



Grant Details

95522 - FY21 Region/CVB Marketing Plan

101305 - FY21 Red Lodge Area Chamber/CVB Marketing Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: FY21 Red Lodge Area Chamber/CVB Marketing Plan
Grant Number: 21-51-026
Grant Status: Underway
Comments:
Applicant Organization: Red Lodge Chamber of Commerce/Visitors Center
Grantee Contact: Sherry Weamer
Award Year: 2020
Program Area: DOC Office of Tourism
Amounts:
Contract Dates: Contract Sent Contract Received Contract Executed
Project Dates: 06/15/2020 07/01/2020 06/30/2021
 Proposal Date Project Start Project End
Grant Administrator: Barb Sanem
Contract Number: 21-51-026
Award Year: 2020

Contract Dates

Contract Sent Contract Received Contract Executed Contract Legal

Project Dates 07/01/2020
 06/30/2021

Project Start Project End

Comments

Amendment Comments

Community & Brand Support

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

DESCRIBE YOUR DESTINATION

Nestled in Montana's magnificent Beartooth Mountains and surrounded by Custer Gallatin National Forest, Red Lodge delivers world-class outdoor recreation and access to Yellowstone National Park via the world-renowned Beartooth Highway. In our historic downtown, you'll enjoy locally owned shops, quality restaurants, plenty of first-class accommodations and entertainment. No matter what the season, Red Lodge is your Base Camp to the Beartooths.

The Red Lodge visitor arrives here looking forward to its natural beauty and quaint charm. What they discover is its magic. And for that, they return again and again, over a lifetime. Like so much of Montana, Red Lodge is surrounded by natural splendor -- Montana's highest peaks frame our back yards, its crystal-clear waterways tumble down our valleys, and that unique combination of pine and aspen scents invigorate our air. But as the Red Lodge visitor knows, we have something special going on here; we're just far enough off the beaten path that locals truly appreciate visitors, we want to say "Hello" when we see someone new in town, and we do not just throw out the welcome mat for you, we show you why we love living here.

Today's travelers are looking for that one of a kind of experience. It's one Red Lodge excels at delivering.

A year-round population of just over 2,000 and a historic Main Street business district with great restaurants, shopping, entertainment, and accommodations means a stay in Red Lodge is an opportunity to make friends with locals.

Red Lodge, Montana, 2016 Gateway Community of the Year, anchors the most scenic route into Yellowstone National Park: the 68-mile

alpine and structural wonder of the Beartooth Highway, an "All-American Road". Open late May-October, visitors come from around the world to experience its summer snowfields, high-mountain vistas, and legendary curves.

Sitting on the edge of a National Forest, Red Lodge lays claim to more than 3.6 million acres of uninterrupted and unspoiled wild country as our "backyard." Much of that is easily accessible with well-marked trails for hikers, horseback riders, and many near town are even open to bicyclists. Whatever the day's adventures entail, Red Lodge is the perfect Base Camp to the Beartooths.

Red Lodge is easily accessed from Interstate I-90 via State Hwy 212 from Laurel and Hwy 78 from Columbus. It is a one hour drive from Logan International Airport in Billings which is served by four major Airlines, United, Delta, Alaska and American Airlines, and by Cody's airport which is served by United and Delta.

OUR STRENGTHS:

Gateway to Yellowstone National Park

The Most Scenic Route to Yellowstone Park, over the Beartooth Highway

The Beartooth Highway

Dubbed "the most beautiful roadway in America" by On the Road correspondent Charles Kuralt, the Beartooth Highway climbs to an astounding 10,947 feet above sea level. As it winds its way from Red Lodge to Yellowstone National Park, the Highway traverses an impressive range of ecosystems and geological wonders. At the highway's summit, travelers find themselves in a sky-high world of glacial cirques, clear alpine lakes, and snow that lingers through the summer months.

Gateway to the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness

Our back yard consists of millions of acres of high-country wilderness. As early as 1897, trails began snaking their way up the West Fork canyon, cleared by hand with saws and pickaxes. Today those same trails can take you to pristine country where visitors can enjoy a variety of outdoor activities.

Great Shops, Restaurants and Music Entertainment

Charming historic downtown hosts a variety of locally owned stores run by helpful, knowledgeable staff. Pop into one of the many restaurants for a quick burger and a locally brewed beer, or experience fine dining featuring wild game and other local fare. In 2018, eight of our local restaurants were selected to participate in Taste Our Place which is a program launched by the State of Montana. The Taste Our Place logo is a declaration of authentic Montana Quality. Relax and listen to some great music from our many local musicians or attend a first run movie at the historic Roman Theater.

Year-round Skiing

During the winter months enjoy bountiful snow, shimmering blue skies and terrain for all abilities that make for great fun on the slopes. Red Lodge Mountain is open from mid-November through mid-April.

During the summer months, the Beartooth Highway is your chair lift to acres of open terrain for skiing and snowboarding. For those that are not interested in hiking, there is Beartooth Basin with two permanent poma lifts for skier access to the Twin Lakes headwall.

Arts and Culture

Catch the spirit of today at one of the many art and photography galleries in town or experience various styles of art at the Carbon County Arts Guild & Depot Gallery and the Red Lodge Clay Center. For history enthusiasts, Red Lodge is home to the Carbon County Historical Society and Museum where visitors can learn about the colorful history of Red Lodge and the surrounding areas.

