Grant Details

95522 - FY21 Region/CVB Marketing Plan

101307 - FY21 Missouri River Country Marketing Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: FY21 Missouri River Country Marketing Plan
Grant Number: 21-51-007
Grant Status: Underway

Comments:

Applicant Organization: Montana's Missouri River Country
Grantee Contact: Carla Hunsley
Award Year: 2020
Program Area: DOC Office of Tourism

Amounts:

Contract Dates:

Project Dates: Contract Sent Contract Received Contract Executed
06/15/2020 07/01/2020 06/30/2021
Proposal Date Project Start Project End
Grant Administrator: Barb Sanem
Contract Number: 21-51-007
Award Year: 2020
Contract Dates

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?

Covid-19

On March 28th Governor Steve Bullock ordered a statewide stay-at-home directive. On March 30th he asked that tourists refrain from traveling to Montana. While these decisions were necessary to protect all Montana’s, it is very devastating to so many of us in several ways, personally and for the organizations we work for. It affects our health and our wealth.

The hardest part at this time for MRC is the unknown. While the country is starting to open up, it has already done some financial damage and we don’t know the future of travel and if there will be a second round of closures. We did see some construction workers in our area during March and April that quarantined for 14 days before going into the community, but they were staying in the motels.

Several major events had to be cancelled. A memorial basketball tournament in Glasgow that brings in over 1000 people in March and the Bakken Brewfest in Sidney to name a few.

We have put most advertising on hold, but we do believe that people are looking for a place to go that is wide open and not many people and can breathe fresh air. Missouri River Country is that ideal place. Digital and Social Media are ways that we can do promotions during these trying times, if we have the funding available. We have applied for a grant that can help us get some travel back if we are successful in receiving the funding.

Missouri River Country is being optimistic and moving forward cautiously. We are starting to see people camping and fishing around Fort Peck Lake and bringing revenue back to Northeast Montana.

If funding is limited, which we know it will be to some extent, we will push Social Media and digital, E-mail newsletters, and Website. We will focus on a Regional Market, close distances and easy to get here travel. We will market our outdoor opportunities. We applied for an Innovation Grant for $25,000. If we
We decreased our budget by 25%. This might not be enough, but we are proceeding with caution and being optimistic. I have also attached a second scenario of a 50% decreased budget. We will not do much spending until we know for sure where we are and if funding is coming in unless we receive a grant.

If collections come in lower we will decrease our trade shows, travel planner, eliminate radio advertising, and press trips.

INTRODUCTION
Montana’s Missouri River Country is a destination for outdoor adventurists, geotourists, history buffs, families, Native American culturalists, dinosaur trail followers, fishermen and women, and overall recreationists. Here visitors find spectacular nature, charming small towns, exceptional wildlife watching, and breathtaking experiences. Missouri River Country is home to Fort Peck Lake, four national wildlife refuges, two Montana state parks, and 27 charming communities. Visitors also find perfect solitude with nature, opportunities to spend genuine, uninterrupted time with their loved ones, and more room to roam. We believe that in the 21st century when people are constantly engulfed in the hustle and bustle of daily life, what visitors now crave from their vacations is a chance to unplug and really connect. Less people and less traffic means more time to focus on real experiences, so we have chosen to take advantage of our amazing open spaces in our marketing campaign: More Room To Roam.

Less people and less traffic means more time to focus on real experiences.

IDENTITY
Montana is an incredibly diverse state that is synonymous with the West. Our history is vast, and so is our landscape. Wide open spaces surround our friendly, small communities. This is a side of our state that few see, but all who see it fall in love with Montana all over again.

We understand that many visitors who come to Montana come to experience the two national parks in our state, and for that reason much of our visitation comes from drive-through travel. However, Missouri River Country has many attractions that bring in visitors directly to our towns, waterways, and wide-open spaces. Missouri River Country is a hub for outdoor recreation including hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, photography, hiking, boating, ATVing, and ice fishing, cross country skiing and snowmobiling in the winter. Thanks to the remoteness of the region, the best show in Montana can be seen each night in Missouri River Country’s beautiful night skies, unpolluted by light from large cities and towns. The Missouri River, which was an integral part of the Lewis and Clark route, runs through our district and attracts history and culture buffs. Uniquely, dinosaurs once roamed this vast landscape and the remains of these giants can be seen at museums throughout the region, including full-sized fossils discovered in Northeast Montana.

A distinct region unto itself, this place of the Great Plains harbors unique landforms. Grand scenes intermingle with smaller bits of geologic wonder. Space, much of it undisturbed, is its greatest commodity, and an unending sky delivers a feeling of freedom with no borders or confinement. Missouri River Country is truly the land of wide open spaces—of opportunity and spectacular nature. You can see for miles, stretch your arms, breathe the fresh air, and sleep under the big starry sky. It’s not the destination but rather the experiences had in Missouri River Country that are truly breathtaking.

STRENGTHS
Hunting
Visitors here spend less time hunting for open space and more time hunting! According to the 2019 ITRR report, hunting was a top 5 reason to visit Missouri River Country, and we believe that this is thanks, in large part, to our less-populated nature! No matter where you go in Northeast Montana, you are surrounded by wildlife, from trophy elk on the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge to Big Horn Sheep South of Malta. Hunters come from all over the US to bow hunt and/or rifle hunt for elk. The skies above are filled with upland gamebirds and waterfowl. Our wide-open spaces are home to pronghorn, mule deer and whitetails. Our corner of Montana is not only an exciting place for hunting adventures but a land of unrivaled beauty and wonder.

Fishing & Fort Peck Lake
In the summer, marinas are filled with fishermen and women looking to cast a line and pass the day on the water. Defined by sandstone formations, fields of grain and fertile river bottoms, Missouri River Country is a place where shorelines go on for more than a thousand miles and fish grow to more than 100 pounds. This is the land where men built a dam across the mighty Missouri River and created the largest body of water in Montana. This is the land of Fort Peck Reservoir, which boasts over 1,600 miles of shoreline (more than the California coast) and an impressive variety of fish. According to the 2019 ITRR report, 42% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country visited Fort Peck Lake on their trip, which shows how immense of an attraction Fort Peck Lake truly is during all seasons. In the winter, Fort Peck Lake freezes over and makes way for some great ice fishing fun on the ice, which means that fishing is a four-season activity, opening up outdoor activities all year long for visitors. Summer water activities include fishing, tubing, water skiing, wake boarding and swimming, and during spring and fall, fishing and boating opportunities still abound. In addition to Fort Peck Lake, many rivers and dams in Missouri River Country provide fishing opportunities, such as Nelson Reservoir, the Missouri River, Milk River, and Yellowstone River.

Fort Peck Reservoir is over 1,600 miles of shoreline (more than the California coast)
Dinosaurs

Millions of years before the formation of the Missouri River in Montana, dinosaurs made this once lush wetland their home. Northeastern Montana has provided a wealth of world class fossil discoveries and according to the 2019 ITRR report, 4% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country participated in activities related to dinosaur attractions. Visitors can experience dinosaur digs at Great Plains Dinosaur Museum in Malta and learn about the prehistoric nature of our dramatic landscape. At the Fort Peck Interpretive Center & Museum visitors can view “Peck’s Rex,” a skeleton of a Tyrannosaurus rex found near Fort Peck in 1996. The Fort Peck Power House Museum has a Triceratops skull on display, along with numerous fossils that were discovered during the digging of Fort Peck Dam. The Phillips County Museum features fossil discoveries from the nearby Judith River Formation including a late Brachylophosaurus, one of the best articulated dinosaur skeletons ever found. The Great Plains Dinosaur Museum offers the public an intimate look into a working paleontological institution. Their Brachylophosaurus fossil, “Leonardo” is in the Guinness Book of World Records “best preserved dinosaur,” and the museum has the best growth series of this dinosaur anywhere. The Garfield County Museum displays a full-scale model of a Triceratops, which was found about 35 miles from Jordan in 1964.

