



Grant Details

68892 - FY19 Region/CVB Marketing Plan

72775 - FY19 Visit Billings Marketing Plan & Budget (Billings CVB)

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: FY19 Visit Billings Marketing Plan & Budget (Billings CVB)
Grant Number: 19-51-012
Grant Status: Underway
Comments:
Applicant Organization: Billings Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitors Bureau
Grantee Contact: Alex Tyson
Award Year: 2018
Program Area: DOC Office of Tourism
Amounts:
Contract Dates: Contract Sent 06/20/2018 Contract Received 07/01/2018 Contract Executed 06/30/2019
Project Dates: Proposal Date 07/01/2018 Project Start 06/30/2019 Project End 06/30/2019
Grant Administrator: Barb Sanem
Contract Number: 19-51-012
Award Year: 2018

Contract Dates

Contract Sent Contract Received Contract Executed Contract Legal

Project Dates 07/01/2018

06/30/2019

Project Start Project End

Comments
Amendment Comments

Community & Brand Support

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

ESTABLISHMENT OF A DESTINATION

BILLINGS, MONTANA - WHERE YOU CAN FORGE YOUR OWN PATH

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 convenience meet the edge of the genuine frontier. Where the adventure of the untamed wilderness and history are out your front door calling you to forge your own path. It is the city without limits with descendants of the West's greatest heroes and is the central point to the ultimate western experience.

Conveniently positioned in the region 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, history, 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 Battlefield, and Pompeys Pillar make Billings an idyllic destination for connecting to the best that Montana offers.

ABOUT BILLINGS

Billings, population 110,000, is well-positioned in southeast Montana as a gateway to Little 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, Billings residents 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, sporting event venues, and several hundred thousand square feet of flexible meeting space are ready to accommodate any traveler's needs and preferences.

ACCOLADES / WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT US

MONTANA TOURISM AWARD

MARKETING CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR

MY FAVORITE PLACE SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Visit Billings is proud to own the Marketing Campaign of the Year title with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development. The *My Amazing Place* Social Media Campaign highlights Team Visit Billings showing off top spots at Montana's Trailhead. Check it out on Facebook @billingsmt

BILLINGS TO WELCOME THE MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

MCL CHOOSES BILLINGS AS THE 2019 NATIONAL CONVENTION HOST CITY

In 2019, Visit Billings, the Billings Hotel and Convention Center, Billings' area lodging partners and the community will have the privilege of hosting thousands of members of the Marine Corp League. The MCL focuses on camaraderie and fellowship for the purpose of preserving traditions and the interests of the United State Marine Corp and those who have been honorably discharged. We are honored.

NOW SHOWING

CHECK IT OUT AT VISITBILLINGS.COM

Find inspiration to take in all of the Billings area's top natural, cultural, and adventurous attractions when you watch the newly released Visit Billings Inspirational Video. From the top of the Rimrocks to the top of the Beartooth-Absarokee Mountains, experience Montana's Trailhead.

NOW COMPLETE

YELLOWSTONE KELLY INTERPRETIVE SITE

Thanks to partnerships with the Billings Chamber of Commerce, City of Billings, Billings area lodging partners, cultural partners and the business community, residents and visitors alike can learn about Yellowstone Kelly. This warrior and veteran is buried atop the Billings' Rimrocks. The area of his gravesite now offers points of interest and interpretation regarding the life of this scout.

SUCCESSFUL YEAR ONE

AMERICAN AIRLINES - DIRECT SERVICE BIL/DFW

Strategic partnerships proved key in FY18 as Billings Logan Airport started offering direct, year-round, daily service to Dallas/Fort Worth. Focused advertising efforts in the Dallas market as well as in Billings, southeast Montana, and northern Wyoming assisted with positive promotion of the direct service.

SPORTS TOURISM GROWTH REALIZED FOR BILLINGS

WELLS FARGO NAIA DI WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Billings will host this 32 team tournament in 2019 and 2020 thanks to community support. Year two of what now looks like a four year cycle, was a huge hit for Billings as a sports tourism destination, but also for the local business community, however, the most significant highlights were the Champions of Character and Youth Impact Day events which helped drive 2,900 area youth to experience the high caliber of competition at Rimrock Auto Arena.

Additional Highlights:

- NAIA Best New Host Award
- Billings named the 2018 Readers' Choice Award Winner by *SportsEvents Magazine*
- Billings named 2017 Platinum Choice Meeting Destination by *Smart Meetings Magazine*

MORE ABOUT BILLINGS:

STRENGTHS

ACCESSIBILITY TO UNSPOILED NATURE

The most scenic entrance to Yellowstone National Park is via the Beartooth Highway, a National Scenic Byway and All-American Road, 60 minutes from Billings:

- Red Lodge – 60 miles
- Beartooth Highway – 65 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
- The only physical evidence along the Lewis and Clark Expedition is located at Pompeys Pillar National Monument, 30 miles from Billings
- Pictograph Cave State Park – 7 miles
- 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:

- Rare, sandstone Rimrocks define the city and offer an unexpected backdrop and vantage points of the horizon
- Walking, hiking and biking trails
- The longest free flowing river in the lower 48, Yellowstone River, runs just south of town
- Four Dances Recreation Area offers excellent access to Bureau of Land Management trails and scenic views

VIBRANT COMMUNITY

APPEAL / ARTS & CULTURE

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

- *True American West culture*
- Museums serving contemporary to western tastes
- Yellowstone Art Museum
- Western Heritage Center
- Yellowstone County Museum
- Lively music, theater and nightlife scene - Magic City Blues, Alberta Bair Theatre, the Pub Station, and Rimrock Auto Arena and Cove Creek Pavilion

Culinary experiences from diners and burgers to James Beard recognized chefs including Montana frontier farm-to-table

State-of-the-art library

Shopping ranging from specialty boutiques to name brand retailers like Scheels at Shiloh Crossing

ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES

- Nearly 5,000 hotel rooms in 55 different hotels ranging from brand name chains to local historic properties
- 360,000-square feet of flexible meeting space
- 10,000 seat Rimrock Auto Arena at MetraPark
- Numerous unique meeting settings including the Historic Billings Depot, Henry's Garage and Swift River Ranch
- Substantial development projects are underway in Billings regarding a Montana convention center development with Hammes Company as well as sports facility opportunities in south and west Billings

AIRPORT

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

Cape Air serves northeast Montana with several daily intrastate flights

Airport located conveniently downtown

Non-stop flights offered daily, weekly and seasonally:

- Seattle (daily)
- Portland (daily)
- Salt Lake City (daily)
- Denver (daily)
- Minneapolis/St. Paul (daily)
- Dallas/Fort Worth (daily)
- Las Vegas (weekly)
- Phoenix (weekly)
- Los Angeles (seasonal)
- Chicago (seasonal)

SPORTS DESTINATION

Billings offers sports teams and events to entertain visitors and locals

- Billings Mustangs Baseball - rookie affiliate team to the Cincinnati Reds has home games June-Sept at Dehler Park
- Community wide events attract athletes from all over the country
- Yellowstone Kelly Mountain Run
- Big Sky State Games - region's largest Olympic style state games
- Montana Marathon (Boston Marathon qualifier)
- Montana Women's Run
- Heart & Sole Run (5k regional qualifier)
- 406 Duathlon Challenge
- Trailhead Trifecta
- Montana Warrior Run
- Big Sky Volleyfest
- Stockman Bank Magic City Soccer Classic
- Sporting venues allow Billings to position itself as a contender in vying for tournaments and competitions
- Revolution Sports Campus
- Dehler Park \$12 million multi-use baseball stadium
- Amend Park soccer, lacrosse and cross country fields
- MetraPark Grounds including Rimrock Auto Arena
- Two universities, four high-schools with full sports facilities and two state-of-the-art middle schools
- Stewart Park Softball and Baseball Complex

STRONG ECONOMY & BUSINESS CLIMATE

- Medical - two nationally renowned hospitals including one Mayo Clinic Partner (Billings Clinic)
- Supportive local business climate
- Partnership with Chamber of Commerce, Big Sky Economic Development, Downtown Billings Alliance as well as City of Billings and Yellowstone County officials strengthens community ties
- Strong agricultural support for state and region
- Oil refineries (Exxon Mobil, Phillips66 & Cenex Harvest Stases)

OPPORTUNITIES

WYOMING TOURISM EFFORTS

The Wyoming Office of Tourism, always a major competitor for Montana, is strategizing and investing in efforts to keep visitors en route to Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. The Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) invests millions of dollars annually in promoting Yellowstone National Park as a tourism pillar.

Wyoming positions itself as "a more desirable entrance to Yellowstone National Park" via Cody and more scenic means of traveling the west from Mount Rushmore instead of taking the Warrior Trail in southeast Montana.

Billings has the opportunity to own Yellowstone's Most-Scenic Route via the Beartooth Highway, targeting the westbound drive markets and key fly markets through strategies that invite travel into southeast Montana to experience Little Bighorn Battlefield and Pompeys Pillar National Monument, the Warrior and Dinosaur Trails, or the most scenic route into Yellowstone National Park via the Beartooth Highway into the northeast entrance at Cooke City/Silvergate.

AIRPORT

Billings Logan Airport, though offering consistent and strong air capacity, is perceived as not keeping pace with necessary and/or potential growth as compared to other Montana destinations. Billings has lost market share in the form of deplanements in recent years as competing Montana communities work hard to attract travelers. Billings Logan, together with community partners including Visit Billings and the Billings Chamber of Commerce, has strongly supported the newest direct flight from Dallas/Fort Worth with American Airlines. Such an opportunity, among other key direct flights including Minneapolis and Denver, allows Billings to compete and yield growth in the future. In the meantime, the City of Billings is working to invest in a major expansion of Billings Logan Airport.

In many cases, airfare is higher than competitive cities. This can be considered a concern for Billings as a destination, particularly with the leisure, sports and conventions recruitment efforts. Billings Logan statistics state that, on average, airfare into Billings fluctuates a few dollars higher or lower as compared to competitive Montana destinations, like Bozeman.

TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

There is an ongoing perception or stigma, still, that there can be nothing to do in Billings. This is beginning to evolve, but the investment into brand lift to focus on the positives at Montana's Trailhead are as important as ever in changing mindset. It's important for stakeholders and business owners to realize the importance of community development. As quality of life improves in Billings and Yellowstone County, so will the offerings to potential visitors. This transformation will help with community pride efforts as well.

MEETINGS & CONVENTION FACILITIES

Billings offers no state-of-the-art, structured, large-capacity convention center on a campus setting. Existing facilities are spread throughout the city and research has found some to be either dated or not in convenient locations, i.e. close proximity to shops, restaurants and points of interest.

With Meeting and Convention business representing nearly a quarter of Billings' tourism industry, a new convention center in any Montana city could steal significant market share from Billings.

Multiple convention center development proposals have emerged this year. Having experienced resistance from industry partners, advocacy will be critical to supporting successful development of these needed facilities and growth of Billings' meetings business.

COMPETITIVE SPORTS FACILITIES

Billings is a strong sports destination with the potential to recruit significantly more youth, collegiate and amateur events if sports facility offerings were expanded.

A feasibility study conducted by Victus Advisors was completed in 2018 and identifies a multi-court indoor facility, ice arena and competitive swim facility as Billings' most needed facilities, in addition to existing field renovations such as lighting and turf.

WALKING EXPERIENCES/GATHERING AREAS

Downtown Billings' outdoor shopping venues like Shiloh Crossing and the West Park Promenade are strengths, but there are few other offerings that encourage guests to explore town. In FY19, Billings will be branding and further promoting the Billings Brew Trail, the only walkable brewery district in Montana.

Investments in the Billings trail system, including the Marathon Loop, are top priorities of the Chamber of Commerce's Trails Committee and Billings TrailNet. Both organizations have a robust volunteer base, while City and County support and strategies help strengthen walkability in Billings. The business community's investment into the Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site (YKIS) along Swords Rimrock Park is a prime example of local residents wanting to invest more into the community for quality of life and tourism impacts.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Known for "Big Sky Country" experiences, Montana ranks high on travel wish lists, however, the more urban experience of Billings, and that of Southeast Montana, varies from the wide-open and unobstructed "Big Sky" perceptions. Many people simply do not have the knowledge that Billings offers great adventure without the sacrifice of a downtown experience.

To build awareness of Southeast Montana, Visit Billings will be establishing partnerships with companion frontier destinations and points east and southeast of Billings to target summer bucket-list travel including an unprecedented list of iconic American sites and attractions from Mount Rushmore to Little Bighorn for the "Great American Road Trip."

TRAIL GUIDES

A brand is only as strong as the local people and businesses that live and breathe it every day. Through the Trail Guides program, we will empower these local businesses and key local influencers to be brand ambassadors and visitor resources once in Billings, essentially adding virtual visitor centers throughout Billings. Visitors to these establishments can ask for recommendations on places to go and things to do, as well as have access to maps and other literature to help them get the most out of their Billings experience.

Participating businesses and locations will showcase a Trail Guide decal on their storefront, letting locals and visitors know that they are a resource for everything tourism and experience related in Billings.

Additionally, we'll have the opportunity to do a series of Trail Guide social takeovers, allowing visitors to get a personal, behind-the-scenes look at the people and places that make up the unique Billings travel experience.

CULINARY

Billings' food scene is as unique and diverse as its travel experience. Branding the Billings culinary experience, Trailhead Gourmet, allows us to not only package and promote our style of cuisine in a unique way, but also represents the wide range of culinary offerings, from diners to James Beard recognized chefs, found throughout Billings.

By branding Billings' culinary scene, we also open up partnership opportunities with food bloggers, writers, food programmers, as well as influencers.

HISTORY & WESTERN HERITAGE

With historic people, experiences, and destinations like Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Pompey's 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.

There's also an opportunity to make this history and heritage more relevant in today's social conversations by having a local legend like Yellowstone Kelly take over the Visit Billings social channels. How would he view the world? Where would he go to eat? What would he do if he were alive and in Billings today?

CHALLENGES

OIL, GAS, & COAL

The regional leisure tourism segment benefits from the oil, gas and coal workforce in eastern Montana and northern Wyoming. The current oil, gas and coal production slump has impacted Billings as a tourism destination. Regional visitors who would typically be traveling to Billings for entertainment and shopping, which equates to room nights, are instead staying close to home.

COMMUNITY PRIDE

Billings locals often direct visitors outward, whether to nearby Bozeman or surrounding regional attractions, giving the perception that there isn't anything to do worthwhile inside of Billings. Community pride is a major component to a successful campaign and drive in visitation – pride starts within.

SMALL TOWN DESIGNATION

Billings is a vibrant community and the largest in the state, however, it is not small and charming per the MOTBD brand pillars. Gaining Montana Tourism brand support as a viable destination in the region is an ongoing challenge for Visit Billings and its stakeholders.

