



Grant Details

80683 - FY20 Region/CVB Marketing Plan

86699 - FY20 Visit Billings Marketing Plan & Budget (Billings CVB)

DOC Office of Tourism

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Community & Brand Support

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

Billings, Montana

Billings, population 110,000, is well-positioned in southeast Montana as a gateway to Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, the northeast entrance to Yellowstone National Park, Pompeys Pillar National Monument and urban amenities on the edge of the genuine frontier. Billings is also situated with great access to some of the key areas in Montana's State Park system including Pictograph Cave and Chief Plenty Coups State Parks.

The county seat of Yellowstone County and largest city in the state, "Montana's City" is also the region's economic hub. Major industries including agriculture, energy, healthcare, finance, education and tourism all help drive the local economy.

Popular attractions locally include the Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site, walkable Brewery District in Historic Downtown Billings, Montana's only zoo and Botanical Park, contemporary and western museums, several theaters, music venues, a state-of-the-art public library and a number of outdoor community festivals. Today, Billings offers nearly 50 miles of multi-use trails and 24 miles of bike lanes. From the sandstone Rimrocks to the Yellowstone River, which is the longest free-flowing river in the lower 48, residents of Billings invite visitors to experience the magic of Montana's Trailhead.

Amazing Big Sky summer weather and snowy winters offer ample opportunity for outdoor enthusiasts to experience all four seasons and the accompanying adventures. Nearly 5,000 hotel rooms along with recreational, cultural and adventurous experiences as well as numerous retail and restaurant offerings, plus several hundred thousand square feet of flexible meeting space ready to accommodate any traveler's needs and preferences.

Billings, Montana's Trailhead – A Community Brand

Shaped by the Yellowstone River and sheltered by the sandstone Rimrocks, Billings is a place of forever views and forever memories, where urban amenities and modern conveniences meet the edge of the genuine frontier. Where the adventure of the untamed wilderness and history are out your front door.

Conveniently positioned in Southeast Montana as the largest city between Calgary and Denver, Spokane and Minneapolis, Billings proudly serves a trade area serving more than 500,000 residents with diverse shopping, award-winning cuisine, arts and culture. Warm, genuine people take the time to welcome you and greet you with a smile. Unparalleled access to some of the most breathtaking and historic wonders in the United States including Yellowstone National Park, Beartooth Highway, Bighorn Canyon, Little Bighorn Battle field, and Pompeys Pillar make Billings an idyllic destination for connecting to the best that Montana offers.

Forge Your Own Path - Montana's Trailhead Brand Evolution for Tourism Marketing

Leveraging Montana's Trailhead, Visit Billings' "Forge Your Own Path," brand evolution invites visitors to be their own pioneers and participate in a memorable journey, authentic to the Big Sky Montana experience yet approachable and unexpected. "Forge Your Own Path" is built on the pioneer spirit of Billings' culture and its people, from Yellowstone Kelly and William Clark (of Lewis and Clark) to today's makers, innovators, adventurers and artists, representing the strong will, Western humility and the self-made perseverance that embodies the Billings way of life.

Onward pioneers. Today is ours for the taking. And tomorrow too. For we have a vision of something better. Of mightier things to come. New ideas. New inventions. New innovations. The likes of which the world has never seen. Let's forge our own path. Blaze new trails. Find new frontiers. Be guided by the greatness that lies ahead. Let's stoke the re of the pioneer spirit. Call home to a place we've only seen in dreams. Big skies and big things. This is freedom. A city without limits. Born in the shadows of the Rimrocks. Fed on the water of the Yellowstone River. Descendants of the West's greatest heroes. This is Montana's Trailhead. This is only the beginning. Forge your own path. Billings. Montana's Trailhead.

Visit Billings Funding

Visit Billings is funded primarily through the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District (BTBID) and through a portion of the State Lodging Facility Use Tax. The BTBID assesses \$2.00 per occupied room night on all hotels and motels in the city of Billings with six (6) or more sleeping rooms. The BTBID funds stay local for promotion of tourism in and around Billings to support and grow business opportunities for the destination and its stakeholders. Additionally, there are two Montana taxes imposed on users of an overnight lodging facility (such as a hotel, motel, campground, dude ranch and guest ranch), which are collected by the facility and remitted to the Montana Department of Revenue. These two taxes are a 4% Lodging Facility Use and a 3% Lodging Facility Sales, for a combined 7% lodging tax. The Lodging Facility Sales Tax (3%) is deposited into the State's General Fund. The Lodging Facility Use Tax (4%) is allocated to the Department of Commerce for tourism promotion on the state and local levels including Montana's Tourism Regions and Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs), like the Billings CVB.

Visit Billings – The Organization & Mission

Visit Billings is a leading brand comprised of the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District and the Billings Convention and Visitors Bureau and is managed by the Billings Chamber of Commerce. Together with the Billings Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureau (BCC/CVB) and Billings Tourism Business Improvement District (BTBID) Boards, the Visit Billings team is committed to growing visitation at Montana's Trailhead. The staff is an extension of its stakeholders (lodging partners) working to provide sales, services and marketing support to the local hospitality industry.

As a destination marketing organization or DMO, Visit Billings is an organization charged with representing Billings as a destination, helping with the development of the tourism industry and community through travel and tourism promotion, marketing and strategies.

The mission of Visit Billings is to generate room nights for lodging facilities in the city of Billings by effectively marketing the region as a preferred travel destination.

Current Destination Highlights

TRAVEL BLOG EXCHANGE NORTH AMERICA 2019

In the fall of 2018, the Visit Billings team contracted to host the 2019 Travel Blog Exchange or TBEX. TBEX is the largest conference and networking event for travel bloggers, online journalists, content creators, travel brands, and industry professionals. Approximately 650 TBEX attendees will converge on Billings in September. During their stay, they will experience the historic, cultural, natural, and recreational amenities offered in Billings, southeast Montana, and the state as a whole.

Aside from the exposure a convention of this magnitude offers the destination, partnerships between MOTBD, Tourism Regions, other CVBs, and tourism partners across the state have been strengthened.

BILLINGS TRAIL GUIDES

The visitor experience is the most important part of growing visitation at a destination. Making sure travelers feel welcomed and enjoy their stay at Montana's Trailhead is a major priority for Visit Billings. Launching the Billings Trail Guides program was a major highlight in FY19, but will continue to be a significant strategy in FY20. Shining a light on the importance of visitor orientation and facilitation by developing ways for the hospitality industry, business community, and area residents to get involved as tourism ambassadors, will elevate the city and help champion repeat visitation.

NON-STOP FLIGHTS AT BIL

FY19 showed continued success with direct, year-round, daily service from Dallas/Fort Worth. Focused marketing efforts in the Dallas market by Visit Billings as well as promotion to Billings, southeast Montana and northern Wyoming residents by the Billings Chamber of Commerce, helped grow and promote the direct service. Low-fare carrier Frontier Airlines will offer new seasonal, non-stop service from Denver beginning May 2019. Visit Billings supports Billings Logan Airport officials in their efforts to grow capacity and strive for a better experience for the traveler.

RECORD ATTENDANCE AT 2019 NAI A WDI CHAMPIONSHIP

In the third of a four year hosting contract, Billings experienced record attendance at the NAI A Women's Division I National Basketball Championship. 19,408 people attended the six day, 31 game tournament at MetraPark. In 2017, 12,993 people turned-out.

The community support for this event is rewarding, but the impact the event has on Visit Billings stakeholders as well as the community's economy as a whole, shows the importance of sports tourism and citywide events at the destination. Billings will host this tournament once more in 2020.

Current Press/Media Accolades

2019 TOP 100 PLACES TO LIVE - LIVABILITY

2019 - BEST PLACE TO LIVE IN THE STATE OF MONTANA - MONEY MAGAZINE

2019 PLATINUM CHOICE AWARD AS A MEETING AND CONVENTION DESTINATION – SMART MEETINGS

2018 READER'S CHOICE AWARD – SPORTSEVENTS MAGAZINE

2018 MONTANA TOURISM MARKETING CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR - MONTANA OFFICE OF TOURISM AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

TOP 7 UNEXPECTED PLACES WITH GREAT COMEDY SCENES - LIVABILITY

TOP 10 CITIES FOR WORKTIREMENT - SMARTASSET

Destination Strengths

Accessibility to Unspoiled Nature

The most scenic entrance to Yellowstone National Park is via the Beartooth Highway which is a National Scenic Byway and All-American Road, 65 miles from Billings

Red Lodge – 60 miles

Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Mountains – 60 miles

Yellowstone National Park NE entrance at Cooke-City/Silver Gate (summer access via vehicle; winter access via snowmobile) – 140 miles

Physical evidence from the Lewis and Clark Expedition located at Pompeys Pillar National Monument, - 19 miles

Billings Area Native American Culture

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument – 60 miles

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area – 85 miles

Crow Fair at Crow Agency (August) – 80 miles

Chief Plenty Coups State Park – 35 miles

Billings scenic and outdoor attractions with accessible walking, hiking and biking trails

Rare, sandstone Rimrocks define the city and offer an unexpected backdrop and vantage points of the horizon

The longest free flowing river in the lower 48, Yellowstone River, runs just south of town

Four Dances Recreation Area (BLM access) offers excellent trails and scenic views

Pictograph Cave State Park is an amazing place to wander and explore

Vibrant Downtown

Community Appeal

Arts & Culture

Historic Downtown Billings and Montana's only Walkable Brewery District, which includes six breweries, two distilleries and one Cider House

State-of-the-art-library and museums serving contemporary to western tastes

Yellowstone Art Museum, Western Heritage Center, Yellowstone County Museum

Beautiful galleries showcasing world-renowned artists from the area

Unique food culture with a variety of flavors and farm-to-table table offerings

Lively music, theater and nightlife scene - The Pub Station, Magic City Blues events, Alberta Bair Theatre (being renovated), Rimrock Auto Arena and the Babcock Theatre, Art House Cinema

Specialty boutiques and major brand shopping available

Accommodations & Facilities

Nearly 4,900 hotel rooms in 55 different hotels ranging from brand name chains to local historic properties Great spaces to meet and gather including convention hotels and MetraPark offering 360,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, along with numerous unique settings including the Historic Billings Depot, Henry's Garage, and Camelot Ranch

Billings Logan Airport (BIL)

Billings Logan Airport serves ten (10) cities directly with major airlines: Frontier, Delta, United, American Airlines, Alaska and Allegiant

Regional offerings - Cape Air serves northeast Montana with several daily intrastate flights

Airport located conveniently close to downtown

Non-stop flights are offered daily, weekly and seasonally

Destination Weaknesses

Meeting and Convention Facilities

Without a large-capacity convention center located in Billings, existing meeting facilities are spread throughout the city and present challenges in quality of product and proximity to restaurants, entertainment and points of interest.

With Meeting and Convention business representing about 20% of Billings' tourism industry, a new convention center in any Montana city could impact market share from Billings.

Civic Pride

Billings' locals often direct visitors outward, whether to nearby Bozeman, Red Lodge or surrounding regional attractions, giving the perception that there isn't anything worthwhile to do in Billings. Community pride is a major component to a successful campaign and drive in visitation – pride starts within. The Visit Billings Trail Guides Program focuses on strengthening this weakness.

Urban Community

Billings is a vibrant community and the largest in the state; however, it is not small and charming per the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development's brand pillars. Gaining Montana Tourism brand support is important. Visit Billings and MOTBD have a strong relationship and are looking at ways to foster continued tourism growth in eastern Montana. The Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative is important to the region, and Billings, as well.

Arrival Experience

Entering Billings via Interstate 90 is especially dreary at nearly half of the city's exits – with sprawling and visible refineries and industrial activities. The exits need improvement in some cases, like berms, wayfinding signage and landscaping that can be more appealing and enticing for visitors contemplating a stopover.

Homeless Population

Billings has many important programs and services for the homeless community through the Montana Rescue Mission, Women's and Family Shelter, among other organizations; however, the existence of these programs impacts a noticeable homeless population as other communities in Montana rely on Billings for these services. The visible presence of homelessness can impact a visitor's impression and is a topic that exists in travel reviews and online forums.

Montana's Brand Pillars

Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative

During FY20 eastern Montana tourism organizations will work closely with MOTBD as the Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative evolves. This marketing effort led by MOTBD targets geographical zones prompting robust conversations on existing tourism assets and future opportunities in the eastern section of Montana.

MOTBD is investing resources targeted on improving the visitor economy in eastern Montana. Together with tourism partner input and data from Destination Analysts, VisaVue, and Arrivalist, leaders will guide decisions identifying areas of opportunity to better promote Montana to support visitor growth statewide.

Pillar Strategy Alignment

STRATEGY 1

COMMUNICATE AND DELIVER MONTANA'S SPECTACULAR UNSPOILED NATURE IN A WAY THAT MAKES IT REAL, TANGIBLE AND ACCESSIBLE TO THE VISITOR.

The Montana "Big Sky" experience ranks high as a wish list destination, but a significant gap exists among those who desire to visit and those who actually travel to Montana, likely due to perceived challenges with accessibility, cost and, perhaps, those who find the desired wilderness experience intimidating. People seek adventure and unspoiled nature, but a majority of travelers also prefer to have the creature comforts of civilization and hospitality. Visit Billings' creative messaging will focus on Billings' proximity to the surrounding unspoiled nature without sacrificing the modern hospitality travelers appreciate. Positioned as Montana's Trailhead, drive less than an hour in any direction from Billings and you're offered access to iconic attractions like Pompeys Pillar, Bighorn Canyon, Little Bighorn Battlefield and Beartooth Highway. From Billings, visitors can see five mountain ranges - Pryor, Big Horn, Bull, Crazy and Absaroka-Beartooth. Billings pairs these recognized "Big Sky" attractions with modern hotel amenities, great brunch spots, the Billings Brew Trail, attractions and dozens of multi-use trails and bike lines, all framed by its own remarkable sandstone Rimrocks and the Yellowstone River.

STRATEGY 2

HIGHLIGHT AND HELP DEVELOP VIBRANT AND CHARMING SMALL TOWNS THROUGHOUT MONTANA.

Billings may boast big city amenities, but it does offer a truly small town feel. Billings offers travelers a destination for shopping, nightlife, dining, accommodations and culture – on the edge of the genuine frontier and near small-town Montana. As the largest community between Calgary and Denver, Spokane and Minneapolis, Billings is a vibrant community with access to small towns via Visit Southeast Montana and Yellowstone Country. Equally as important to the visitor, the frontier character of its warm and hardworking people is uniquely Montanan and inherently individual. Visit Billings' marketing initiatives employ Billings' locals as its Trail Guides, inviting visitors to participate in the culture and spirit of the destination and its people, whether connecting with local artists and artisans, discovering historical relevance through the perspective of Yellowstone Kelly, or simply locating the "locals' favorite" trails and burger spots.

STRATEGY 3

INTEGRATE NATURE AND TOWNS TO OFFER AND DELIVER A BALANCE OF "BREATHTAKING EXPERIENCES" AND "RELAXING HOSPITALITY."