Events and Attractions

Red Lodge is home to many events and year-round attractions. Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary - Home of Champions Rodeo - Beartooth Rally - Winter Fest - National Finals Ski-Joring - Christmas Stroll - Fun Run - Iron Horse Motorcycle Rodeo - Red Lodge Songwriter Festival - Bearcreek Downs Pig Races - Beartooth Run - Shredfest, Cruisen' Red Lodge and many more.

Proximity to Billings

Billings is the largest city in Montana with a population of over 110,000 and a major transportation hub for South Central Montana. Travelers can reach Billings by air, bus or car on two east and west and via north and south Interstate highways. Billings Logan International Airport is served by four major airlines United, Delta, Alaska, and American.

Amenities

Red Lodge may seem like a remote destination to some visitors, but they will be pleased to find we have the same amenities and comforts they have at home. More than adequate cell phone coverage and broadband internet is available in most areas.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Motorcycle/Auto Groups

The Beartooth Highway was recently voted the *Number 1 Motorcycling Road in America* by the American Motorcyclist Association. It is a "bucket list" item for many motorcycle enthusiasts.

Small Groups

Red Lodge is the perfect destination for small groups. RV clubs, executive retreats, conventions of 200 people or less, craft clubs, all find the comfortable meeting spaces and hospitality of Red Lodge a great place to spur creativity, make new friendships and renew old relationships.

Weddings/Reunions

Picturesque venues, quality lodging options, and numerous recreational opportunities in the surrounding area make Red Lodge the perfect setting to gather family and friends for your wedding or reunion.

Tournaments/Community Events

The newly revamped Roosevelt Center, our modern high school auditorium, and other historic venues, provide the opportunity to house tournaments as well as larger community events.

Outdoor Competitions

Challenging, yet stunningly beautiful terrain attracts competitors from around the country to a multitude of outdoor events. Included among these events are the Beartooth Run, Nitty Gritty Road Race, Collegiate Ski Races, National Ski Joring Championships and the summer Shredfest which is the only summer qualifier in North America for the Freeride World Tour.

Media Partnership Opportunities

Billings has a wide reach with television, radio and print media that we can better utilize with positive and timely press releases and promotional partnering. Quarterly, the Billings Gazette features what is going on in Red Lodge in its Explore editorial section. More can be done with KTVQ, KULR, YPR, and the print media options in Billings, Yellowstone Valley Women, and Magic Magazine, among others.

Annual Events

Red Lodge has a growing number of competitive, recreational and cultural events. Many of these events take place during the summer months but winter events such as the Alpine Ski Races, National Ski Joring Championships, and Winter Fest also attract visitors from in state and out of state locations. In the Summertime we have Red Lodge Music Festival, Red Lodge Songwriter Festival, Fourth of July Rodeos and Parades, Beartooth Basin Summer Ski Area, Beartooth Bike Rally, Cruisen' Red Lodge Vintage Car Show, and Labor Day Fun Run just to name a few.

Location and Way Finding Signage

Red Lodge is miles from a major highway. Montana Highway signs point Yellowstone Park travelers past Red Lodge exits or towards the Chief Joseph Highway in Wyoming. Location and Way Finding Signage has finally come to fruition and will be implemented in time for this year tourist season.

OUR CHALLENGES:

COVID 19

In addition to our normal challenges, Red Lodge will have the added, significant challenge of adjusting to changes brought forth by the continuing COVID 19 Pandemic. Fear and uncertainty provide challenges on both ends of the spectrum. From the business perspective, residents are afraid of bringing COVID 19 into a town that has had very few cases in spite of being a high profile area for visitors. On the other side, travelers that we normally expect are hunkering down due to the pandemic and are choosing not to travel either from fear of catching the virus or from the many economic hardships that were suddenly thrust upon them. One of most significant challenges will be making business and travelers alike feel safe enjoying what our community has to offer while maintaining proper social distancing (along with any other restrictions the CDC may recommend) as we find our way forward.

Making Red Lodge a Destination

Red Lodge is used as a 'Pass Through' for the Beartooth Highway and Yellowstone Park in the summer. If we can influence a small percentage of summer travelers to stay one additional night in Red Lodge and enjoy all the offerings of our town and surrounding area, it will make a significant impact on our local economy. In the winter months we need to reinforce Red Lodge as a winter destination to skiers and non-skiers alike. First class restaurants, comfortable accommodations, great shopping, restful relaxation, ice-skating, Nordic skiing, wildlife viewing, and hiking are a few of the winter time activities available in Red Lodge. Red Lodge Mountain is a fabulous, family-oriented alpine ski area.

Location and Way Finding Signage

Red Lodge is miles from a major highway. Montana Highway signs point Yellowstone Park travelers past Red Lodge exits or towards the Chief Joseph Highway in Wyoming.

Montana is perceived as challenging to access. In addition to the states' destination attribute weaknesses, both the Montana and Red Lodge brand brings with it this perceived access challenge.

Beartooth Highway is Seasonal

Weather and snow plow funding often delay the opening of the Beartooth Highway in the spring. Snowstorms will temporarily close the road. Timely communication of the road status is challenging with reports of closures carrying a higher priority than reports of the Highway re-opening. The portion of the Highway located in Wyoming is a secondary priority for snowplows.