History & Culture

History is as vast as our rolling landscape in Missouri River Country. Lewis and Clark buffs come here to experience the landscape that has remained virtually unchanged since the days of westward expansion. Lewis and Clark may have been early visitors to Missouri River Country, but when they arrived the region was already home to the Assiniboine people. Members of the Sioux nation also call our corner of Montana home, and their cultural heritage continues to be celebrated today through such events as pow wow and dancing ceremonies. Annual pow wow weekends are held on the Fort Peck Reservation, where traditional dance, song, and tribal ceremonies can be experienced. Missouri River Country has many museums, cultural centers, visitor centers and historic downtown regions that attract history and culture buffs to our corner of Montana.

Outdoor Recreation & Wildlife

While we are most known for our hunting and fishing, there is a plethora of outdoor recreation opportunities in Missouri River Country. Hikers can enjoy total trail solitude in the Little Rocky Mountains, birders will be amazed by the uninterrupted views, wildlife viewing is plentiful, and boating and ATVing opportunities abound. RV and tent campers make their way to Northeast Montana to take part in a Montana adventure found only here. According to the 2019 ITRR report, 26% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country participated in wildlife watching, and Missouri River Country has wildlife watching opportunities in spades. Between four national wildlife refuges, the American Prairie Reserve, Fort Peck Lake and other riparian areas, and the elk rut areas, visitors have vast opportunities to participate in wildlife viewing. Slippery Ann Elk Viewing Area is one of the best places to view elk in the fall, and visitors are consistently enamored with the raw nature found in Missouri River Country. Bikers can stop in Glasgow at the Bike Bin at Smith Park, featuring a bicycle repair stand and bike wash station conveniently located near camping and showers at the adjacent Shady Rest RV Park. In the winter, visitors can bring their cross-country skis and explore our wide-open prairies on the snow, which is a fun and unique experience for locals and visitors alike.

Charming Communities

27 charming, small communities dot Missouri River Country, offering visitors authentic Montana character. Museums, outfitters and shops offer a taste of our history and culture. Visitors can pan for gold or go on a dinosaur dig based out of our communities, and then return to spend the night in our hotels and cabins. We have five microbreweries in the region and many wonderful dining options serving up delicious burgers, steaks, locally grown produce and so much more. Visitors have the chance to experience local farmers markets in the summer and festivals throughout the year. One of the best parts of our region is the people who call Missouri River Country home and get to share our beloved landscape with visitors.

Affordability

Compared to other vacation destinations, Missouri River Country offers affordable options for travelers. Lodging, food and drink is less expensive in Missouri River Country. Affordable and free activities like wildlife watching, hiking, museums, fishing and dinosaur digs are more abundant compared to other areas in the state. We know that our affordability is a great resource for travelers, and plays a role in our attraction to visitors as they choose where to spend their hard-earned vacation dollars.

Wide Open Spaces

There is more room to roam in Missouri River Country, and this is a huge draw for our visitors. According to the 2019 ITRR report, 23% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country were primarily attracted to Montana for open space/uncrowded areas. Oxford University scientists used population data and analytics to find “the middle of nowhere,“ and their results determined that the top three spots were in Missouri River Country: Glasgow took the top spot with Scobey and Wolf Point coming in the second and third spots, respectively. The Washington Post published an article on Glasgow being, “in the middle of nowhere.” From that article, Glasgow gained momentum in the press with an NBC article that interviewed community members, airing on the NBC Nightly Newscast. The American Prairie Reserve calls Northeastern Montana home as well and is a great place to view the plains and the animals who thrive here, including the national mammal, the American Bison. We believe that our being in “the middle of nowhere” is exact what certain tourists are looking for in a vacation—a place to escape from the city, get away from traffic, and find themselves in the middle of nowhere (or in the middle of everything, depending on how you look at it).

Dark Skies

Missouri River Country is one of the most remote regions in the country and the closest major city is 4 ½ hours away. For this reason, our night skies remain unpolluted by light and allow visitors to have a truly out-of-this-world experience. We believe that our dark skies are a huge strength and provide visitors with a unique, star-studded experience that is fun for families, couples and retirees alike.

Events Calendar

According to the 2019 ITRR report, 3% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country were primarily attracted to Montana for special events, while 9% reported it was one of the reasons they were attracted. Our charming communities host a wide variety and large quantity of events each year which provide visitors with an authentic taste of our region while also providing entertainment, all while boosting our local economies. In the summer, each of our eight counties host a county fair, many complete with live concerts and rodeos. Additionally, the PRCA Rodeo Circuit comes through Northeastern Montana, including the Wolf Point Wild Horse Stampede, the oldest rodeo in Montana, and the Match Bronc Ride in Jordan, along with several other PRCA Rodeos during the warm season. Pioneer Days in Scobey is a huge event where visitors can experience what life was like in the years of the pioneers, and local pow wows provide insights into Native American culture and traditions. Fishing tournaments (in the summer and winter months!) attract sportsmen and women from all over. Visitors can easily access our events calendar and plan their visit through the events page on our newly redesigned website, and businesses can add their events directly to the calendar.
Drive-Through Status
Missouri River Country has historically been and continues to be a drive through region, meaning that visitors are “just passing through” to destinations with more widely recognized icons. Last year, 60% of visitors to Missouri River Country came in a truck or a car, and 11% of visitors were only passing through. We must continue to educate travelers that there are activities and points of interest in the region.

Accessibility
While being located in “the middle of nowhere” is a strength of ours in terms of providing visitors with uninterrupted solitude with nature, this continues to be a challenging factor for Missouri River Country. Some of our towns are 4 ½ hours driving distance from any major city and accessing our region by air service is difficult. We are fortunate to have Essential Air Service in Sidney, Wolf Point, and Glasgow. While these flights are beneficial, our challenge is getting them to connect with other flights. They are small planes that can only accommodate 9 passengers and fly solely into Billings.

Infrastructure
Infrastructure is one of Missouri River Country’s biggest challenges. In certain months, roads to attractions like U.L. Bend National Wildlife Refuge and Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge are impassable or closed, and ruts in roads can deter tourists from visiting certain areas. Maintaining hotels, cities, and roads will continue to be an issue in our region with limited funding. Lack of revenue from camping on Federal property also remains a challenge.

Access to Information
We know that once people are in Missouri River Country, they fall in love with our wide-open spaces, friendly communities and access to outdoor recreation. However, compared to other parts of Montana, information about Missouri River Country is harder for potential visitors to get a hold of. According to the 2019 ITRR report, 25% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country used information from friends or relatives living in Montana, 23% used no sources, and 21% used search engines. Our redesigned website is working to combat these gaps in information by adding pages specific to activities, events, and accommodations as well as updated blogs to inspire visitors. We also know that word of mouth from friends and family living in Montana is important to visitors, so increasing awareness of Missouri River Country to the people who live in Montana is also important for the information spreading about the many opportunities found in our region.

Amtrak
We are fortunate to have Amtrak go through MRC, but rental cars are a challenge. Wolf Point and Glasgow have dealerships that rent cars which helps. The dealerships/car rentals will bring cars to the train depot and airport. The one car rental in Wolf Point does advertise in our travel planner.

OPPORTUNITIES

Amtrak
Missouri River Country is fortunate to have Amtrak stops in Wolf Point, Glasgow and Malta. We believe that a unique opportunity lies in attracting visitors to stop over in Missouri River Country on their way from the Chicago and Minneapolis areas on route to Glacier National Park. We also believe that there is untapped potential for families from cities to the east who can easily access our charming communities and have authentic Montana experiences with less train-time than riding all the way towards Glacier National Park.

Dark Skies
Missouri River Country has some of the darkest skies in the continental United States. With our distance from major cities, most of our region is considered “dark sky” country, and we believe that this is an untapped marketing opportunity for us. We believe there is huge potential in marketing Missouri River Country as a place for astrotourism and eventually designating an International Dark Sky Park at Brush Lake State Park. The Northern Lights and amazing views of the Milky Way can be seen here, and marketing these dark sky opportunities presents a unique opportunity to draw visitors to our region.

Conventions
As a region, conventions and meetings have not been a focal point, but we do acknowledge that these events are a huge economic boom to communities. For this reason, marketing and outreach from communities in Missouri River Country to host these events is a worthwhile endeavor that Missouri River Country will strive to support and assist as needs arise.

Close Proximity Visitors
We believe that Missouri River Country can become a weekend destination for close proximity travelers, including flight traffic from Billings, families, couples and individuals looking to experience a unique side of Montana and the west not found elsewhere in the surrounding areas. Our region provides chances to attend events, take part in outdoor recreational opportunities including hunting and fishing, experience truly dark skies, and so much more, which can all be done in a long weekend to those who live nearby in other regions or bordering states.