Whether visitors seek adrenaline pumping adventure or easy paced experiences, Billings is the perfect place to set up home base. With nearly 5,000 hotel rooms, a wide variety of local attractions, and access to breathtaking views and Montana icons, Billings will surprise and delight visitors from all

walks of life.

Describe your destination.

The Travel Decision Process

THREE PHASES: INSPIRE, ORIENT, FACILITATE

According to the current Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan, the best way to consider how the potential traveler considers and contemplates trip planning and execution of an itinerary is as follows:

THE PROCESS IS DEFINED BY USE OF THE FOLLOWING TERMINOLOGY AND CORRESPONDING DEFINITIONS:

INSPIRATION - The process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative.

ORIENTATION - The relative physical position or direction of something.

FACILITATION - The action of facilitating something to make it easy or easier.

THE INSPIRATION PHASE is where the traveler is made aware of the general product and develops a desire to visit the destination. The Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) is responsible for the foundation of this marketing mindset via Montana's brand image, per the strategic plan. MOTBD markets Montana's key tourism pillars to inspire potential visitors to the state with inspirational imagery and copy. MOTBD focuses strategies on Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks as well as mountain adventures. Therefore, in the inspirational phase, Billings must strategize to position our destination as a viable city to include on one's itinerary. Efforts by MOTBD to elevate eastern Montana will assist with this phase for the region. Visit Billings appreciates planning surrounding the Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative which is evolving during the creation of this document.

- Billings is well situated between the historic landmarks of southeast Montana and the awe-inspiring landscapes of Yellowstone Country. Working to compliment MOTBD efforts, Visit Billings will continue to leverage stunning imagery, targeted messaging and compelling calls to action in marketing materials.

- Billings boasts access to the Beartooth Highway which Charles Kuralt called "the most beautiful drive in America." As a destination, Billings offers stunning vistas via the sandstone Rimrocks and access to the Yellowstone River, all reasons to choose southeastern Montana as part of one's route. Wyoming's state tourism office strategizes to keep the drive market in Wyoming by enticing travelers making 'on the road decisions' to access Yellowstone National Park via Cody. Visit Billings hopes to work closely with MOTBD in the future to help ensure potential travelers are inspired to make eastern Montana part of their travels for incredible adventures and ease of access to landmarks and experiences beyond the MOTBD brand pillars.

- Regionally, Billings itself offers a vacation destination to many neighboring communities. Ongoing "weekender" campaigns will inspire and invite the driving audience to explore and enjoy all Billings has to offer in entertainment, outdoor activities, cultural and historic interests and recreation.

THE ORIENTATION PHASE is where the traveler begins researching the details of his or her trip. This phase focuses on the route the traveler will take to arrive at the chosen destination and the mode of transportation used to get there. Per the strategic plan, Montana's visitors have multiple destinations to arrive within the state and bordering states. Regions and CVBs provide tools to help the visitor plan a route and encourage a longer stay.

VisitBillings.com

Visit Billings will be launching its newly re-designed VisitBillings.com website May 2019. The site will bring the destination's "Forge Your Own Path" brand to life while addressing critical site design and functionality updates. In today's digital landscape, Destination Marketing websites have to work even harder to engage the consumer. The DMO's traditional role as an information provider, or gatekeeper, has shifted with the overabundance of information available at a consumer's fingertips. While travelers filter through user-generated content (UGC), TripAdvisor reviews, Instagram posts and travel blogs, a destination website should be positioned as a trusted resource for travel inspiration and planning. Content needs to be relevant to the individual needs of a potential traveler. New persona-driven web content was developed to guide prospective History Buffs, Outdoor Enthusiasts, Foodies, Shopaholics and Arts & Culture Aficionados to Billings.

Visit Billings Visitor Guide

The Visit Billings Visitor Guide is available digitally via the website and is mailed at no-charge upon request. The Billings guide focuses on the "Forge Your Own Path" branding and encourages travelers to seek adventure around every corner with the assistance from beautiful imagery, maps, recreational listing, and more. Visit Billings' focus is to provide accessible and authentic information; therefore, no advertising is included in Visit Billings publications.

Billings Logan Airport (BIL)

Visit Billings continues to highlight direct flights with United and Delta as well as the successful American Airlines' addition into the Billings' market with a daily, direct flights between Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) and Billings Logan (BIL). In FY20 Visit Billings will also feature non-stop flights from Denver to Billings via Frontier Airlines. Cape Air is an important partner in the regional leisure market serving smaller eastern Montana communities where residents may choose to fly to Billings in order to shop, schedule use of services and enjoy entertainment and activities.

THE FACILITATION PHASE is where the traveler seeks experiences en route to a destination and during a stay.

- Tourism Regions, Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs), TBIDs, communities and organizations must all work together to make visitors aware of the full array of experiences available to guests. We are all stronger together.

- The Billings Visitor Information Center (VIC) is managed by Visit Billings and housed on the main floor of the Billings Chamber of Commerce office one mile from the Interstate 90 corridor. Nearly 30 part-time volunteers operate the center, which is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with expanded hours on some high-season weekends. The VIC is complete with brochures, maps, guides and retail offerings. The Visit Billings and Chamber teams are knowledgeable, welcoming and on-the-ready in order to facilitate visitor queries. The goal is to foster successful stays and future Montana travels.

- The Visit Billings staff keeps an open dialogue of communication and information flow with tourism partners, area hotels, attractions, businesses, and the community in preparation to provide exceptional customer service to expected visitors. This service initiative is spearheaded by the Trailhead Tourism Ambassador (TTA) Program. The TTA mission is to unite and motivate the Billings community in raising the bar and level of service. It provides frontline employees training and support regarding options for visitors in and around Billings and southeast Montana.

- In FY20, Visit Billings will be evolving the Trailhead Tourism Ambassador's Program into Billings Trail Guides. This program focuses on empowering local businesses, area residents, and key local influencers to be brand ambassadors, further enhancing the visitor experience.

- Visit Billings continues to foster connectivity within different social media platforms by offering visitors current and relevant content via Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter and YouTube. Visitors are invited to engage with the #VisitBillings brand throughout their journey.

Optional: Include attachments here

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

Summer Leisure Marketing Strategy

For the summer pioneers, Billings not only rewards their journeys with easy access to the Yellowstone scenic route via Beartooth Highway, but also the inspiring Rimrocks, Pompey's Pillar, and vast, iconic surrounding areas waiting to be forged right outside of their hotel room.

Goals

1. Generate awareness of Billings as the Most Scenic Route into Yellowstone, and proximity to iconic attractions as part of a Great American Road Trip

2. Increase awareness of Billings, Montana as being the place to experience unspoiled adventure without sacrificing the comfort of hospitality

3. Leverage the "Forge Your Own Path" brand position as an invitation for prospective visitors Summer season marketing strategy will continue to establish ownership of the most scenic route to Yellowstone National Park via Beartooth Highway. Ranked alongside Bryce Canyon and Glacier National Park, among others, Yellowstone is a bucket list family attraction with nearly four million annual visitors. Branded as "Billings Yellowstone's Scenic Route," messaging will focus on Billings proximity to the surrounding unspoiled nature without sacrificing hospitality, hotel accommodations, great brunch spots and walkable brewery trails, western heritage sites, and even guaranteed opportunities to see and appreciate native animals up close at Montana's only zoo.

Summer Target Audience (Leisure)

Visit Billings will focus heavily on behavioral targeting around summer vacation planning and booking, with an interest in the outdoors, national parks and western heritage experiences. While family remains an important summer demographic, especially in targeting growth of older Millennial families, the current visitor profile indicates that a majority of visitors to Billings are traveling without children. Creative messaging and media targeting will balance growth of families traveling with children with an equally outsized target of outdoor enthusiasts traveling as couples or as groups of friends. Billings' target audience includes Adults 25-65 with an annual household income of \$75,000 +. According to the Billings' visitor profile, current visitors have an average HHI of \$97k and average age is 50.

Primary: Summer vacationers from key feeder markets (Minneapolis, MN; Denver CO; Seattle, WA) with interest in travel to Montana and the western region of the U.S., including monuments, state and national parks and western heritage. HHI of \$75k+

Secondary: Regional close drive markets, primarily in-state and Wyoming, traveling for events and things to do. Bozeman, MT; Minot-Bismarck-Dickinson, ND; Great Falls, MT; Rapid City, SD; Helena, MT; Missoula, MT; Casper, WY; Cody, WY; Gillette, WY; Billings DMA (excluding city of Billings). HHI \$50k+

To maximize budget, national marketing initiatives will focus on 2-3 key geographic markets with the highest potential for ROI. Visit Billings and BCF conducted a thorough market analysis, including the most recent data available through MOTBD's Joint Venture partnership with VisaVue and Visit Billings' Visitor Profile, to determine the markets most effective for summer visitation growth, especially for new visitors.

DENVER, CO DMA

With a population of over 1.6M ages 25-54, Denver ranks highest in travel behavior that aligns with Billings' destination experience. The "Mile High City" skews high for nature enthusiasts with an active, outdoor lifestyle. Located about 550 miles southeast of Billings, Denver has affordable daily non-stop flights (Frontier Airlines) and is within drive proximity at about an 8-hour trip. The market ranks as the primary feeder market in preliminary visitor profile data.

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL, MN DMA

Another large feeder market with daily non-stop flights to Billings, Minneapolis is about 840 miles South/Southeast of Billings, about a 12-hour drive or short two-hour flight. This prime target market sits at an ideal location for the "All American Road Trip." The target population age 25-54 is about 1.7M and skews high for frequent travelers who participate in sightseeing while on domestic vacation. MOTBD has also added Minneapolis/St. Paul as a new test market for its 2019 warm-season campaign.

SEATTLE-TACOMA DMA

With daily non-stop flights into Billings, the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue DMA market boasts a population of over 2.2M between the ages of 20-59. Located 860 miles from Billings, visitation is flexible through convenient flight services and by vehicle, tapping into the Road Tripper audience. Seattle visitors reported the highest volume of spend in market behind Billings residents, with a growth of 3.9% YoY from Summer 2017 to Summer 2018. The market also ranks high in unique website visitation to VisitBillings.com.

Regional Year-Round Leisure Strategy

The pioneer spirit of Billings is alive throughout the area, but it's not all big sky, dust and cowboy boots; it's rooted in a cultured, urban foundation unlike any other Montana destination. Regionally, we'll be sharing our unique and wondrous stories with a twist, bringing them to life through both video and still assets that evoke the true "Forge Your Own Path" spirit while offering us the ability to translate these stories across a variety of mediums.

Goals

1. Increase awareness of "things to do" in Billings for the regional audience
2. Establish a sense of urgency around seasonal events and attractions
3. Leverage the "Forge Your Own Path" brand position as an invitation for prospective visitors

Creative messaging will focus around "things to do," consistently providing potential visitors new reasons to travel to Billings and establishing a sense of urgency around booking for special seasonal features, such as opening of Beartooth Highway or holiday family ski retreats. Primarily promoted through digital targeting, these travel drivers will be communicated through the brand lens of "Forge Your Own Path." A content calendar will outline key travel-driving events, activities and attractions by season, and map out markets and allocated budgets throughout the year.

Regional Year-Round Target Audience

Regional focus will remain on target markets with higher awareness and familiarity of Billings. These include markets within 350 miles, primarily in-state as well as Wyoming and South Dakota. For leisure travel, these close-in drive markets have a higher propensity to visit year-round for events, outdoor activities and nearby skiing in the winter, and short getaways for shopping and dining in Montana's biggest city. In some cases, travel may align with extending a necessity visit (i.e. doctor's appointment) overnight to include leisure activities.

Billings' regional target audience includes Adults 25-65 with an annual household income of \$50,000 +. Regional markets include Bozeman, MT; Minot-Bismarck-Dickinson, ND; Great Falls, MT; Rapid City, SD; Helena, MT; Missoula, MT; Casper, WY; Cody, WY; Gillette, WY; Billings DMA (excluding city of Billings).

Other Important Markets:**Motorcycle Enthusiasts (two-wheel market)**

Aligning with the destination's leisure strategy, building awareness of its proximity to the most scenic route into Yellowstone National Park, Visit Billings will also continue to leverage Beartooth Highway as a key draw for the lucrative two-wheeled market. Among its "Top 10 Motorcycle Rides in the U.S.," National Geographic describes the 68-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 212 as "the perfect definition of what a great bike ride should be."

Motorcyclists in Montana are drawn to Mountains with curvy roads. They enjoy touring vacations, driving long distances and experiencing the journey. National Parks are key drivers of visitation. In 2018, June through Sept., an estimated 394,000 motorcyclists rode in Montana, 4.4% of all non-resident visitors to the state. The target audience is men and women motorcycle enthusiasts 35-64 on any model bike. Nonresident motorcyclists spent an average of 4.74 nights in a hotel. (Motorcycle Touring in Montana: A Market Analysis 2019, published by the Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research.)

Visit Billings partnered with RoadRUNNER Motorcycle Touring & Travel January 2019 with a 12-page Shamrock Tour spread on Billings, MT. FY20 plans include additional sponsored content development and niche digital targeting of the two-wheel audience. Billings' hospitality amenities and access to surrounding Big Sky Country roads elevate its position with groups like BMW Motorcycle Owners of America, Gold Wing Road Riders Association, Harley Owners Group, and Yamaha Star Motorcycles. Record attendance and success for previously hosted rallies position Billings well for future citywide bookings in the two-wheel markets.

Group and International

Yellowstone National Park and Little Bighorn Battlefield, along with the Lewis and Clark Trail, are key attractions positioning Billings as a trailhead to access popular tourism sites from a reliable and group-friendly destination. Billings' proximity to Beartooth Highway, a consistently top ranked scenic drive in North America, and into the northeast entrance to Yellowstone National Park at CookeCity/Silver Gate is a major asset for Group and International markets.

Regional partnerships are critical to the continued growth of Group and International Tour visitation. Visit Billings is fortunate to have a good working relationship with Visit Southeast Montana and the Red Lodge business community. As staff works to monitor the International landscape, Visit Billings will consider marketing opportunities through Brand USA and the MOTBD. Previously, Visit Billings has participated in the American Bus Association (ABA) Annual Marketplace as well as IPW, Go West Summit, and initiatives through Rocky Mountain International (RMI) like International Roundup, which all market to travel agents and tour operators on the domestic and International fronts. Staff will continue to evaluate the ROI on these programs.

Canada remains a viable International market for Billings, particularly during the warm season when driving conditions permit safe, long distance travel. Creative aimed at capturing travelers en route to Yellowstone National Park is leveraged for this market. Historically, Canadian travel to the U.S. has closely correlated with the U.S./Canadian Dollar exchange rate. While the Canadian Dollar has strengthened since a significant decline in 2016, it is not yet back at parity. Recent research presented by the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) by the University of Montana, shows Canadian travel habits may be limited to the central corridor of Montana. Visit Billings and BCF Agency will assess the data and make decisions in this market accordingly.