Make Winter Success Less Dependent on the Snow Conditions at Red Lodge Mountain

Red Lodge Mountain is the major draw for Red Lodge in the winter season. The town's commerce follows the quality of the snow conditions on the mountain. We can reduce the dips when snow conditions are not at their best by promoting all of the other amenities, events, and winter time activities going on in Red Lodge. Red Lodge is within easy reach of public access to BLM lands, Forest Service lands, and national parks. Hiking, cross country skiing, wildlife viewing, scenic drives, shopping, fine dining, and relaxing in one of our great accommodations are all available.

Online Mapping Services

Google Maps and others report inaccurate information for routes and business addresses.

Lack of City Marketing Support

While the City of Red Lodge collects a Resort Tax, the governing body offers no marketing or promotional funds for Red Lodge.

Perceived lack of comforts/technologies

Montana is perceived to be somewhat remote and lacking many of the amenities and technologies those travelers who may be less outdoor minded are looking for.

Perceived costs and time requirements inhibit visitation to Montana. Research shows focus group and in-depth participants expressed serious concerns about the cost of a trip to Montana. Beyond the cost of traveling to Montana, many generally felt that a trip to Montana would require a significant investment of time.

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS:

Jackson Hole, WY

Popular tourism destination because of its proximity to Yellowstone & Grand Teton National Parks. Website, mobile, social media, and internet advertising resources.

Livingston, MT/Gardiner, MT

Way finding signage on I-90. Year-round entrance to Yellowstone Park.

Bozeman, MT / Big Sky, MT

Greater variety in lodging, dining and shopping opportunities, including groups, conventions and conferences. Proximity to Yellowstone Park. Four-season activities. Popular ski area. Cultural, historic, and educational activities, events, and attractions. Significantly greater marketing dollars.

West Yellowstone, MT

West entrance to Yellowstone Park. The name West Yellowstone. More lodging and dining options. Significantly greater marketing dollars.

Cody, WY

Eastern gateway to Yellowstone Park, access to five scenic byways including Chief Joseph Highway is a second route to Beartooth Highway and Northeast entrance. Lodging options, Buffalo Bill Center of the West, regional airport. By partnering with Wyoming Tourism, Cody has successfully marketed itself as "Yellowstone Country" and its airport "Yellowstone Airport." Significantly more funding for promotion is directed to Cody by local, county and state monies.

Colorado

Travelers' perceptions make Colorado Montana's top competitor. In addition to awareness, demand, excitement for, and visitation at significantly higher rates than Montana, research illuminated the directly competitive relationship Colorado represents. In discussing where to go in the West and Montana specifically, it was clear that most research participants viewed Colorado as the destination they would be heavily weighing Montana against, and a more persuasive one at that. These travelers felt Colorado had similar offerings on a basic level—spectacular natural beauty, abundance of outdoor recreation, outdoor culture, and winter sports. Very importantly, Colorado's cities, infrastructure, and mature tourism product were seen as providing more of a "safety net," something that was keenly on the minds of those who were less on the outdoor spectrum and/or less familiar with traveling in this region of the U.S.

MONTANA'S BRAND PILLARS:

The Montana Brand Pillars were seemingly written for Red Lodge.

Nestled in the Beartooth Mountains, with Yellowstone Park just up the road, and the Beartooth All American Highway at our doorstep, we truly offer more spectacular unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48.

A little off the beaten path Red Lodge, a historic mining town, is a vibrant and charming community that serves as a gateway to many natural wonders.

From art walks to downhill mountain bike rides, from reading a good book by the fire to skiing fresh powder, Red Lodge is a friendly, welcoming town offering a wide range of activities in every season. Enjoy breathtaking experiences by day and relaxing hospitality by night. Regardless of your choice of activities, our community works hard to make your visit an experience to remember.

Describe your destination.

THREE PHASES OF THE TRAVEL DECISION; INSPIRATION, ORIENTATION AND FACILITATION:

The overall consumer-marketing goal is to expose our brand, "Base Camp to the Beartooths", to potential visitors and invite them to stay a night or longer in Red Lodge. A strong social-media presence, along with online and print marketing via cooperative efforts with Yellowstone Country Travel Region, and the Red Lodge TBID provide inspiration. Once inspired, potential guests will be oriented appropriately via the Destination Red Lodge Travel Planner and RedLodge.com. The CVB follows through to facilitate their stays once they arrive via front line staff of tourism partners and stakeholders and the Red Lodge Visitor Information Center staff and volunteers.

Our content will focus on the three core elements travelers are looking for when deciding on an outdoor destination such as Red Lodge:

1. unique natural encounters without giving up modern comforts
2. comfortable isolation that attracts free-spirited adventurers,
3. a place for entirely new experiences and a place for new ways of experiencing the familiar.

Optional: Include attachments here

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

OUR TARGET MARKET

OUR TARGET MARKETS DEFINED

The High Potential Visitor

This group is clearly a high-value audience; it is different from other travelers in important ways. Behaviorally and demographically, the survey shows that high potential Montana visitors have a remarkable and distinctive profile. This group of heavy travelers is not only attracted to Montana, they see the destination as more attractive and competitive when compared to the regional competition. In brief, high potential Montana visitors are:

- City dwellers (i.e., not rural and not suburban)
- Married with children
- Well-educated, Affluent
- Younger
- Frequent travelers
- Male-oriented (54.3% male and 45.7% female)
- Strongly attracted to Montana's tourism offering
- Familiar with Montana's tourism offering
- Likely repeat visitors
- Outdoor-oriented travelers

High potential Montana visitors are also heavy consumers of recreational activities. This group is interested in a diverse array of Montana activities, centered around day hiking and visits to the National Parks.