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 Billings Logan Airport arrival experience is strong for visitors traveling by air, but the aesthetics via the I-90 corridor aren't as inviting nor welcoming. 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.

GROUND TRANSPORTATION

With the addition of Uber in the Billings market, ground transportation has substantially improved. However, taxicab services continue to be inconsistent regarding availability and often times are offered in a shuttle format, meaning a rider may share the cab with other riders taking longer to get to a store, restaurant or attraction. There is typically not a price break in this group ride scenario. There is room for improvement in this transportation offering to Billings, but the burden lies with individual businesses.

CANADIAN EXCHANGE RATE

Ongoing flux in the Canadian exchange rate directly impacts the viability of this market.

HOMELESS POPULATION

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

VISIT BILLINGS

A DESTINATION MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING ORGANIZATION

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 management and marketing organization, Visit Billings is 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.

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

VISIT BILLINGS 2027

Together with community, regional and state partners, the Visit Billings team will continue to strategize with local leaders, community associates and stakeholders to ensure a solid foundation of success into the next decade of travel promotion at Montana's Trailhead while working in the here and now to grow visitation in support of local stakeholders.

VISIT BILLINGS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a world where destinations are focused on being relevant and remarkable, at every turn, with every tourism product, many times the quintessential means of connecting with the potential and active traveler becomes a secondary focus. As human beings we are inspired by emotion, passion, excitement,

impressions, and sensations.

Our senses are drawn to the reactions felt from the smell of the dirt at the rodeo, the feeling you get when you are on a trail surrounded by the sounds of birds chirping while scents of grass and trees float around you, the wind on our faces as we bike or jog down the path, the views achieved after reaching the top of the hill, the admiration realized when walking into the gallery of a powerful artist, the warm feeling from a sip of a handcrafted beverage, the adrenaline exerted while floating the river, the accomplishment of actually feeling the tug on the end of the fishing rod, the emotion that overcomes you when you watch the cowboy kneel down and pray before the ride. Inspiration leads to Experience. Experience leads to living. Living leads to memories and tradition.

Tourism product development is directly related to offering places to go, meet, and compete, but the authentic experience speaks to people and that is what guides individuals in travel and builds a confidence in us to live life to the fullest. That's the power of travel and to Visit Billings and our tourism partners that is the power of traveling to Billings.

As Visit Billings continues to focus on the ten year vision, the experience will be primary. In FY19, we will focus on the destination, the community, the people, the pride, *and the* experience. It's about wellness, adventure, history, culture, nature, and discovery.

From community pride efforts and customer service training to working with strategic partners on tourism product development efforts, Visit Billings will look to the people and places that draw people to the region.

Research projects including general tourism projects, economic impact data, sports tourism expansion efforts, and convention center development will help mold visioning strategies. Marketing and sales strategies will hone in on what we already know; people make places. At Visit Billings, we strive to host people to the best of experiences and we are the head of the trail to lead the way to new adventures in the great American West.

Describe your destination.

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.

- 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 consider within the state and bordering states. Regions and CVBs provide tools to help the visitor plan a route and encourage a longer stay.

- 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.
- "Get Here" page content continues to highlight direct flights with United and Delta as well as American Airlines' expansion into the Billings' market with a daily, direct flight between Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) and Billings Logan (BIL). The page also includes stay and fly rates offered to regional residents driving to Billings for air service. 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.
- In FY19 Visit Billings will be branding and marketing its Billings Brew Trail and Trailhead Gourmet culinary experiences.
- 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.

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), communities and organizations must all work together to make visitors aware of the full array of experiences available to guests.

- 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 thirty 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 FY19 Visit Billings will be evolving the TTA Program to include Billings Trail Guides, empowering local businesses 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.

MOTBD BRAND PILLARS

Visit Billings is committed to keeping the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development's (MOTBD) key brand pillars front-of-mind in all marketing efforts to present a holistic Montana experience to visitors. There are many ways the MOTBD plan speaks to Billings as a destination. In other instances, Billings will seek to position itself as a valuable contributor to the state's tourism efforts as some elements of the MOTBD strategy are difficult to adorn onto Montana's largest city. As Montana's largest and most urban community, it can be difficult for Visit Billings to 'fit' Billings into the MOTBD mindset at all times.

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. New FY19 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 one 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 six mountain ranges – the Bighorns, Pryors, Beartooths, Crazyes, Big Snowies and Bull Mountains.

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. FY19 marketing initiatives will 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.

Optional: Include attachments here

Visit Billings - LA Travel and Adventure Show One Sheeter.pdf

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

“FORGE YOUR OWN PATH” BRAND EVOLUTION

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 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 fire 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.

Leveraging Montana's Trailhead, Visit Billings will be launching “Forge Your Own Path,” an evolution of the Visit Billings brand promise, inviting visitors to be their own pioneers and start their own unique and 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.

Visit Billings will differentiate itself from the competitive set by bringing the Billings experience to life through the lens of its brand essence, the spirit at the core of the destination. Typical tourism campaigns feature big scenery and “people doing stuff,” whether drinking a craft beer, hiking or shopping. Visit Billings will stand not only for its products and nearby bucket-list attractions, but its authentic, accessible character.

MARKETING BEGINS AT HOME

As it's currently positioned and marketed, Montana's Trailhead directs visitors outward, away from Billings. This directly plays into the overall perception of a lack of things to do, events, entertainment and family activities within city limits. From initial on-the-ground research, this was also the case when engaging with the local community and business owners. More often than not, we were directed outside of Billings when seeking unique travel experiences. Community pride is a major component of a successful brand and its campaign efforts to drive visitation. It's imperative that we continue to evolve the ambassador program, introduce new initiatives like the Billings Trail Guides, increase stakeholder engagement, and utilize local partnerships to instill pride and ownership of Billings.

SUMMER STRATEGY

Visit Billings will focus heavily on behavioral targeting around summer vacation planning and booking, with interest in outdoors, national parks and western heritage experiences. Based on recent Visitor Profile research, Visit Billings will target adult travelers 25-54 with an annual household income of \$75,000 to \$150,000.

SUMMER LEISURE STRATEGY AND CREATIVE MESSAGING

Summer season strategy will establish ownership of the most scenic route to Yellowstone National Park via Beartooth Highway. 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.

Partnerships will be developed in FY19 with companion frontier destinations to target summer bucket-list travel including an unprecedented list of iconic American sites and attractions from Mount Rushmore to Little Bighorn Battlefield for the “Great American Road Trip.”

While family remains an important summer demographic, especially in targeting growth of older Millennial families, the current visitor profile indicates that a majority visitors to Billings are traveling without children. Ranked alongside Bryce Canyon and Glacier National Park, among others, Yellowstone is a bucket list family attraction with nearly 4 million annual visitors. In growing awareness of Billings' proximity to the national park, as well as western heritage sites such as Pompey's Pillar and Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monuments, Visit Billings will target road warrior families seeking epic summer vacation memories. According to Mintel's Outdoor Enthusiasts, US - March 2017 report, six in 10 fathers say they are very enthusiastic about the outdoors, compared to slightly more than one third of all adults. Younger men are more likely than women to participate in active outdoor activities, an opportunity to engage with fathers. 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.

To maximize budget, national marketing initiatives will focus on 2-3 key geographic markets with the highest potential for ROI, ensuring a minimum reach and frequency to truly make an impact. Visit Billings and BCF conducted a thorough market analysis to determine the top markets most effective for summer visitation growth, especially for new visitors. This analysis includes factors such as proximity and accessibility (drive time and flight convenience and cost), population within target demographics, web visitation and analytics, and travel behavior data among other variables.

The following map positions key target geographic areas, primarily top national feeder markets and DMAs with direct flights, based on demographic and behavioral considerations indicative of travelers seeking a destination experience that aligns with that of Billings, MT. Areas shaded in darker red and orange indicate larger concentrations of desired travel behavior. This includes variables such as DMA population who has spent over \$3,000 on domestic travel, taken 3+ domestic non-business trips or visited a National Park within the last 12 months. *(resource: Esri ArcGIS 2010 U.S. Census data)*

POTENTIAL OUT-OF-STATE MARKETS FOR SUMMER TARGETING:

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 and is within drive proximity at about an eight-hour trip. The market ranks as the primary feeder market in preliminary visitor profile data, and fifth in unique website visitation to VisitBillings.com

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.

Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX DMA

As the newest daily direct flight to Billings, recent promotional partnerships have seen growth in this feeder market. Located over 1,300 miles from Billings, visitation will be dependent on affordable and convenient non-stop flight service. Dallas population of ages 25-54 is over 2.9M and, of Billings target markets, it has one of the largest populations of frequent domestic travelers and those who have visited a state park. The market ranks high in unique website visitation to VisitBillings.com, in part due to recent promotional efforts.

Salt Lake City, UT DMA

Ranking second highest in unique website visits to VisitBillings.com, Salt Lake City is under a nine hour drive from Billings or a quick one-hour non-stop flight; however, its location southwest of Billings may inhibit opportunities to target summer visitation around Yellowstone National Park. Salt Lake City's population age 25-54 sits just under 1.1M A prime target for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers, Salt Lake City itself is surrounded by five of Utah's own national parks.

REGIONAL TARGET FOR ANNUAL GROWTH YEAR ROUND - UTILIZATION OF PRIVATE FUNDS FOR REGIONAL MARKETING

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 the necessity visit (doctor's appointment) overnight to include leisure activities.

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.

A leisure win this past years was when visitors showing increased enthusiasm in learning more about winter activities at Montana's Trailhead. This past year's winter campaign focused on why you should make Billings a destination on a snow day. The messaging focused on gearing up and getaway to Billings for snow shoes and warm brews.

Regionally, our digital display ads for our fall, holiday and winter campaigns saw CTRs between 0.04% - 1.19%.The Brandpoint listicle drove 645 visitors in a very steady stream over the course of the winter campaign - 45% of all referral traffic. The new microsite was introduced in 2016-17 to help position Billings as a viable and competitive winter tourism destination in Montana. Campaign efforts on both a regional and national level directed to this site. These efforts were continued to be reinforced throughout FY18 resulting in an increase of 24% unique pageviews and increase of 5.9% average time on

site. Our efforts will continue in FY19 with website updates and potential focus on SEO.

Brand partnerships, Facebook Canvas ads and programmatic digital will present opportunities to brand and showcase product differentiators. In FY 2018-2019, Visit Billings will brand and own these differentiators such as Billings' Brew Trail, the only walkable brewery district in Montana, as well as the destination's authentic culinary experiences from award-winning burgers to James Beard recognized chefs.

TWO/FOUR WHEEL

The two and four wheeled market is lucrative for the Billings region, with the Beartooth Highway, voted by AMA Magazine as the #1 Motorcycling Road in America, just 60 miles away. FY17 saw the completion of the Gold Wing Road Riders Association Wing Ding event with targeted recruitment to these riders.

The target audience is men and women motorcycle enthusiasts 35-64 residing in the United States – on any model bike, in any model vehicle. Specifically talking to the two-wheeled group, Harley riders are generally mid-40s to early 50s. Honda Gold Wing riders can skew toward mature riders with time to tour. BMW riders can range into their 80s.

Motorcycle riders in this area enjoy touring vacations, driving long distances and "experiencing" the journey. Women riders typically stop more often, visiting, shopping and relaxing in cities.

Visit Billings has partnered with Butler Motorcycle Maps to offer a variety of detailed tour options in order to ensure all motorcyclists enjoy the best ride experience into and out of Billings and the region.

INTERNATIONAL

International marketing will continue to grow with emphasis on the German and Asian markets. FY18 saw continued partnership with Brand USA.

Visit Billings staff will again work to host opportunities like workshops that will help stakeholders and tourism partners best host international visitors. Such education and promotional programs can help identify the role of Montana's Trailhead in international leisure market expansion. The development of Billings Trail Guide program, an evolution of the current Trailhead Tourism Ambassador program, will expand the program beyond hotel frontline employees will help gain traction for the tourism industry and assist the destination in offering first class hospitality as a whole, particularly for international visitors.

Canada remains a viable international market for Billings, particularly during spring/summer when driving conditions permit safe, long distance travel. Creative aimed at capturing travelers en route to Yellowstone National Park is leveraged for this market. As the exchange rate continues to fluctuate, so does the viability of this market.

Visit Billings will continue to research the international landscape for other viable markets and will seek opportunities to market our destination in partnership with other strong voices like Brand USA and the MOTBD. Additionally, group travel is significant for the international market and efforts in this area continue to grow.

GROUP TOUR

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 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.

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.

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.

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

Within a highly competitive marketplace, meeting and convention sales are a top priority for Visit Billings. Meetings business grows year-round visitation, especially in the shoulder seasons. Relationships with meeting and event professionals are a key to the future of this segment, along with quality properties, state-of-the art facilities and attractions that create excitement about the destination and its brand. Billings is a strong meeting and convention destination with non-stop air service to nearly two dozen major cities, 360,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space and 5,000 hotel rooms. With multiple proposed development projects under review, Visit Billings will continue to advocate for a new large-scale convention center as well as surrounding, walkable multi-use and entertainment products. Partnering and supporting the Hammes Company and the region's One Big Sky District development efforts will help align this segment for growth as part of the Visit Billings 2027 vision.

Visit Billings will focus on small market meetings and major city-wide convention business that benefits convention properties and multiple hotels. Such growth in this segment will result in continued progress in hotel occupancy, average daily rate (ADR), and impact the local economy by filling restaurants, retailers and attractions. This also supports the workforce and to some extent, the area's tax base.

Sales and marketing initiatives will be aimed toward planners and decision makers of small market meetings, those with 400 attendees or less, utilizing three or more hotels with approximately 400 peak room nights and between 8,000 and 20,000 square feet of meeting space.

Planners are concerned about having state of the art venues that support high attendance at meetings. They also desire destinations with attributes they believe their delegates will value. Multitaskers who want all destination information at their fingertips, planners also seek to build relationships with a destination. There is an emphasized focus on the experience beyond the four walls of the meeting room, and sales efforts will highlight that experience for Billings.

Targeted industries include two and/or four-wheeled, energy, agriculture, religious, corporate, military, trails, cycling, outdoor/recreation, healthcare, non-profit and professional

and trade associations. 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.

SPORTS

As a leading regional destination in the sports market, Billings offers a wide range of venues accommodating several sports categories. The current sports facilities, coupled with strong air service options and proximity to national attractions position Billings strongly in this growing tourism segment. Team-friendly restaurants, local attractions, affordability and competitive room rates make Billings an ideal sports hub for youth, high school, collegiate, and amateur athletic events.