Meetings and Conventions

Meeting planners often arrive in Billings with a misperception of Montana, drawn to the attraction of Big Sky Country without awareness of the wealth of amenities and resources available for meetings and conventions at the destination. Billings' walkable downtown with dining and entertainment, close proximity to Billings Logan Airport with growing nonstop service, and surrounding regional attractions are strong value propositions for planners. Planners leave a site visit excited about the destination's potential for their attendees.

Goals

1. Build brand awareness of Billings as a meetings destination
2. Generate new leads and grow Visit Billings' database of qualified Meeting Planners
3. Service groups with high level of customer satisfaction and event execution

Target Audience

A high priority for Visit Billings is booking citywide events as they tend to support all stakeholders. A citywide event is any booking requiring three or more hotels. Recent success with Travel Blog Exchange or TBEX, NAIA WDI Basketball, the Marine Corp League Annual Convention, Gold Wing Road Riders Wing Ding, and BMW Motorcycle Owners of America showcase the destination's track record for larger opportunities. Such events are very important to meeting the mission of generating room nights for lodging facilities. Other key markets in the meeting and convention recruitment segment include Military Reunions, Association, Corporate, Government, and niche opportunities like historic, cultural, motorcycle touring (2-wheel), and recreation-focused events.

Visit Billings' geographic focus includes the broader Mountain West, as well as Minneapolis, Seattle, and Dallas, due to proximity and a third-party presence. Visit Billings staff primarily target new bookings with 200-500 minimum room nights. The months of April through October all present prime opportunities for group bookings.

Sports

Billings is a leader in Montana pertaining to sports tourism. Recruiting new, growing existing, and retaining current sporting events at the destination are major priorities in this market as they directly support the stakeholder year-round. However, the opportunities in this segment are vast. Currently, Visit Billings staff work to support local colleges and universities in bid efforts for respective National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) events. Supporting local athletic departments and MetraPark for Montana High School Association and divisional school tournaments is also a priority for Visit Billings.

Meantime, youth and amateur tournament directors working hard to execute baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse, basketball and volleyball events, must have the resources to succeed and Visit Billings staff work closely with them to offer support and guidance to aid in their success. Their events directly impact and drive room nights to stakeholders. Big Sky State Games, the YMCA, and other organizations are key partners in sports tourism as well.

Goals

1. Continue to elevate Billings and Yellowstone County as a strong sports destination in the region
2. Be a valuable resource to tournament directors and associations in efforts to host and grow competitions that draw athletes and fans from across the region generating room nights for lodging partners
3. Build off of successes with NAIA and NCAA (WDI Basketball and West Region DII Cross Country) to better position Billings in future bid efforts with Rocky Mountain College and Montana State University Billings
4. Monitor conversations surrounding additional sports facilities at the destination in order to prepare for future sports sales for the DMO

Supporting public partners like the City of Billings and MetraPark as well as private investors and sports supporters will be important to Visit Billings staff and the future of this tourism segment. Meanwhile, continuing to foster relationships with MSU Billings, Rocky Mountain College, the Big Sky State Games, YMCA, and youth and amateur tournament directors will be a priority. Relationships are key to maintaining and growing success in this segment.

b. What are your emerging markets?

History and Western Heritage

With historic figures, experiences, and destinations like Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Pompeys Pillar National Monument, and the Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site, Billings is the centerpiece to a powerful western history and heritage experience. There is an opportunity to package and develop these stories and attractions into a richer and more engaging tourism product. Once developed, this market could speak to the History Buff and Road Tripper.

Great American Road Trip

Visit Billings is Montana's Trailhead to monumental, unexpected adventures. Located in Southeast Montana, Billings neighbors iconic American sites and attractions – from Yellowstone National Park to the Little Bighorn Battlefield. When paired with the Black Hills and Badlands regions of South Dakota, the Great American Road Trip is revealed with an unprecedented bucket list of must-see national parks and monuments in one six-day vacation. Visit Billings is developing partnerships with frontier destinations and lifestyle brands to target road trippers and bucket-list travelers and bring awareness to this untold story.

The Great American Road Trip offers several opportunities to niche or emerging segments including:

- Arts & Culture Aficionado
- Foodie
- Outdoor Enthusiast
- Road Tripper

Rebranded: Billings Brew Trail

Visit Billings rebranded its Billings Brew Trail in FY19, Montana's only walkable self-guided brewery tour. Although it continues to grow, the current list includes six breweries, two distilleries and a cider house. The craft brewery community will be hosting its first Billings Craft Brew Week May 2019 with Taproom Cards to earn stamps for prizes, yoga and movie events, and a Beer Run and post-race party.

Bite Sized Travel

Travelers are forgoing big, extended vacations for more frequent mini-breaks in 2019 and seeking destinations where they can squeeze unique, curated travel experiences into three days. The dated "staycations" are being replaced with "serial short breaks." This trend also correlates with travelers seeking unusual accommodations such as yurts, tree houses and Airstreams. Billings' seasonal attractions, food scene and amenities in proximity to Yellowstone, Little Bighorn Battlefield and Pictograph Cave State Park position the destination well for quick getaways from key regional markets.

Optional: Include attachments here.

c. What research supports your target marketing?

Research

Visitor Profile Research – Destination Analysts and BCF Agency

This past fiscal year, Visit Billings completed a comprehensive Visitor Profile research study conducted by Destination Analysts, Inc. Top line survey data collected from in-person intercept surveys of Billings area visitors informed top visitor origin markets, purpose of visit and place of stay, as well as detailed trip characteristics. The top visitor markets represented in the survey sample were Denver-Boulder (6.7%) and Minneapolis-St. Paul (4.9%). Just under half of those surveyed traveled to Billings primarily for leisure (46%). The most important factors motivating the visit to Billings included a special event or festival, shopping, a good deal on airfare, and nearby friends or family.

A strong indicator of visitor satisfaction, 95.6% of those surveyed reported high likelihood to return to Billings and nearly all (96.3%) were willing to recommend Billings to other travelers. An online survey was also conducted to explore perceptions of the Billings brand from the perspective of the regional traveler, as well as those residing outside of a 500-mile radius from billings. Billings performed well for outdoor recreation, shopping, craft breweries and nightlife; however, the biggest opportunity for growth is in perception of Billings' scenic beauty, affordability, restaurants, historic sites and iconic attractions. The "Forge Your Own Path" campaign messaging strategically focuses on these opportunity attributes, which are seen as the most important attributes for selecting leisure destinations in the West.

VisaVue Reporting

Through the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development's Joint Venture program, Visit Billings is able to purchase VisaVue traveler spending data at a reduced rate. The past two years of data have been used to inform the current market strategy. Denver-Boulder and Minneapolis- St. Paul are in the top three originating MSAs by cardholder account over Q3, both showing over 5% growth in spend amount Y/Y.

Top MSAs of Residence

Denver-Boulder, CO

Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI

Phoenix-Mesa, AZ

Seattle-Everett, WA

Portland, OR-WA

Missoula, MT

Atlanta, GA

Billings, MT

Great Falls, MT

Riverside-San Bernadino-Ontario, CA

Houston, TX

San Francisco-Oakland, CA

Other research important to Visit Billings includes annual reporting by the Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research or ITRR. Research specifically published by ITRR in 2019 was also referred to under summer planning in the leisure segment: Motorcycle Touring in Montana: A Market Analysis 2019.

FY20 Strategic Goals

FOSTER VISITOR GROWTH

Tourism is a leading industry in Billings, generating economic impact that is crucial to local businesses. Tourism growth sparks investment in hospitality infrastructure and attractions, supports thousands of jobs within Yellowstone County, and enhances the overall quality of life in Billings.

Visit Billings staff work to fulfill the mission to inspire and facilitate travelers and planners in order to grow visitation to the destination. The team is committed to promoting, marketing, and selling the city as a preferred travel destination for leisure, business, and sports itineraries as well as offering orientation and facilitation services that enhance the visitor experience, build brand allegiance to the community, and encourage repeat visitation.

In FY20, Visit Billings staff, together with the Chamber/CVB and BTBID Boards of Directors, Visit Southeast Montana officials, area tourism partners, and the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD), will continue to foster visitor growth at Montana's Trailhead in order to support stakeholders. If Visit Billings stakeholders (area lodging partners) are successful, the staff is fulfilling the organization's mission. Strong occupancy and room demand reports for the lodging community equate to full restaurants, retailers, and attractions. In turn, the business community strengthens and the local economy thrives. Partnerships are key to success beyond the mission. The United States Travel Association (USTA) offers great insight regarding the importance of collaboration for both residents and visitors of a community: Collaboration creates attractive communities. The USTA notes in its Travel's Essential Roles report that investing in the improvement of a destination makes it more attractive to visitors, but also to talent. What may begin as an effort to bolster the livability of a place, can turn into an attraction that creates a boost to the tourism economy.

One recent example of this in Billings is the Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site (YKIS). This private-public partnership project improved an area of the community that has now become a historic attraction for visitors as well as a sense of pride and enjoyment for residents. So, by collaborating with community partners and elected officials, Visit Billings can play a role in helping create a place where people want to spend their time—whether it be for a weekend, a semester or a lifetime. Meaningful economic development that leads to attracting businesses, talent, and visitors requires cooperative partnerships with all stakeholders in an area: lawmakers, public officials, city planners; the business community; the Billings Chamber of Commerce; and other destination or regional marketing organizations (USTA 2019).

THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE: THE TRAIL GUIDE: FOSTERING

A SENSE OF PRIDE AND PLACE

In Billings, research over the past decade obtained by Randall Travel Marketing and BCF, consistently reflects that there is a civic pride weakness among Billings' area residents. As tourism demand continues to increase in a city, the USTA warns that destination marketing organizations have the added responsibility of engaging with and creating advocates with local residents. This is a major priority for Visit Billings leadership and staff. Residents can be champions of a destination, but they can also be detractors if they do not see the value in increasing visitor demand and ensuring that visitors have a positive experience. It's important, yet can be difficult for residents to understand the positive impact visitation has on a community.

For instance, on a busy weekend in Billings with a sporting event, it may be frustrating to residents who must deal with added traffic congestion and perhaps wait times at restaurants. However, visitors are traveling between sports venues, retailers, restaurants, and hotels spending money in the community which directly supports the economy and local jobs. This positive impact message can be difficult to convey. Thus, it's important for Visit Billings to have strong relationships with media partners, local civic groups, tourism colleagues, and others to ensure residents realize the importance of visitors having a positive experience in Billings and Yellowstone County.

A positive visitor experience is a significant piece of a successful tourism economy. Residents have the capacity to elevate Billings which can significantly impact visitor growth and the visitor experience. In FY20, the Visitor Experience strategy will continue to be a priority. An influence of community pride will play a significant role in the future of visitor growth at Montana's Trailhead. From launching the Trail Guides program and shining a light on visitor orientation and facilitation best practices to developing ways for the community to get involved as tourism ambassadors, staff will work to inspire residents to become champions of the place they call home.

INCREASE LEISURE VISITATION

Visit Billings positions Billings and the surrounding area as a preferred destination for leisure visitation. Investing in leisure tourism marketing strategies is the highest priority for the organization as it supports all stakeholders. Through strategic marketing and promotional efforts, Visit Billings focuses on driving room nights to area properties by campaigning to regional, national, and in some cases, international travelers. From the regional resident to the international visitor, Billings is an attractive destination. Local amenities like fine dining and the brewery district along with gateway access to national historic, cultural, and natural attractions - help strengthen the destination's brand. Park offering urban amenities on bucket list road trips. These attractions draw and boost visitation to the destination and the region. The marketing team will assess opportunities in elevating Billings as a destination between Yellowstone National Park and Badlands National Park offering urban amenities on bucket list road trips.

The overall leisure marketing strategy is to increase year-round visitation targeting regional, national and international travelers. During FY20, Visit Billings will continue to build off of successes realized during a strong FY19. FY19 Smith Travel Research Reports reflected consistent gains in occupancy and room demand. In FY17, following BTBID Board driven direction, the Visit Billings staff began the process of assessing and diversifying the organization's leisure marketing after weaknesses in the leisure segment were experienced. Together with the organization's agency of record, BCF Agency, staff will forge ahead to grow leisure visitation. Hosting social media influencers, travel writers and bloggers as well as attending tradeshows focused on leisure travel offerings, are also important component to increasing leisure visitation in Billings.

MEETING/CONVENTION SALES AND SERVICING

The meeting and convention recruitment segment accounts for nearly 20% of annual visitation to Billings. Visit Billings, together with BCF Agency, uses direct sales and marketing efforts such as face to face appointment-based meetings, sales missions, and advertising or sponsorships to secure bookings that grow visitation in this segment at the destination. With six convention hotel properties, additional new, state of the art meeting space projected to be on-line by January of 2020 with Marriott,

MetraPark, and numerous other venues that compliment convention space in the community, meeting and convention sales is a prime focus in FY20.

Billings is a desirable meetings destination, for either small or city-wide events. By marketing, promoting, and selling Billings as a meetings destination, Visit Billings can generate room nights and revenue for stakeholders. By inspiring and orienting meeting professionals with thoughtful sales strategies and measurable objectives, this segment can continue to have a strong economic impact on the community. Meanwhile, the Visit Billings Visitor Services staff can help facilitate this segment by providing planners with assistance and services that benefit and enhance events. Planners often turn to staff for suggestions on how to increase attendance and help ensure a strong welcome for guests. Therefore, from the initial sales process to the actual execution of the meeting or convention, customer service is a top priority for Visit Billings.

Servicing staff can help engage the local business community in planning and servicing efforts, assist with site inspections, planning and attendance building for a group, and guarantee proper pre and post meeting tour options for attendees. The Trail Guides program and civic pride efforts are also important to sales and servicing in this segment.

BILLINGS: SPORTS TOURISM

Strong gains in sports tourism continue to position Billings as a sports events destination. Positioning Billings as a sports events destination will remain a priority for Visit Billings in FY20. In FY19, Visit Billings staff fosters growth in this segment by supporting partners like the Montana High School Association, Montana State University Billings, Rocky Mountain College, area school districts as well as the City of Billings and Yellowstone County. Meanwhile, continuing to build relationships with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is a major priority. Staff also support officials with the Big Sky State Games, YMCA, and several local tournaments. Hosting club and travel sporting events like youth and amateur basketball, volleyball, softball, and baseball tournaments directly helps stakeholders. Also, during FY20, Visit Billings staff will continue to support community efforts to enhance facility options for the city and will assess needs for a sports sales and events manager.