Motorcyclists
We believe that the wide open spaces and wide open roads of Missouri River Country are a natural attraction to motorcyclists. This combined with friendly communities, expansive natural areas, wildlife viewing opportunities, and attractions along the way make our region a perfect fit for motorcycle tourism. According to the 2019 ITRR report, 6% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country entered Montana by motorcycle. In addition, 6% of visitors to the region participated in motorcycle touring, while 54% said they were interested in scenic driving. Each year, the Big Muddy Motorcycle Rally in Plentywood brings in many motorcyclists, and the BMW Rally in nearby Great Falls is an excellent chance for motorcyclists to pass through, or make their way towards, Missouri River Country on either end of their trip. For this reason, we developed specific travel itineraries for motorcyclists on our website, which allows for ease of planning and opportunities for multiple trips for visitors traveling by bike.

Video
In this age, video is the best way to catch the eye of visitors and encourage them to spend their hard-earned vacation dollars here, rather than anywhere else. We believe that better focusing on and integrating video into our marketing campaigns and social media presence is a fantastic way to increase interest in, and visitation to, Missouri
River Country.

Repeat Visitation
ITRR indicates that in 2019, 91% of the visitation to Missouri River Country comes from repeat visitors. This leads us to believe that awareness of our activities and attractions is lacking. When visitors experience our hunting, fishing, history, open spaces, nature and culture, they will want to come back. We strive to attract first time visitors, and once they experience our region we believe they will spread the word to their home communities and come back again and again.

Missouri River Country has some of the darkest skies in the continental United States.

Sleeping Buffalo Hot Springs
A very exciting opportunity lies in the newly developed Sleeping Buffalo Hot Springs and Resort. ITRR indicates that 12% of state visitors ranked “hot springs” as a reason for visitation to Montana, and we believe that spreading awareness of this remote hot springs has the potential to increase visitation to our region.

Brewery Tour
The craft beer industry has been rapidly growing over the past decade, and many tourists incorporate craft beer tours and tastings into their vacations. According to ITRR’s 2019 report, 18% of visitors to the state visited a local brewery. Missouri River Country is home to five craft breweries: Blue Ridge Brewing in Malta, Busted Knuckle Brewery in Glasgow, Docz Missouri River Breaks Brewing in Wolf Point, Meadowlark Brewing Company and 1035 Brewing in Sidney. By marketing our breweries as an option for travelers and encouraging visitors to visit all breweries in the region, Missouri River Country can open our region to a new type of tourist market.

Rockhounding
Rockhounding and gold panning are two activities for which Montana is known for, and Missouri River Country provides opportunities for visitors to have an authentic experience. Gold panning kits are available for rent in Zortman, where visitors can explore the Little Rocky Mountains and search for gold nuggets in the waters outside of town. Missouri River Country provides access to the Yellowstone River for rockhounding as well. We believe spreading awareness about these activities is a huge opportunity for garnering interest in our region.

Dinosaur Digs
In Missouri River Country, visitors not only have the opportunity to learn about the paleontological history of Montana and to see fossils and replicas of dinosaurs, they also have the chance to be real-life excavators at the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum, where they can accompany experts on dinosaur digs. This opportunity is unique to a very limited number of places in North America, and we believe spreading awareness about this fun activity is a great promotion of our region.

Fort Peck Reservation-Turtle Mound Buffalo Ranch
When the Missouri River Country Board of Directors toured the Turtle Mound Buffalo Ranch, we were very impressed with the Ranch and the possibility of creating a partnership between the Fort Peck Tribes and Missouri River Country. We will explore options to help both entities bring more visitation to Northeast Montana.

Eastern Montana Initiative
Missouri River Country is excited and confident in the potential for new and increased visitation to Eastern Montana through the Eastern Montana Initiative. We will be developing recreational opportunities and creating a dark skies trail with the help of the Eastern Montana Initiative grants. We will be able to expand more on these projects in the years to come. It is just a great opportunity to be able to get them started with the help of EMI.

Montana’s Brand Pillars
Missouri River Country is a distinct region unto itself. The wealth of opportunities for adventure amidst the spectacular, unspoiled nature can’t be overstated. Big water recreation, wildlife viewing, prairie topography, wild country paleontology, and uncluttered views that go on forever. We have 27 vibrant and small charming towns and our brilliant night skies are filled with stars and the landscapes give you more room to breathe and more room to roam.

- **Spectacular, Unspoiled Nature**: Missouri River Country has some of the most spectacular river breaks, badlands and unspoiled landscapes. If Lewis and Clark traveled through today as they did 200 years ago they would still recognize much of what they viewed back then.

- **Vibrant and Charming Small Towns**: Our charming small towns are filled with friendly, welcoming people. Expect a hand wave as you drive through, but make sure to stop for some of the home town hospitality.

- **Breathtaking Experiences by Day and Relaxing Hospitality at Night**: Whether it’s hiking the badlands, visiting our museums or spending time on the lake, Missouri River Country has what it takes to have a breathtaking experience. Hang out at one of our Breweries in the evening and relax and experience MRC’s night time hospitality.

Describe your destination.

THREE PHASES OF TRAVEL
It is easy to fall in love with Missouri River Country. Our rolling sea of prairie stretches for miles below big blue skies that come to life with stars at night. Missouri River Country will follow the State’s three phase travel strategy of inspiration, orientation and facilitation to provide world-class experiences and unforgettable memories. Stunning photography of our landscape inspires people through advertising and social media. It is hard to see bright green landscapes and giant blue skies and not want to learn more (or come see it for yourself!). Our open spaces and abundance of wildlife and recreation activities will draw interested visitors and make people want to learn
Once we have hooked people into wanting to learn more, we will orient them to our region with information about activities, lodging, events and opportunities. Using print marketing, trade show opportunities, social media outlets (ie: Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) and informational blog posts, we will provide information to our interested visitors. We recently built a state-of-the-art website which is responsive to mobile devices and will serve as an immeasurable tool in delivering the message about opportunities in Missouri River Country to the public.

We will facilitate visitors through continued hospitality. From the moment of interest to their last day of vacation, Missouri River Country staff and marketing teams will provide nothing but excellent information, service and resources. The new website is proving to be a huge asset in ensuring that visitors have an encore experience in our region, and our informational print materials such as travel guides, hunting and fishing guides, brochures and maps will help visitors experience all that Missouri River Country has to offer. In addition, promoting traffic to the visitor’s center will enable us to have a hands-on approach to facilitating the experience of our visitors.

Optional: Include attachments here

VMT - Fort Peck Stars 2.jpg

TARGET MARKETS

GEOGRAPHIC
Strategically targeting certain geographic markets will enable Missouri River Country to stretch the impact of our marketing dollars. Missouri River Country will target the following geographical markets, which provide our current base of visitors and potential for increased visits by high-value, low-impact tourists:

According to Arrivalist Data for 2019 our top 10 states are:
Montana
North Dakota
Minnesota
Ohio
Washington
Wyoming
South Dakota
Wisconsin
Colorado
Texas

Our primary target market would be Regional:
Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota, Washington and Wyoming

We also plan to target Saskatchewan, Canada
Arrivalist Data doesn’t cover Canadian travel.
We also know that many Montanans visit Missouri River Country as a close-to-home, quick trip in our state. When it comes to Montana residents, we market the chance to fall in love with Montana all over again in a fresh, new part of the state.


PSYCHO-GRAPHIC
Missouri River Country will target the visitors that present a high impact, such as history and culture buffs, hunters and anglers, and the families or couples that are interested in the many things Missouri River Country has to offer. Various visitors seek the hunting and fishing opportunities here, and they bring their families to visit museums and/or to recreate around the lakes, rivers and streams. Many families follow the Montana Dinosaur Trail through our region. The 50+ permanent RVer’s are becoming popular in our area as well. These people like to visit our wide-open spaces and stay in our campgrounds. When the state “Montana” is mentioned, people get excited. We see this at our trade shows and in reactions online through social media. The beauty of Missouri River Country is the quiet, peace and solitude.