Family travelers are a natural fit with Montana's travel product, including that available in the Eastern portion of the state. They are a large and lucrative segment. In the Montana Brand Exploration Survey, approximately one-third, 32.0 percent, of travelers reported having children under the age of 18 in their homes. Like high potential visitors, family travelers index high on outdoor psychographics, have high incomes and would expect to spend more and stay longer in the state than other travelers. Family travelers are interested in a variety of Red Lodge experiences, but their ideal trips would appear to center around Yellowstone National Park, day hiking, horseback riding, and driving scenic byways. This niche market also expresses significant interest in child-friendly activities related to history, culture, and geology.

Red Lodge offers affordable vacation opportunities to families visiting Montana for the first time or coming back on a repeat visit. 85% of visitors surveyed responded they will return to Montana within the next two years. These returning visitors are a significant target for our CVB.

Geo-tourism is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the distinctive geographical character of a place—its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents. **Geo-travelers** are high-value, low impact visitors who appreciate the unique characteristics, eccentricities, and natural qualities of Red Lodge. They place high value on travel experiences that respect and support the local character of place and are less likely to become discouraged in their travel experiences by travel distances/difficulties and vagaries of weather.

History Buffs

History buffs score higher on the psychographic index, have proven to have higher incomes, and would spend more and stay longer compared to non-history buffs.

Our Traveler at a Glance

- Healthy, Active, Outdoor Enthusiasts
- Arts, Crafts, Entertainment Enthusiasts
- Motorcyclists and Auto Enthusiasts
- RV Enthusiasts
- Empty Nesters/Active Retirees
- Income: AHI of \$50,000+
- Education: Bachelor's Degree
- Age: 35-65

Core Geographic Markets

Red Lodge is located in the South Central portion of Montana. We are the gateway to the Northeast Entrance to Yellowstone Park via the Beartooth Highway. Because of our geographic location, the majority of visitors come from east of us.

Summer

California, Florida, Texas, Wyoming, Idaho, Colorado, Washington, and the Mid-Western States, particularly Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Winter

California, Florida, Wyoming, North Dakota, Minnesota and SK/MB Canada are key winter markets.

b. What are your emerging markets?

OUR EMERGING MARKETS

Two Wheel travelers

Motorcyclists and bicyclists are attracted to the Beartooth Highway for its beauty and challenge. This segment of the tourism market is growing and important as they view the Highway as a destination and spend multiple nights in our area.

Foodies

Red Lodge has an array of excellent restaurants, an award winning craft beer brewery, gourmet food and wine shops, for those travelers that seek unique dining experiences.

Entertainment/Music Seekers

On any given night there are a number of bars and restaurants that feature live music, both local artists and touring bands. During the course of the year, events such as The Red Lodge Music Festival and the Red Lodge Songwriter Festival bring world class musicians to Red Lodge to share their art.

Billings

The Billings area is 60 miles away and has a population base of approximately 170,000. The Billings Convention and Meeting market is growing and we will continue to develop our relationship with the Billings CVB, Visit Billings. The Billings market is the perfect target to strengthen our winter destination business, especially on non-holiday weekends.

Corporate Retreats

Red Lodge is the perfect place for executive retreats and small group gatherings for associations, social clubs and private companies located in Billings and Bozeman.

Areas to the East

Eastern Montana, North Dakota, and Minnesota continue to be strong markets and will be the focus for our Winter destination marketing.

Colorado & other Mountain States

We have listed Colorado previously as a competitor for non-resident visitors. However, state tourism data and our own information indicate a rising interest in visiting Montana and specifically Red Lodge from Coloradans. As their own tourism industry continues to grow and their population continues its rapid growth, the competition for outdoor space grows in equal proportion. Many Colorado residents, especially those from major metropolitan areas are looking for less crowded, less expensive, simpler destinations, much the way Colorado used to be. Red Lodge is the perfect fit, an 8-9 hour drive or a one hour direct flight from Denver, their largest metropolitan area.

Optional: Include attachments here.

c. What research supports your target marketing?

Demographic Research

(ITRR 2017 Interactive Data Non-Resident Travel Survey Report) *

- Average Age - 57
- Age Groups –47% 55-64, 43% 65-74, 21% 45-54, 23% 35-44, 21% 25-34
- Gender - 53% Male, 47% Female
- Group Size - 52% Couple, 5% Self, 31% Immediate Family
- Average Group Size - 2.43
- Household Income – 23% Less than \$50k, 7% \$75-\$100k, 13% \$50-\$75k, 29% \$100-\$150k

**All percentages taken from online ITRR reports with 72 respondents*

Facebook Demographics – Top 4 Categories, 65%, are women

- 15% Women 35 to 44 Years
- 16% Women 45 to 54 Years
- 10% Women 25 to 34 Years
- 13% Women 55 to 64 Years
- 9% Women 65+ years

Geographic Research – Non Resident

ITRR – Non Resident

- ITRR 2014 – Texas, Minnesota, Missouri, Kentucky, Arizona
- ITRR 2015 – Wyoming, Minnesota, California, Colorado
- ITRR 2016 – Wyoming, Minnesota, Washington, Colorado
- ITRR 2017 – California, Wyoming, North Dakota, Idaho, Wisconsin

RedLodge.com Travel Planner Requests

For 2019, 1158 travel planner packets were requested. The Midwest accounted for 37% of all requests. Top states were Minnesota with 9% and Florida and Texas with 5%

Facebook – Top 5 Cities (Outside Montana)

- Cody, WY
- Bismarck, ND
- Powell, WY
- Denver, CO
- Gillette, WY

Facebook – Top 5 Cities (Within Montana)

- Billings
- Red Lodge
- Bozeman
- Laurel
- Missoula

ITTR 2017 non-resident study data showed the average length of stay for non-resident visitors to Montana was 7.31 nights with 78% of in Yellowstone Country. 57% of the Non-resident travelers stated their primary reason for coming is vacation/recreation/pleasure, which leads to the supposition that they want a broader experience than just visiting Yellowstone Park.