SUPPORT AIRPORT PROGRESSION: BIL

Air service is a direct route to tourism success for Billings. A lack of consistent service, higher fares, or limited airline options can constrict tourism growth. Quality air service and pleasant arrival and departure experiences are essential to growing visitation at Montana's Trailhead. As the City of Billings and its Aviation and Transit Department work to move the community forward by enhancing the traveler's experience at Logan Airport, the BTBID Board will provide leadership as necessary to support the City's \$47M airport expansion and development project. This is a crucial piece to the tourism growth puzzle in Billings and southeast Montana. Ahead in FY20, Visit Billings will also continue to assist community partners in fostering relationships with air carriers serving the city including Frontier, United, Delta, American Airlines, Alaska Air, Allegiant, and CapeAir. Together with the Billings Chamber's Air Service Committee, Visit Billings staff, Big Sky Economic Development, and the TBID Board of Directors will monitor growth and expansion opportunities for air service into BIL and will foster relationships with air carrier officials.

THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE

Visit Billings has a strong relationship with MOTBD, particularly with efforts to grow international travel to the western United States. In recent years, overseas visitors have ranked sightseeing, fine dining, and national parks/monuments as major draws in deciding where to spend time while visiting the United States. These items speak directly to what Billings offers. Therefore, Visit Billings will continue to work with MOTBD and partners like Visit Southeast Montana and Rocky Mountain International to better position eastern Montana for international travel experiences. International familiarization tours remain a priority to help staff and stakeholders build relationships with international tour operators. Staff will also attend International Roundup and IPW in 2020 to grow future travel to Billings in the international market. Finally, Visit Billings, through its Trail Guides program will provide more education to tourism partners and stakeholders to elevate this tourism segment at the destination.

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

Cooperative Opportunities and Joint Ventures

Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development Partnership and Joint Ventures

Visit Billings will continue partnering with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) in marketing and advertising opportunities including print, digital, OOH, and trade shows. There is value in not only leveraging dollars toward increasing audience reach and frequency, but in the association and tie to MOTBD messaging and brand pillars. Digital opportunities that hyper target a qualified audience of travelers have been heavy-lifters for Billings. Accordingly, staff will look first to those opportunities again. In FY19, Visit Billings participated in several of the MOTBD co-op advertising opportunities including Parents Magazine, Sojern and TripAdvisor. Similar placements will be considered in FY20.

Visit Billings will partner with MOTBD, Montana's tourism regions, and CVBs on relevant consumer trade shows when appropriate. Billings has and will continue to partner with MOTBD and Visit Southeast Montana at the Rocky Mountain International Roundup, U.S. Travel Association's IPW and perhaps the GoWest Summit. These partnerships have proven successful in the past and are expected to be in the future.

Optional: Include attachment here.

DA- Billings Visitor Profile Study.pdf

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

Local and Regional Partnerships

Visit Billings would like to participate in the following cooperative opportunities with neighboring regions:

In the coming year, Visit Billings has plans to partner with Visit Southeast Montana to draw visitors to the area. It's important for the Visit Billings team to maintain a strong alliance with this valued partner.

Yellowstone Country travel region, particularly the Red Lodge area, is another important region where Visit Billings will continue building relationships. Many wins have been realized through team efforts between Billings and Red Lodge including the Hot Bike Tour, Outdoor Writers Association of America, BMW MOA Rally and GWRRA Wing Ding 38. Billings is a gateway to the Beartooth Highway (considered part of Yellowstone Country) and Yellowstone National Park via Red Lodge. Billings is also a welcome destination for travelers coming out of the park seeking services, shopping and urban amenities. Visit Billings believes there is value in strengthening the benefits each city offers the other.

Also, falling in line with MOTBD's strategic goals, Billings will partner with the City of Billings, Chamber of Commerce, Yellowstone County, Downtown Billings Alliance and local leaders to preserve the assets and quality of life in the community, maintaining productive dialogue around seeking ways to improve Billings area tour products to grow Billings as a year-round destination. The Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site renovation at Swords Rimrock Park is a perfect example of community partnership that impacts quality of life as well as Billings as a tourism destination.

Finally, Montana State Parks are very important to Billings visitation. The organization looks for strategic ways to support and elevate Montana State Parks.

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

Visit Billings is a proud proponent of Joint Ventures and Cooperative opportunities. Visit Billings leisure marketing staff and creative representatives with BCF Agency have partnered with many opportunities presented including Visit USA Parks, Family Fun, Sojern, TripAdvisor, and other buys and partnerships, to name few.

All options presented by MOTBD and Hoffman-York are contemplated and considered. However, winter options that focus on skiing and other cold season travel product are less attractive for investment as Billings has limited cold season options that would attract national, winter visitation.

Visit Billings is also a proud partner of the VisaVue program. Visit Billings also appreciates opportunities offered by MOTBD in partnership with Rocky Mountain International.

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 Atchmnt
		Visit Billings will work to elevate and promote social media channels particularly with the hosting of Travel Blog Exchange late summer of 2019. Facebook The Facebook channel			Robust social networking sites allow			

	<p>Consumer</p> <p>Social Media</p>	<p>will:</p> <p>Engage and respond to followers' questions and comments on a daily basis</p> <p>Encourage dialogue by asking followers questions</p> <p>Include links within posts, when relevant, to help drive traffic to the Billings blog and newly designed website</p> <p>Tag relevant hospitality partners, attractions, events and visitors in posts, when applicable, to maximize visibility and reach</p> <p>Incorporate paid campaigns aimed at attracting new followers from key markets</p> <p>Instagram</p> <p>The Instagram channel will:</p> <p>Curate and utilize consumer-generated photography and video</p> <p>Create editorial photos and video aimed at highlighting destination experiences and offerings in a visually compelling way</p> <p>Leverage the existing #VisitBillings hashtag while encouraging visitors and stakeholders to do the same</p> <p>Engage with traditional media through the use of designated hashtags generated by publications like RoadRUNNER, National Geographic Traveler and Sunset to aggregate related content and join in on relevant and timely social media conversations</p> <p>Pinterest</p> <p>The Pinterest channel will:</p> <p>Re-pin content from popular travel bloggers, travelplanning sites and other brands to help to establish Visit Billings' Pinterest page</p>	<p>Social media channels offer strong targeting and positioning capabilities that speak to demographics noted in Destination Analysts Visitor Profile information and reporting.</p>	<p>Goals include:</p> <p>Generate awareness of Billings, Montana as the Most Scenic Route into Yellowstone.</p> <p>Increase awareness of Billings, Montana as being the place to experience unspoiled adventure without sacrificing the comfort of hospitality.</p> <p>Leverage the Forge Your Own Path brand position as an invitation for prospective visitors.</p> <p>Measures with STR and VisaVue Reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner referrals- 50% • Travel guide views and requests- 30% • 3+ min on site- 10% • Email sign-ups- 10% 	<p>users to create profiles, follow people of interest, post items of interest, exchange messages, and connect with like-minded user groups. Promoting a campaign and creative on such channels can directly impact an active planner make decisions.</p> <p>Facebook serves as a Billings Trail Guide, posting daily and consistent updates and addressing followers' inquiries in a timely manner. Type of content will include information on events, photography/video, details on attractions, closings/openings, what's new, user-generated content, third-party endorsement through press coverage, etc.</p> <p>Instagram is the inspiration channel for Visit Billings, guiding followers on their dreaming, and ultimately, planning, travel phases through compelling imagery and videos, both branded and consumer-generated.</p> <p>Nearly a quarter of online travel planners use Pinterest as a resource. With its use as a visual search engine, Visit Billings will be evaluating organic Pinterest content to test this channel in the paid space in FY20.</p> <p>The above social media applications will be the focus of social media marketing in some cases.</p>	<p>\$5,000.00</p>	<p>No funds were spent in FY20. Typically, the Visit Billings/Billings CVB staff would execute social media projects preparing for warm season campaigns. Due to COVID-19, the funds budgeted for social media for FY20, were not spent in order to prepare for worst case scenarios for the organization and the destination.</p> <p>Billings' citywide occupancy in the third quarter of FY20 fell from 70% to 4-6%, devastating the hospitality industry and tourism partners (Smith Travel Research).</p> <p>In order to prepare for such financial turmoil to the organization and in order to protect the mission, staff halted expenditures in March 2020. Therefore, the funds allotted to this method were carried into FY21 in order to better market the destination and support tourism in the region in a post-COVID-19 recovery.</p> <p>This method has proved successful in previous fiscal years and may be continued as the post-COVID-19 market recovers and funds are available. However, funds were not allocated for this budget line or method in FY21 due to budget concerns and needing to place more funds into other methods for marketing.</p>	
			<p>Visitor Profile Research – Destination Analysts</p> <p>This past fiscal year, Visit Billings completed a comprehensive Visitor Profile research study conducted by Destination Analysts, Inc. Top line survey data collected from in-person intercept surveys of Billings area visitors informed top</p>	<p>Visit Billings staff,</p>	<p>General Joint Venture Opportunity Mindset:</p> <p>Visit Billings will continue partnering with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) in marketing and advertising opportunities including print, digital, OOH, and trade shows. The organization will also partner with Regions and other CVBs in order to help market Billings and elevate the state as a whole when applicable.</p> <p>There is value in not only leveraging dollars toward increasing audience reach and frequency, but in the association and tie to MOTBD messaging and brand pillars.</p> <p>Digital opportunities that hyper target a</p>		<p>Joint Ventures</p> <p>As noted in the Method, Visit Billings/Billings CVB is always appreciative of co-op and Joint Venture opportunities with MOTBD and other partners including Regions and other CVBs.</p> <p>Such partnership(s) proved successful again in FY20, pre-COVID19, meeting objectives to leverage funds to have more opportunities at a lower cost or to be placed as a larger Montana voice in marketing.</p> <p>There is value in not only leveraging State Lodging Tax funds to increase audience reach and frequency, but in the association and tie to MOTBD messaging and brand pillars. This helps elevate the state as a whole as well as Billings as a destination.</p>	

Consumer	Joint Ventures	<p>Visit Billings will consider joint venture and cooperative opportunities that offer value in targeting a national audience that aligns with Billings as a tourism destination.</p> <p>We will respond with interest and consideration together with our creative partner, BCF Agency.</p> <p>We appreciate opportunities that invest in elevating Billings to a diverse and wide range of print or digital offerings.</p>	<p>visitor origin markets, purpose of visit and place of stay, as well as detailed trip characteristics. The top visitor markets represented in the survey sample were Denver-Boulder (6.7%) and Minneapolis-St. Paul (4.9%). Just under half of those surveyed traveled to Billings primarily for leisure (46%). The most important factors motivating the visit to Billings included a special event or festival, shopping, a good deal on airfare, and nearby friends or family.</p> <p>VisaVue Reporting</p> <p>Through the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development's Joint Venture program, Visit Billings is able to purchase VisaVue traveler spending data at a reduced rate. The past two years of data have been used to inform the current market strategy. Denver-Boulder and Minneapolis- St. Paul are in the top three originating MSAs by cardholder account over Q3, both showing over 5% growth in spend amount Y/Y.</p>	<p>boards, and the agency of record, BCF Agency will continue to monitor Smith Travel Research (STR) data throughout all campaigns using 2018 as a benchmark for performance:</p> <p>2018 Performance Metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average Occupancy 70.6% • Average ADR \$101.37 • RevPar \$71.61 <p>Success will also be measured by creating Visit Billings ads and placement in travel guides. Increasing viewer exposure.</p>	<p>qualified audience of travelers have been heavy-lifters for Billings. Accordingly, staff will look first to those opportunities again. In FY19, Visit Billings participated in several of the MOTBD co-op advertising opportunities including Parents Magazine, Sojern and TripAdvisor. Similar placements will be considered in FY20.</p> <p>Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative:</p> <p>Also important to note when discussing important partnerships with MOTBD and other partners, during FY20 the eastern Montana tourism organizations will work closely with MOTBD as the Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative evolves. This will include partnership with Visit Southeast Montana in order to elevate the region which includes Billings.</p> <p>This marketing effort led by MOTBD targets geographical zones prompting robust conversations on existing tourism assets and future opportunities in the eastern section of Montana. MOTBD is investing resources targeted on improving the visitor economy in eastern Montana. Together with tourism partner input and data from Destination Analysts, VisaVue, and Arrivalist, leaders will guide decisions identifying areas of opportunity to better promote Montana to support visitor growth statewide.</p>	\$30,000.00	<p>In early FY20), Visit Billings/Billings CVB staff were able to increase the initial budget from \$30,000 to \$33,844.92 which helped add value to opportunities offered.</p> <p>Opportunities executed successfully in FY20 with such funding included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Creation of artwork and placement of Visit Billings creative in Glacier Country's Travel Guide -Creation of artwork and placement of Visit Billings creative in Southeast Montana's 2020 Travel Guide -Partnership with Visit Southeast Montana for placement in the 2020 Professional Bull Riders Eight Seconds Volume in an effort to elevate southeast Montana and Billings as destinations in Montana -Partnership with Visit Southeast Montana for placement in the Seattle Magazine consisting of a 2-page split spread -Creation of artwork and placement of Visit Billings creative in the Red Lodge Travel Guide -Warm season OOH in DFW with Hoffman York and MOTBD -TripAdvisor Follow-up: including ad lift reporting from Billings' most recent campaign on TripAdvisor (attached) using the TA's new reporting platform. The report compares users exposed to Billings' ads to users in the same audiences targeted who weren't exposed to your ads. Some bulletpointed highlights below: <p>Users exposed to Billings ads viewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% more pages of Billings content • 30% more points of interest in Billings (hotels/attractions/restaurants) • 20% more page views of Billings hotels • 50% more page views of Billings attractions • 10% fewer page views of Billings restaurants content <p>This method is considered successful based on exposure of placements (see TripAdvisor Report) as well as Smith Travel Research reporting for Billings as a destination. Unfortunately, with COVID-19 impacts, Smith Travel Research was not the best gauge of success.</p> <p>However, the partnerships noted above have a proven track record of elevating Billings as travel destination. Therefore, such partnerships, made available in a post-COVID-19 marketing scenario, will be considered again.</p> <p>Visit Billings typically measures success for such investments using Smith Travel Research or STR reporting. However, due to COVID-19 impacts, the STR reporting is not being used to measure true success of the investments since reporting from hotels and motels to STR were scewed as a result of COVID-19 directives and guidelines for travel. However, for records, please note:</p> <p>2020 STR - Billings citywide:</p> <p>Occupancy for Billings: 45%</p> <p>Average Daily Rate or ADR: \$87.43</p> <p>Room Demand: -31%</p>	<p>TripAdvisor Reporting - Billings.MT.pdf</p>
		<p>Online and Digital Marketing:</p> <p>Visit Billings will focus heavily on behavioral strategies targeting summer vacation planning and booking, with an interest in the outdoors, national parks, and western heritage experiences.</p> <p>To maximize budget, national leisure marketing initiatives will focus on 2-3 key geographic markets with the highest potential for ROI. Visit Billings and BCF Agency conducted a thorough market analysis, including the most recent data available through MOTBD's Joint Venture partnership with VisaVue and Visit Billings' Visitor Profile (Destination Analysts), to determine the markets most effective for summer visitation growth, especially for new visitors.</p> <p>Please see previous marketing copy submitted in this program pertaining to strategies, goals, and</p>						