DEMOGRAPHIC
In addition to geographic targeted marketing, Missouri River Country strategically targets prime demographic groups who have inclination and reason to visit our region. Strategic marketing includes social media posts, ad placements, and trade shows.

Hunters & Anglers
This group includes hunters and fishermen and women from Montana and other states who would visit Missouri River Country for specific recreational opportunities. This demographic is heavily skewed as an affluent male audience. Census statistics suggest that 15% of the general US population 16 years of age or older fishes and 10% hunts from that same demographic. These people most likely come into the region to recreate and do not travel elsewhere in the state once they are here. 4% of visitors to our region listed hunting as an attraction while 14% listed fishing.

History & Culture Buffs
This group includes adults 30+ years of age who are traveling with or without children with a household income of $60,000+. These travelers are interested in a variety of history, arts and culture and are likely to visit at least one historical site during their vacation. They will most likely pair their trip to include other historical regions of
Montana. 18% of visitors to our region listed Lewis and Clark as an attractant to Montana.

**Couples**
This group includes adults 30+ years of age without children who have a household income of $50,000+. These people are interested in history, culture, arts, museums, soft adventure, wildlife viewing and birding, dinosaurs, and scenic attractions.

**Traditional Family Travelers**
This group includes adults 35+ years of age with children whose household income is $60,000+. These travelers participate in scenic driving, nature photography, camping/hiking, museums, wildlife viewing and birding and dinosaur activities. They are interested in creating a relaxing and memorable experience together.

**RV & Camping Travelers**
This group consists of adults 35-65 years of age with children or adults 55-64 years of age without children. They usually have a household income of $75,000+. These travelers participate in camping, hiking, visiting historic sites, sightseeing, photography, wildlife viewing, birding, and dinosaur activities.

**Outdoor Enthusiasts**
This group consists of adults 35-65 years of age who are traveling with or without children. They have a household income of $60,000+. They enjoy participating in outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, biking, fishing, hunting, birding, wildlife watching, dinosaur activities, ATVing, motorcycle riding and water recreation.

**Sports Travelers**
This group consists of adults 25+ years of age traveling with children to sporting events such as basketball, baseball, hockey, football and track and field. They have a household income of $50,000+.

**METHODS**
Missouri River Country will reach geographic and demographic target markets through various advertisement placements to promote the region as a travel destination. Using branding and strong ad copy, we believe that we can successfully attract visitors to the region.

**Branding**
In FY18, Missouri River Country rebranded our logo with carefully selected color palettes to represent the aesthetic appeal of our region. Blues and greens evoke the colors of the prairie. Rolling green hills match bright blue skies, and the light blues represent the flowing Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers that crisscross our region. The dark orange evokes memories of swaying grasses in the fall, and the deep red evokes the boldness of sunsets in the summertime. We feel that this strong color palette is a powerful marketing tool to successfully brand Missouri River Country as a destination for potential travelers. Continuous integration in print, digital, and social media to create a consistent image for the region.

**Print and Digital Ads**
Last year, Missouri River Country placed many print and digital ads which were chosen to maximize reach to target demographics. In FY21, we will continue to place print and digital advertisements on sites and publications where we feel we can maximize our reach to our target and demographic markets. Our advertisements will focus on the pillars of Missouri River Country’s attractions: dinosaurs, history and culture, dark skies, outdoor recreation, and charming small towns.

**Website Marketing, Optimization, Development & Maintenance**
After receiving a grant from the State of Montana, Missouri River Country has completely rebuilt a state-of-the-art website which is integral to boosting our presence in the 21st century market. The new website follows branded colors and fonts, and is compliant with the bed tax requirements. Many postings are directly from Visit Montana’s website, meaning that visitors can have a streamlined experience while visiting our state. The design is dynamic and responsive to all devices. By using a different server, the website has increased security and allows Missouri River Country to upload higher quality photos to the site, meaning we now have a greater chance to inspire through imagery. The number of landing pages on the new website has increased greatly from the older site, meaning that Missouri River Country is increasing our SEO presence online. This also gives visitors more of a chance to explore the options of our region and spend more time on the site, which will in time create opportunities to drive revenue through ad sales on the website if desired. Through the continuance of fresh, monthly blog content, organic algorithms will drive traffic to the site and visitors can now easily explore and learn about our region. The launch of the new website in February of 2019 took Missouri River Country from an average of 8.6 travel guide orders per month to 26.5 travel guide orders per month via the online order a guide form. In addition, the website also saw a 36.52% increase in number of visitor sessions and a 72.65% decrease in the bounce rate in a snapshot of performance from February 1, 2019 to August 31, 2019. A goal for this year is to create seasonal itineraries to be housed on the website to ease the planning process for visitors. This past year, specific changes were made to the website to make it more attractive and user-friendly to viewers: Added a photo slider to the homepage to increase inspiration while planning or considering a trip to the region. Added an events submission page to allow local businesses to contribute to the calendar. Added an “Order a Travel Guide” call to action on the homepage to assist with the goal of increasing the number of guides requested. Added additional call to action buttons for the blog, newsletter, and photo gallery. Made enhancements to the Community Pages to pull in relevant blog content.

**Pinterest**
This year, a Pinterest board was created for Missouri River Country with the goal of increasing visitation to the website and inspiring Pinterest users to save images and blogs about our region. After the first month, monthly viewers on the page were already over 700, and over 1000 users have viewed the pins. We anticipate upward trends as the page content grows and users save the pins promoted.

**Content Development**
In order to inspire and educate people on the offerings of our region, Missouri River Country needs to be constantly providing new content and information to our potential visitors. Using FAQs from the visitor’s center and call center as well as tips from social media sites, Missouri River Country will build the content library through web page designs, blog posts, social media posts and through printed content and print pieces, such as our Travel Planner, Hunting and Fishing Guide, and Calendar of Events.
Printed Content Materials
This year, we put together a Hunting and Fishing Guide specific to our region with advice on where to hunt and fish, the seasons for various species, tips, and first person narratives from locals explaining what makes our region special. 20,000 Hunting and Fishing Guides were printed, and distribution ranges from in-person drop offs at chambers and gas stations throughout the state and mailings as requested. Our travel guide continues to be a great source of information for visitors, with 30,000 printed last year and distributed to Chambers and mailed out to individuals as requested. Our 2020 Events Calendar brochure serves as a great informational piece for potential visitors, with 7,500 copies printed last year.

SOCIAL MEDIA EXAMPLES

Photo & Video Library Development
Photography and video are critical in inspiring potential visitors to plan a trip to Missouri River Country. It is vital that we are able to maximize our budget while still obtaining high quality photos and videos of our region. We have been working on building relationships with photographers based in the area as well as using photo influencers through cooperative opportunities to increase the items in our photo library and, in turn, using these photos on social media, the new developing website, and in print advertisements to promote Missouri River Country in the best possible light. Over the past year, our photo library has steadily been growing with photography from locals, such as Ken Plourde, Kelsey of Malta, and Jennifer Caulkin, and professionals such as Andy Austin, Bradley Castaneda, and Justin Kauffman.

Publicity
Missouri River Country will strategically work with partners to increase publicity as well as continue our partnership with the State of Montana’s tourism. We plan to recruit photo influencers, including seeking out specific astrotourism influencers in our market. We also want to continue our strategy of purposefully placing advertisements in other region’s magazines, such as Glacier Country Montana and Destination Missoula’s travel guides.

Trade Show Displays
Missouri River Country actively promotes our region at various trade shows throughout the country where we distribute print information about our region and MRC swag. We estimate that our trade show displays reach over 100,000 unique potential visitors a year.

Washington
Colorado
Michigan
Wisconsin
Minnesota
North Dakota
South Dakota
California
Regina, Canada
Calgary, Canada

Lead Collection
Missouri River Country will continue to collect leads through various methods including:
Providing promotional giveaways where lead data is collected like Wings Over the Big Sky.
Collecting information at trade shows.
Using website integration and using a form designed for increased conversation of information.

b. What are your emerging markets?

EMERGING MARKETS
Missouri River Country has isolated the following emerging markets that we believe are a perfect fit for our attractions. We plan to market directly to their travel desires and needs.