The following 2017 ITTR data outlines what visitors are doing while in our area.

- Scenic Driving - 70%
- Wildlife Watching - 60%
- Day Hiking - 57%
- Recreational Shopping - 33%
- Visit local brewery - 29%
- Nature Photography - 27%
- Visiting Museums - 22%
- Fly fishing - 20%
- Car/RV camping - 18%
- Visiting Historical Sites - 18%
- Attending Festivals and Events – 17%
- Followed by river rafting/floating, farmers markets, birding, skiing/snowboarding

Key Psychographic Markets for Red Lodge.

- Social Class - middle to upper class (in terms of disposable income)
- Lifestyle - active, outdoor recreational oriented, frequent travelers
- Opinions - interested, but primarily influenced by desire to experience things for themselves
- Attitudes & Interests - outdoor activities, history & culture, foodies
- Attitudes & Beliefs - environmentally conscious, has an adventurous spirit, likes nature
- Technology - savvy - using mobile devices in all stages of planning & travel

Beartooth Highway Economic Impact Research

During the winter season, Red Lodge, MT is not considered a gateway community because of road closures limiting access only to Cooke City/Colter Pass/Silver Gate, MT and Cody, WY (via the Chief Joseph Scenic Byway).

Nonresident visitor expenditures contributed to over \$41.1 million in economic activity to Carbon County in 2016, the vast majority being spent in Red Lodge. The economic impact for this region from nonresident travelers is substantial to local communities. Furthermore, results identified that nonresidents perceive the Beartooth Highway as a destination in itself, not simply a highway.

2015 average spending in Carbon County by nonresident visitors to Montana totaled \$63.4 million. This \$63.4 million in local spending directly supports \$40.2 million of economic activity in the region, and supports an additional \$16.1 million of economic activity, indirectly.

Source: http://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1352&context=itrr_pubs

OVERALL GOALS

As we near our 6th year, we reflect on our previous success and the upcoming challenges for the future. In 2016 Red Lodge received the MTOTBD Gateway Community of the Year award for our Branding Efforts. Our Lodging Tax Collections have continued to increase over the last three years and we have increased our influence on social media through increasing our Facebook fan base. We expect the lingering effects and changing attitudes due to the COVID 19 crisis to have significant and long lasting repercussions for our

community. The full scope of the challenges have yet to present themselves. We will have to adjust our expectations as the situation changes.

COVID 19

Overshadowing all of our goals is the specter of COVID 19. It is too early to know what the full repercussions of the pandemic will be. Even though shelter-in-place restrictions are currently being loosened, fear within the community and fear about reopening, along with fears from travel exposure continue to leave people uncertain about unnecessary travel.

Financial repercussions from unprecedented unemployment also leaves us wondering if people will feel like they can afford to travel.

Low oil prices will also have an influence on our market. Gas is cheap, but the oil industry, which is our primary drive market, has been devastated and the global market has been wiped out for at least the first half of the grant period.

Our current plan is to stay fluid, go with the flow, and make changes as they come. Red Lodge is opening back up slowly with a focus on social distancing and many restaurants continue to offer curbside pickup as an alternative. Events are still being planned in the hope that we will be moving forward; however upswing in Coronavirus cases could change things at a moment's notice. Red Lodge has installed handwashing stations and some stores are starting to offer private shopping. We will market our area as attractive to socially distanced outdoor adventure with our many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors without being in close contact with others.

Improve Visitor Experience With Improved Signage and Infrastructure

We will accomplish this with way-finding signage and visitor off-street parking. The signage is complete though COVID 19 has delayed implementation of the signage. We expect all signage to be place before June 30th.

Continue to Build Marketing Infrastructure

This will include, but not be limited to:

Consistent and informed Visitor Information Center staffing to enhance the guest experience and educate them to all the Red Lodge and the area has to offer.

- Increase Travel Planner Mailers
- Increase public awareness of what is happening in the Red Lodge area with targeted and regular press releases
- Increase social media reach through facebook, instagram and twitter
- Continue to promote local events. In light of the current situation, we will consider this year successful if we are able to normalize the situation and have the events that are already scheduled.

Develop Cooperative Relationships within our Market Area

- Red Lodge Tourism Business Improvement District
- Yellowstone Country Travel Region
- City of Red Lodge
- Red Lodge Business Alliance

Increase Winter Season Visits

The Red Lodge TBID and Red Lodge CVB have joined in efforts to increase non alpine skiing related travel to Red Lodge.

Attract Groups, Meetings and Sporting Events

While we will continue on smaller meeting for the future, we have to take into consideration the current environment and put ourselves in a top of mind position long range planning. The long term focus will remain on smaller meetings (10-200 people) and social groups. We will also work to attract youth tournaments/events in the shoulder seasons, but for the remainder of this year we will highlight social distancing friendly activities.