	<p>Consumer</p> <p>Online/Digital Advertising</p>	<p>target markets for more details.</p> <p>The Media Mix Breakdown is anticipated to be similar to <u>but is subject to be adjusted</u>:</p> <p>Digital - 40%</p> <p>Content Partnerships - 14%</p> <p>Social - 36%</p> <p>Search - 10%</p> <p>Visit Billings' Summer Media Plan(s) focus on programmatic pre- mid- and post-roll video with online display retargeting. Through a Demand Side Platform (DSP) partner, the plan showcases new video assets for the destination.</p> <p>Video continues to lead the storytelling space and is the most powerful way to connect emotionally with an audience.</p> <p>A new content partnership with RoadTrippers.com, a web and mobile travel-planning platform, will provide custom trip guides with display, email and social promotion.</p> <p>TripAdvisor:</p> <p>TripAdvisor is a leading consumer facing website. By investing in TripAdvisor, Visit Billings can better position the destination for visitor growth and repeat visitation by combining trusted user reviews, travel guide content, and a booking engine to inspire, orient, and facilitate travelers planning trips.</p> <p>Visit Billings invests in TripAdvisor annually. Previously, part of the investment has been a joint-venture opportunity with MOTBD. Such offerings are considered and appreciated. Meantime, Visit Billings and BCF Agency will execute a contract with TripAdvisor with the following tactics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a multi campaign framework which allows for maximum budget control, while also ensuring thematic relevance of ad groups to ensure high CTR and quality scores Provide ongoing campaign optimization across campaigns in order to take advantage of pockets of opportunity to maximum effect Ongoing bid management to ensure overall KPIs are delivered while also ensuring campaign effectively scales Continual keyword refinement and expansion 	<p>Visitor Profile Research – Destination Analysts</p> <p>This past fiscal year, Visit Billings completed a comprehensive Visitor Profile research study conducted by Destination Analysts, Inc. Top line survey data collected from in-person intercept surveys of Billings area visitors informed top visitor origin markets, purpose of visit and place of stay, as well as detailed trip characteristics. The top visitor markets represented in the survey sample were Denver-Boulder (6.7%) and Minneapolis-St. Paul (4.9%). Just under half of those surveyed traveled to Billings primarily for leisure (46%). The most important factors motivating the visit to Billings included a special event or festival, shopping, a good deal on airfare, and nearby friends or family.</p> <p>VisaVue Reporting</p> <p>Through the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development's Joint Venture program, Visit Billings is able to purchase VisaVue traveler spending data at a reduced rate. The past two years of data have been used to inform the current market strategy. Denver-Boulder and Minneapolis- St. Paul are in the top three originating MSAs by cardholder account over Q3, both showing over 5% growth in spend amount Y/Y.</p>	<p>In instances where social ad units direct a user to stay within the platform, social engagement metrics will be monitored and optimized.</p> <p>Visit Billings staff, boards, and BCF Agency will continue to monitor Smith Travel Research (STR) data throughout all campaigns using 2018 as a benchmark for performance:</p> <p>2018 Performance Metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average Occupancy 70.6% Average ADR \$101.37 RevPar \$71.61 <p>BCF will track and report the following engagement metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner Referrals View or Request Visitor Guide 3+ Minutes on Site eNewsletter Sign-ups <p>25% of view-through conversions are measured, 100% of click-through conversions are measured. In instances where social ad units direct a user to stay within the platform, social engagement metrics will be monitored.</p> <p>For video units, we will track and report on video completion rate and cost per completed view.</p>	<p>Leveraging Montana's Trailhead, Visit Billings' "Forge Your Own Path," brand invites visitors to be their own pioneers and participate in a memorable journey, authentic to the Big Sky Montana experience yet approachable and unexpected.</p> <p>"Forge Your Own Path" is built on the pioneer spirit of Billings' culture and its people, from Yellowstone Kelly and William Clark (of Lewis and Clark) to today's makers, innovators, adventurers and artists, representing the strong will, Western humility and the self-made perseverance that embodies the Billings way of life.</p> <p>Visit Billings positions Billings and the surrounding area as a preferred destination for leisure visitation. Investing in leisure tourism marketing strategies is the highest priority for the organization as it supports all stakeholders. Through strategic marketing and promotional efforts, Visit Billings focuses on driving room nights to area properties by campaigning to regional, national, and in some cases, international travelers.</p> <p>The overall leisure marketing strategy is to increase year-round visitation. During FY20, Visit Billings will continue to build off of successes realized during a strong FY19.</p>	<p>\$85,409.00</p>	<p>Typically, the Visit Billings/Billings CVB staff would expend all funds allocated in this budget item preparing for seasonal campaigns. Due to COVID-19, the funds budgeted for this line item in FY20 were not all spent in order to prepare for worst case scenarios for the organization and the destination.</p> <p>Billings' citywide occupancy in the third quarter of FY20 fell from 70% to 4-6%, devastating the hospitality industry and tourism partners (Smith Travel Research).</p> <p>In order to prepare for such financial concerns to the organization and in order to protect the mission, staff halted expenditures in March 2020. Therefore, any remaining funds allocated to this method were carried into FY21 in order to better market the destination and support tourism in the region in a post-COVID-19 recovery.</p> <p>However, prior to COVID-19, placements were made to execute mission and to orient and facilitate visitors to Billings.</p> <p>Digital placements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Visit USA Parks paid digital placements and targeted campaigns to promote Billings as a destination -Visit USA Parks branded itinerary promotions -Sturgis exposure targeting attendees to Sturgis, SD in August of 2019 in order to promote Billings as a destination to make part of itineraries to or from the event -Sloth Marketing in addition to MOTBD Grants for ZooMontana to promote the Sloth coming to ZooMontana in late summer 2020 -Great American Road Trip campaign promoting Billings as a place to stay along the road trips spanning from the Badlands of South Dakota to Yellowstone National Park and all monuments and Parks in between. <p>The placements noted above as well as the method as a whole we considered successful as the inspiration phase of marketing was and is so important during the pandemic. Potential travelers are making plans as a vaccine becomes available and travel resumes. It's important that Visit Billings/Billings CVB brand is available for inspiration. Staff need to be available to assist with orientation and facilitation - and they are.</p> <p>Please see Billings Media Report (attached) for more KPIs regarding this method which was successful despite COVID-19 impacts. Also, there are examples of creative attached in misc. attachments section of the grant.</p> <p>This is a proven successful method which will continue in future fiscal year(s). The reporting is attached here with examples of creative under misc. attachments.</p>	<p>Billings Media Report 8.7 - PW (2).pdf</p>
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Consumer	Ad Agency Services	<p>Visit Billings contracts with BCF Agency in a retainer model in order to execute the following timely and efficiently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing Strategies • Remain fluid with placements and campaign execution in proper DMAs • Ongoing planning, execution, and assessment of campaigns and ROI • Benchmarks and regular reporting for DOC/MOTBD Rules and Regulation needs as well as reports for staff and boards • Continuous improvement of campaign performance versus paying per project 	<p>The overall leisure marketing strategy is to increase year-round visitation targeting regional, national and international travelers. During FY20, Visit Billings will continue to build off of successes realized during a strong FY19. FY19 Smith Travel Research Reports reflected consistent gains in occupancy and room demand. In FY17, following BTBD Board driven direction, the Visit Billings staff began the process of assessing and diversifying the organization's leisure marketing after weaknesses in the leisure segment were experienced. Together with the organization's agency of record, BCF Agency, staff will forge ahead to grow leisure visitation. Hosting social media influencers, travel writers and bloggers as well as attending tradeshows focused on leisure</p>	<p>The ultimate measure of success is mission fulfillment. The mission of Visit Billings is to generate room nights for lodging facilities in the city of Billings by effectively marketing the region as a preferred travel destination. The BCF Agency is a partner in this mission execution.</p> <p>All efforts boil down to generating room nights; driving and growing visitation to/in Billings. While assessing and analyzing how campaigns perform and tracking ROI are extremely important, heads in beds is a crucial measurement of success for the stakeholder.</p> <p>2018 Performance Metrics for Smith Travel Research Reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average Occupancy 70.6% 	<p>Marketing efforts influence perceptions of a destination as well as a city's tourism product. Strategic partners in marketing execution are key to motivating travel and successful returns on investment (ROI). Contracting with a proven creative agency is important to the destination marketing process for Visit Billings.</p> <p>Visit Billings contracts with BCF Agency in a retainer model in order to execute the following timely and efficiently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing Strategies • Remain fluid with placements and campaign execution • Ongoing planning, execution, and assessment of campaigns and ROI • Benchmarks and regular reporting for Rules and Regulation needs as well as reports for 	\$36,000.00	<p>Contracting with a proven creative agency is important to the destination marketing process for Visit Billings as well as strategies.</p> <p>As noted in the Method, inspiring, orienting, and facilitating are the priorities for Visit Billings in partnership with MOTBD and Montana's Regions and CVBs.</p> <p>Marketing and strategizing are some of the most important pieces of destination marketing and management. As a destination management and marketing organization, Visit Billings/Billings CVB staff need to be able to ensure investments in marketing are focused on a substantial return on the investment for stakeholders and that placements and buys will prove successful for stakeholders.</p> <p>Working with an agency is essential and helped lead to successful campaign execution pre-COVID-19 of FY20.</p> <p>Visit Billings agency of record for FY20 was the BCF Agency. This partnership, which included a monthly retainer, was a shared expense between the Billings CVB and private dollars. In FY20, funds assisted with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual planning and strategizing • Opportunities • Results and reporting • Innovation • Creativity, Artwork, Creative • Buying power • Social media consulting • Assistance building and managing photo libraries • Key to mobile-friendly websites and developments • e-communications templates and systems • Relevant landing pages • Branding power and consistency • Help with creation of booth strategies for consumers show • Sales, orientation, and facilitation materials • Presentations/ROI programming <p>The FY20 retainer fees and/or account management fees proved to be a successful investment and led to meaningful, inspiring, and successful campaigns along with strong buying power and strategies that were key to the success of the organization as a whole regarding leisure, business, sports, and meeting recruitment marketing.</p> <p>Visit Billings can't afford to hire a graphics artist, media buyer, interactive manager, IT experts, and communications professional. However, contracting with a full service agency that works with staff makes for the win-win and solid investment.</p> <p>This Method and strategy were successful. The objective was met and the method will continue. Please note the attached status reports which outline projects the agency worked on in FY20 with Visit Billings staff.</p> <p>Visit Billings typically measures success for such investments using Smith Travel Research or STR reporting (heads in beds). However, due to COVID-19 impacts, the STR reporting is not being used to measure true success of the investments since reporting from hotels and motels to STR were skewed as a result of COVID-19 directives and guidelines for travel. However, for records, please note:</p> <p>2020 STR - Billings citywide:</p>	<p>Combined Status Reports.pdf</p>

			travel offerings, are also important component to increasing leisure visitation in Billings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average ADR \$101.37 RevPar \$71.61 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff and boards Continuous improvement of campaign performance versus paying per project 		<p>Occupancy for Billings: 45%</p> <p>Average Daily Rate or ADR: \$87.43</p> <p>Room Demand: -31%</p>		
Consumer	Opportunity Marketing	Visit Billings will look to these funds should an appropriate opportunity to grow visitation at Montana's Trailhead, present itself. If not, dollars will be shifted to consumer (leisure) marketing efforts.	TBD	TBD	During planning of FY20, not all opportunities for marketing are known. Visit Billings is grateful for the opportunity to reserve dollars under consumer/opportunity marketing in order to be prepared for upcoming and unknown options in the 12 months ahead.	\$2,500.00	<p>In March 2020, Billings' citywide occupancy decreased from 70% to 4-6%, devastating the hospitality industry and tourism partners (Smith Travel Research) as a result of COVID-19 public health and economic impacts. This hit to lodging partner businesses directly impacted current budget decisions for staff in anticipation of the organization's future funding decreasing for FY21 and FY22.</p> <p>In order to prepare for the financial turmoil the destination experienced and will experience due to lower State Lodging Tax collections, staff halted expenditures in March 2020. Therefore, the funds allotted to this method (Opportunity) were carried into FY21 in order to better market the destination and support tourism in the destination in a post-COVID-19 environment.</p> <p>The use of such funds as opportunity marketing have proven successful in previous fiscal years. This method will continue.</p>		
Consumer	Printed Material	<p>Printed Materials for Visit Billings focus on the "Forge Your Own Path" branding and encourage travelers to seek adventure around every corner with the assistance from beautiful imagery, maps, recreational listing, and more.</p> <p>Visit Billings' focus is to provide accessible and authentic information; therefore, no advertising is included in Visit Billings publications.</p> <p>Printed materials are essential to visitor orientation and facilitation for leisure and group travel.</p> <p>Printed materials are available via digital format at www.VisitBillings.com as well.</p>	Facilitation: Tourism Regions, Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs), communities and organizations must all work together to make visitors aware of the full array of experiences available to guests.	Inventory will be monitored along with other factors depending on the specific project.	<p>In FY19, Visit Billings rebranded the local brewery district from Billings' Walkable Historic Brewery District to the Billings Brew Trail.</p> <p>Private dollars paid for the rebranding efforts, but one of the most popular facilitation pieces of the Trail is the tear off printed map. This map showcases the Billings Brew Trail on one side and coffee and tea shops on the backside to offer non-alcoholic options.</p> <p>It's expected the current FY19 supply will be depleted in early FY20 due to Travel Blog Exchange conference execution. These dollars would help with a reprint of the map for additional FY20 needs. Billings Brew Trail reprint budget: \$1,000</p> <p>The Billings Scenic Drive Map has long been a popular choice of orientation and facilitation both on www.VisitBillings.com in a digital offering, in the Billings Visitor Guide, and as a stand alone map used in hotels, motels, the airport, and the Billings Visitor Information Center. This popular map will need to be reprinted in FY20 as well. Scenic Drive Map Reprint: \$2,000</p>	\$3,000.00	<p>Scenic Drive Map</p> <p>This method was successful and the objective to get visitors inspired and oriented with Billings Scenic Points of Interest was met.</p> <p>In FY19, 10,000 copies were printed and the supply was depleted. In FY20, this file was printed again in preparation for sports tournaments, meetings, conventions, business travel, and leisure travel. The cost to print 10,000 copies of the maps on pads was \$1,686.96.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, distribution of this map was halted in March 2020, but resumed partially in summer 2020. Due to COVID-19, supply is mostly available which is a positive since collections are lower and funds will be limited for such projects in FY21.</p> <p>Typically Visit Billings must reprint this file every 6-8 months for distribution. This printed map is distributed in the Billings Visitor Information Center, at the Billings Logan Airport's Visitor Area, is given to stakeholders and tourism partners to distribute at their hotels or attractions, and is also included in all convention bags or on servicing tables for events. The map facilitates visitors to local points of interest along side signage that was installed throughout the destination and the Billings Scenic Drive was officially created ten years ago.</p> <p>The printed map is an important part of the program and the printing of the map will be continued once the supply is depleted in FY21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually, Visit Billings prints a supply of the Billings Scenic Drive Map. The Map is available in digital format at VisitBillings.com and is part of orientation materials (digital and print) for meeting planners, conventions attendees, and sports teams. The Map is also made available for facilitation at hotel front desks, the Billings Visitor Information Center, travel shows, for fulfillment requests, and is integrated into the Billings Visitor Guidebook. <p>The Map is 11x17 and is printed as a tear-off Map on 60#. Four color paper. There are 100 Maps per pad for a quantity of 10,000 Maps for distribution. The Map is also available here: https://www.visitbillings.com/sites/all/themes/visitbillings/images/pdfs/Scenic%20Guide%20Map.pdf</p> <p>Billings Historic Walkable Brewery District Map</p> <p>This method was successful and the objective was met to distribute the supply of the tear-off map to assist visitors.</p> <p>5,000 copies were printed in FY20. Due to COVID-19, supply is still in tact which is a positive since collections are lower and funds will be limited for such projects in FY21.</p> <p>Typically Visit Billings must reprint this file every six months for distribution. This printed map is distributed in the Billings Visitor Information Center, at the Billings Logan International Airport's Visitor Area, maps are given to stakeholders and tourism partners to distribute at their hotels or attractions, and is also included in all convention bags or on servicing tables for events and tournaments.</p> <p>In 2013, Visit Billings created the Billings Historic Walkable Brewery District. Over the course of several years, many breweries, two distilleries, and eventually a Cider House opened in a 1.5 mile area of downtown Billings – all walkable for visitors. Visit Billings spearheaded this project six years ago and continues to foster the promotion of the tour today as a means to court visitors to the destination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The map includes safety options including ways to contact Uber, Lyft, and a taxi service, restaurants options, and opportunities to stop at galleries, museums, and other points of interest along the route to the establishments noted on the map. Since the initial design of the District, the Billings Historic Walkable Brewery District Map is available in digital format at VisitBillings.com and is part of orientation materials (digital and print) for meeting planners, conventions attendees, and sports teams. The map is also made available for facilitation at hotel front desks, the Billings Visitor Information Center, travel shows, in fulfillment requests, and is integrated into the Billings Visitor Guidebook. The District is also part of several national leisure campaigns (some niche), social media offerings, digital assets, and print assets to create inspiration. The printed piece is a very important component to the project and will be continued. In 2018, in order to offer non-alcoholic 'brew' or differing time of day options to guests, the Visit Billings team added a Brew Map to the backside of this front/back print piece. It highlights coffee and tea shops in the same vicinity. <p>In FY20, the cost to produce 5,000 maps on pads was \$835.89</p> <p>Finally, in FY20, the YNP/GNP Parks Map was reprinted for distribution. 1,000 of the 11x17 maps were printed as a facilitation tool. Again, there is a good supply of these maps left due to the Billings Visitor Information Center being closed due to COVID-19 limitations.</p> <p>This method proved successful in FY20 and will be continued.</p>		YNP GNP Map.pdf
		Yellowstone National Park and Little Bighorn Battlefield, along with the Lewis and Clark Trail, in which Billings plays a major role, are key attractions positioning Billings as a trailhead to access popular tourism sites from a reliable and group-friendly destination. Billings offers tour operators 55 hotels to choose from (5,000 sleeping rooms) along with more than 300 restaurants, the historic Walkable			<p>Travel and Tradeshow, under Billings CVB line items, will focus on international tour operators exposure and relationships.</p> <p>The International Marketplace</p> <p>Visit Billings appreciates its relationship with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD), Rocky Mountain</p>				