Young Outdoor Enthusiasts
This market includes young travelers between the ages of 18-30 who are interested in traveling for outdoor adventure. These travelers are more likely to camp at least one night of their trip, and they are looking for access to hiking, climbing, water sports, wildlife viewing, photography and camping experiences. These users are also highly active on social media, so we believe that targeting these audiences within our drive markets through social media channels will be an impactful way to reach this group.

Retirees
According to the 2017 ITRR report, a high number of couples ages 65-75 are traveling through Missouri River Country. We believe that retirees are a great group to target, as they are traditionally financially stable, traveling without children and looking to engage in soft adventure and historical and cultural experiences.

**Amtrak Riders**

Missouri River Country has three Amtrak stops in Wolf Point, Glasgow and Malta. We believe that a unique opportunity lies in attracting visitors to stop over in Missouri River Country on their way from the Chicago and Minneapolis area on route to Glacier National Park. We also believe that there is untapped potential in families from the east who can easily access our charming communities and have authentic Montana experiences with less train-time than riding all the way to Glacier National Park.

**Craft Beer Enthusiasts**

Craft beer tours are becoming increasingly common, with some larger breweries serving as the single reason visitors take trips to specific areas. The Brewers Association found that 18% of craft beer drinkers visit three or more out-of-town breweries each year. Montana has the second most breweries per capita of any state in America, and we believe that promoting Missouri River Country as a brewery destination to the craft beer market would increase visitation to towns where craft breweries are present.

**Montana MADE**

Local, sustainable crafts and products are on the rise, and visitors appreciate the pride of local craftsmen and women. We believe that by promoting the Montana Made artisans and goods in our region, we can attract visitors to seek out our fairs, markets, and shops.

**Compared to other vacation destinations, Missouri River Country offers affordable options for travelers.**

**Astrotourists**

80% of Americans can’t see the Milky Way anymore due to light pollution according to a 2016 study, and astrotourism is on the rise worldwide as city dwellers or people living in condensed population areas long to see the uninterrupted night sky. Since Missouri River Country has some of the darkest night skies in the country, we should be directly promoting our region as a destination for dark sky enthusiasts and photographers alike. We have long-term aspirations to create International Dark Parks. We plan to use target campaigns to show off our dark skies and grow awareness around the astrotourism options in our region. We are more than halfway through the application process of Brush Lake State Park becoming an IDSP. We also believe that promoting visitation to Hill Ranch Oasis, a bed and breakfast near Mosby, will allow for visitors who would prefer to sleep indoors, the chance to take in the uninterrupted skies—an opportunity specific to this particular place as opposed to other accommodations in towns.

**Agritourists**

Agritourism centers around tourists who come from cities and want to get a taste of the rural farming and ranching communities. Agritourism is one of the fastest-growing forms of global tourism with an economic impact of more than $1 billion in many US states and countries, and we believe that Missouri River Country is a no-brainer for agritourism activities in the state of Montana. Agritourism activities that can be found in Missouri River Country include: farmers markets, horseback riding, and shopping for local honeys, breads, and other handcrafted items. We believe our small, charming rural communities make us an ideal travel option for agritourists. All 8 counties in Missouri River Country are home to an annual county fair, where opportunities for agritourism abound, from rodeos, 4H competitions, petting zoos, live music and dancing, and so much more.

**Digital Detox Travelers**

We are living in the age of technology overload, and we believe that promoting our “no cell service, no worries” attitude towards travel can be a huge attractant for Digital Detox Travelers, a group of people looking to get away from the over-stimulus of our digital world. According to the 2019 ITRR report, 23% of nonresident visitors who spent at least one night in Missouri River Country said that the primary reason they were attracted to Montana was open space and uncrowded areas. With more room to roam and more time to disconnect, Missouri River Country is a natural fit for these visitors. According to Intrepid, bookings to locations in this category were up significantly in 2018, and Darshika Jones, Intrepid’s director of North America, explained that they saw “an increase in those more remote destinations where you get that opportunity to unplug and reconnect.”

**SUPPORTING RESEARCH**

*Agritourism is growing in America.* SustainableAmerica.org. 2013.  
80 Percent of Americans Can’t See the Milky Way Anymore. *National Geographic.* 2016.  

With the opportunity to receive updated Arrivalist Data from MOTBD, Missouri River Country will be able to see where our visitors are coming from, how long they are staying and how many are coming into our region. This data is separated out by counties and will be useful in our marketing strategies.

**GOALS**

Our primary marketing goals are to increase visitation and communicate a cohesive and effective marketing identity. We will follow the MOTBD’s 2013-2017 Strategic Plan, incorporating the plan into Montana’s Missouri River Country’s FY21 Marketing Plan. We will support the Montana brand with our charming and unique towns, spectacular nature and breathtaking experiences. In addition, we will continue taking advantage of partnerships with MOTBD, other tourism regions/CVB’s, local chambers, and tribal...
entities, working together to more effectively promote our area as a tourist destination. The following are the goals for Missouri River Country in FY21:

**Increase arrivals and encourage extended stays and increased expenditures** from our frequent repeat visitors by focusing promotions and advertising in the warm season.

**Increase overall visitor awareness** of Missouri River Country’s attractions and activities.

**Promote and support Missouri River Country’s newer attractions** including: Sleeping Buffalo Hot Springs & Resort, Fort Peck Interpretive Center & Museum, the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum, the Children’s Museum of Northeast Montana, World Wildlife Exhibit, the Montana Dinosaur Trail and the Northeast Montana Birding Trail.

**Promote microbreweries in the region** including: Blue Ridge Brewing in Malta, Busted Knuckle Brewery in Glasgow, Docz Missouri River Breaks Brewing in Wolf Point, Meadowlark Brewing and 1035 Brewing in Sidney.

**Seek joint venture and co-op marketing opportunities** with the State of Montana and other appropriate entities.

**Increase awareness of Missouri River Country** and the organization’s role in regional tourism development.

**Promote our unique outdoor recreation activities** including: hunting, fishing, dark sky viewing, Brush Lake State Park, Hell Creek State Park & Campground, and promote more access and additional public amenities, camping and state parks.

**Promote regional conventions, community events, sporting events and shopping.**

**Gain feature stories in regional and national consumer publications** about events and attractions that expose our region’s unique appeal, with particular emphasis on expanding dinosaur opportunities.

**Develop both online marketing and online resources** to increase visitor interest in the region and make it easy for visitors to find and use information that will inspire planning.

**Gain increased exposure** of Missouri River Country online through web-based public relations, keyword placements on the search engines, online packages, social media, apps and related tactics.

**Implement state’s brand of three pillars**: 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; 3) Breathtaking experiences by day and relaxing hospitality at night.

**Seek opportunities to promote** the Fort Peck and Fort Belknap Indian Reservations and work with tribal leaders to promote cultures of the tribes and tourism activities.

To measure success we listed increase bed tax by 1% and website visits by 5% in several of the methods. For several years our bed tax collections and our website were both down. We see our bed tax as an overall achievement, if it increases it relates to all of our advertising efforts. Last year it was up 6% and now with Covid-19 we will probably drop again. We finally felt we were coming out of our downward trend. The Eastern MT Initiative was a huge benefit to us and we would see results from it for years with the grants to establish new marketing that we didn’t have the funds to do on our own. A few years ago we had a grant to do a complete redo of our website. That’s part of the reason for the website increasing. We were up 26% last year. If both methods were successful, bed tax is overall and visitors use the website to plan trips we would know that the website is working and our advertising is working to bring visitation to MRC.

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

**JOINT VENTURES**

Missouri River Country recognizes that budgeting is a limitation on our marketing expenses. For this reason, seeking Joint Ventures with MOTBD and building a relationship is a vital part of our marketing strategy. In FY20, Joint Venture placements included:

- Photographer Justin Kauffman visited Missouri River Country, through which we gained a number of high quality photographs to use for marketing.
- Sojern Digital Joint Venture with MOTBD
- Parent Magazine Joint Venture with MOTBD

We would like to do these again in FY21, but due to the current conditions we might not be able to. We realize the benefits of these Joint Ventures and they will take top priority. At this time we don't know of any JV's that would be more Regional, but that would be something that might fit into our plan for FY21. We would like to see more JV's at affordable costs to us lower funded entities.