Expand Alliances With Area Towns

Red Lodge is fortunate to be located near Billings - Montana's largest city. With this alliance, we want to support their efforts in promoting the Beartooth Highway as "The most scenic route to Yellowstone Park." Billings is also a hub for groups, conventions and meetings. We will work to strengthen our relationship with the Billings CVB to attract these groups to our area.

Cooke City is the "other side" of the Beartooth Highway and the Northeast Entrance to Yellowstone Park. It is mutually beneficial to strengthen our relationship.

Cody, Wyoming has the potential to be a very strong ally. Although they are essentially after the same visitor, by working together, we will attract more visitors to our side of Yellowstone Park driving visitors to the East and Northeast Entrances.

We will work with area communities to strengthen our relationships and promote Red Lodge through their Chambers and CVBs. These communities include Columbus, Big Timber and Bozeman.

Red Lodge Branding

The Red Lodge brand, Base Camp to the Beartooths, is in place and is being used across all our marketing platforms and media placements.

Measurable Objectives

Increase Travel Planner distribution

Increase Facebook Friends, Followers, and Likes

Placement of Wayfinding infrastructure

Share in joint venture with one of our partners

Reopen the community and return to "business as usual" after COVID 19

Be able to host our already scheduled events in the aftermath of COVID19

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

Yellowstone Country – Visit Billings

Yellowstone Country and Visit Billings brings in an assortment of people including conferencing and networking events, travel bloggers, online travel journalists, new media content creators, travel brands and industry professionals.

Billings CVB – Winter Marketing

Work with Visit Billings to help attract visitors to Red Lodge via Billings

Billings CVB – Meeting/Groups Marketing

Work with Visit Billings as a 'day trip' possibility for Meeting and Group planners. Our goal would be extended stays and return visits.

TBID and RLMLA

Create joint ventures with the Red Lodge TBID and Red Lodge Merchants and Lodging Association to promote events.

Optional: Include attachment here.

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

Yellowstone Country – Visit Billings

Yellowstone Country and Visit Billings brings in an assortment of people including conferencing and networking events, travel bloggers, online travel journalists, new media content creators, travel brands and industry professionals.

Yellowstone Country - Opportunity Marketing

Yellowstone Country has opportunity funds available for cooperative marketing of new events

Billings CVB – Winter Marketing

Work with Visit Billings to help attract visitors to Red Lodge via Billings

Billings CVB – Meeting/Groups Marketing

Work with Visit Billings as a 'day trip' possibility for Meeting and Group planners. Our goal would be extended stays and return visits.

TBID and RLMLA

Create co-op opportunities with the Red Lodge TBID and Red Lodge Merchants and Lodging Association to promote events.

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

The Red Lodge Branding Project, led by the CVB Branding Leadership Team, was funded by the Red Lodge Tourism Business Improvement District TBID, Yellowstone Country Travel Region, and the Red Lodge Merchants and Lodging Association. Because of their help, no CVB funds were required. Red Lodge won the 2016 Gateway Community of the Year Award for the branding effort. We work closely with the TBID on all marketing efforts.

TBEX 2019 was the highlight of our partnering efforts. We worked with Yellowstone Country, Visit Billings, MOTBD, RLMA, TBID, and local businesses to bring attention to our area from travel bloggers, online travel journalists, new media content creators, travel brands and industry professionals. With so much support, we were able to arrange several tours for groups as well as host FAM trips for some of the TBEX participants.

Optional: Include attachments here.

Optional: Include attachments here.

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	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	<p>We will be promoting Red Lodge as a destination through electronic newsletters minimum of once per month. Our email database includes 15,000 emails.</p> <p>Chamber staff will produce and circulate this newsletter to continually put Red Lodge at the forefront of consumers' decision making process, providing them the facilitation and navigation of Red Lodge at their fingertips. The newsletters will cover the shoulder season targets but also strive to increase occupancy levels during the high traffic summer months when guests are more likely to travel to Red Lodge due to personal schedules, weather, accessibility to Red Lodge and the State of Montana.</p> <p>The requested money will be used to fund an online enews subscription service ONLY.</p>	<p>Our statistics show that 38% of this interested market resides in the Midwest but also proves that requests arrive from a world-wide base.</p> <p>The Red Lodge E-newsletter performs with an Open Rate (OR) of 30-40%. We are well above the median average of 15% for the Travel & Leisure Industry. Our Click Through Rate (CTR) of 4.3 also exceeds the median average of 1.5%.</p> <p>Promoting Red Lodge through digital and electronic media has proven to be a consumer demand and requirement in today's economy.</p> <p>Review of enews metrics with attention to OR and CTR; consistently be above the National Average for the Travel and Leisure Industry.</p>	<p>Success will be measured by the size of our email subscribe list, open rates and clickthrough rates while staying within our budget parameters.</p>	<p>Targeting our captive audience who has already expressed interest in visiting Red Lodge, Montana, via electronic marketing and newsletters will position Red Lodge as a vacation destination. Using the newsletter links to drive the consumer to our websites provides a further opportunity to educate and entice. The newsletters will allow Red Lodge to showcase ease of accessibility, special events, peak interest for the geo-traveler in the culture, history and natural surroundings, wildlife viewing and adventure opportunities.</p>	\$1,225.00		
		<p>Visitors interested in visiting the Red Lodge area can request a travel planner and activities guide packet, either online or by</p>	<p>According to national travel statistics, 79% of requests are online or downloaded. Once the visitor's guide is in their hands, 70% actually travel to the destination.</p>	<p>Comparing Visitor Information Center top 10 visitor counts and Destination Red Lodge Travel Planner Mailer statistics by origin of requests as</p>	<p>Getting a travel planner into the potential visitors hands while they are still planning increases the awareness of</p>			