A highly competitive segment, sports event travel includes not only the athletes, coaches, officials and trainers, but also parents and family members. This supportive group comes to play a loyal role, but seeks experiences outside of a tournament bracket. At the same time, there are athletes, professional and amateur, who make Montana part of their itineraries to hike, raft and climb as well as experience fishing, hunting and birding.

In March 2018, Billings welcomed its second year of the NAIA Division I Women's Basketball National Championships with 32 teams competing in 31 games in six days at Rimrock Auto Arena. Billings will be host community to Montana State University Billings' Athletics as the destination for the 2018 and 2020 NCAA DI West Region Cross Country Championships which aligns the city well for a future bid effort regarding the national championship. Visit Billings also looks forward to assisting MSU Billings Athletics with the 2019 GNAC Softball Championship.

For a sports event planner, one of the most important decision factors in selecting a destination is its track record of hosting similar events. Destinations with a clear track record prove their ability to accommodate venue and hotel needs, and in the event planner's mind will be easier to work with. Visit Billings currently targets sports planners, tournament directors, and sports industry decision makers representing competitive events such as volleyball, lacrosse, soccer, softball, basketball, and cross country to include amateur, K-12 and collegiate competition. Primarily a regional scope to include Montana, Regional, Northwest, Pacific Northwest and Midwest conferences and associations.

As the sports travel segment continues to grow in Billings, it's necessary for the stakeholders, the community and Visit Billings as a DMO to have a better understanding of the opportunities available to recruit new, and expand existing, sporting events. In FY18, Visit Billings partnered with regional stakeholders to conduct a sports facility feasibility study. Results of the independent analysis identify a need for several facilities including a multi-court indoor facility, ice arena (two sheets of ice would be ideal), and competitive swimming facility, as well as lighting, turf and field improvements to existing facilities. For Visit Billings, it's time to look at executing long term strategic planning for sports tourism sales and marketing, take steps to organize a community sports committee and create a position at Visit Billings that could result in the hiring of a sports manager to execute sales, marketing and service of this important segment. Sports tourism is a significant part of Visit Billings 2027.

b. What are your emerging markets?

As noted previously, here is a look at emerging markets, under contemplation, for Visit Billings:

POTENTIAL OUT-OF-STATE MARKETS FOR SUMMER TARGETING:

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 and is within drive proximity at about an eight-hour trip. The market ranks as the primary feeder market in preliminary visitor profile data, and fifth in unique website visitation to VisitBillings.com

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.

Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX DMA

As the newest daily direct flight to Billings, recent promotional partnerships have seen growth in this feeder market. Located over 1,300 miles from Billings, visitation will be dependent on affordable and convenient non-stop flight service. Dallas population of ages 25-54 is over 2.9M and, of Billings target markets, it has one of the largest populations of frequent domestic travelers and those who have visited a state park. The market ranks high in unique website visitation to VisitBillings.com, in part due to recent promotional efforts.

Salt Lake City, UT DMA

Ranking second highest in unique website visits to VisitBillings.com, Salt Lake City is under a nine hour drive from Billings or a quick one-hour non-stop flight; however, its location southwest of Billings may inhibit opportunities to target summer visitation around Yellowstone National Park. Salt Lake City's population age 25-54 sits just under 1.1M. A prime target for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers, Salt Lake City itself is surrounded by five of Utah's own national parks.

Optional: Include attachments here.

c. What research supports your target marketing?

Resources:

Esri ArcGIS - 2010 U.S. Census data

<http://www.itrr.umt.edu/>

<https://www.ustravel.org/>

<http://www.ntaonline.com/>

Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development in partnership with Destination Analysts

Destination Analysts in partnership with Visit Billings

<http://www.bigskyeconomicdevelopment.org/wp-content/uploads/2018-Yellowstone-County-Sports-Facility-Feasibility-Study.pdf>

VisaVue

BCF Agency

2018-2019 STRATEGIC GOALS

Focus: The Visitor Experience

Foster Visitor Growth at Montana's Trailhead

Visit Billings, as a destination management and marketing organization, promotes Billings and supports the local tourism economy. The Visit Billings team assists the destination and stakeholders (Billings and Yellowstone County lodging partners) by using strategic marketing campaigns, deliberate activities, tourism leads, sales missions, familiarization tours, publicity efforts and other regional, domestic, and international promotional efforts to increase visitation to the city and region.

Full hotels equate to full restaurants, retail businesses and tourism attractions. In turn, the business climate and local economy thrive. This overarching goal for FY19 fully supports the mission of Visit Billings as the Billings Convention and Visitors Bureau and Billings Tourism Business Improvement District of Billings, Montana.

As the State of Montana prepares for the 2019 Legislative Session, policies that protect and promote travel including improvements to our roads and airports as well as protecting tourism funding and generation, will be a priority for Visit Billings and its managing organization the Billings Chamber of Commerce.

At the same time, on a national level, Visit Billings is proud to continue to support the United States Travel Association's (USTA) Project: Time Off. The average American leaves nearly 17 days of vacation time unused annually. Visit Billings supports the USTA's efforts to disrupt the vacation stigma and will help communicate the message of the importance of taking time off. It's key to personal well-being, professional success, and business performance while vital to local economic expansion.

Goal

The Visitor Experience

A positive visitor experience is a significant piece of a successful tourism economy. Cynthia Messer with the University of Minnesota's Tourism Center, once stated that every resident of a community is an essential partner in the tourism experience. As she noted, tourism has the opportunity to instill a sense of community pride and knowledge of local history that can elevate a destination and grow visitation. It has been eminent in recent Visit Billings led research findings that the Billings' community lacks civic pride. This can significantly impact visitor growth and visitor experience. As Messer also mentioned in a 2011 article, residents often focus on negative perceptions of a city. They don't see it as a destination. So when a visitor asks basic questions of a resident, certain community-minded frustrations can be discussed like low-wage jobs, a 'nothing to do here' mentality, taxes, or traffic congestion instead of places to experience as a guest to the community. This mindset aligns with what research shows for Billings. As Visit Billings 2027 evolves, The Visitor Experience strategy will be an umbrella priority. An influence of community pride will play a significant role in the future of visitor growth at Montana's Trailhead. From expanding the Trailhead Tourism Ambassador (TTA) program and shining a light on the importance of visitor orientation and facilitation to developing ways for the community to get involved as tourism ambassadors, we will work to inspire residents to become champions of Billings.

Goal

Support Airport Progression

Quality air service as well as pleasant arrival and departure experiences are essential to tourism growth for a destination.

Billings Logan Airport (BL) is a proven strength for Billings, the surrounding region and Montana. Numerous flights per day serving several major hubs including Salt Lake City, Denver and Minneapolis/St. Paul, help grow visitation at Montana's Trailhead and sustain a strong business climate. In FY17, American Airlines (AA) announced daily, year-round, direct service between Billings (BIL) and Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas (DFW) as Billings secured a Small Community Air Service Development Program Grant from the Federal Government. In FY19, that service may expand following a successful first 12 months of service. Visit Billings will work in tandem with community partners including the Chamber of Commerce, Big Sky Economic Development and the City of Billings to help sustain this newly established flight together with BL officials.

In FY19, Visit Billings will continue to assist partners in fostering relationships with air carriers serving the city including United, Delta, American Airlines, Alaska Air, Allegiant and CapeAir. Together with the Billings Chamber's Air Service Committee, Visit Billings staff 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.

As the City of Billings and its Aviation and Transit Department work to move the destination forward with expanded air service and by enhancing the traveler's experience, Visit Billings will provide leadership support for the City's \$47M airport expansion and development project. This is a crucial piece to tourism growth in Billings and southeast Montana. Visit Billings will also foster its relationship with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) in the agency's efforts to grow air service for the state of Montana as a whole.

Goal

Increase Leisure Visitation

Investing in leisure tourism marketing strategies is a top objective for Visit Billings. The regional, national, and in some cases, international, markets support the majority of Visit Billings' stakeholders.

From the regional resident to the international traveler, Billings is an attractive destination. Local amenities and gateway access to national historic, cultural and natural attractions help strengthen the destination's brand and boost visitation. The overall leisure marketing strategy is to increase year round visitation targeting regional, national and international travelers. In FY17, the team began the process of assessing and diversifying the organization's leisure marketing efforts. These strategies will continue to be assessed and expanded in FY19.

As of the publishing of this document, Visit Billings was approaching the end of a year-long, tourism research project with Destination Analysts. The final research report is expected during the first quarter of FY19. At this time, this information obtained that helps guide marketing efforts for the organization will be released to all stakeholders and also contemplated and considered by the Visit Billings staff. Then, together with the Visit Billings creative agency of record, BCF Agency, this research will be applied in future marketing efforts to help grow leisure visitation for the destination.

Goal

Sports Tourism at Montana's Trailhead

Strong gains in sports tourism have helped position Billings as a sports events destination since 2012. Continuing to position Billings as a sports events destination will remain a priority. In FY19, Visit Billings staff, together with the Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) Board of Directors, will plan to expand sports tourism efforts for Visit Billings as a destination marketing and management organization.

Supporting public partners like the City of Billings, Yellowstone County, and South Billings Urban Renewal District 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, and YMCA, as well as other youth and amateur tournament directors will be a priority.

As FY20 approaches, Visit Billings will be prepared to hire a sports sales manager, partner with strategic partners to create a sports-tourism focused committee that will also support youth and amateur sports from a community point of view, continue to apply findings from research released in the Yellowstone County Sports Facility Feasibility Study executed by Victus Advisors in 2018, and, finally, will build off of past successes to prepare the destination for sports tourism growth in the future – Visit Billings 2027.

Goal

Meetings and Conventions Recruitment

The meetings and conventions recruitment conversation is significant at Montana's Trailhead. The value of this tourism segment for Billings must be elevated. Tradeshows, business meetings, conventions, and conferences all bring people and business to Billings – directly impacting the local economy year-round. Working with stakeholders and strategic partners, Visit Billings staff will continue to grow this segment which speaks for 24% of visitation to Billings (RTM, 2010). As a destination marketing and management organization, Visit Billings will collaborate with tourism partners to market and grow this segment for Billings. These efforts will include strategic marketing campaigns, tradeshow attendance, one-on-one meeting planner exchanges, mining leads, sales missions, and meeting planner-focused familiarization tours.

Simultaneously, updated research, expected to be released mid-year 2018, along with Chamber of Commerce efforts to spotlight the importance of a regional convention center for Montana, will help define the future of this market for Billings. Visit Billings is a proud strategic partner with the Hammes Company in the future of One Big Sky District. This development project focuses on a large-scale convention center which would complement Billings' six smaller convention center properties and MetraPark as an exhibition, agricultural and arena focused venue. Visit Billings will leverage its efforts and will drive innovation in this tourism realm.

Goal

The International Marketplace

Visit Billings appreciates its relationship with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD), Rocky Mountain International, Brand USA and other entities that help grow international travel to the western United States.

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.

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.

Visit Billings will again work in FY19 to provide more education to tourism partners and stakeholders (sponsored workshops) to help research and grow promotional programs aimed at attracting and accommodating the international traveler and international group tours. International familiarization tours will also remain a priority to help staff and stakeholders build relationships with international tour operators.

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

COOPERATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development

Visit Billings will continue to partner 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 FY18, Visit Billings participated in several of the MOTBD co-op advertising opportunities including iExplore, Sojern and TripAdvisor. Similar placements will be considered in FY19.

Visit Billings is always eager to participate in co-operative opportunities with MOTBD, when opportunities align appropriately.

Billings CVB - Destination Red Lodge Partnership.pdf

Optional: Include attachment here.

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

COOPERATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

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, and particularly Red Lodge, is another important region where Visit Billings will continue building a relationship. Many successful familiarization tours and 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.
- Visit Billings will partner with MOTBD and Montana Regions/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 the GoWest Summit. These partnerships have proven successful in the past and are expected to be in the future.
- Finally, 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 and our product as a year-round destination. The Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site renovation at Swords Rimrock Park is a perfect example of community partnership. In FY19, Visit Billings will also be partnering with our locals, the people who have established the character of the destination. We will be establishing our Billings Trail Guide program and seeking inspiration in our people and the stories of the past with tourism product development front of mind.

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

Visit Billings has participated in the following co-operative opportunities in the past, including, but not limited to, publication opportunities as well as transportation campaigns in prime markets like Chicago.

Visit Billings has and will continue to partner with MOTBD and Visit Southeast Montana on relevant consumer trade shows including, but not limited to, Rocky Mountain International Roundup, U.S. Travel Association's IPW and the GoWest Summit. These partnerships have proven successful in the past and are expected to be in the future.

In FY18, Visit Billings participated in MOTBD co-op advertising opportunities including TripAdvisor. TripAdvisor has been a trusted partner for many years, and the plan moving forward is to continue to nurture and grow the relationship.

Visit Billings is always eager to partner with regional friends and of course, MOTBD, when opportunities align appropriately.

Optional: Include attachments here.

FY19 Visit Billings Marketing Plan.pdf

Optional: Include attachments here.