Consumer	Travel/Trade Shows	<p>Brewery District, strong retail offerings, museums, historical and cultural attractions, as well as adventure and recreational opportunities – all items that can assist with building an exciting and adventurous custom itinerary for groups of all sizes.</p> <p>Billings continues to rival its competitive-set cities for adventure, access, and experience. Billings' proximity to Beartooth Highway, a consistently top ranked scenic drive in North America, and into the northeast entrance to Yellowstone National Park at Cooke City/Silver Gate is a major asset to the Billings tourism industry and the group tour market. Visit Billings appreciates its relationship with the Red Lodge business community and town leaders as we work to attract groups in partnership with Visit Southeast Montana.</p> <p>The incubation period in generating successful leads in the group travel market spans a multi-year strategy where tour operators begin booking new itineraries 12-36 months ahead of tour schedule execution. Visit Billings staff will focus on marketing Billings as a preferred travel destination in the group tour market on national and international platforms to begin the process of consideration. Individual geographic segments will be researched and marketed to in a variety of ways as well in order to compete in this expanding tourism segment.</p>	<p>The Tradeshow noted in this line item will include RMI's International Roundup and USTA's IPW.</p> <p>Visit Billings appreciates the chance to attend these events with MOTBD staff and liaisons.</p>	<p>Account Management relationship follow-up, and Smith Travel Research Report (STR) which offers monthly snapshots of occupancy and room demand percentages for the Billings market, will help guide ROI and successes to an extent as well in this market.</p>	<p>International, Brand USA and other entities that help grow international travel to the western United States.</p> <p>In recent years, top leisure activities for overseas visitors were ranked as follows: (1) shopping, (2) sightseeing, (3) fine dining, (4) national parks/ monuments and (5) amusement/theme parks. Visit Billings will continue to work together with the MOTBD and partners like Visit Southeast Montana to better position eastern Montana for international travel experiences.</p> <p>Visit Billings has worked with Brand USA, Rocky Mountain International and events like the U.S. Travel Association's IPW Marketplace to help foster relationships in specific international regions. Strong relationships have been built to countries like Italy, Germany and the UK, but there is much work to be done especially considering concerns surrounding a reported decline in U.S. competitiveness for international travel dollars in recent years (United State Travel Association). As a destination, Billings aligns well with the goals of the international visitor with plans to experience the west, National Parks, and Montana.</p>	\$6,750.00	<p>Due to COVID-19, the funds budgeted for travel and trade shows for FY20, were not fully expended. The only funds spent were for a registration fee to Rocky Mountain International's - International Round Up or IRU. The event was cancelled due to COVID-19 and funds were moved from the 2020 event to the 2021 event.</p> <p>No other funds were spent in this budget item or method as events were either cancelled or staff needed to save funds in order to prepare for worst case scenarios for the organization and the destination.</p> <p>Billings' citywide occupancy in the third quarter of FY20 fell from 70% to 4-6%, devastating the hospitality industry and tourism partners (Smith Travel Research).</p> <p>In order to prepare for such financial adjustments to the organization and in order to protect the mission, staff halted most expenditures in March 2020. Therefore, the funds allotted to this method were carried into FY21 in order to better market the destination and support tourism in the region in a post-COVID-19 recovery.</p> <p>This method has proved successful in previous fiscal years. This method will continue in future fiscal years as COVID-19 impacts lessen and funds are available.</p>	
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	<p>The objective of enhancing a photo/video library is to increase the number of assets for Visit Billings, stakeholders, MOTBD, and tourism partners.</p> <p>Having fresh, relevant, and targeted images is key to properly market a destination.</p> <p>Visually compelling and INSPIRING photography increases engagement across all media applications, whether it be increasing the view rate of an article, swaying a consumer's selection process or improving social media interaction. Articles containing relevant images have 94% more total views than articles without images, on average (JuffBullas.com). Given the visual age we live in, the power of strong photography cannot be emphasized enough.</p> <p>This year, Visit Billings/Billings CVB will allocated carryover funds from FY19 in order to execute a photo shoot and to purchase custom photos that capture specific scenes that help market the destination.</p>	<p>Maintaining an inventory of current Billings-specific photographs is critical in representing the destination in a relevant, fresh and compelling manner. Visit Billings makes a year-round effort to acquire imagery that supports marketing efforts, and showcases iconic Billings.</p>	<p>Billings' leisure market consists of a healthy balance of history on the genuine frontier, outdoor adventure and recreation and urban amenities. As the largest city in the region, Billings offers amenities and opportunities regional visitors expect from the destination (medical, shopping, restaurant offerings, etc.).</p> <p>Visit Billings is striving to be sure visitors expectations are exceeded so that all visitors, regardless of where they come here from, see Billings as the trailhead to the many iconic attractions and experiences offered.</p> <p>Visit Billings will measure success by tracking the number of images obtained</p>	<p>Inspiring images are important in building creative marketing as well as for the creation of orientation and facilitation print/digital materials.</p>	\$6,000.00	<p>Typically, the Visit Billings/Billings CVB staff would execute image library expansion projects in preparation for warm season campaigns. Due to COVID-19, the funds budgeted for for this category for FY20, were not spent in order to prepare for worst case scenarios for the organization and the destination. Saving funding for future mission execution became more important in FY20, thus funds were not spent in this method.</p> <p>Billings' citywide occupancy in the third quarter of FY20 fell from 70% to 4-6%, devastating the hospitality industry and tourism partners (Smith Travel Research) and threatening future budget allocations.</p> <p>In order to prepare for such financial turmoil to the organization and in order to protect the mission, staff halted expenditures in March 2020. Therefore, the funds allotted to photo/video projects were instead carried into FY21 in order to better market the destination and support tourism in the region in a post-COVID-19 recovery.</p>	

		<p>Staff will focus on location and audience demographics to keep pace with media frequency and trends.</p> <p>Photos will also be used in warm season campaigns, on social media platforms, and at VisitBillings.com. Images will be available to tourism organizations and partners at no charge as well.</p>		<p>and the budget expended to do so.</p> <p>The goal will be to obtain 15 quality images using the budget or less than the approved budget for this method.</p>			
Film	Opportunity Marketing	<p>This is a to be determined (TBD) expense.</p> <p>Visit Billings looks forward to any opportunity to help the Montana Film Office success for the Montana brand.</p>	<p>In the past, Visit Billings has hosted directors and producers with film/location scouts in order to help meet the needs of any project. Staff will be on call and offer support to the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development and the Film Office with DOC, to ensure Montana and its communities are film-friendly.</p>	<p>Publicity utilizing Cision is one option to measure success, however, this is a variable until the project or opportunity presents itself to the organization or destination.</p>	<p>Per the Montana Film Office's website, the primary roles of the Montana Film Office are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote the state of Montana as a filming location to the Film/TV/Print industries and invite these productions into Montana for the overall economic benefit of the state. Once a production has come into our state, assist producers to find locations that fit their script, as well as act as their liaison through every phase of production. To nurture and support the development of our resident crew base, as well as our resident filmmakers. <p>The Montana Film Office is a component of the Montana Department of Commerce. Film support is very important to Visit Billings. Previous partnerships with former employees of the office included major projects like NEBRASKA, American Idol, HGTV episodes, as well as working to meet site location and casting needs.</p>	\$1,000.00	<p>These funds were not expended due to COVID-19 impacts to the destination and the organization in order to protect viability of the future of the organization and its mission.</p> <p>In March 2020, Billings' citywide occupancy decreased from 70% to 4-6%, devastating the hospitality industry and tourism partners (Smith Travel Research) as a result of COVID-19 public health and economic impacts. This impact to lodging partner businesses directly altered all FY20 budget decisions for staff in anticipation of the organization's future funding decreasing for FY21 and FY22 or until a post pandemic recovery.</p> <p>In order to prepare for the negative economic impacts the destination experienced and will experience due to lower State Lodging Tax collections, staff halted expenditures. Therefore, the funds allotted to this method (Film/Opportunity) were carried into FY21 in order to better market the destination and support tourism in the destination in a post-COVID-19 environment.</p> <p>This method has proven successful in previous fiscal years and will be continued in future fiscal years(s) as COVID-19 impacts lessen and funds are available.</p>
					<p>Group Marketing is important to growing key tourism segments in Billings and supporting properties of all sizes and needs.</p> <p>In order to reach decision makers, planners, tour operators, and tournament directors as well as attendees, athletes, fans, and other visitors a multi-media approach is necessary including print, digital, and other communication means.</p> <p>These targeted tourism segments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings and 		

- Conventions
- Recruitment
- Sports
- Group Tour and International Tour Initiatives

Meetings and Conventions Recruitment

Meeting planners often arrive in Billings with a misperception of Montana, drawn to the attraction of Big Sky Country without awareness of the wealth of amenities and resources available for meetings and conventions at the destination. Billings' walkable downtown with dining and entertainment, close proximity to Billings Logan Airport with growing nonstop service, and surrounding regional attractions are strong value propositions for planners. Planners leave a site visit excited about the destination's potential for their attendees.

Marketing and Recruitment Goals:

1. Build brand awareness of Billings as a meetings destination
2. Generate new leads and grow Visit Billings' database of qualified Meeting Planners

A high priority for Visit Billings is booking citywide events as they tend to support all stakeholders. A citywide event is any booking requiring three or more hotels. Recent success with Travel Blog Exchange or TBEX, NAIA WDI Basketball, the Marine Corp League Annual Convention,

Gold Wing Road Riders Wing Ding, and BMW Motorcycle Owners of America showcase the destination's track important to meeting the mission of generating room nights for lodging facilities. Other key markets in the meeting and convention recruitment segment include Military Reunions, Association, Corporate, Government, and niche opportunities like historic, cultural, motorcycle touring (2-wheel), and recreation-focused events.

Visit Billings' geographic focus includes the broader Mountain West, as well as Minneapolis, Seattle, and Dallas, due to proximity and a third-party presence. Visit Billings staff primarily target new bookings with 200-500 minimum room nights. The

Meetings and Conventions Recruitment:

Print and Digital Placements - Where feasible to be most successful

Meeting Planner Familiarization Tours - Inviting a planner to experience Billings is the number one opportunity to convert business. In addition to considering individual site visits on a case-by-case basis, Visit Billings will continue to host an annual meeting planner familiarization (FAM) tour.

Sponsorships - To support Visit Billings' sales initiatives, sponsorships will be considered with a focus on generating leads at select appointment-based shows throughout the year.

Lead Generation - With a focus on generating qualified sales leads for Visit Billings, FY20 marketing will include 1-2 primary lead generation campaigns. Utilizing EmpowerMINT as Visit Billings' list source, a uniquely branded direct mail marketing initiative will be developed to be executed ahead any 2020

Due to COVID-19 impacts and travel restrictions, the Visit Billings/Billings CVB stopped marketing to groups for meeting and sports events recruitment in March 2020. Due to COVID-19, the funds budgeted for meetings and sports marketing for FY20, were not completely spent in order to prepare for worst case scenarios for the organization and the destination.

Billings' citywide occupancy in the third quarter of FY20 fell from 70% to 4-6%, devastating the hospitality industry and tourism partners (Smith Travel Research).

In order to protect the mission of the organization in a post pandemic recovery, funds allotted to this method were carried into FY21 in order to better market the destination and support tourism in the region. This method will be continued.

Prior to COVID-19 restrictions, Visit Billings/Billings CVB staff did expend 53% of the funds allocated for this method.

The largest allocation was made to **CVENT**. Cvent, Inc. is a privately held software-as-a-service (SaaS) company that specializes in meetings, events, and hospitality management technology.