Consumer	Travel Guide	phone, making it easy to obtain a quality piece full of information that will help the potential visitor make their destination decision as well as providing reasons to extend their stay.	Once they are on the ground, 80% use it as a planning resource and 71% extend their stays as a result of the visitor's guide. In 2019, 1,1158 Travel Planner Packets were requested online.	well as by specific overall state number of requests will allow us to measure the Travel Planner distribution results. We will consider this method a success if we have at least 1,000 requests for travel planners.	Red Lodge as a destination and the most scenic route to Yellowstone Park. This is a catalyst for increased non-resident visits and extended stays in Red Lodge.	\$1,260.00		
Consumer	Joint Ventures	<p>In the coming year, Red Lodge has plans to partner with Yellowstone Country Travel Region and Visit Billings on various opportunities including print media, digital media, and fam tours.</p> <p>We will also continue to build our relationship with Billings and Southeast Montana, look for co-operative marketing opportunities and continue to work with them to attract large groups to Montana.</p>	<p>Red Lodge is an attractive destination for regional, national and international travelers. Local amenities and gateway access to unparalleled natural attractions help strengthen the Red Lodge's brand and boost visitation. The overall leisure marketing strategy is to increase year-round visitation targeting regional, national and international travelers. Red Lodge continues to work to diversify the CVB's leisure marketing efforts.</p> <p>Red Lodge is fortunate to be able to partner with different entities to promote our community and state. Being located at the Northeast Entrance to Yellowstone National Park is a great benefit that brings many opportunities our way. Yellowstone National Park is at the top travelers' lists, and many of those travelers are looking to travel the breathtaking Beartooth Highway as part of their Park adventure.</p> <p>We have found that by partnering with organizations like Yellowstone Country, Southeast Montana, Visit Billings and MOTBD we have been able to stretch our budget and expand our reach in additional print and online presence to promote Red Lodge as a year-round destination.</p>	<p>We have found that by partnering with organizations in our region, county and state the benefits are exponential, including but not limited to an elevated print and online presence. Our participation in these programs have helped us to make the most of our small operating budget and limited staff time and promote awareness of Gardiner as a year round destination. Plans to measure success for projects utilizing Joint Venture funds will be determined, depending on the details of each project.</p>	<p>Red Lodge has one of the smallest budgets of any CVB in Montana. By working with the regions and cities in our area, we have been able to leverage our small budget with our large tourism appeal. The Beartooth Highway is a major Montana attraction and by working with Yellowstone Country, Visit Billings and Southeast Montana, we continue to grow the appeal of our area.</p>	\$3,500.00		
		Our strategy is to make our Travel Planner and the Beartooth Highway brochure available to visitors at the Airports and other strategic facilities	Air travel to Montana continues to grow with	We track the number of travel planners and brochures supplied to various outlets and have seen an increase in the number picked up. We	Air travel is important to our area. We sit within 2 hours of 3 gateway airports.			

Consumer	Printed Material	<p>(like the Bozeman rest area) around Red Lodge. We have secured rack space at the Billings, Bozeman, and Cody Airports and the Bozeman rest area.</p> <p>The Bozeman, Mt and Cody, Wy Airports charge for this service. The Billings Airport does not charge.</p>	<p>Bozeman accounting for a large percentage of the growth. Both Billings and Bozeman have been working to promote new flights. Yellowstone Country along with Bozeman, Big Sky and others have worked together to subsidize the new flights.</p>	<p>also ask out of state visitors to our VIC how they got to Montana. Our main goal is to get the travel planners into the hands of the potential visitor as as soon as possible after their request made and while travel plans to Red Lodge are being made.</p>	<p>Visitor's traveling to Yellowstone Park have a choice of entrances and exits to the Park. We feel that by having a presence with a compelling message, we will inspire the traveler to visit Red Lodge.</p>	\$680.00		
Consumer	Print Advertising	<p>We will use this to promote our area in places such as the Visit Southeast Montana Travel Guide and the Cody Visitor Guide. We will also use this to promote weekend and mini-vacation travel. We will use collaborative efforts wherever possible to maximize our budget. We have found that printed materials are good for brand recognition and support for our other marketing campaigns, especially those surrounding events. This method includes ad production and placement for print advertising.</p>	<p>Print advertising remains relevant, especially for niche markets. Return on investment on print materials is difficult to track but is an essential part of a comprehensive marketing plan. We feel that it is important to have placement in our direct drive and flight markets to stay top of mind as a travel destination.</p>	<p>Return on investment on print materials is difficult to track but is an essential part of a comprehensive marketing plan. We feel that it is important to have placement in our direct drive and flight markets to stay top of mind as a travel destination. We will report on the number of magazines distributed.</p>	<p>Red Lodge is an incredible area and, once visited, not forgotten. Our only drawback has been a lack of awareness of our area compared to surrounding towns. By targeting visitors already traveling in nearby areas we can draw these visitors in with an expectation that some percentage of them will return as repeat visitors. Cody had a record year last year with 100,000 moving through their airport. As we get past the COVID 19 crisis, Cody's numbers will continue to go up. If we can get our information into the hands of visitor's as they arrive we can help guide their choices for navigating our area.</p>	\$835.00		
Marketing Support	Administration	<p>Red Lodge will use the 20% budget allowed for administration and will follow the Regulations and Procedures when using Lodging Tax Revenue in order to maintain our status.</p>	<p>Red Lodge remains within the 20% budget allowed for administration and will follow the Regulations and Procedures when using Lodging Tax Revenue.</p>	<p>Red Lodge will remain within the 20% budget allowed for administration and will continue to follow Regulations and Procedures when using</p>	<p>Red Lodge's administrative efforts supports the Montana Brand. We communicate a consistent and effective marketing identity using the Montana Brand and the Red Lodge Brand to</p>	\$2,750.00		