Optional: Include attachment here.        Photo Influencer 3.jpg

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

**COOPERATIVE OPPORTUNITIES**

With MRC's budgeting limitations, seeking Co-op opportunities with other Regions/CVB’s and building relationships with other partners in the industry is a vital part of our marketing strategy. In FY19, cooperative placements included:

In June of 2018, Missouri River Country was one stop in a three-week, multi-region cooperative venture with social media influencer and photographer, Andy Austin. Andy started his journey in Missouri River Country where he visited Fort Peck and Fort Peck Lake, Sidney and Meadowlark Brewing Company, toured the MonDak Heritage Center, camped,
fished and explored the night skies along the Yellowstone River, and much more. This was a joint venture with Visit Southeast Montana, Southwest Montana, Western Montana's Glacier Country, Yellowstone Country Montana, Inc., and Destination Missoula.

Ad was placed in Western Montana’s Glacier Country’s travel guide

Ad was placed in Visit Southeast Montana’s travel guide

Lee Newspaper Statewide buy with Glasgow TIBD

Cape Air Magazine with Visit Southeast Montana

True West feature with Visit Southeast Montana

MT Dinosaur Trail-website and video project

Lewis & Clark Partnership

Local Co-op Marketing with Chambers and Communities-Glasgow, Sidney, Garfield County, Daniels County and Malta

Missouri River Country would like to continue to do Joint Ventures with the other Regions/CVB’s. We don’t know what these would be at this time or if funding will be available, but once again we know that partnering leverages our marketing dollars. See section “c” for results.

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

In FY20 Missouri River Country participated in Sojern and Parenting Magazine, with MOTBD. We also partnered with Sidney CVB on a couple print ads, and with other regions on the Montana Dinosaur Trail and Lewis and Clark Trail.

Joint ventures that we did in FY19: Lewis and Clark with several Regions, Sojern, and Parenting Magazine with MOTBD and a Cadian Campaign partnership with Central MT, Dakota Magazine with Sidney Chamber, Glacier Country, and Destination Missoula, and the Accommodations Book with MOTBD and the other Regions. Partnerships are a huge benefit for our Region. Our bed tax increased 6% and our website showed a 26% increase. CPC on our banners were $1.20, CTR is .36% with 1,651,137 impressions. We will continue the L&C campaign, it has done website updates that link to our site. We find that L&C is still popular with inquiry calls to the office. The cost was $1500. The Canadian Campaign with Central MT was a huge success.

Accommodation book we feel is necessary to support with a small contribution on our part of $102.77. The Canadian Campaign with Central MT was a huge success.

We will continue the L&C campaign, it has done website updates that link to our site. We find that L&C is still popular with inquiry calls to the office. The cost was $1500. The Accommodation book we feel is necessary to support with a small contribution on our part of $102.77. The Canadian Campaign with Central MT was a huge success.

MRC contributed $500, MOTBD also contributed to this campaign. Other partnerships with Glacier, Missoula, Parenting, Sojern, Dakota Magazine. We will continue to do Joint Ventures when it fits into our Marketing Plan for success. We try to budget as much as we can into Joint Ventures because partnerships arise throughout the year. All the Joint Ventures we did were successful and we will continue to do them as funding allows.

Optional: Include attachments here. Alicia Nelson Hell Creek.jpg

Optional: Include attachments here. YELLOWSTONE ABOVE SIDNEY (2).jpg


Marketing Segment, Method & Budget

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<td>Consumer</td>
<td>Travel/Trade Shows</td>
<td>MRC will attend trade shows that target our geographic, demographic and psychographic markets to the high-value, low-impact visitors according to the narrative of our plan and provide them with information about our region. We will purchase giveaway items for an additional attraction to our booth, such as agates, and novelty items. At our sports shows we have interest from people seeking outfitters and guides. We supply the information to them and will bring home any leads and distribute them to the appropriate businesses. With the recent Covid-19 Pandemic we probably won’t be able to do as many shows and we will focus on a Regional Market, such as in-state, North Dakota, and South Dakota. We will also consider a show in Regina, which would be a close driving distance if the borders open.</td>
<td>In a Consumer Show survey done by ITRR it was noted that two regions that exhibited at a show were able to highlight the entire state and help in visitation. When we do shows people are interested in MT and we provide them with the information to plan their trip. Our recent shows that we attended in FY20 have showed a great response rate. All results haven’t been finalized yet. the ISE Sacramento, CA Sportshow had an attendance of 38,000 to 38,000. CA is in our top 10 visited states according to 2019 ITRR. A couple years ago we marketed in ND and according to 2019 ITRR report ND is our top state where visitors come from. According to the Tourism Research Dashboard, Mobile Location Data, ND was second to Montana for visitors coming to our region. According to ISE “the biggest advantage Destination Exhibitors have is putting a smiling and informed face in front of the hundreds of attendees who come to shows. MRC is one of Montana’s Ambassadors. Folks stop by with questions about what Montana has to offer, and they get answers. The internet is a wonderful thing but it only leaves a momentary impression.” Arrivalist Data shows most of our regions visitors come from MT, ND and MN. It also had WA and SD on the list. If funding is available we will focus on these shows.</td>
<td>MRC will measure success by tracking the attendance, with a goal of at least 10,000 attendees and interest shown at the shows and the information handed out. A goal of at least 350 MRC travel planners at each show, along with 100 each other misc. brochures and information. A report will be given after the show to see if it was successful or not and whether we should continue to do shows at that destination.</td>
<td>MRC will exhibit at target market trade shows and promote our spectacular nature, charming small towns, and breathtaking experiences and provide them with information. We will market our winter, ice fishing, hunting/fishing, and warm season attractions and events. We will attract them to our booth with giveaways, trinkets, and give them our MRC bags to collected information. We display dino replicas on our table for an added attraction. The response is overwhelming from adults and youth alike. For our outdoor sports shows we will distribute our new Hunting/Fishing Guidebook.</td>
<td>$6,000.00</td>
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In previous years MRC leased billboards designed to reach out-of-state tourists traveling through our region, increasing awareness of the MT Dinosaur Trail. We had a new design in FY19 to attract visitors to the Dinosaur Museums and also other museums and attractions. These billboards are strategically placed along Hwy 2, 12, 128, and 12 in Osseo and Dodson. We update the signs as needed.

In FY21 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic some of the Dinosaur Museums might not open, therefore we will need to re-evaluate this segment moving forward. The MRC BOD have set a date of Sept. 15th to review how the last 3 months have gone with travel, visitors and the opening of the museums. We realize the importance of spending the funds wisely and if we can’t receive a ROI then we will transfer funding from the Billboard budget to other areas of our marketing budget. We would look at more website development and SEM. We would like to keep the Billboards in the budget at this time because if we cancel them we chance not getting signage back.

MRC has an ongoing need for photos and videos for our marketing projects and social media. We will utilize the MOTBD photos in Web Dam to use where there is a need, but those photos are limited and doesn’t provide any videos. Photography and video are critical in inspiring potential visitors to visit MRC. It is vital that we are able to maximize our budget while still obtaining high quality photos and videos of our region. Our Travel Planner designer lets us use his photos for other projects which really helps with our limited budget. MRC purchases photos and develops videos in our marketing efforts. The photos have been used in print and online advertising and our Travel Planner. Photos play an important role in the attractiveness of advertising our charming and breathtaking wonders. Research shows that pictures tell the story. Photography helps utilize the social media platforms for marketing. The brain usually can only process limited information at a time. Photos are images to make the potential traveler have a better understanding of what we have to offer. According to www.guttulus.com, “Good photography commands the attention of customers. No matter how great your product or the service that you offer is, without impressive imagery that communicates, potential customers are more likely to ignore the product.” Or in our case look for other places to visit. We believe good photography sells us, as we have some of the most spectacular nature and some of the darkest, beautiful skies. According to 2019 ITRR nature photography has some of the most spectacular landscapes. Viewers often find panoramic photos of nature even more appealing when they can place themselves viewing the landscape.