Billings CVB-Sojern-JV-Match-2017-2018-300x600.jpg

Optional: Include attachment here:

Lumen - Billings.png

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
		THREE PHASES: INSPIRE, ORIENT, FACILITATE					<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>10,000 copies were printed and the supply was depleted.</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 Airport 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.</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>Annually, Visit Billings reprints this map for distribution. In May 2019, Visit Billings ordered 200 maps pads which consist of 50 sheets per pad on 11 x 8.5 paper that is 80#. This is a total of 10,000 in quantity. It's a glossy, four color design that appeals to visitors and potential visitors for leisure, business, meeting, and sports travels. Again, this supply was depleted.</p> <p>The cost to print this FY19 supply of the map was \$1,407.05, but the print shop offered a discount of \$416.79 for a total of \$990.26 for this map supply.</p> <p>This supply typically lasts our organization and stakeholders six (6) months. At times when we have needed to replenish the supply earlier in the year due to large events or tournaments, private dollars have paid for additional print runs. Additionally, as other establishments need to be added or removed from the map to ensure it is up-to-date, private funds have paid for the design work.</p> <p>Visit Billings staff and stakeholders see great value in this map and will continue to update the material and print the material. It is available online here: https://www.visitbillings.com/billings-brew-trails</p> <p>There is no advertising offered on this publication.</p> <p>This project is exempt from bidding requirements per the Regulations and Procedures for Regional/CVB Tourism Organizations because the project cost was less than \$2,000.</p> <p>Scenic Drive Program 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>10,000 copies were printed and the supply was depleted.</p> <p>Typically Visit Billings must reprint this file every 6-8 months for distribution. This printed map is distributed</p>	

	<p>Consumer</p> <p>Printed Material</p>	<p>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:</p> <p>INSPIRATION - The process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative.</p> <p>ORIENTATION - The relative physical position or direction of something.</p> <p>FACILITATION - The action of facilitating something to make it easy or easier.</p> <p>Printed and digital materials assist in proper execution of the facilitation phase and accommodating visitors.</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>Visit Billings offers several print and digital facilitation pieces via mail, email and the Billings Visitor Information Center (VIC).</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkable Brewery Map: http://www.visitbillings.com/brew-tour.php • Scenic Drive Map: http://www.visitbillings.com/billings-scenic-guide.php • Billings Loop Tour Pocket Guide: http://www.visitbillings.com/pdf/CVB_LoopTrailMap.pdf • Trail Guide: http://www.visitbillings.com/billings-trails.php • Gateway to Yellowstone: http://www.visitbillings.com/pdf/CVB_GatewayToYellowstone_Map.pdf • Visit Billings Official Guidebook: http://www.visitbillings.com/guidebook/ • Air Service Map: http://www.visitbillings.com/pdf/billings-air-service.pdf 	<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 (Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research or ITRR).</p> <p>As noted above, orientation and facilitation of/for potential travelers or active travelers are key to successful trip execution.</p> <p>Printed materials like tear off maps and brochures along with digital offerings, customer service training programs for frontline employees, and a visitor information center all assist with such phases of the process.</p>	<p>Success will be gaged by the distribution of the materials.</p> <p>Printed materials are important to the orientation and facilitation phases of travel decision process.</p>	<p>In FY19, a portion of these maps will be updated (digitally using private funds) and in some cases reprinted for hard copy distribution and convention facilitation.</p> <p>Printed materials are important to the orientation and facilitation phases of travel decision process.</p>	<p>\$6,350.00</p>	<p>In the Billings Visitor Information Center, at the Billings Logan Airport 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.</p> <p>In 2011, Visit Billings endured the creation of a Scenic Drive program. Historic and scenic points of interest in Billings were identified and defined by staff, stakeholders, and community members. Then, wayfinding signage was installed throughout the destination and the Billings Scenic Drive was officially created.</p> <p>Today, the signs are still fixed across the city and the Scenic Drive Map produced in tandem with the Drive is still available to visitors and potential visitors. This program and the Map that accompanies the program continue to be very popular for orientation and facilitation of the potential visitor and visitor. Particularly for the meeting or convention attendee. Stakeholders also appreciate having a pad of Maps at their front desks for guests as they check-in and are facilitated properly. This is a very successful program. The Map is a key part of the program and the printing of the Map will be continued:</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>This supply has been exhausted. Private funds or public funds will be used to reprint. Typically we look to alternate funding sources for design work or digital updates.</p> <p>The pads cost Visit Billings \$2,351.08 to print, but the print business offers a discount of \$700.52 to Visit Billings for an ultimate expense of \$1,650.56 to the organization for this orientation and facilitation tool.</p> <p>At times when we have needed to replenish the supply earlier in the year due to large events or tournaments, private dollars have paid for additional print runs. Additionally, as the Map is updated to maintain relevancy in design, private funds have paid for the creative work offering a balance of funds used between private and public entities.</p> <p>There is no advertising offered on this publication.</p> <p>This project is exempt from bidding requirements per the Regulations and Procedures for Regional/CVB Tourism Organizations because the project cost was less than \$2,000.</p> <p>YNP/GNP Maps Piece</p> <p>This method was successful and the objective was met by distributing to visitors inquiring about YNP and GNP. The map is often offered with Yellowstone Country's Guidebook or Glacier Country's Guidebook.</p> <p>Approximately 500 of these maps are distributed annually through the Billings Visitor Information Center.</p> <p>For many years, the Montana Office of Tourism supplied a quantity of 11x17 maps that offered orientation of Yellowstone National Park on the front and Glacier National Park on the back. This map became one of the most coveted Maps by the 25 Visitor Information Center volunteers for Visit Billings as well as a key map to use in familiarizing potential visitors at tradeshow in tandem with the highway map of the state of Montana.</p> <p>Recently, that supply transitioned to offering us the print file instead so Visit Billings could print it per supply-needs of our organization and visitors. We appreciate Carol Crockett's assistance with this file as not having the file available to reprint would have been unfortunate as it's such a smart piece to offer visitors.</p> <p>In FY19, Visit Billings ordered a reprint of this YNP/GNP Map:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is mainly distributed in the Billings Visitor Information Center during conversations with guests who are heading into Yellowstone National Park via the northeast entrance at Cooke City or the north entrance at Gardiner. • The map is also extremely helpful to visitors looking to travel to Glacier National Park for park-to-park planning and for our support of Glacier Country. • Additionally, this piece is used at the Denver Travel and Adventure Show as Billings is a mid-way point for Colorado residents between their state and Glacier National Park. <p>The cost to print this map is .53 per piece. The FY19 ordered was for a quantity of 1,000 for a total of \$530.</p> <p>There is no advertising offered on this publication.</p> <p>This project is exempt from bidding requirements per the Regulations and Procedures for Regional/CVB Tourism Organizations because the project cost was less than \$2,000.</p> <p>Budget Overview</p> <p>The three print projects executed in FY19 were all successful. Each piece is important in the orientation and facilitation phases of tourism services, and at least one is key to inspiration to travel to Billings and Montana.</p> <p>Visit Billings is proud of its partnerships with Billings' area print businesses. Due to non-profit and partner discounts, Visit Billings didn't need to use all funds budgeted in this line item.</p> <p>\$6,350.00 was budgeted for Printed Materials in FY19.</p> <p>\$3,170.82 was spent, \$3,179.18 was left in June 2019 and was reallocated for leisure marketing for FY20. 49.93% of the Printed Materials budget was expended.</p> <p>The 2018 Room Demand Percent Change was 5.2%. The goal was 3%. Visit Billings exceeded the Room Demand percentage goal by 2.2%.</p> <p>All projects were considered successful and will be continued as supplies are depleted.</p> <p>Supplies were appropriately depleted and visitors saw value in the printed material.</p>	<p>Billings Brew Trail.pdf</p>
					<p>Inspiring images are important to building creative marketing as well as for the creation of orientation and facilitation print/digital materials.</p>			

<p>Consumer</p>	<p>Photo/Video Library</p>	<p>The objective of enhancing a photo library is to increase the number of assets for Visit Billings, stakeholder, MOTBD, and tourism partner use.</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 will continue to tap local talent for existing images and also schedule custom photo shoots to capture specific scenes, location and audience demographics to keep pace with media frequency and trends. Emphasis this FY will be placed on relevant photos with people in them experiencing the destination.</p> <p>Photos will also be used on social media platforms and VisitBillings.com, and will be available to tourism organizations and partners at no charge.</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 in FY19 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>	<p>The budget for the FY19 Photo/Video Library line item was \$6,500. Visit Billings spent \$4,000 of this budget by negotiating the purchase of additional images from hosting two Visit USA Parks influencers. It was important to host the influencers in Billings prior to Billings executing Travel Blog Exchange as well.</p> <p>Andi Fischer and Emily Sierra were amazing to host. We had hosted Andi previously, but leveraged the use of funds to include additional rights to images they obtained during their 48 Hours in Billings in FY19.</p> <p>The initial contract was to receive 20 images. In the end, Emily offered us 40 images that will be used to enhance the Visit Billings photo library, but to also be sure stakeholders and tourism partners have access to the fresh imagery.</p> <p>Visit Billings spent 61.54% of the budget. Other funds were reallocated to leisure marketing.</p> <p>This Method was successful. The objectives were met and such projects will continue.</p>	<p>\$6,500.00</p>	<p>As noted in the Method, the objective of building and managing a relevant photo and video library for Visit Billings is to increase the number of photo assets in the organization's library to allow the organization, stakeholders, tourism partners, and MOTBD to have access to fresh and targeted video and photo/digital assets at will for marketing and sales needs.</p> <p>In FY19, Visit Billings was successful in executing this Method and meeting the objective of obtaining new images and assets that were attained within the approved budget.</p> <p>The budget for the FY19 Photo/Video Library line item was \$6,500. Visit Billings spent \$4,000 of this budget by negotiating the purchase of additional images from hosting two Visit USA Parks influencers. It was important to host the influencers in Billings prior to Billings executing Travel Blog Exchange as well.</p> <p>Andi Fischer and Emily Sierra were amazing to host. We had hosted Andi previously, but leveraged the use of funds to include additional rights to images they obtained during their 48 Hours in Billings in FY19.</p> <p>The initial contract was to receive 20 images. In the end, Emily offered us 40 images that will be used to enhance the Visit Billings photo library, but to also be sure stakeholders and tourism partners have access to the fresh imagery.</p> <p>Visit Billings spent 61.54% of the budget. Other funds were reallocated to leisure marketing.</p> <p>This Method was successful. The objectives were met and such projects will continue.</p>	<p>48 hours in Billings Montana_VER2.pdf</p>
<p>Consumer</p>	<p>Webpage Marketing/SEO/SEM</p>	<p>Brand partnerships, Facebook Canvas ads and programmatic digital will present opportunities to brand and showcase product differentiators. In FY 2018-2019, Visit Billings will brand and own these differentiators such as Billings' Brew Trail, the only walkable brewery district in Montana, as well as the destination's authentic culinary experiences from award-winning burgers to James Beard recognized chefs.</p>	<p>SOCIAL MEDIA</p> <p>With instant, real-time access to Instagram photos, TripAdvisor reviews, influencer-sourced listicals and user generated content, the traveler's path to purchase is no longer linear. Instead of selecting a destination first, following by traditional planning research and purchase, they seek travel inspiration and advice through friends, family and influencers as part of their social sphere.</p> <p>Social media is a top priority in driving awareness and familiarity of Billings and adding Montana's Trailhead to the consideration set of new visitors. FY19 will focus heavily on building brand advocates through initiatives that encourage social sharing and social takeovers, starting with our own local community. Channel strategy will also begin to incorporate initiatives focused on customer service and positioning Visit Billings as a resource for travel guidance while in the destination. The team will continue to integrate social components into marketing campaigns to</p>	<p>Visit Billings staff will monitor www.visitbillings.com analytics for July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019. Staff will monitor users and conversions. Staff will also make all reports and data available to stakeholders. MOTBD, and members of the general public upon request.</p>	<p>Trip Advisor</p> <p>Online review sites remain a primary resource for travel research prior to booking. Trip Advisor is the leading travel research site and Visit Billings' plans to continuation its Tourism Sponsorship contract. In addition to unique Billings destination content, placement may include digital display on desktop, tablet and mobile targeting Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota and Canada, competitive content and Trip Advisor's Audience Extension retargeting.</p> <p>Facebook and Instagram</p> <p>With social's strong influence on travel decisions, Facebook has an outsized audience with robust targeting capabilities and creative units to utilize in bringing the Billings' Yellowstone Scenic route to life. Instagram continues to hold a primary role in travel inspiration. Placement targeted to in-feed, utilizing standard and/or carousel sponsored ads to drive website traffic and conversions. Canvas ad units to increase brand engagement and lead generation to grow the databases, all layered with targeting such as demographic, geographic, interest, behavioral and/or look-a-</p>	<p>\$8,500.00</p>	<p>While not all of the funds designated in this line item were expended, the Method proved successful and will be continued.</p> <p>Visit Billings used Billings CVB joint venture, digital marketing, and private funds to grow visitation to Billings. In FY19, Google Adwords assisted the organization in acquisition of visitors to the website. Additionally, staff and the Visit Billings agency monitored behavior and conversions at VisitBillings.com including average session duration which per the report attached was 1:52 minutes. Paid searches like those pursued via this investment offered 26,455 visits.</p> <p>Visit Billings utilized other funds to assist this Method. Please note the TripAdvisor reporting and other digital placement follow-up data.</p> <p>More:</p> <p>For calendar year 2018, Visit Billings Room Demand per Smith Travel Research or STR Reporting was 5.2%. The goal was 3%. Visit Billings and Billings as a general tourism destination is fortunate to have nearly 55 hotels with 4,850 guest rooms. More than 1/2 of the hotels report to STR which allows Visit Billings to accurately use the STR Room Demand data along with ADR and Occupancy as reports for this Method.</p> <p>This Method will continue. Funds not expended were reallocated to leisure marketing efforts including digital placements.</p>	<p>Analytics www.visitbillings.com Acquisition Overview 20180701-20190630.pdf</p>

				inspire and orient potential visitors while facilitating guests.		like and lead generation. <i>With escalating concerns around privacy and abuse of user data, paid social will be closely monitored and evaluated against alternate digital targeting.</i> Google Adwords			
Consumer	Joint Ventures	<p>COOPERATIVE OPPORTUNITIES Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development</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. 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 FY18, Visit Billings participated in several of the MOTBD co-op advertising opportunities including iExplore, Sojern and TripAdvisor. Similar placements will be considered in FY19.</p>	Investing in leisure tourism marketing strategies is a top objective for Visit Billings. The regional, national, and in some cases, international, markets support the majority of Visit Billings' stakeholders.	From the regional resident to the international traveler, Billings is an attractive destination. Local amenities and gateway access to national historic, cultural and natural attractions help strengthen the destination's brand and boost visitation. The overall leisure marketing strategy is to increase year round visitation	It's important for Visit Billings to leverage public and private funds to play roles with MOTBD, Regions, and other Montana CVBs. This Method will be successful if partnerships are offered and successful. Meantime, Smith Travel Research Report (STR) which offers monthly snapshots of occupancy and room demand percentages for the Billings market, will help guide ROI and	<p>Cooperative Opportunities are equally as important to Visit Billings:</p> <p>Local and Regional Partnerships</p> <p>Visit Billings would like to participate in the following cooperative opportunities with Neighboring Regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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, and particularly Red Lodge, is another important region where Visit Billings will continue building a relationship. Many successful familiarization tours and 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. Visit Billings will partner with MOTBD and Montana Regions/CVBs on relevant consumer trade shows when appropriate. Billings has and will continue to partner with 	\$30,000.00	<p>Joint Ventures</p> <p>As noted in the Method, Visit Billings is appreciative of co-op and Joint Venture opportunities with MOTBD. Such partnership(s) were successful again meeting objectives to leverage funds to have more opportunities at a lower cost or to be placed as a larger Montana voice in marketing. 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>Once again in FY19, Visit Billings said yes to digital opportunities that targeted a qualified audience of travelers using Sojern, TripAdvisor, and Parents magazine.</p> <p>Again, the Method was successful, the objective was met, and staff will look first to those opportunities again.</p> <p>TripAdvisor</p> <p>As noted in the Method, Visit Billings continues to partner with TripAdvisor. With TripAdvisor, between the Joint Venture component and additional funds, Visit Billings contracts the Destination Sponsorship. TripAdvisor's Premium Destination Partnership was renewed for 2019, and the summer plan will include additional placement in Montana, Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Idaho and Wyoming content.</p> <p>Among paid social, Facebook and Instagram will remain prominent along with testing YouTube and Pinterest with interest and keyword targeting. Creative materials will place emphasis on video placement, Instagram stories and Facebook's Instant Experience. Paid Search will also continue to play a prominent role in driving qualified traffic to VisitBillings.com. Visit Billings has allocated resources to participate in MOTBD's Joint Venture programs as opportunities become available in June.</p> <p>In FY19, this included cover photo and video sponsorship that appears at the top of the destination pages to all travelers.</p> <p>Destination branding which brands Visit Billings with an icon and cross-link to the social profile on TA.</p> <p>Ten featured destination photos to showcase Billings to travelers.</p> <p>Sponsored profile which allows VB to gain more visibility and followers.</p> <p>A 300x250 ad</p> <p>The Discovery carousel which offers a mix of trips, articles, and videos for travelers to discover (be inspired and oriented) and become engaged while exploring Billings as a destination.</p> <p>The FY19 TA commitment looked like this as well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$20,000 TripAdvisor spend (includes Destination Sponsorship & matching advertising spend) \$98.81 for Acceleration Ad Serving 100% SOV of the standard IAB banner placements Content integration on TripAdvisor*** Matching advertising spend will run in the spring, targeting Montana content and active travel planners in target states <p>\$20,098.81 Total</p> <p><i>*Formally Premium Destination Partnership</i></p>	MOTBD_Parents_Draft2-VisitBillings.pdf