				Lodging Tax Revenue.	promote tourism from within the Red Lodge office.			
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	These meetings are informative and necessary for us to perform to our best ability in presenting a strong organization and staying informed of the rules and regulations in tourism.	These meetings play an important role for accomplishing increased brand recognition within the tourism industry. Travel time and mileage is allowed for this budget due to distances to travel to meetings. With our small budget, this provides opportunities for Red Lodge to learn and grow that we likely would not otherwise be able to afford.	We will consider this method successful if a representative from Red Lodge attends all four meetings.	In addition to being required attendance in order to meet the terms for participation, both the TAC meetings and Governor's Conference provide important information that keeps us informed on tourism trends, updates, rules and regulations, and provides useful marketing tools and information on opportunities we might otherwise miss.	\$2,500.00		
Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	7% of the CVB bed tax revenue will be used for VIC Staffing. Our strategy is to increase a paid Staff person's time professionally serving the public by approximately 200 hours annually from which the CVB will supply 85 of those hours. This will have a significant impact on the service that we will be able to provide.	Every year over 8,000 travelers enter the Visitor's Information Center requesting information about the Area. The revenue generated by the CVB positively impacts our scope of services. We receive grant from Yellowstone Country to help staff our visitor center during peak season. The CVB staffing dollars will help extend our staffing through the peak season and into the shoulder season.	Research conducted by the MOTBD has shown that VICs and their staff provide a vital service. It is imperative to have staff available with the tools and knowledge they need to provide a good experience to the visitor. Without support for staffing we would have to reduce our hours.	The funds will be applied to the fulfillment component of increasing awareness, group travel promotion and providing increased levels of quality service for Red Lodge. Increasing the staff time, the hours of operation, the efficiency and level of knowledge the Visitor Counselors will provide guidance to mitigate and dispel the challenges outlined. This centralized fulfillment component will be in place to assist group travel planners, families who visit in the winter and the secret season traveler who spends more time, money and resources.	\$1,000.00		
					Opportunities arise that we don't always foresee, such as an			

Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	Having money reserved for Opportunity Marketing prepares us to take advantage of prospects that will protect and promote Red Lodge to that which we cannot foresee at the given time. These funds will also be available for co-operative marketing opportunities. Our strategy is to be prepared for these opportunities.	We have been working together with Yellowstone Country, the Red Lodge Tourism Business Improvement District and Red Lodge Merchants and Lodging Association to better place ourselves for continued collaborative opportunities.	It is difficult to give measurables on an opportunity we haven't yet received. In general, we would hope to see: an increase in Red Lodge Resort Tax Collections over the previous year; An increase in occupied room nights over the previous year as reported by Red Lodge TBID collections.	opportunity to showcase the community or to mitigate negative publicity from a natural disaster such as forest fire or other natural disaster. Opportunity Marketing allows us to position ourselves as premier vacation destinations no matter what the challenge. Staying in front of the news through all modes of communication will provide us the sustainability to maintain our revenue.	\$968.89		
Publicity	Fam Trips	We will invite media, meeting planners, group organizers and social influencers to Red Lodge with the goal of extended visits and press. Networking opportunities will be seized at every opportunity to build solid relationships with journalists and social media influencers – targeting those that offer insight or leads including adventure, history, culture, recreation and food and beverage publications.	Visitors attending meetings, weddings, conventions or other group activities, will return for an extended visit - if they have a good first experience.	We will track the number of influencers, groups and meetings as well as all mentions in press and social media.	Red Lodge is an incredible area and, once visited, not forgotten. Our only drawback has been a lack of awareness of our area compared to surrounding towns. We have found that the more influencers and group organizers we can get to Red Lodge to experience all we have to offer, the more good press we receive.	\$1,000.00		
						\$15,718.89		

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	Electronic Adv - Newsletter, E-blast	\$1,100.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Travel Guide	\$1,800.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Joint Ventures	\$4,400.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Printed Material	\$1,100.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Print Advertising	\$4,555.00	\$0.00
		\$12,955.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Administration	\$1,100.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$1,925.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	\$968.89	\$0.00
		\$5,493.89	\$0.00
Publicity	Fam Trips	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
		\$1,000.00	\$0.00
		\$19,448.89	\$0.00

Miscellaneous Attachments

Description	File Name	File Size
Marketing Budget Pie Chart	PieChart.pdf	275 KB
Marketing Budget Pie Chart	PieChart.pdf	275 KB

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
FY21 Required Docs	FY21 Required Docs.pdf	463 KB