The company offers web-based software for meeting site selection, online event registration, event management, email marketing, and web surveys.

Visit Billings invests in the diamond level which allows staff to work directly with meeting planners who are looking to book meetings or conventions at the destination. The placements also offer digital placements and search options that elevate Billings as a meetings destination. For instance, if a meeting planner is looking to meet in Billings the west, Visit Billings will be featured. An example of the City Profile can be found here: [Visit Billings For Your Next Meeting or Event | Cvent Blog](#)

The CVENT placement and investment is successful and will play a role in getting meeting planners to think Billings in a post pandemic meeting recruitment environment. Private funds also assist with this investment. Here is a 2019 YoY performance reports from February 2020.

Visit Billings

					<p>prepare for future sports sales for the DMO</p> <p>Group Tour and International Tour Initiatives</p> <p>Yellowstone National Park and Little Bighorn Battlefield, along with the Lewis and Clark Trail, are key attractions positioning Billings as a trailhead to access popular tourism sites from a reliable and group-friendly destination.</p> <p>Regional partnerships are critical to the continued growth of Group and International Tour visitation. Visit Billings is fortunate to have a good working relationship with Visit Southeast Montana and the Red Lodge business community. As staff works to monitor the International landscape, Visit Billings will consider marketing opportunities through Brand USA and the MOTBD. Previously, Visit Billings has participated in the American Bus Association (ABA) Annual Marketplace as well as IPW, Go West Summit, and initiatives through Rocky Mountain International (RMI) like International Roundup, which all market to travel agents and tour operators on the domestic and International fronts. Staff will continue to evaluate the ROI on these programs.</p>			
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	<p>TAC Meetings: Most of these meetings take place in Helena and require travel and at least one overnight stay.</p> <p>Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation: This event is hosted by a Montana community that differs from year to year. This event requires travel and typically two overnight stays.</p>	<p>Team building and information gathering are important aspects of the industry and making sure all partners understand what is required of them and ways/opportunities to work together.</p> <p>For other needs, please reference the MOTBD Regulations and Procedures document pertaining to such meeting expenses.</p>	<p>TAC Meetings are a requirement. Attendance by the executive director at all quarterly TAC meetings and the Governor's Conference will be measurement of success.</p> <p>The Governor's Conference is typically a home run for staff and is attended annual for many reasons including exposure to partners, relationship building, information gathering, and the tradeshow.</p>	<p>Meetings of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) constitute required attendance for the Executive Director of a Region or CVB.</p> <p>These meetings offer important insight for organizations from both the TAC, MOTBD, and State Partners including ITRR and Montana State Parks for Regions and CVBs.</p> <p>The Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation is an important relationship building and information gathering event hosted every April. Visit Billings uses State Lodging Facility Use Tax to send the Executive Director while private dollars are used to send other CVB staff.</p>	\$1,850.00	<p>This method was successful as staff met the objective as needed prior to COVID-19 restrictions placed for the health and safety of Montana residents.</p> <p>Regarding Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) Meetings, the Visit Billings Executive Director attended all meeting of the TAC in FY20 prior to any COVID-19 restrictions or cancellations. These meetings were successful and items were discussed with staff, the agency of record, and other partners upon return. This method will be continued once travel can resume due to the pandemic.</p> <p>The take-a-ways to those meetings attended included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insight on MOTBD Marketing Plans for the state as a whole Research reports from ITRR Tribal project updates Networking with Region and CVB counterparts <p>Regarding the Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation, it was expected to be hosted at Northern and DoubleTree by Hilton Hotels in downtown Billings. However, due to the pandemic, the conference was postponed until spring of 2021. Visit Billings looks forward to assisting MOTBD staff with a successful execution of the event.</p> <p>The Method will continue once pandemic restrictions are lifted.</p>	
				Promotion and support of the local lodging community assisting with the Lodging Facility Use				

<p>Marketing Support</p>	<p>Administration</p>	<p>Per Regulations and Procedures for Regional/CVB Tourism Organizations regarding use of the Lodging Facility Use Tax:</p> <p>Up to but not to exceed the amount, 20% of the Billings CVB's new annual revenue may be designated to cover administrative expenses, which are defined in the Rules and Regulations Document.</p> <p>Some of these allowable expenses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountant Fees • Equipment such as copying machine, phones, software, etc. • Rent • Storage • Legal Fees • Janitorial Services • Utilities 	<p>The Billings CVB is a very important organization to the local lodging community in support of the economy and annual execution of the tax proceeds to market and sell Billings as a preferred travel destination.</p>	<p>Tax per Montana Code Annotated is a main driver for the Billings CVB. If local lodging partners are supported, the partnership between the Department of Commerce, Billings CVB, and the Billings Chamber of Commerce is successful.</p> <p>The objective for Administration budget is to spend funds appropriately and efficiently for managing the organization's operations. Per statute, the maximum allowed for the Administration method is no 20% of the total lodging tax receipts. Specifically, success will be determined by the total spend in the Administration method; if it is 20% or less, we will consider the method successful.</p>	<p>Per the contract between the Montana Department of Commerce and the Billings Chamber of Commerce, 20% of projected revenue may be designated to cover allowable administrative expenses per the management agreement for the Billings CVB.</p> <p>These funds are extremely important to the health of the Billings CVB as an organization.</p>	<p>\$72,856.00</p>	<p>As noted in the Method, allowable administrative expenses can meet, but not exceed 20% of the Billings CVB's annual new revenue. These expenses were executed in FY20 as allowed in the Regulations and Procedures document.</p> <p>Funds were expended as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountant fees • Equipment including copy machines, the phone system, WiFi, software, computers • Janitorial services • Office supplies • Storage • Office space and visitor information center area <p>The objective of these funds is to appropriately and efficiently manage the organization's operations.</p> <p>The Method was successful for Visit Billings.</p> <p>Visit Billings was successful in meeting the overall objective of staying within the allowable 20% Administrative budget.</p> <p>Visit Billings will continue this marketing method.</p>	<p>FY20 CVB PieCharts.pdf</p>
<p>Marketing Support</p>	<p>Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center</p>	<p>Fulfillment is important to visitor orientation and facilitation. The Billings Visitor Guide assists planning and active travelers with both:</p> <p>THE ORIENTATION PHASE is where the traveler begins researching the details of his or her trip. This phase focuses on the route the traveler will take to arrive at the chosen destination and the mode of transportation used to get there. Per the strategic plan, Montana's visitors have multiple destinations to consider within the state and bordering states. Regions and CVBs provide tools to help the visitor plan a route and encourage a longer stay.</p> <p>THE FACILITATION PHASE is where the traveler seeks experiences en route to a destination and during a stay.</p> <p>In order to better reach potential visitors to Montana and Billings, contracts with Certified Folder Display (CFD) will help distribute the Billings Visitor Guide in key markets including other parts of Montana, Western North and South Dakota and Northern Wyoming.</p> <p>In addition to contract fulfillment, Visit Billings will utilize dollars for general postage and fulfillment assistance with local mail service, MTS.</p>	<p>76% of travelers to Montana are repeat visitors. It's important to ensure a positive experience during trip execution to help result in more repeat visitation. Printed materials, digital offerings, customer service training programs for frontline employees and a visitor information center all assist in this phase of the travel process.</p>	<p>Visit Billings tracks inventory of the Visitor Guide with Certified Folder Display (CFD).</p> <p>This long-running partnership allows the organization to distribute the Billings Visitor Guide in key markets including other parts of Montana, Western North and South Dakota and Northern Wyoming.</p> <p>Visit Billings manages 30 volunteers who assist with mailing and preparing tens of thousands of visitor guide mailings following requests, annually. These requests come from the website, phone calls, placements, and e-communications.</p> <p>During busy times of the year, when volunteers and staff aren't able to keep up with request demands of visitor information, Visit Billings contracts with MTS, a mail service company that helps with the facilitation of requests in an efficient capacity.</p> <p>Funds designated in this method assist with fulfillment and distribution of visitor information about Billings and in some cases, the region and the state.</p>	<p>Rapid City The Black Hills Yellowstone Route Buffalo and Sheridan, WY Helena Great Falls Bozeman Rest Area Sweetgrass Rest Area Anaconda Rest Area Dena Mora Area Butte</p>	<p>\$23,500.00</p>	<p>FY20 proved another successful year of fulfillment by a contractor with Certified Folder Display (CFD). The business assisted Visit Billings by displaying Visitor Guidebooks at the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buffalo/Sheridan, Wyoming • Helena/Great Falls • Yellowstone Routes • Butte at I-15 and I-90 • Billings area magazine racks • Rapid City/Black Hills <p>In FY20, despite COVID-19 impacts, Visit Billings supplied CFD 30,000 Visitor Guidebooks. The design and printing of the Billings Visitor Guidebook is paid for with private dollars (\$45,000) while the distribution is paid for using CVB funds.</p> <p>Points to make once again for FY20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of guides are distributed via six (6) routes across southern and central Montana, including 565 locations. • The key Rapid City/Black Hills distribution includes 233 locations • The Yellowstone Routes offer 100 points of distribution <p>The CFD contract with Visit Billings for FY20 cost 13,126.82.</p> <p>This Method will continue.</p> <p>Fulfillment</p> <p>Additionally, Visit Billings uses Mail Technical Services or MTS Mail Services, Inc. to assist with large amounts of Visitor Guidebook requests during certain times of the year.</p> <p>Visit Billings staff and/or volunteers respond(s) to inquiries via phone, mail, publications, email, and website for Visitor Guidebooks serving as support for visitors in the orientation phase.</p> <p>There are times of the year when requests become too significant in volume to execute mailers 100% in-house. These lists are instead inputted into the system for records and envelopes are then filled by volunteers at the Billings Visitor Information Center and then the envelopes are taken to MTS Mail Services to be quickly labels, sorted, and mailed efficiently.</p> <p>During COVID-19, when all volunteers in the Billings Visitor Center weren't available and the VIC closed, mailers went 100% to MTS. This fulfillment support was wildly successful during such difficult times. It was important for Visit Billings/Billings CVB staff to mail out guidebook requests as soon as possible in order to meet any planning that was taking place by potential visitors in lock down in other states and cities. MTS was able to ensure all mailers were sent out in a timely manner during COVID-19.</p> <p>This method was successful for FY20 and will be continued in FY21.</p>	<p>Certified Folder Contract II.pdf</p>
					<p>Research as stated: Smith Travel Research (STR) Report and</p>			

Marketing Support	Research	<p>Pertaining to Meetings and Conventions Group Recruitment:</p> <p>Billings, as a trailhead to adventure, western experiences and incredible vistas in Big Sky Country, offers must-see experiences that can be highly effective in drawing large attendance. There are nearly 5,000 sleeping rooms, more than 360,000 square feet of meeting space and several unique venues that accommodate groups. empowerMINT assists with success in this segment.</p> <p>The cost of the annual subscription for Smith Travel Research is \$5,500.</p> <p>The cost of the annual subscription to empowerMINT from Destinations International recently increased from \$5,500 to \$7,500 after nearly a decade of paying the same contract amount.</p>	<p>Nearly 4,900 hotel rooms in 55 different hotels ranging from brand name chains to local historic properties</p> <p>Great spaces to meet and gather including convention hotels and MetraPark offering 360,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, along with numerous unique settings including the Historic Billings Depot, Henry's Garage, and Camelot Ranch</p> <p>Billing Logan Airport serves ten (10) cities directly with major airlines: Frontier, Delta, United, American Airlines, Alaska and Allegiant.</p> <p>Meetings and Conventions make up approximately 20% of the tourism market according to HVS Consultant's Convention Center Study update in 2018. This report is available at BillingsChamber.com.</p>	<p>Smith Travel Research Report (STR) which offers monthly reporting and data in the form of snapshots of occupancy and room demand percentages for the Billings market, will help guide ROI and successes.</p>	<p>EmpowerMINT Database.</p> <p>Smith Travel Research produces a monthly report also referred to as the STR Report. This research offers data on community, regional and national travel trends. The STR Report is an extremely important investment pertaining to mission execution.</p> <p>STR Reports are the hotel industry standard for benchmarking measurables for a DMO like Visit Billings. Data tracked includes occupancy rate, room demand, RevPar and average daily rate (ADR). By tracking and utilizing this research, Staff can benchmark Yellowstone County lodging statistics with other competing destinations across the region and country. The STR Report is emailed to stakeholders and tourism partners.</p> <p>empowerMINT offers meeting planners destination information for their planning purposes. Sales Manager can access the library via state, region, city, etc. and help scout prospects for meeting or convention sales. Sales staff can also target industries to mine meeting leads include two and/or four-wheeled, energy, agriculture, religious, corporate, military, trails, cycling, outdoor/recreation, healthcare, non-profit and professional and trade associations.</p> <p>Billings' amenities and access to surrounding bucket list attractions elevate its position with city-wide convention groups like BMW MOA, Gold Wing, Corvette, Mustang and Harley. Record attendance and success for previously hosted rallies position Billings well for future city-wide bookings in the two and four wheel markets and beyond. EmpowerMINT assists staff with prospecting.</p>	\$12,800.00	<p>Due to COVID-19, 58% of funds allocated to the research budget line were spent instead of 100%.</p> <p>The pandemic has had a major impact on collections and budgets, therefore FY20 funds were saved when and where feasible and able without causing damage to the brand or mission.</p> <p>empowerMINT was not renewed as a cost-saving measure, thus savings in the research category were able to be carried into FY21 to assist in COVID-19 recovery.</p> <p>Funds were spent during COVID-19, Smith Travel Research reporting and data became as important as ever to the organization and stakeholders. Visit Billings was able to monitor average daily rate fluctuations, citywide occupancy trends, as well as a week to week reports that offered insight on the toll the pandemic and subsequent restrictions, guidelines, and directives were having on lodging and tourism partners. This research was shared with stakeholders and partners and is on file with the CVB. It was also utilized to view trends and know when marketing would be fruitful depending on travel habits. This use of the method and funds was successful and future research will be continued.</p>	STR Example 3.2020.xls
		<p>It is important to gain industry knowledge to be</p>	<p>A full report to the Visit Billings Boards of Directors (TBID and Chamber/CVB) will be made available.</p>	<p>The event has a history of being a very worthy investment for many reasons including networking</p>	<p>Formerly DMAI, Destinations International (DI) strives to make its members and destinations successful. As the world's largest and most reliable resource for destination organizations, they inform, connect, inspire and educate members with the goal to drive destination economic impact, job creation, community sustainability and quality of life through travel.</p>		<p>These funds were not expended due to COVID-19 impacts on the tourism and hospitality industries and how those impacts would and will decrease funding to the Billings CVB.</p> <p>Visit Billings/Billings CVB staff halted any spending of State Lodging Tax funds allocated to the Billings CVB FY20 budget in mid-March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	