			<p>targeting regional, national and international travelers. In FY17, the team began the process of assessing and diversifying the organization's leisure marketing efforts. These strategies will continue to be assessed and expanded in FY19.</p>	<p>successes.</p>	<p>MOTBD and Visit Southeast Montana at the Rocky Mountain International Roundup, U.S. Travel Association's IPW and the GoWest Summit. These partnerships have proven successful in the past and are expected to be in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finally, 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 and our product as a year-round destination. The Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site renovation at Swords Rimrock Park is a perfect example of community partnership. In FY19, Visit Billings will also be partnering with our locals, the people who have established the character of the destination. We will be establishing our Billings Trail Guide program and seeking inspiration in our people and the stories of the past with tourism product development front of mind. 		<p>**End date extended to renew at beginning of the the calendar year without additional cost.</p> <p>***The number of ad sizes for the DS has been reduced</p> <p>TripAdvisor recommends uploading a new hero image (2560x500), avatar, and updating the 'About Info'.</p> <p>- TripAdvisor's overall performance was dampened by the 320x50 creative performance. Going forward, BCF recommends reconsidering the mobile presence on TripAdvisor and incorporating alternative mobile ad units; e.g., mobile native ad unit. PDP webpages were updated from a site-perspective (to better fit the social landscape); in conjunction with this - BCF swapped creative.</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <p>- Visit Billings and BCF will work with TripAdvisor to drive more quality traffic & interest to the PDP page, as we own 100% SOV and must have creative locked on the page. BCF will confer, internally, to see what we can do regarding creative refreshing. The summer campaign ended on 6/30/19; however, the Joint Venture portion of the campaign started on 7/8/19 for TripAdvisor.</p> <p>Visit Billings also expended funds for digital presence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AdYouLike Sojern Parents - https://billingschamber.sharepoint.com/Shared%20Documents/CVB/Leisure%20Advertising/2018-2019/State%20JV/Visit_Billings_Parents_MOTBD.pdf <p>This Method and these projects were successful and will be continued as the objective(s) were met.</p> <p>For calendar year 2018, Visit Billings Room Demand per Smith Travel Research or STR Reporting was 5.2%. The goal was 3%. Visit Billings and Billings as a general tourism destination is fortunate to have nearly 55 hotels with 4,850 guest rooms. More than 1/2 of the hotels report to STR which allows Visit Billings to accurately use the STR Room Demand data along with ADR and Occupancy as reports for this Method.</p>	
			<p>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</p>				<p>Visit Billings staff met the objective regarding the importance elevating the destination to the International Market as outlined in the method of the grant application. Overall this Method was successful, however, one of the programs will not continue at this time as explained below in the section pertaining to Go West Summit.</p> <p>The following travel shows were identified as successful previously and were thus attended by Visit Billings staff in FY19 using Billings CVB dollars. However private funds helped offset any expenses above budget projections. Each of the following shows (3) was attended in partnership with MOTBD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go West Summit – hosted in Boise, Idaho IRU: International Round Up with Rocky Mountain International – hosted in Spearfish, South Dakota IPW: presented by the U.S. Travel Association – hosted in Anaheim, California <p>Go West Summit brought together CVBs, lodging properties, outfitters, and other businesses offering 'product' in Boise, Idaho in winter of 2019.</p> <p>Visit Billings staff met with approximately 17 buyers during pre-scheduled appointments over two days. It was noted by staff that perhaps only ten of those appointments were viable. Other destinations had approximately 25 appointments.</p> <p>Following several years of attendance, we noted following the 2019 Go West event, that Visit Billings is more competitive and offers more to buyers at IPW, IRU, and ACGI (private funded event) than Go West Summit. In order to be responsible with funds, Visit Billings will not attend the Go West Summit in 2020.</p> <p>Go West, we have found, is more Pacific Rim focused and Visit Billings is not currently competitive in that</p>	

Consumer	Travel/Trade Shows	<p>Travel and Tradeshows, 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 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 done 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>	<p>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 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>Success will be measured by:</p> <p>Number of attendees to each show as well as if contacts made showed interest in Montana, Billings, or southeast Montana.</p> <p>Success is also monitored organization-wide per Smith Travel Research Report information.</p>	<p>The Tradeshows noted in this line item will include RMI Round Up, IPW, and GoWest Summit. Visit Billings appreciates the chance to attend these events with MOTBD staff.</p> <p>Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development:</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. 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>Appointments are key to appointment-based trade show events. We appreciate the work of MOTBD staff to leverage the MONTANA brand to help lead to good conversations with Regions and CVBs.</p> <p>The 2019 international event line-up proved successful with full schedules for Visit Billings staff as partners of MOTBD staff. Locally, leads are followed up with via staff through account management using IDSS, the program Visit Billings uses for client management.</p>	\$10,750.00	<p>market. Bozeman, West Yellowstone, Gardiner, and Livingston along with NW Montana destinations carry more clout with such buyers as Billings is still a bit removed from gateways and entrances. Although we believe there is a place in this market eventually for Billings, strategies need to be contemplated, monitored, constructed, and perhaps executed. Please note the contacts made at GO West are part of the Visit Billings relationship monitoring program in which we continue to communicate with prospective buyers of Billings' product. Leads are made available to stakeholders upon request.</p> <p>IRU or International Round Up was attended once again in FY19 as planned.</p> <p>Visit Billings staff attended 40 appointments. Staff reported that 75% of the appointments seemed viable for Billings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 2-3 appts that are vendors (magazine/media reps) • 9 appts are the RMI Country reps (Usually just learning whats 'new') • The remaining 30-ish are all Travel Companies and they typically have interest in learning more about our destinations fit into the Great American West • 1/3 of those usually have strong familiarity with our destination from past FAM's or visits <p>The event took place in Spearfish, South Dakota and offered Visit Billings staff the opportunity to again meet with international buyers. This event continues to be successful for Visit Billings. As staff works to build relationships with buyers looking for product in southeast Montana, it's important for staff to have the chance to elevate Billings to buyers.</p> <p>In Spearfish, staff sat down with buyers and took time to 'sell' Billings to them. Many of these buyers were seen in on pre or post familiarization tours in recent years or were visited with again at IPW in Anaheim. This allows for multiple touch points and relational scenarios strengthening Billings as a tourism destination to potential and current buyers.</p> <p>Locally, leads are followed up with via staff through account management using IDSS, the program Visit Billings uses for client management. Stakeholders and tourism partners are surveyed annually to see which tour companies or operators are using Billings' product in order to continue to support the expenditure of IRU. Leads are available upon request to stakeholders.</p> <p>IRU, as part of this Method, was successful and will be continued. The objectives to meet with four operators and build relationships with those looking to southeast Montana for product in order to impact stakeholders by increasing occupancy and room demand were met. This event will be held in Casper, Wyoming in 2020.</p> <p>IPW offered more than 1,300 exhibitor booths of which two were offered by MONTANA in 2019. Visit Billings sent two employees who were part of the Montana appointments. Montana had 153 appointments all together. These appointments represented nearly 70 countries during the four day event.</p> <p>One Visit Billings staff member was paid for using private funds, the other was paid for using Billings CVB funds.</p> <p>Visit Billings is extremely grateful for the partnership provided by MOTBD (Marlee Iverson and Kim Birrell) leading up to and during IPW. Additionally, the exposure to journalists and the media during the event is importance to all Montana destinations.</p> <p>Appointments are key to this event and the 2019 event proved successful with full schedules for Visit Billings staff. Locally, leads are followed up with via staff through account management using IDSS, the program Visit Billings uses for client management. Additionally, Visit Billings monitors Cision to see where any media mentions are reported from IPW attendance and conversations. Stakeholders and tourism partners are surveyed annually to see which tour companies or operators are using Billings' product in order to continue to support the expenditure of IPW. Leads are made available to stakeholders upon request.</p> <p>IPW, as part of this Method, was successful and will be continued.</p> <p>During the above appointment-based show attendance, staff distributed the following collateral materials to buyers when/where applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific International Market One-Sheet Information Document – specifies 'Must-Sees' in the destination and region • Business cards • Business card thumb drives – drives include digital versions of Visitor Guidebook, inspirational video, translated documents on digital equipment that looks like a business card • Visitor Guidebook when applicable/requested <p>Visit Billings expended 100.4% of its Travel/Trade Show budget in FY19.</p> <p>This budget pays for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration • Airfare/Ground Transportation • Accommodations • Shipping of materials if necessary • Meals <p>Leads for the above shows were distributed locally when/where applicable.</p> <p>The annual goal for the Smith Travel Research Room Demand percentage is 3%. Billings saw growth of 2.2% to 5.2% in calendar year 2018 with continued growth in citywide demand for YTD 2019. This rate is important to Billings stakeholders including 53 hotels/motels with nearly 4,900 guest rooms - the most guest rooms in any city in Montana.</p> <p>Additionally, in FY19, Visit Billings' event booking goal was 34 bookings in the meetings and/or sports markets. Visit Billings staff booked 53 meetings, conventions, and sports events.</p>	IPW Appointments.xlsx
					<p>POTENTIAL OUT-OF-STATE MARKETS:</p> <p>Denver, CO DMA</p> <p>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</p>			

Consumer	Multi-Media Marketing	<p>To establish a minimum 10-25% reach of Billings' target audience in its primary geographic markets with highest propensity for ROI, media will layer in placements that have the propensity to deliver the greatest targeted, cost-efficient reach, such as out-of-home and select print with digital focused primarily social and short form video. Media selection will also be cognizant of the media characteristics of particular markets as well as the target audience. Specific markets may present opportunities to utilize radio and television to enhance reach and recall, whether broadcast or streaming and over-the-top television. This is supported by Mintel's Outdoor Enthusiasts, US - March 2017 report which states 33% of outdoor enthusiasts said they look to TV programming to stay informed about outdoor activities they enjoy. While 38% of outdoor enthusiasts have used an online source to stay informed about outdoor activities and 25% use print magazines.</p> <p>Exposure to media on multiple channels will be key in driving awareness and purchase intent, and executing digital simultaneously with traditional offline media will drive greater lift. In addition, brand collaboration and sponsorship opportunities will further engage summer vacationers and outdoor enthusiasts with predisposition to visit national parks and western heritage experiences.</p> <p>TRAVEL DECISION PROCESS</p> <p>THREE PHASES: INSPIRE, ORIENT, FACILITATE</p> <p><i>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:</i></p> <p>THE PROCESS IS DEFINED BY USE OF THE FOLLOWING TERMINOLOGY AND CORRESPONDING DEFINITIONS:</p> <p>INSPIRATION - <i>The process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative.</i></p> <p>ORIENTATION - <i>The relative physical position or direction of something.</i></p> <p>FACILITATION - <i>The action of facilitating something to make it easy or easier.</i></p> <p>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. Visit Billings staff and agency will meantime help elevate and inspire travel to Billings. Building the destination into itineraries to Montana.</p> <p>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 strategies position the destination as a viable city to include on one's itinerary along Montana travels as well as a full destination all together.</p>	<p><i>Visit Billings will focus heavily on behavioral targeting around summer vacation planning and booking, with interest in outdoors, national parks and western heritage experiences. Based on recent Visitor Profile research, Visit Billings will target adult travelers 25-54 with an annual household income of \$75,000 to \$150,000.</i></p> <p>Per MOTBD Strategies - Visit Billings consumer marketing, in both print and digital, support the following:</p> <p>INTEGRATE NATURE AND TOWNS TO OFFER AND DELIVER A BALANCE OF "BREATH TAKING EXPERIENCES" AND "RELAXING HOSPITALITY."</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Digital reporting and metrics from agency will pair with Smith Travel Research Report (STR) data. STR Reports offer monthly snapshots of occupancy and room demand percentages for the Billings market. This will help guide ROI and successes to an extent as well.</p>	<p>550 miles Southeast of Billings, Denver has affordable daily non-stop flights and is within drive proximity at about an eight-hour trip. The market ranks as the primary feeder market in preliminary visitor profile data, and fifth in unique website visitation to VisitBillings.com</p> <p>Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN DMA</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX DMA</p> <p>As the newest daily direct flight to Billings, recent promotional partnerships have seen growth in this feeder market. Located over 1,300 miles from Billings, visitation will be dependent on affordable and convenient non-stop flight service. Dallas population of ages 25-54 is over 2.9M and, of Billings target markets, it has one of the largest populations of frequent domestic travelers and those who have visited a state park. The market ranks high in unique website visitation to VisitBillings.com, in part due to recent promotional efforts.</p> <p>Salt Lake City, UT DMA</p> <p>Ranking second highest in unique website visits to VisitBillings.com, Salt Lake City is under a nine hour drive from Billings or a quick one-hour non-stop flight; however, its location southwest of Billings may inhibit opportunities to target summer visitation around Yellowstone National Park. Salt Lake City's population age 25-54 sits just under 1.1M. A prime target for outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers, Salt Lake City itself is surrounded by five of Utah's own national parks.</p>	\$40,398.00	<p>Yes. The objective(s) were met and this Method will be continued.</p> <p>The annual goal for the Smith Travel Research Room Demand percentage is 3%. Billings saw growth of 2.2% to 5.2% in calendar year 2018 with continued growth in citywide demand for YTD 2019. This rate is important to Billings stakeholders including 53 hotels/motels with nearly 4,900 guest rooms - the most guest rooms in any city in Montana.</p> <p>Additionally, in FY19, Visit Billings' event booking goal was 34 bookings in the meetings and/or sports markets. Visit Billings staff booked 53 meetings, conventions, and sports events.</p> <p>In FY20, it was noted that Visit Billings could better leverage its dollars by adding the Seattle/Tacoma market to its geographic strategy due to the MOTBD investment in that market. So in FY20, Visit Billings opted to not invest in the Dallas/FW market. The Dallas/FW marketing is important to Visit Billings and will be revisited in late FY20 and FY21.</p>	Billings Media Report June 19.8.xlsx
							<p>Print/Digital</p> <p>In FY19, Visit Billings leveraged the Montana's Trailhead brand and the destination's "Forge Your Own Path," brand which 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>All creative and placements focused on the above marketing strategy.</p> <p>Additionally, Visit Billings' 2019 Media Plan focused on programmatic pre- mid- and post-roll video with online display retargeting. Through a DSP partner, the plan showcased new video assets for the</p>	