In FY19 ITRR’s report showed that 3% of visitors used billboards as a source of information during their trip. According to Geopath, our three signs had a weekly average total of 25,686 impressions. Dodson-8,238, Osseo-6,762, Wolf Point-12,886. According to Yesco Sign Company, billboards deliver a timely message, convenient to the point of visitation, and impulsive visitation. They also state that there is a low CPM and high ROI on billboards. Profile types of people driving by our boards are Young & Rustic, and Back Country Folks. The Wolf Point and Osseo boards have a very high percentage of people driving by it that fall into the “Young and Rustic” category. The description of these people are composed of restless singles, and young families in the nation’s rural areas. They enjoy the outdoors on their ATV’s but are also big video gamers and follow NASCAR and monster trucks. This is based on survey data and cell phone data from Geopath.

Our billboards advertise our dinosaur museums. Here is what we are seeing for visitation at those facilities. The Fort Pack Interpretive Center’s visitation was down 11% at 20,760 recorded visitors, Phillips County Museum, up by 24% at 4926, GPDM had a 15% increase in visitors. They reported that visitors did comment on seeing the billboard signs. The Garfield County Museum was up 10% at 785 visitors.

MRC realizes the importance of having our spectacular nature captured through photos and videos. We will continue to maintain and update photos and videos as needed. We have been working on building relationships with photographers based in the area as well as using photo influencers through cooperative opportunities to increase the items in our photo library and then, in turn, use these photos on social media, and in developing our new website and travel planner. We are in need of photos with people. People photos make our spectacular nature even more appealing when you can place yourself viewing the landscape.

MRC received 29.544 inquiries in FY19 from our print advertising. According to https://marketing.sfgate.com/blog/4-reasons-why-print-advertising-still-works, print advertisements have a significant success by increasing our library with wildlife, nature, night skies and people photos to use in our travel guide, creative and website. We will also work on promoting MRC with video footage to show at trade shows and on our website and promote MRC’s spectacular nature, contributing to at least 1 new video and 5 new photos.

MRC will measure success by tracking the effectiveness of our advertising with a goal of under $5.00 CPM and will strive to receive at least 5000.
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<th>Consumer</th>
<th>Print Advertising</th>
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<td>impact on converting prospects into customers, or in our case visitors. It also states that printed ads have much more influence on buying or visiting decisions than electronic advertisements, if the incorrect target demographics are used and bought by the target audience. Each year we carefully determine the right placements for our advertising.</td>
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<td>MRC sends out our E-Newsletters to a growing data base of 5000+ recipients with an average of 18% opens. According to Constant Contact the average open rate is 20%, but can fluctuate from 15% to 50% with an open click rate of 6%. We are currently seeing an average click rate of 4%. Email automation ensures that everything you have to say or offer to potential visitors reaches them automatically and immediately. Sending emails drives significant results according to Quick Facts-Constant Contact.</td>
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<td>Website visits in FY19 were up 26% with the launching of our new website. MRC realizes websites are one of the most important ways to promote our area. According to mindfirecomm.com, &quot;banner ads first introduced in Global Network Navigator in 1993, few people understood the impact this would have on the advertising industry. To sum things up it was a preeeеееееееeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeleeesly big deal.&quot; As we all know it’s a technology world and online advertising is the right direction to go when marketing our region. There are also countless ways to track the success.</td>
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<td>We will print and update as needed, our promotional pocket maps, and brochures such as Canoe/Kayaking, L &amp;C, hunting &amp; fishing, calendar of events, rock hounding, astronomy locations, brewery trail, birding and dinosaurs. We will also print and design a useful resource map of MRC showing attractions, roads, trails and points of interest. Any printed material that we do will include shipping costs that will be and subtracted accordingly. We will continue to do Co-op Marketing projects with communities that want to print a brochure/card or do signage for their communities. We will distribute an allocated amount of these brochures throughout MRC, at trade shows, and send out upon request. We will also purchase a few brochure racks where brochures are needed to be distributed. MRC doesn’t have a paid distribution service, therefore paid staff will deliver the brochures and</td>
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<th>Consumer</th>
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<td>MRC will continue to do regular E-Newsletters using Constant Contact to promote our area events and attractions. These newsletters provide information about events and attractions to entice a potential visitor to MRC. We will also customize E-mails with different target audiences and niche markets. Large format E-blasts are more engaging to the reader with more links and useful information.</td>
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<td>MRC realizes the importance of e-mails in this technology age, whether by computer or mobile. The past E-Newsletters and E-Blasts have proven effective. We will continue to promote MRC through E-mails since we have seen success in the past and has drove visitors to our website. The Marketing Personnel director sends out these newsletters on a regular basis using the program Constant Contact. This is a cost saving way of doing it.</td>
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<td>MRC will place digital advertisements on sites and publications where we feel that we can maximize our reach to our target and demographic markets in our narrative. Our advertisements will focus on the pillars of MRC's attractions: dinosaurs, history and culture, outdoor recreation, hunting/fishing and charming small towns.</td>
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<th>Online/Digital Advertising</th>
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<td>MRC will print and update as needed, our promotional pocket maps, and brochures such as Canoe/Kayaking, L &amp;C, hunting &amp; fishing, calendar of events, rock hounding, astronomy locations, brewery trail, birding and dinosaurs. We will also print and design a useful resource map of MRC showing attractions, roads, trails and points of interest. Any printed material that we do will include shipping costs that will be and subtracted accordingly. We will continue to do Co-op Marketing projects with communities that want to print a brochure/card or do signage for their communities. We will distribute an allocated amount of these brochures throughout MRC, at trade shows, and send out upon request. We will also purchase a few brochure racks where brochures are needed to be distributed. MRC doesn’t have a paid distribution service, therefore paid staff will deliver the brochures and</td>
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<th>Consumer</th>
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<td>These specialty brochures are handed out at trade shows and requested through our website. They are delivered to area brochure racks. We usually hand out around 200 each at our trade shows. We were running low on several of these brochures so the demand has been high. According to naturalnewsblogs.com/8-reasons-brochure-still-important-marketing-tool-business, &quot;they give a clean look to your readers&quot; &quot;Brochures are the best for marketing products as they offer a simple and clean look to a design and it is easier for the viewers to find relevant information about your business or products. In other words, your readers are able to scan critical information about your products and its features without straining their eyes.&quot; Here in MRC we find them very useful for people that like to have a print piece in their hands.</td>
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<td>MRC will place digital advertisements on sites and publications where we feel that we can maximize our reach to our target and demographic markets in our narrative. Our advertisements will focus on the pillars of MRC's attractions: dinosaurs, history and culture, outdoor recreation, hunting/fishing and charming small towns.</td>
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<th>Consumer</th>
<th>Travel Guide</th>
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<td>MRC will design our primary and informational travel planner in FY21. Travel planners are an important marketing piece that provides information, pictures, maps and tools needed by the visitor to plan their trips and spend more time in MRC. FY20 was our print year. This has proven to be very cost effective by doing an updated planner every 2 years, alternating years between design and print. Shipping costs are included in the bidding process and will be invoiced accordingly.</td>
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<td>In FY19 MRC distributed 13,766 travel planners through the mail, delivered to communities by the ED and MP, mileage paid at state rate, and taken to trade shows. First time visitor groups according to ITRR were 3%, and repeat visitors 91%. These statistics show that once visitors experience MRC they return. Travel guides have proven to help a potential visitor plan their trip and spend extra time in MRC. Arrivalist Data shows visitors to our region are mainly from MT, ND and MN.</td>
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<td>MRC will measure success by tracking the amount of planners that are sent out each year and track our bed tax collections with a goal of 1% increase, and track how many are handed out at trade shows with an average of 350 for each show, and track our website visits with a goal of 10% increase and 9000 more unique visitors to the site.</td>
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<td>MRC prints and designs our travel planner in a 2-year cycle. This informational piece is a necessity to attracting visitors to MRC and providing them a print piece to help plan their trip and to extend their stay. We will continue to distribute them at trade shows and mail to inquiry requests, chambers and VIC's, and distribute them in MRC and the surrounding area for visitors to pick up along their way. Due to restricted travel conditions if funding is limited, we will work on design for two years to stretch funding.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer</th>
<th>Joint Ventures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MRC sees the value of Joint Ventures and partnering with MOTBD and other Regions to reach the best market and leverage our marketing dollars. We will take advantage of match funding opportunities when available and within our budget. Please see the narrative portion of our FY21 Marketing Plan to see where our Joint Venture Marketing funds were spent. New joint venture marketing will include Night Skies with other regions. We will continue to promote the MT Dinosaur Trail and L&amp;C Trail. The Eastern MT Initiative helped boost our marketing efforts with grants they provided and the extra marketing MOTBD did to promote Eastern MT.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Joint Ventures line item will help with more accurate tracking. When partnering with MOTBD and other Regions our marketing efforts go further. According to Google, meaningful partnerships are the foundation for success. Partnerships is what enables many companies to make continuous improvements. By sharing with others, you can direct your resources and capabilities to projects you consider most important. In MRC, Joint Ventures are even more beneficial with our limited budget. We would like to see more affordable and regional opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRC will measure success by our bed tax revenue, website visits and overall inquiries including the MT dinosaur trail and Lewis and Clark projects. Reports will be given on the Dinosaur Trail and L&amp;C Trail. We will plan to increase our bed tax by 1% and website visits by 10% and 9000 more unique visitors to the website.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint ventures and partnerships are an important part in marketing Montana and MRC. We gain more exposure and our marketing dollars go further, especially with our limited budget. We will join in partnerships whenever it meets our target markets and budget. For FY21 we will consider Parenting and Sojern joint ventures with MOTBD. We will also do other partnerships throughout the year with other regions and Cooperative Marketing with our local communities. See the narrative portion or our marketing plan to see where our Joint Ventures and Cooperative funds have been spent in the past.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$9,000.00</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer</th>
<th>Ad Agency Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MRC has contracted with Windfall, Inc. as their Agency of Record. Windfall is a professional agency that excels in Marketing Strategies. The MRC board of directors are confident that Windfall will market MRC as a destination that will result in more visitation to our Region. They will provide a full media plan, marketing plan, market research, social media support, digital leadership, search engine marketing and optimization, and website support. Windfall is also contracted by other tourism partners so they are knowledgeable to follow the MT brand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windfall, Inc. has contracted with 4 other tourism regions and 1 CVB. Research has shown that the previous regions and CVB have been successful with Windfall’s marketing efforts. FY21 will be our 4th year contracting with them. We have confidence that they will provide the marketing strategies necessary to increase our bed tax revenue with a new and aggressive media plan, media and social plan. They have created new ads that are attractive and eye catching. According to Google, by partnering with an agency, you will gain unprecedented access to a considerable talent pool, which will ultimately save your business both time and money.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRC will measure the success of these projects by tracking our website visits and our visitation at our events, attractions and the whole region. MRC needs the assistance of an ad agency to help market our region as a destination. They will provide us with the marketing necessary to bring more visitors and recognition to MRC. We will measure our success by tracking our website visits, bed tax revenue, social media and collect leads with a goal of a 1% bed tax increase, 10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windfall will provide a yearlong strategic media plan that will focus on media placements, strategic partnerships, and digital and social resource management. They will research and develop new and expanded strategies to grow the website and develop content.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$12,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>Search Engine Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>Website/Internet Development/Updates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Radio &amp; Television Advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Support</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Outreach</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Opportunity Marketing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>TAC/Governor’s Conference meetings</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Marketing Support

