of information presented.</p>	<p>Updates are given outlining the Montana Office of Tourism/Business Development's marketing efforts. We also learn about marketing efforts that may be beneficial to our tourism region.</p> <p>Research is presented that Central Montana can use to make decisions on our marketing.</p> <p>Discussions are held on revised guidelines that impact the Regions and CVBs. Keeping abreast of changes is critical to a well-managed organization. Sharing strategies with other bed tax funded entities has led to partnership efforts.</p>	\$2,000.00		
Marketing Support	Joint Ventures	<p>During the fiscal year we receive requests to participate with other bed tax funded entities in a joint marketing project. When project requests are received we will evaluate them to see if they fit with our goals and our budget.</p>	<p>Once we determine that a joint venture project is a good fit for Central Montana we will cite the research used.</p>	<p>As each joint venture project is approved by the Central Montana board of directors we will determine a plan to measure success.</p>	<p>Central Montana can increase the effectiveness of our limited budget by participating in joint ventures.</p>	\$4,000.00		

Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	<p>This project covers our postage used to respond to inquiries and our toll-free phone line for those who call to request information.</p> <p>Most of our postage is used for our bulk mailings as we respond to inquiries for our travel literature. Some of the postage budget is used to respond to international requests individually. The budget also covers the cost of our toll-free phone line for those who choose to use that to call and request our travel information.</p>	We don't have research statistics since this is a support project.	<p>This is a support project however we track the inquiries we receive and respond to.</p> <p>Our measureable goal will be to have all inquiries responded to within two weeks of receiving the inquiry. During our peak marketing times we typically do one bulk mailing a week. However, in slower marketing times it can take two weeks to reach the quantity available to meet the weight requirement for a bulk mailing.</p>	<p>Many people still call or respond to our ads and request print information to make their trip planning easier. We obviously need postage to fulfill their request.</p> <p>Our toll-free phone cost is minimal and we have chosen to keep it active since it is published in many places.</p>	\$6,000.00		
Publicity	Fam Trips	<p>This strategy is focused on gaining earned media/publicity for the region. We reach out to media, social media influencers and individual writers to see if an activity or event in our region fits their audience.</p> <p>We have partnered with other tourism regions and the Montana Office of Tourism/Business Development on a variety of FAM trips and we have conducted many on our own.</p> <p>While we have expenses to host the FAM trip, the value of our potential visitors seeing publicity generated by someone who has visited has a lot of credibility.</p>	<p>Social Media Today: Why Use Social Media Influencers</p> <p>PR Daily: How Earned Media's Value Is Shifting</p> <p>Ad Age White Papers: Five Reasons You Need to Focus on Earned Media; Earned Media, The Most Trusted Form of Content</p>	<p>We will measure success in a variety of ways.</p> <p>For print articles we will determine the value of the pages in the article if we were to place an ad of the same size.</p> <p>Social media posts will be valued on the reach and engagement of each post. We don't assign a dollar amount.</p> <p>We will measure success based on the number of articles, social posts, blogs, and videos generated. If a person hosted on a FAM trip does primarily print media, we want to see a minimum of one print article at least one page long. For social media influencers we want to see a minimum of one post daily while they are being hosted and a minimum of 3 posts following the trip.</p>	<p>Similar to attending consumer shows, it helps Central Montana to get specific information about our lesser known vacation products to an audience we hope visits.</p> <p>Writers and social media influencers typically use many images in their articles or posts. Our paid advertising usually has one image plus limited text so we feel we benefit greatly from FAM trips. The earned media generated is also viewed similar to a third-party endorsement or beneficial word of mouth information - both are compelling and inspiring.</p> <p>In the past we've hosted journalists, photographers, video producers, bloggers and content creators and the earned media we have received has covered a wide swath of Central Montana.</p>	\$6,000.00		
						\$200,000.00		

**Marketing Method Evaluation Attachments**

- Attachment 1
- 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	\$15,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	\$130,911.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Ad Agency Services	\$14,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Website/Internet Development/Updates	\$25,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Travel/Trade Shows	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	\$12,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Printed Material	\$42,000.00	\$0.00
		\$243,911.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Administration	\$41,774.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Cooperative Marketing	\$8,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	\$2,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$2,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Contracted Services	\$20,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Joint Ventures	\$4,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	\$9,000.00	\$0.00
		\$86,774.00	\$0.00
Publicity	Fam Trips	\$6,000.00	\$0.00
		\$6,000.00	\$0.00
		\$336,685.00	\$0.00

### **Miscellaneous Attachments**

Description	File Name	File Size
Central Montana's FY21 pie chart showing detail of all budget line items.	FY21 PIE CHART Detail.pdf	250 KB

### **Reg/CVB Required Documents**

Description	File Name	File Size
FY21 Application for Lodging Tax Revenue FY21 Pledge of Understanding FY21 Applicant's Certificate of Compliance	FY21 Required Documents.pdf	246 KB