	<p>Consumer</p> <p>Online/Digital Advertising</p>	<p>Summer season national campaign strategy will note southeast Montana's access to the most scenic route to Yellowstone National Park via Beartooth Highway. 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.</p> <p>Partnerships will be developed in FY19 with companion frontier destinations to target summer bucket-list travel including an unprecedented list of iconic American sites and attractions from Mount Rushmore to Little Bighorn Battlefield for the "Great American Road Trip."</p>	<p>The map included in the full marketing plan file positions key target geographic areas, primarily top national feeder markets and DMAs with direct flights, based on demographic and behavioral considerations indicative of travelers seeking a destination experience that aligns with that of Billings, MT. Areas shaded in darker red and orange indicate larger concentrations of desired travel behavior. This includes variables such as DMA population that has spent money on domestic travel, taken 3+ domestic non-business trips or visited a National Park within the last 12 months. (resource: Esri ArcGIS 2010 U.S. Census data)</p>	<p>Method will be measured based on Smith Travel Research Report (STR) which offers monthly snapshots of occupancy and room demand percentages for the Billings market, as well as full reporting from the agency of record per the placements and performance of the placements (see attachment).</p>	<p>To maximize budget, national marketing initiatives focused on MSP, Denver, and Seattle with the highest potential for ROI, ensuring a minimum reach and frequency to truly make an impact.</p> <p>Visit Billings and BCF conducted a thorough market analysis to determine the top markets most effective for summer visitation growth, especially for new visitors. This analysis includes factors such as proximity and accessibility (drive time and flight convenience and cost), population within target demographics, web visitation and analytics, and travel behavior data among other variables.</p>	<p>\$30,000.00</p>	<p>destination.</p> <p>Video continues to lead the storytelling space and is the most powerful way to connect emotionally with an audience. A new content partnership with RoadTrippers.com (private funds), a web and mobile travel-planning platform, will provide custom trip guides with display, email and social promotion.</p> <p>Summer national campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With the Summer campaign kicking off officially on 5/31, Visit Billings and the agency of record, BCF, used the first month of data to benchmark the campaign's performance to ensure that the campaign was optimized to continue total conversion growth, as well as lower its overall cost per conversion. - The campaign's inflated overall cost per conversion was solely indicative to Distillery's video cost per conversion and was expected, as video are not expected to drive conversions, but awareness. - Video placements out-performed display placements. End users were not initially responding favorable to the new, summer creative. BCF then worked with vendors to manually optimize display campaigns, as well as allowed vendor ad servers to gather information to recalibrate their algorithms to assess their end user response to new creative. - TripAdvisor's overall performance was dampened by the 320x50 creative performance. Going forward, BCF recommends reconsidering the mobile presence on TripAdvisor and incorporating alternative mobile ad units, e.g., mobile native ad unit. PDP webpages were updated from a site-perspective (to better fit the social landscape); in conjunction with this - BCF swapped creative. - Distillery's video placement performed very well, delivering a consistent and overall Video Completion Rate of 93%. Display rendered a slightly higher Cost per Conversion (CPC) in June; however, this slight influx could be attributed to the lesser time for the ad serve to gather reporting. BCF continued to work with Distillery to manually optimize the campaign, while the partner's algorithm maximized. - Facebook saw strong performance out of the gate June and July 2019 with national leisure buys. The campaign focused around the Instant Experience unit, and video units running across Facebook and Instagram Stories. Pinterest was also active. The Family Outdoor creative running in Stories for IG drove the strongest initial interest as well strong conversion efficiency. While the least efficient in driving initial engagement was the Instagram Instant Experience it still proved to ultimately drive the right audience to the site with strong on-site engagement (of those with significant volume of conversions). - Several targeting tactics were tested for the YouTube campaign with performance and available inventory driving spend by tactic within Google Adwords. As the consumer campaign gained traction and historical data, CTR, CPC, and CPA metrics improved week over week for the life of the campaign. <p>Videos for the campaign can be seen here: https://vimeo.com/showcase/5961769 (password: bmt)</p> <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit Billings and BCF will work with TripAdvisor to drive more quality traffic & interest to the PDP page, as we own 100% SOV and must have creative locked on the page. BCF will confer, internally, to see what we can do regarding creative refreshing. The summer campaign ended on 6/30/19; however, the Joint Venture portion of the campaign started on 7/8/19 for TripAdvisor. - Look-a-Like targeting and Retargeting are being introduced to the Facebook campaign. As these adjustments gained traction, Facebook's optimization of spend was monitored and adjusted to meet budget. <p>Regarding Facebook and the spring/summer 2019 national placements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distillery display and native were initially extended to 6/14 to account for two weeks of being off while the website was being updated (VisitBillings.com), but was stopped 6/7 due to inefficient performance. The remaining budget was shifted behind the Facebook regional campaign which drove more efficient results. - Facebook continued to see strong performance at the beginning of May 2019 prior to the campaign being paused. With the resumption of the campaign, while initial performance in May dipped, June saw an improvement as the Facebook system recalibrated the campaign. The Instant Experience was turned off and budget shifted to the conversion campaign at the end of May 2019. - Similar to the Facebook campaign, the Search campaign saw a dip in performance after being off for the VisitBillings.com website updates, but saw improvements as Google Adwords regained a pool performance data. The Yellowstone campaign was resumed at the beginning of May. Testing on bid approach was started in June on the less CPA efficient Billings to Do and Brand Travel, to better balance conversion and click performance. Additional negative keywords were added, poorly performing keywords were paused (See completion report for SEO if questions) and keyword organization between Events and Attractions was adjusted to improve quality scores by extension offering more efficiency. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test alternate Facebook audiences moving into future campaigns. <p>Visit Billings also expended funds in the following publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northwest Travel 2-page spread • Lewis and Clark Marketing Program • Horizon Travel New York • Yellowstone Journal • Adventure Outdoors: See pages 62-63 for ad and advertorial • RoadRUNNER (part of two-wheel campaign) • 2-wheel YouTube 2 min video • 2-wheel Pinterest • Acceleration - 2-wheel • Trip Advisor Spring • AdYouLike • Sojern • Parents - https://billingschamber.sharepoint.com/Shared%20Documents/CVB/Leisure%20Advertising/2018-2019/State%20JV/Visit_Billings_Parents_MOTBD.pdf • TripAdvisor <p>Lewis and Clark Marketing Program:</p> <p>Visit Billings is a proud partner of the Lewis and Clark Expedition Marketing Program with J. Greg Smith Inc. This publication has been promoting Billings' area visitor attractions in the Lewis and Clark Country tourism program since 2014. Program materials have included:</p> <p>1) The Lewis and Clark Trail regional brochure for Montana and the Dakotas</p>	<p>Billings Media Report June 19.8.xlsx</p>
--	---	--	---	--	---	--------------------	--	---

						<p>2) Billings Trailhead Discovery Trail auto tour brochure</p> <p>3) Six internet pages on the Lewis and Clark Country.org site</p> <p>2019 Program Performance looked like this for the Lewis and Clark Marketing Program:</p> <p>-5,000 Billings Trailhead Montana Discovery Trail tour brochures were distributed by Visit Billings, Certified Folder and Montana State Parks. Certified Folder reported their stock of the Billings Trailhead tour brochures are depleted.</p> <p>-Lewis and Clark Country.org pages with Visit Billings content gained more visitor traffic in 2019 compared to 2018:</p> <p>- 118% increase in page views: 8,250 in 2019 vs. 3,779 in 2018</p> <p>- 80% increase in Unique page views: 6,565 vs. 3,644</p> <p>- 260% increase in page views of Billings Trailhead Tour page</p> <p>- Average viewing time of Billings Trailhead Tour page: 3:16</p> <p>- Decreases in Page Exit and Bounce Rates</p> <p>- The LewisandClarkCountry.org site's top 12 visitor origination states include 9 leading Montana visitor states: OR, WA, CA, IL, TX, UT, MN and CO</p> <p>Area Visitor Guidebooks VB Ad Placements:</p> <p>Meantime, Visit Billings continued to leverage partnerships with Regions and CVBs that meet Billings as a destination (proximity) or help promote Billings as a stop along travels on an itinerary. These publications included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination Red Lodge • Visit SEMT Travel Guide • Cody, WY Visitor Guide <p>For calendar year 2018, Visit Billings Room Demand per Smith Travel Research or STR Reporting was 5.2%. The goal was 3%. Visit Billings and Billings as a general tourism destination is fortunate to have nearly 55 hotels with 4,850 guest rooms. More than 1/2 of the hotels report to STR which allows Visit Billings to accurately use the STR Room Demand data along with ADR and Occupancy as reports for this Method.</p> <p>Such Methods will continue in FY20 as they proved successful in FY19. It is important for Visit Billings staff and the Visit Billings agency to constantly monitor which placements are performing in order to ensure proper investment to grow visitation at Montana's Trailhead.</p>		
Consumer	Ad Agency Services	<p>Visit Billings relationship with its ad agency, BCF Agency, is extremely important to serving the mission of the organization.</p> <p>The main role of an advertising agency is to work with you to develop an advertising campaign. Advertising agencies are staffed with copywriters, art directors and media planners who will create your ads and place them in the appropriate media. BCF agency will work within the constraints and our budget. These Ad Agency Service funds will help with all aspect of campaign development, media, placements, strategizing, digital services, and reporting.</p>	<p>Creative services are crucial to communicating inspirational and targeted messaging to prospective and active travelers.</p> <p>Inspiring, orienting, and facilitating are the priorities for Visit Billings in partnership with MOTBD and Montana's Regions and CVBs.</p> <p>Marketing and advertising are the most important pieces of destination marketing. As a destination management and marketing organization, staff need to be able to ensure investments in marketing are focused on a substantial return on the investment for stakeholders.</p> <p>Working with an agency is essential.</p> <p>Visit Billings agency of record is BCF Agency. This partnership, which includes a monthly retainer that is paid for using private dollars and Billings CVB dollars, will offer Visit Billings staff and stakeholders the following in FY19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual planning and strategizing • Opportunities • Results and reporting • Innovation • Creativity • Buying power • Social media consulting • Assistance building and managing photo libraries • Key to mobile-friendly websites and developments 	<p>All offerings via websites, social, digital and print placements, as well as research and reporting through Smith Travel Research, will guide effectiveness.</p>	<p>Visit Billings' relationship with its agency of record is very important to fostering visitor growth for the destination. In FY19, this relationship continue to be successful for the destination and its stakeholders.</p> <p>Leveraging Montana's Trailhead, Visit Billings successfully launched the "Forge Your Own Path" campaign. It included an evolution of the Visit Billings brand promise, inviting visitors to be their own pioneers and start their own unique and memorable journey, authentic to the Big Sky Montana experience yet approachable and unexpected.</p> <p>"Forge Your Own Path" was 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, with its agency, is able to differentiate itself from the competitive set by bringing the Billings experience to life through the lens of its brand essence, the spirit at the core of the destination. Typical tourism campaigns feature big scenery and "people doing stuff," whether drinking a craft beer, hiking or shopping. Visit</p>	\$30,000.00	<p>Ad Agency Services</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 advertising are the most important pieces of destination marketing. As a destination management and marketing organization, staff need to be able to ensure investments in marketing are focused on a substantial return on the investment for stakeholders.</p> <p>Working with an agency is essential.</p> <p>Visit Billings agency of record is BCF Agency. This partnership, which includes a monthly retainer that is paid for using private dollars and Billings CVB dollars, offered Visit Billings staff and stakeholders the following in FY19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual planning and strategizing • Opportunities • Results and reporting • Innovation • Creativity • 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 both strategies for consumers show • Sales, orientation, and facilitation materials • Presentations/ROI programming <p>The FY19 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>The annual goal for the Smith Travel Research Room Demand percentage is 3%. Billings saw growth of 2.2% to 5.2% in calendar year 2018 with continued growth in citywide demand for YTD 2019. This rate is important to Billings stakeholders including 53 hotels/motels with nearly 4,900 guest rooms - the most guest rooms in any city in Montana.</p> <p>Additionally regarding the success of the ad agency services for FY19, account management reports show numerous projects being worked on that aren't reflected on digital or print placement as well. This includes market planning and execution (see attachment), website collaborations and updates, publication and collateral sales materials, etc.</p> <p>Once again, in FY19, the amount of research and tracking BCF Agency performed, allowed staff to travel and work on priorities that are equally as essential. For FY19, \$33,000 was expended for agency services</p>	BTBID Abridged Marketing Plan - FY20.pdf