Marketing/Publicity Personnel

MRC's ED will commit to marketing obligations outside the normal scope of responsibilities outlined in the current job description. No overtime will be received between the two positions and hours will be tracked and recorded for this position. Duties will be directed at marketing MRC as a destination.

Marketing Support

Cooperative Marketing

MRC will continue to work with communities to help them promote their area or an event in their town. In the past we have done a 50/50 match with a community to print brochures, posters, signage, and advertise an event on the radio, newspaper, or TV. See Cooperative Marketing in the MRC FY21 narrative portion. We will take advantage of the new Rules and Regulations that permit MRC to advertise conventions. We would like to partner with the larger Chambers and communities with motels to accommodate convention attendees. MRC will plan to bring more conventions to our region.

Marketing Support

Equipment

Office equipment is needed to maintain a professional office. With the increase in technology the most up to date equipment is needed.

According to: https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/81634, "Businesses existed before there were computers, fax machines, telephones and copiers, but few entrepreneurs these days would want to try to grow a company without the advantages modern information technology can bring. Merely having access to the internet—with its myriad opportunities for finding customers, building brands, researching suppliers and communicating with employees and others—can easily justify updating the technology in your office."

MRC will purchase equipment as needed.

MRC needs to maintain a professional office. New equipment is necessary to keep up with the new technology and advancing society. We will only get new equipment when and as needed.

$420.00

Publicity

Press Trips

MRC will host Press/FAM Trips, allowing us to reach more writers and ultimately generate more publicity. In the past we have coordinated FAM's with MOTBD and other regions. We would plan to continue this joint venture to increase awareness of our region of nature, hunting, fishing, dinosaurs, history, birding, Native American culture and arts.

Our recent Press Trips with Jason Mitchell Outdoor Television on mule deer hunting, ice fishing, walleye fishing, and lake trout fishing have produced several articles in publications such as Midwest Outdoors, In-Fisherman and MN Sporting Journal. They are still producing inquiries because he runs the TV show "River Country.

MRC will measure the success of our FAM's by increasing awareness of MRC through publications, videos, and press releases.

Press/FAM Trips are an important way of getting exposure to MRC. When working with the MOTBD they help us get the best journalists to produce the best coverage of our area. We will continue to work with Jason Mitchell because of past successes. He has produced videos and YouTube videos that we will continue to utilize and

$1,000.00

$28,000.00

$4,000.00
American Culture, recreation/outdoors, night skies, outlaws, boating, canoeing, ice fishing and anything thing that would make MRC a memorable place to a visitor.

shows several times throughout the year.

television with a goal of $15,000 in Publicity Value

keep updating as needed. We will take advantage of opportunities to use photographers and outfitters to achieve our publicity goals.

MRC's social media efforts will include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, You Tube, and Pinterest and any social media venues that fit our market. We will continue to do promotions, contests and giveaways to increase our "Likes", and recognition of MRC.

We currently have 14,023 likes on Facebook. We have gained 913 in the past year, and we will continue to grow our likes with social media campaigns. We have 1135 followers on Instagram, an increase of 149 and, 371 followers on Twitter, an increase of 28. Research shows that we have increased on all Social sites.

MRC will measure success by tracking our "Likes" and "Followers" with a goal of 100 new likes on all Social Media channels. We will also try to do a minimum of 2 posts a week.

Social Media is growing and becoming a popular way of advertising. MRC will continue with the social media venues to capture the social media audiences to attract visitors to MRC. While much effort is put into Social Media, MRC struggles with likes and followers. We continually increase and will increase with our continued efforts, contests and giveaways. The MP will contribute to most of the social media marketing efforts.

$1,000.00

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing Segment</th>
<th>Marketing Method</th>
<th>Bed tax funded budget</th>
<th>Non bed tax funded budget (optional)</th>
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<td>Consumer</td>
<td>Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast</td>
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<td>Online/Digital Advertising</td>
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<td>Ad Agency Services</td>
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### Marketing Support

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<td>TAC/Governor’s Conference meetings</td>
<td>FY21 Pie Chart Budget.xlsx</td>
<td>14 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/Publicity Personnel</td>
<td>FY21 Pie Chart Budget.xlsx</td>
<td>14 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Marketing</td>
<td>FY21 Pie Chart Budget.xlsx</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
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**Total: $215,410.00**

### Publicity

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>FY21 Pie Chart Budget.xlsx</td>
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**Total: $5,500.00**

### Miscellaneous Attachments

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>FY21 Pie Chart</td>
<td>FY21 Pie Chart Budget.xlsx</td>
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<tr>
<td>Segment Pie Chart</td>
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**Total: $95,459.00**

### Reg/CVB Required Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>File Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY21 Pie Chart Budget</td>
<td>FY21 Pie Chart Budget.xlsx</td>
<td>14 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-21-20 MRC board meeting minutes approving Marketing Plan</td>
<td>MRC minutes 04-21-2020.docx</td>
<td>29 KB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-21-20 MRC board meeting minutes approving Marketing Plan</td>
<td>MRC minutes 04-21-2020.docx</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pledge of Understanding, Application for Lodging Tax Revenue FY21, Certificate of Compliance FY21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pledge of Understanding, Application for Lodging Tax Revenue FY21, Certificate of Compliance FY21</td>
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**Total: $215,410.00**