Marketing Support	Professional Development	able to serve visitors to the fullest extent.	The Visit Billings staff member who attends shares findings and revelations with colleagues and coworkers.	opportunities and the sharing of best practices among peers in the industry.	The event has a history of being a very worthy investment for many reasons including networking opportunities and the sharing of best practices among peers in the industry. Visit Billings private funds pay for the membership fee to DI, while State CVB funds assist with allowing one staff member to attend the annual conference hosted every July.	\$1,500.00	As room demand, hotel occupancy, and average daily rate percentages dropped in March, April, May, and June of 2020, it became apparent to Visit Billings/Billings CVB staff that funds needed to be protected for the organization's viability heading into FY21 and FY22. Therefore, these funds were not spent as allocated and were instead marked as savings for future FY carryover. This method will be continued in FY21 with funds allocated in the FY21 budget.
Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	<p>TRAVEL DECISION PROCESS</p> <p>THREE PHASES: INSPIRE, ORIENT, FACILITATE</p> <p><i>The Toll-free line is important to the following final two stages:</i></p> <p>THE ORIENTATION PHASE is where the traveler begins researching the details of his or her trip. This phase focuses on the route the traveler will take to arrive at the chosen destination and the mode of transportation used to get there. Per the strategic plan, Montana's visitors have multiple destinations to consider within the state and bordering states. Regions and CVBs provide tools to help the visitor plan a route and encourage a longer stay.</p> <p>Visit Billings marketing initiatives direct prospective travelers to a comprehensive website at VisitBillings.com. The site is maintained regularly and provides in-depth information, maps, guides, suggested itineraries and must-sees in Billings and the area. In FY19, Visit Billings will be incorporating new campaign content with enhancements in website user experience allowing prospective visitors to explore travel plans by interest, also providing another data source for optimizing marketing efforts.</p> <p>The Billings Guidebook is available digitally via the website and is mailed at no-charge upon request. The Visit Billings team is committed to responding to web and phone inquiries promptly.</p> <p>THE FACILITATION PHASE is where the traveler seeks experiences en route to a destination and during a stay.</p> <p>Tourism Regions, Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs), communities and organizations must all work together to make visitors aware of the full array of experiences available to guests.</p>	<p>Call reports and call logs are important to examine the success of this hotline. Visit Billings is also working with private funds to allow for text inquiries into the number (406) 245-4111.</p> <p>The company is named Quiq. HQs are in Bozeman. To date, Visit Billings staff feels the texting option along with the 1-800 offering, help the destination better meet the needs of prospective travelers as well as those currently en route or in town.</p>	<p>This method will be successful if it helps drive traffic into the Billings Visitor Information Center so we can provide information to visitors. We will measure success based on the availability and access to the Visitor Information Center (staffing hours, hours of operation, etc.). We will track and report the number of visitors to the VIC and the top states they come from.</p>	<p>Visit Billings maintains a toll free number that rings directly into the Visitor Information Center (VIC). The number is printed in certain marketing like the Visitor Guide and is also available on line at www.visitbillings.com. The organization believes it is important to meet the needs of potential visitors to Billings and the surrounding region.</p>	\$1,116.00	<p>Visitor Center Toll-Free Phone Number</p> <p>Per the <i>Method</i> and rationale, the Billings Visitor Information Center is open year-round, 37.5 hours each week. The Center is open on weekends and holidays as needed as well. This was the case in three quarters of FY20, until the COVID-19 pandemic caused closure of the Billings Visitor Center.</p> <p>Part of the service of the Billings Visitor Information Center (VIC) during FY20, was for volunteers and staff to accept phone calls in order to orient and facilitate potential travelers and travelers with questions and/or concerns. Questions answered include, but aren't limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road conditions • Road construction reports • Routing • Lodging needs • Restaurant needs • Community statistics – population and geographic inquiries • Where is the VIC located? • Request materials including maps, brochures, and Visitor Guidebooks • General travel information • Directions and details referring to YNP, Bighorn Canyon, Pompeys Pillar and Little Bighorn National Monuments, the Lewis and Clark Trail, the Nez Perce Trail, Beartooth Highway, Red Lodge, Billings area recreation, historic, and cultural inquiries, etc. <p>The Billings VIC toll-free hotline was made available on printed materials including the Billings Visitor Guidebook in order to offer a free, long-distance phone call for those preferring a toll-free number. Once staff could ensure the number was no longer referenced on any publications, the line was cancelled during FY20. It was no longer needed and therefore in FY21, an expense for this line will not be necessary.</p> <p>This method is no longer necessary and will not be continued.</p> <p>Please note, 3,794 people entered the Visitor Center in Billings from July 2019 through the closure of the VIC in March 2020 due to COVID-19 impacts. Top states include Wyoming, South Dakota, Minnesota, North Dakota, Colorado, and Texas.</p>

		<p>Visit Billings will continue to build relationships with influencers and journalists that will help grow the brand and mission.</p> <p>Methods to include:</p> <p>FAMILIARIZATION (FAM) TOURS AND PRESS TRIPS</p> <p>Ultimately, some of the best media coverage is a result of journalists and influencers visiting the destination. Within the past year, Visit Billings hosted content creators, bloggers and journalists that hit key areas of focus including summer outdoor recreation, Billings' food scene, and establishing Billings as the most scenic route into Yellowstone National Park via Beartooth Highway. Journalists from RoadRUNNER Magazine embraced Montana's Trailhead in August as they produced a video and article around four amazing two-wheel road trips in and around Billings, MT.</p> <p>Breakdown of this method:</p> <p>General Fam Tours: \$5,000 which includes partnerships with MOTBD when hosting international tour operators and receptives.</p> <p>Journalists and Influencers: \$6,000 particularly Visit USA Parks and TBEX Preps</p> <p>Site Inspections for Groups as Needed: \$1,500</p> <p>Photos: \$3,500 Most of the contracts with influencers and journalists offer a chance obtain assets including professional imagery. This can be extremely helpful in refreshing the image library.</p> <p>RELATIONSHIP BUILDING/NETWORKING</p> <p>Continuing to build relationships with journalists and influencers who best fit the destination's brand, needs and budget will be a focus for FY19. The benefits of a social media influencer with the right targeted following plays a significant role in adding Billings to the consideration set of new audiences.</p> <p>TBEX</p> <p>Visit Billings will be hosting the 2019 North America Travel Blog Exchange this September. Most of this will be paid for with private dollars. The event will bring up to 450 travel bloggers, content creators, journalists and influencers to Billings for the conference, in addition to hosting tours of destinations throughout Montana.</p>	<p>Visitor Profile Research – Destination Analysts</p> <p>This past fiscal year, Visit Billings completed a comprehensive Visitor Profile research study conducted by Destination Analysts, Inc. Top line survey data collected from in-person intercept surveys of Billings area visitors informed top visitor origin markets, purpose of visit and place of stay, as well as detailed trip characteristics. The top visitor markets represented in the survey sample were Denver-Boulder (6.7%) and Minneapolis-St. Paul (4.9%). Just under half of those surveyed traveled to Billings primarily for leisure (46%). The most important factors motivating the visit to Billings included a special event or festival, shopping, a good deal on airfare, and nearby friends or family.</p> <p>A strong indicator of visitor satisfaction, 95.6% of those surveyed reported high likelihood to return to Billings and nearly all (96.3%) were willing to recommend Billings to other travelers. An online survey was also conducted to explore perceptions of the Billings brand from the perspective of the regional traveler, as well as those residing outside of a 500-mile radius from Billings. Billings performed well for outdoor recreation, shopping, craft breweries and nightlife; however, the biggest opportunity for growth is in perception of Billings' scenic beauty, affordability, restaurants, historic sites and iconic attractions.</p> <p>VisaVue Reporting</p> <p>Through the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development's Joint Venture program, Visit Billings is able to purchase VisaVue traveler spending data at a reduced rate. The past two years of data have been used to inform the current market strategy. Denver-Boulder and Minneapolis- St. Paul are in the top three originating MSAs by cardholder account over Q3, both showing over 5% growth in spend amount Y/Y.</p>	<p>Executing successful itineraries that elevated the destination's brand of Montana's Trailhead will help lead to a successful method under Publicity/Fam Trips.</p> <p>Relationships with journalists, influencers, meeting planners, tour operators, and sports event planners is key to success in this method as well.</p> <p>We will measure success by the publicity/earned media garnered from the influencers (social media posts, blogs, photos, etc.)</p>	<p>Visit Billings Publicity strategy focuses on generating distinct story angles and themes centered around the "Forge Your Own Path" brand-level campaign with an emphasis on elevating awareness of Montana's Trailhead. Ahead of the 2019 hosting of the Travel Blog Exchange conference or TBEX, Visit Billings will partner with guest influencers, journalists as well as the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD), tourism and hospitality stakeholders, and neighboring regions in promoting visitation to the area.</p> <p>This will include but is not limited to:</p> <p>FAMILIARIZATION (FAM) TOURS AND PRESS TRIPS</p> <p>Ultimately, some of the best media coverage is a result of journalists and influencers visiting the destination. Within the past year, Visit Billings hosted content creators, bloggers and journalists that hit key areas of focus including summer outdoor recreation, Billings' food scene, and establishing Billings as the most scenic route into Yellowstone National Park via Beartooth Highway. Journalists from RoadRUNNER Magazine embraced Montana's Trailhead in August as they produced a video and article around four amazing two-wheel road trips in and around Billings, MT.</p> <p>EDITORIAL OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Visit Billings will continue to seek opportunities to partner with publications such as RoadRUNNER Magazine, Billings365 and digital influencers to create new and relevant content for potential visitors.</p>	<p>Visit Billings Publicity strategy focuses on generating distinct story angles and themes centered around the "Forge Your Own Path" brand-level campaign with an emphasis on elevating awareness of Montana's Trailhead. Ahead of the 2019 hosting of the Travel Blog Exchange conference or TBEX, Visit Billings will partner with guest influencers, journalists as well as the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD), tourism and hospitality stakeholders, and neighboring regions in promoting visitation to the area.</p>	<p>COVID-19 negatively impacted this method tremendously.</p> <p>In a normal tourism year, the Visit Billings/Billings CVB staff would execute numerous familiarization itineraries with influencers, journalists, tour operators, and meeting/sports events planners.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, the funds budgeted under FAMS for FY20, were not spent in order to prepare for worst case scenarios for the organization and the destination. Plus, such opportunities were limited due to COVID-19 restrictions nation and world-wide.</p> <p>Billings' citywide occupancy in the third quarter of FY20 fell from 70% to 4-6%, devastating the hospitality industry and tourism partners (Smith Travel Research).</p> <p>In order to prepare for budget hits for future fiscal years and in order to protect the mission of the Billings CVB, staff halted expenditures in March 2020. Therefore, the funds allotted to this method were carried into FY21 in order to better market the destination and support tourism in the region in a post-COVID-19 recovery.</p> <p>This is an important method that will be continued as a COVID-19 recovery becomes attainable.</p> <p>Visit Billings/Billings CVB staff did spend 5% of these funds or \$874.42. The dollars were spent in July of 2019 hosting influencers (lodging expense) Emily Taylor and Andi Fischer affiliated with Visit USA Parks (visitusparks.com) placement/contract. This was a successful trip for Billings' brand for the summer of 2019. Both Andi and Emily shared stories and photos on social media and executed itineraries successfully to promote the destination. Earned media is posted on the site misadventureswithandi.com and see attached for pdf version. This was the second time working with Andi. Staff hope to partner in the future once funding is available to do so and such opportunities are available again.</p> <p>Private funds also helped execute this FAM trip.</p> <p>Please see the attached 48 Hours in Billings from Misadventures with Andi Fisher... as proof of performance for this method.</p> <p>Also, Visit Billings hosted Travel Blog Exchange or TBEX in FY20. However, no state lodging tax dollars/budget were used; only private dollars were used. All staff salaries are paid with private dollars as well.</p> <p>TBEX proved successful for Billings as a travel destination as well as Visit Billings as an organization. Staff would bid for the business in the future. Metrics for TBEX can be furnished upon request.</p>	<p>\$16,000.00</p>	<p>\$370,281.00</p>	<p>48 hours in Billings from Misadventures with Andi Fisher_VER2.pdf</p>
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Marketing Method Evaluation Attachments

Attachment 1	FY20VisitBillingsBudgetToActualReport+PieCharts.pdf
Attachment 2	BMT-10664_sturgis_MBB-Side_Raise-Hell (1).pdf
Attachment 3	GART Digital Banner Example Visit Billings.jpg
Attachment 4	Visit Billings Red Lodge Guidebook.jpg
Attachment 5	Sloth Marketing - Visit Billings.jpg
Attachment 6	Visit USA Parks Client Final Report - Billings.pdf
Attachment 7	Scenic Drive Map File.pdf
Attachment 8	48 hours in Billings from Misadventures with Andi_Andi Fisher_VER2.pdf
Attachment 9	Visit Billings Meetings.Group Ad Example.jpg
Attachment 10	Billings Media Report 8.7 - PW (2).pdf

Marketing Method Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Bed tax funded budget	Non bed tax funded budget (optional)
Consumer	Social Media	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Consumer	Joint Ventures	\$30,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	\$121,826.15	\$350,000.00
Consumer	Ad Agency Services	\$36,000.00	\$44,000.00
Consumer	Billboards/Out-of-Home	\$0.00	\$17,500.00
Consumer	Printed Material	\$3,000.00	\$71,500.00
Consumer	Opportunity Marketing	\$2,500.00	\$103,500.00
Consumer	Travel/Trade Shows	\$6,750.00	\$84,390.00
Consumer	Print Advertising	\$0.00	\$13,350.00
		\$205,076.15	\$689,240.00
Events	Press Promotions/Media Outreach	\$0.00	\$85,000.00
Events	Multi-Media Marketing	\$0.00	\$197,500.00
		\$0.00	\$282,500.00
Film	Online/Digital Advertising	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
		\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Group Marketing	Multi-Media Marketing	\$65,000.00	\$45,500.00
		\$65,000.00	\$45,500.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$1,850.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Administration	\$72,856.00	\$469,225.00
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	\$23,500.00	\$80,138.00
Marketing Support	Research	\$12,800.00	\$32,000.00
Marketing Support	Professional Development	\$1,500.00	\$16,650.00
Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	\$1,116.00	\$14,800.00
Marketing Support	Marketing/Publicity Personnel	\$0.00	\$150,000.00
Marketing Support	Partner Support	\$0.00	\$14,000.00
Marketing Support	Website/Internet Development/Updates	\$0.00	\$30,197.00
		\$113,622.00	\$807,010.00
Publicity	Fam Trips	\$16,000.00	\$14,750.00
		\$16,000.00	\$14,750.00
		\$400,698.15	\$1,840,000.00

Miscellaneous Attachments

Description	File Name	File Size
Billings CVB Pie Chart and Budget Breakdown	Billings CVB FY20 Pie Chart and Budget Breakdown.pdf	3.1 MB
Visit Billings Marketing Plan	Visit Billings Full Marketing Plan and Budget - FY20.pdf	66.9 MB

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
Billings CVB Required Documents	Billings CVB FY20 Required Documents.pdf	814 KB