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>Billings will stand not only for its products and nearby bucket-list attractions, but its authentic, accessible character.</p> <p>The agency costs designated here will allow the destination marketing to be creative and progressive and afford Visit Billings the creative funds needed for print and digital, creative and media, as well as placements and planning.</p>		<p>with Billings CVB funds. Private funds paid an equal amount as this is a shared expense between the Billings CVB and the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District.</p> <p>Visit Billings can't afford to hire a graphics artist, media buyer, interactive manager, and IT expert, or communications professional. However, contracting with a full service agency that works with staff makes for the win-win.</p> <p>This Method and strategy were successful. The objective was met. This Method will continue.</p>	
Film	Opportunity Marketing	<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> <p>Visit Billings looks forward to any opportunity to help the Montana Film Office success for the Montana brand.</p>	<p>Film-friendly communities continue to be important to the tourism industry as a whole for the state of Montana and MOTBD.</p> <p>The Montana Film Office is important to the health and wealth of Montana's film scene.</p> <p>Visit Billings is willing to assist should a project arise where the staff can be of service. In some cases, this may mean assisting financially by helping offset costs to a production company or the State with site inspections, touring, and/or other means to accommodate producers or directors in the destination.</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>If funds are executed for a film project for the destination, this method will be considered successful. If funds are exhausted due to a project not being available to assist, the method was still successful by being prepared as a destination to accommodate opportunities.</p>	<p>Visit Billings set aside \$1,000 in film, opportunity marketing for FY19 in the event an opportunity was made available for the organization to assist a producer, director, or the Montana Film Office for a project in the Billings area.</p>	\$1,000.00	<p>An opportunity did not present itself where such funds were utilized in FY19 and funds were reallocated to leisure marketing.</p> <p>Visit Billings did meet the objective however to reserve opportunity marketing dollars for film in the event an opportunity presented itself.</p> <p>This Method will be continued and was consider successful by staff as a means to continue the Montana Film Office and MOTBD as well as other Regions and CVBs when a project arises.</p>	
Group Marketing	Multi-Media Marketing	<p>These dollars will be invested in print and digital marketing efforts for Meeting and Convention Recruitment, Group Tour Marketing, and Sports Tourism efforts.</p> <p>More:</p> <p>MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS</p> <p>Within a highly competitive marketplace, meeting and convention sales are a top priority for Visit Billings. Meetings business grows year-round visitation, especially in the shoulder seasons. Relationships with meeting and event professionals are a key to the future of this segment, along with quality properties, state-of-the art facilities and attractions that create excitement about the destination and its brand. Billings is a strong meeting and convention destination with non-stop air service to nearly two dozen major cities, 360,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space and 5,000 hotel rooms. With multiple proposed development projects under review, Visit Billings will continue to advocate for a new large-scale convention center as well as surrounding, walkable multi-use and entertainment products. Partnering and supporting the Hammes Company and the region's One Big Sky District development efforts will help align this segment for growth as part of the Visit Billings 2027 vision.</p> <p>Visit Billings will focus on small market meetings and major city-wide convention business that benefits convention properties and multiple hotels. Such growth in this segment will result in continued progress in hotel occupancy, average daily rate (ADR), and impact the local economy by filling restaurants, retailers and attractions. This also supports the workforce and to some extent, the area's tax base.</p> <p>Targeted industries 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>SPORTS</p> <p>As a leading regional destination in the sports market, Billings offers a wide range of venues accommodating several sports categories. The current sports facilities, coupled with strong air service options and proximity to national attractions position Billings strongly in this growing tourism segment.</p> <p>GROUP TOUR</p> <p>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 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>Goals for this Method include:</p> <p>Build brand awareness of Billings as a meetings destination; Generate new leads and grow Visit Billings' database of qualified Meeting Planners; Service</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>Visit Billings places annual booking goals for meetings, conventions, and sports events. Additionally, Visit Billings monitors Smith Travel Research reporting as Billings is in a fortunate position to use such data to report visitor growth, of 54 hotels and motels in Billings more than half report to STR.</p>	<p>Yellowstone National Park and Little Bighorn Battlefield, along with the Lewis and Clark Trail, continue to be key attractions positioning Billings as a trailhead to access popular tourism sites from a reliable and group-friendly destination. This messaging is successful for not only Billings but such investments continue to be important as we work to elevate tourism partners to grow visitation at Montana's Trailhead.</p> <p>Meeting and convention recruitment, sports tourism, and group tours are very important markets for Billings as a tourism destination. Investments made in FY19 proved successful in all marketing commitments based on Smith Travel Research (STR) reporting and marketing analytics monitored by Visit Billings' staff and the Visit Billings agency of record.</p>	\$60,000.00	<p>In FY19, Visit Billings purchased exposure with the following publications in a print and/or digital format in order to grow visitation in said markets:</p> <p>Smart Meetings</p> <p>Group Tour Media</p> <p>Great American West</p> <p>Goals met included: Build brand awareness of Billings as a meetings destination; Generate new leads and grow Visit Billings' database of qualified Meeting Planners; Service groups with high level of customer satisfaction and event execution</p> <p>For orientation and facilitation marketing Visit Billings purchased print and/or digital exposure for Lee Enterprises for the NAIA Women's Division I National Championship and the Montana High School Associations State Championships program-wide.</p> <p>Additionally, with sports tourism, the following goals were met per Method:</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p> <p>Group marketing efforts for sports, meetings, and leisure (international) were successful in FY19.</p> <p>The annual goal for the Smith Travel Research Room Demand percentage is 3%. Billings saw growth of 2.2% to 5.2% in calendar year 2018 with continued growth in citywide demand for YTD 2019. This rate is important to Billings stakeholders including 53 hotels/motels with nearly 4,900 guest rooms - the most guest rooms in any city in Montana.</p> <p>Additionally, in FY19, Visit Billings' event booking goal was 34 bookings in the meetings and/or sports markets. Visit Billings staff booked 53 meetings, conventions, and sports events.</p> <p>The Method was successful and will be continued.</p>	<p>Billings-Advertorial_GAW2020_UG-0919.pdf</p>

		<p>groups with high level of customer satisfaction and event execution.</p> <p>For orientation and facilitation marketing Visit Billings purchased print and/or digital exposure for Lee Enterprises for the NAIA Women's Division I National Championship and the Montana High School Associations State Championships program-wide.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>						
Group Marketing	Fam Trips	<p>Leveraging Montana's Trailhead, Visit Billings will be launching "Forge Your Own Path," an evolution of the Visit Billings brand promise, inviting visitors to be their own pioneers and start their own unique and 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.</p> <p>Visit Billings staff will use this platform to attract, plan, and execute familiarization or FAM tours as they pertain to group tour marketing.</p> <p>Visit Billings will differentiate itself from the competitive set by bringing the Billings experience to life through the lens of its brand essence, the spirit at the core of the destination. Typical tourism campaigns feature big scenery and "people doing stuff," whether drinking a craft beer, hiking or shopping. Visit Billings will stand not only for its products and nearby bucket-list attractions, but its authentic, accessible character.</p>	<p>FAM trips are intended for operators to become familiar with certain products and offerings to better market their services to their client base.</p> <p>Group Tour, international and domestic, as well as meeting planner familiarization events are very important to growing visitation at Montana's Trailhead.</p> <p>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 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>Account Management, relationship follow-up, booking on measurable objectives, followers, Cision Reporting, 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.</p>	<p>FAMILIARIZATION (FAM) TOURS</p> <p>FAM tours will be a continued means of showcasing Montana's Trailhead. The team will work independently and with MOTBD to recruit journalists and expose them to Billings and the surrounding regions. In addition to the leads given to Visit Billings by MOTBD, Visit Billings will reach out to journalists on prospective story ideas. When a journalist shows interest, the team will be ready to execute a fully hosted and, if desired, guided experience at Montana's Trailhead. Media gathering entities like Cision will assist by tracking coverage and generating leads.</p> <p>Visit Billings will continue to invite and assist partners including MOTBD and Visit Southeast Montana, to help grow the international landscape for the region. We will seek opportunities to market and 'show-off' the Billings' destination in partnership with other strong voices like Brand USA and the MOTBD.</p> <p>Group travel is significant for the international market and efforts in this area continue to grow.</p>	<p>\$9,500.00</p>	<p>Fam Trips</p> <p>As noted in Method and supporting information, FAM trips are intended for operators to become familiar with certain products and offerings to better market their services to their client base.</p> <p>The Group Tour market segment(s), international and domestic, as well as meeting planner familiarization events, are very important to growing visitation at Montana's Trailhead.</p> <p>As the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) documents, Montana is a rare place. It is a place where you can take your time and savor the grandeur of nature. With more than 38 million hectares of land and one million residents, Montana is one of America's greatest treasures of scenic lands and wildlife, unspoiled by traffic and untouched by crowds.</p> <p>The state has two national parks, 24 mountain ranges, millions of hectares of public lands and vast wilderness preserves, all for you to explore. It is a place where travelers can enjoy the magnificence of the natural environment by day and relax in the hospitality of small towns by night.</p> <p>Famous for its fishing streams, mountains, and wide-open spaces, Montana also has an exciting frontier history, a mix of cultures, and performing art traditions, all inspired by the drama of the landscape and its inhabitants.</p> <p>Speaking to this Montana experience, Billings, Montana's Trailhead is home to forever views and forever memories which fall in-line with the highpoints buyers are seeking in Montana for their clients.</p> <p>Visit Billings employees are proud to continue partnering with MOTBD to expose potential buyers and tour operators to Montana including Billings.</p> <p>In FY19, as the method outlined, Visit Billings partnered with MOTBD and other Regions and CVBs to elevate Montana to buyers. Working with MOTBD, Visit Billings was able to play a role in the 2018 Australia/New Zealand Mega Fam. Thirteen guests plus Brand USA hosts and staff from MOTBD arrived in Billings on Thursday, August 16 and stayed in and around Billings for two night hub and spoking to into Yellowstone Country and southeast Montana. The guests enjoyed Billings' nightlife and also took in major events like Farmer's Markets, Swords Rimrock Park, and the Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site before heading east to Miles City for the Crow Fair and the Indian Country excursions.</p> <p>Expenses under this line items for Fam Tours in order to grow Group Tours included Horseback riding, PRCA Rodeo at First Interstate Arena at MetraPark, and meals with private dollars paying for all alcoholic beverages.</p> <p>Names include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barbera Thomas Nicholson Howarth Shepherd Sharp McRobbie Ledson Fowler Malcolm Fletcher (Brand USA host) Davis (Brand USA host) Tobeck (NZ Air Rep) Iverson (MOTBD) Birrell (MOTBD) Sines (Karst Stages) <p>Funds were also expended for a Meeting Planner Site Inspection conducted by Visit Billings to grow visitation for the destination in the Meetings/Convention Recruitment segment.</p> <p>Visit Billings staff vetted, chose, and hosted successfully the following meeting planners:</p> <p>FAM attendees were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tara Bass - Helmsbriscoe Rachel Dobbs - Helmsbriscoe 	<p>Finalitinerary Australia New Zealand Mega Fam.docx</p>

							<p>Tonja Taylor- PNC Banking</p> <p>Corine Kumano - Boeing Travel</p> <p>William LaCroix - LaCroix Agency</p> <p>Visit Billings also hosted a site inspection for the Marine Corp League's National Convention which was ultimately hosted in Billings in August of 2019. It was one of the organization's most attended conventions. The first site inspection in 2017 was hosted with private funds for Visit Billings.</p> <p>The final site visit was paid for using Billings CVB dollars. This second site visit was very important to the meeting planners in order for them to solidify pre and post tours for attendees and to ensure all venues and services were secured.</p> <p>Per another lead from the MOTBD and Kim Birrell, Visit Billings hosted two guests representing the Benelux Market. They focused on off-the-beaten-path locations for their article.</p>	
<p>Marketing Support</p>	<p>Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center</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>THE FACILITATION PHASE is where the traveler seeks experiences en route to a destination and during a stay. Having hard copy collateral materials can help ensure a positive trip and strong wayfinding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Certified Folder assists with this goal. 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 thirty 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 	<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>Smith Travel Research Report (STR) offers monthly snapshots of occupancy and room demand percentages for the Billings market. This information will be monitored internally and shared with stakeholders/lodging/tourism partners.</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>Per the Method, Montana guidebooks and brochures are a very important piece of the orientation and facilitation process. It's key to make them available at many points in the travel decision process.</p> <p>Visit Billings is again grateful of its partnership with Certified Folder Display to assist in the disbursements of Visitor Guidebooks to travelers in Montana or en route to Montana via a nearby access points in Wyoming and South Dakota.</p> <p>Visit Billings realized citywide Room Demand success by the Smith Travel Research Report: Room Demand growth was 3% and Billings citywide realized 5.2% - a 2.2% increase over goal for Room Demand in calendar year 2018. Growth was also realized YTD 2019 in the same data column.</p>	<p>\$24,500.00</p>	<p>In FY19, the contract for fulfillment by a contractor with Certified Folder Display (CFD) 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 FY19, Visit Billings supplied CFD 30,000 Visitor Guidebooks. We did run low on supply at some locations and will make adjustments to printing counts in FY20 runs.</p> <p>Points to make:</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 costs \$16,393.11. This breaks down to less than \$1,500 monthly to have the supply distributed to rest areas, hotels, and convenient stores across the region. Visit Billings does receive a non-profit discount with CFD.</p> <p>The most expense part of the contract is the displays in the Black Hills region with the least expensive part of the contract being distribution in area near the I-90/I-15 corridors near Butte and Helena.</p> <p>Other contracts with CFD disperse guides at:</p> <p>Sweet Grass, Bozeman, Anaconda, and Dena Mora Rest Areas</p> <p>This partnership continues to be successful. The Method was again successful in FY19 and will be continued as objectives were met.</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>Visit Billings uses private funds to pay for the design and printing of the Visitor Guidebook inventory then leverages State CVB funds to facilitation, fulfillment, and postage.</p> <p>27,308 Visitor Guidebooks were mailed using in-house and MTS fulfillment services in FY19 for Visit Billings.</p> <p>\$24,500 was budgeted for fulfillment by a contractor for FY19.</p> <p>\$24,129.33 was expended which was 98.49% of the budget.</p> <p>Additionally, to reiterate, the annual goal for the Smith Travel Research Room Demand percentage is 3%. Billings saw growth of 2.2% to 5.2% in calendar year 2018 with continued growth in citywide demand for YTD 2019. This rate is important to Billings stakeholders including 53 hotels/motels with nearly 4,900 guest rooms - the most guest rooms in any city in Montana.</p>	<p>Certified Folder Contract II.pdf</p>

			<p>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.</p>				
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	<p>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) of group marketing efforts.</p> <p>The dollars being made available should an opportunity arise to strengthen Billings' destination marketing or sale - is the point of this method.</p>	<p>Organizations may use up to 10% of their total budget for Opportunity Marketing in order to implement marketing methods which were unknown at the time the marketing plan was approved by the Council. In FY19, Visit Billings budgeted less than 1% of its projected revenue in this capacity.</p>	<p>Success will be measured by making dollars available for opportunities not realized when the FY19 marketing plan was approved by the Tourism Advisory Council.</p>	<p>In FY19, Visit Billings set aside \$3,500 in Opportunity Marketing funds. These funds were to be made available with Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) Marketing Committee approval should an opportunity to market the destination arise that wasn't originally planned in the FY19 budget.</p> <p>As noted in the Method, should no opportunity arise to grow visitation at Montana's Trailhead, funds would be reallocated to consumer or group marketing efforts.</p> <p>This method was successful as the funds were made available should an opportunity, unknown at the time of the FY19 marketing plan creation, present itself.</p> <p>An opportunity did not present itself in FY19, but the method was successful as the objective was met.</p>	\$3,500.00	<p>While dollars in FY19 weren't executed per the Method and we redistributed to marketing, such 'opportunity' funds will continue to be responsibly budgeted.</p> <p>Visit Billings appreciates the opportunity to budget for such unknown marketing options. The method was successful and will continue.</p>
			<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</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</p>	<p>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 thirty 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</p>		<p>Visitor Center Toll-Free Phone Number</p> <p>Per the Method 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 again in FY19.</p> <p>Part of the service of the Billings Visitor Information Center (VIC) during FY19, 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

Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	<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 continues to monitor this investment as a need to meet for potential visitors to Billings and the surrounding region.</p>	<p>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>inquiries into the number (406) 245-4111. 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>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 Toll-free line rings into the VIC.</p> <p>At this time, Visit Billings staff is unsure whether they will maintain the 1-800 number as calls have decreased substantially due to the widely used cell or smart phones. Meantime, the staff continues to grow use of the Quiq program to offer texting options to visitors.</p>	\$1,100.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 is made available on printed materials including the Billings Visitor Guidebook in order to offer a free, long-distance phone call for those referring a toll-free number.</p> <p>Visit Billings staff continue to monitor the relevance of this line which costs \$1,121.73 annually. This cost hasn't increased or decreased. Some conversations with colleagues of other DMOs prove that many have canceled their toll-free numbers. Visit Billings still feels given certain generations traveling or preparing to travel prefer to have a toll-free line and thus, this Method is considered successful, necessary and will continue for one more year as the objective for the organization is to orient and facilitate travelers or potential travelers via staff, volunteers, or other travel counselors.</p> <p>\$1,100 was budgeted for the Visit Billings toll-free hotline. \$1,121.73 was expended which was 101.98% of the budget for this line item.</p> <p>Again, this program may be cancelled prior to the end of FY20.</p>	
Marketing Support	Administration	<p>Administrative dollars are very important to Visit Billings as an organization.</p> <p>Allowable administrative expenses can meet, but not exceed 20% of the Billings CVB's annual new revenue.</p> <p>Funds can be 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>Per statute, the maximum allowed for the Administrative budget is 20% of the total marketing budget (or less).</p>	<p>Success will be determined by the total spend in this method, if total spend does not exceed the 20% allowable expense.</p>	<p>Per contract between the Montana Department of Commerce and the Billings Chamber of Commerce, the relationship was again successful and important to Visit Billings, its stakeholders, and the management of the Billings CVB budget.</p>	\$70,236.00	<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 FY19 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>The overall budget for the Billings CVB in FY19 was \$361,184. 20% of the new revenue was \$72,236.</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>Targeted industries to mine meeting leads include two and/or four-wheeled, energy,</p>	<p>Account Management, relationship follow-up,</p>	<p>In Billings, the sales team encourages planners to experience a Bucket List State for their next meeting destination. As the campaign reads, "This is Big Meetings Country". At the same time, the come-early or stay-late mindset is relevant, <i>unique meeting spaces and distinctive team building opportunities</i>, formal and informal, can boost attendance building. In order to successfully sell Billings as a meetings destination, sales programs for mining are important to sales staff. EmpowerMINT has previously proven to assist with such needs.</p> <p>Concurrently, research and data that shows the impact of events booked by Visit Billings, is important to ROI and to stakeholders.</p>		<p>Smith Travel Research</p> <p>This method was successful and the objective was met.</p> <p>Visit Billings is fortunate to have stakeholders who report to Smith Travel Research (STR) therefore offering a consistent, monthly set of data for the destination. As noted in the description of the Method, stakeholders, Visit Billings staff, and board members rely on the monthly Smith Travel Research Citywide (STR Report) reporting in order to gauge the health of the industry via data points carved out in the monthly report. This report also helps Visit Billings under the impact of booked events, conventions, leisure campaigns, and sports tournament contracted by sales staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The STR Report is a calendar year report. This fiscal year, the report was considered research for the organization, stakeholders, and the destination as a whole, once again. In FY19, the report continued to allow tourism partners to follow the fitness of the destination by monitoring Occupancy, Average Daily Rate (ADR), and Room Demand. Once again the report was emailed to all stakeholders in the Visit Billings database as well as media, businesses, and tourism partners. The reports were also all uploaded to VisitBillings.com and remain available upon request to the public. 	

Marketing Support	Research	<p>Research as stated: Smith Travel Research (STR) Report and 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. 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, RevPar can benchmark Yellowstone County lodging statistics with other competing destinations across the region and country.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>agriculture, religious, corporate, military, trails, cycling, outdoor/recreation, healthcare, non-profit and professional and trade associations. 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>	<p>bookings on measurable objectives, followers, Cision Reporting, 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.</p> <p>Success will be defined for STR report as they are received, assessed, and distributed.</p> <p>Success for the EmpowerMINT program will be based on usage by sales staff and any business booked by leads based off the program.</p>	<p>Billings is unique to many other Montana cities. 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. In order to review and report the impact of such events, big or small, Smith Travel Research citywide reporting is used.</p> <p>With nearly 55 lodging partners reporting on demand, occupancy, and other data points like Average Daily Rate to the Smith Travel Research company, Visit Billings can lean heavily on monitoring such data to report successes in booked events, but also to monitor weaknesses within the destination. For instance, value season including months from April through October are strong months for Billings. But November through March can be weaker offering value. Visit Billings works to book stronger events or help tourism partners market events during these months in hopes of strengthening the stakeholders bottom lines and the destinations as a whole via visitation growth.</p>	\$11,000.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports can be viewed here: https://www.visitbillings.com/tbid-stakeholder <p>In FY19, Visit Billings executed the contract for STR spending \$1,980 on the Trend Report which allows staff to choose the competitive set of other destinations to monitor including Montana cities, the U.S., Montana, and other cities comparable to Billings including Rapid City, South Dakota and Madison, Wisconsin. Then, \$3,240 was also spent as part of the overall STR contract in order to combine, filter, and present data for Billings' citywide reports as related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupancy • Average Daily Rate (ADR) • Room Demand <p>This project was successful and will be continued.</p> <p>EmpowerMINT</p> <p>This method was not successful and the program will be discontinued.</p> <p>Per the FY19 Method, Destinations International (DI) offers cities a program called EmpowerMINT. It's a database of tens of thousands of conventions and meetings, large and small that can be filtered to meet the needs of the destination. Destination Marketing/Management Organizations (DMO) are able to subscribe to this database and mine for leads to recruit business to their communities.</p> <p>While the subscription of this program has proven fruitful in the past by previous sales personnel, the current Meetings and Conventions Sales Manager does not utilize the program or the subscription enough to justify a continued contract with DI. Current personnel prefers to mine and recruit new business by other means including appointment-based tradeshows, tradeshow sponsorships, meeting planner site inspections, and e-communication programs. Therefore, this subscription will not be continued at this time and will be cancelled for FY20. Please note, the list price for EmpowerMINT is \$15,300. Visit Billings was able to contract with this subscription for \$5,200 which was negotiated by the ED.</p> <p>In FY19, the State Research Expense budget was estimated at \$11,000.</p> <p>Visit Billings spent \$10,420 of this budget.</p> <p>\$580 was reallocated to leisure marketing for FY20.</p> <p>Visit Billings spent 94.73% of this budget line item in FY19.</p>	December 2018 -STR Report.pdf
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	<p>The objective for this Method is for appropriate staff to attend required meetings in order to obtain at least three items from each meeting that will be shared with leadership in order to support all marketing efforts.</p>	<p>Sharing key information from the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) as the Department of Commerce as a whole, is important to Billings.</p> <p>information to lodging partners and staff is essential to a health tourism industry, particularly information from officials with Commerce, MOTBD, and other Regions, CVBs, and tourism partners statewide.</p>	<p>The success is measured by tracking attendance and through reports back to the organization.</p>	<p>This method was successful as staff met the objective.</p> <p>Regarding Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) Meetings, the Visit Billings Executive Director attended all meeting of the TAC in FY19. These meetings were successful and items were discussed with staff, the agency of record, and other partners upon return. This method will be continued.</p> <p>Additionally, the Visit Billings Leisure Marketing Manager attended the June TAC Meeting in order to ensure a strong representation from the organization for the Council. Private dollars helped pay for this additional staff member's attendance.</p>	\$1,350.00	<p>The take-a-ways included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insight on MOTBD Marketing Plans for the state as a whole • Taste Our Place programming • Tribal projects • TAC Roundtable which offer insight on what's happening in other Montana destinations <p>Regarding the Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation hosted in Butte in FY19, the Executive Director, Leisure Marketing Manager, and Meeting/Convention Sales Manager each attended the Butte convention. Billings CVB funds paid for the Executive Director to attend, while private dollars paid for the additional staff to attend the conference.</p> <p>The take-a-ways included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montana Film Office updates • Yellowstone National Park Superintendent – current priorities for YNP • How to build partnerships with community leaders to move tourism forward <p>This Conference is extremely important for staff to attend. While specific sales tracks weren't offered for the meeting/convention sales employee, other general destination marketing and management tracks did offer insight. The festivities, networking, and general comradery are all important to staff.</p> <p>This Method was successful, the objectives were met by attending all TAC meetings and the Governor's Conference. Insight garnered was shared with staff, board members, and tourism partners at board meetings and within the community. The Method will continue.</p> <p>\$500 was budgeted for three TAC Meetings in FY19. \$1,557.99 was spent in mileage, accommodations, and meals. The budget will be adjusted to reflect the increase in FY20.</p> <p>\$850 was budgeted for the Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation. \$794.86 was expended for travel, registration, and accommodations.</p> <p>The Method will continue.</p>	
Marketing		<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>The event has a history of being a very worthy investment for many reasons</p>	<p>It is important to gain industry knowledge to be able to serve visitors to the fullest extent and to be</p>	<p>Papers and reports by the employee(s) attending training will be made available to the Visit Billings Boards of Directors (TBID and Chamber/CVB).</p> <p>The Visit Billings staff</p>	<p>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. In FY19, this expenditure was again successful in assisting the Meeting and</p>		<p>This method proved successful and the objective was met.</p> <p>The Visit Billings Meeting and Convention Sales Manager is currently attending classes through Destinations International to acquire his Certified Destination Marketing Executive certification or CDME. Papers are due by facilitators and these papers are available upon request. Other points to make per this method:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY19 was the employee's third year attending classes for professional training and continued education. • State CVB funds were used to pay for registration, while private dollars paid for travel, meals, and accommodations. • This program will continue to be budgeted for in FY20 when private funds will assist once again in expenditures pertaining to the employee's work in obtaining more professional education 	CDME FY19 - Summary -

Support	DMO Program Participation	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 or to take part in trainings offered by the organizations like the certification called: CDME - Certified Destination Marketing Executive	a viable participant in an organization as an employee of a DMO or DMMO.	member who attends - shares findings and revelations with colleagues and coworkers. He/she will also share any papers at the request of stakeholders.	Convention Sales Manager for Visit Billings attend and learn more about destination marketing and sales. This helps the organization as a whole as the investment has in the past.	\$1,500.00	surrounding destination marketing and management for the betterment of the individual, organization, and destination leadership. \$1,500 was budgeted to be used for the expense of registration for the employee for FY19 CDME classes with Destinations International. The final cost was \$1,475. 98.33% of the budget was expended. Remaining dollars were reallocated to leisure marketing for FY20. Again, this method was successful. It will be continued. The objective was met. Even once this employee has completed the CDME certification, staff will continue to budget for Destinations International Annual Conventions and other professional development conventions/opportunities like ESTO, etc.	Visit Billings Staff.pdf
Publicity	Press Trips	PUBLICITY/EARNED MEDIA The Visit Billings team strives to partner with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD), tourism partners and neighboring regions in promoting visitation to Billings, Montana's Trailhead. A few key tactics include the following regarding publicity efforts: FAMILIARIZATION (FAM) TOURS FAM tours will be a continued means of showcasing Montana's Trailhead. The team will work independently and with MOTBD to recruit journalists and expose them to Billings and the surrounding regions. In addition to the leads given to Visit Billings by MOTBD, Visit Billings will reach out to journalists on prospective story ideas. When a journalist shows interest, the team will be ready to execute a fully hosted and, if desired, guided experience at Montana's Trailhead. Media gathering entities like Cision will assist by tracking coverage and generating leads. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING/NETWORKING 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. SEEKING EDITORIAL OPPORTUNITIES While recruiting journalists to visit, learn and write about the destination, Visit Billings will continue to seek opportunities to submit editorial content for various publications. Leveraging its relationship with Billings365.com, Visit Billings will make it a priority to contribute content that can attract guests and grow visitation.	Billings' leisure market offers a consistent 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.). Visit Billings is striving to be sure visitors expectations are expanded so that all visitors, regardless of where they come here from, see Billings as the trailhead to the many iconic attractions and experiences offered. Foster Visitor Growth at Montana's Trailhead Visit Billings, as a destination management and marketing organization, promotes Billings and supports the local tourism economy. The Visit Billings team assists the destination and stakeholders (Billings and Yellowstone County lodging partners) by using strategic marketing campaigns, deliberate activities, tourism leads, sales missions, familiarization tours, publicity efforts and other regional, domestic, and international promotional efforts to increase visitation to the city and region. Full hotels equate to full restaurants, retail businesses and tourism attractions. In turn, the business climate and local economy thrive.	Making sure any contract with an individual or company pertaining to press, media, journalist, and/or influencer trip or FAM is fully executed and all deliverables are in hand. Assets must be made available. This Method is successful if Visit Billings contracts with individuals who impact the brand, exposure, and image of the destination. Additionally, staff will be sure to foster relationships by following up with guests and monitor Cision Reporting when/where applicable.	This project is important to the Visit Billings mission because it is the combining of budgets and resources to promote our region and state. As noted in the Method , Visit Billings works to partners with entities and individuals that who can elevate Billings as a tourism destination with a proven track record. Recruiting writers to visit, learn, and write about the destination is important to the mission. In FY19, Visit Billings was successful in executing this Method and meeting the objective of contracting with media and/or influencers who impact the brand of the destination. Should the opportunity arise to partner with MOTBD and other businesses/organizations, the team will execute accordingly in the future.	\$5,000.00	Yes, the Method was successful. The objectives were met. Visit Billings will continue such projects and programming. Visit USA Parks Contract for FY19 The budget for the FY19 Publicity and Press Trips was \$5,000. Visit Billings partnered with Visit USA Parks influencers via Hermann Global. It was important to host the influencers in Billings prior to Billings executing Travel Blog Exchange. Visit Billings had hosted Andi Fischer previously and knew of her work and impact to Visit USA Parks. On Facebook, Visit USA Parks boasts more than 31,000 followers. Information is also available at www.VisitUSAParks.com . On Instagram, Visit USA Parks offers nearly 46,000 followers. Andi Fischer and Emily Sierra were amazing to host. Again, Visit Billings had hosted Andi previously, but leveraged this trip and use of funds for not only support and impact from Visit USA Park's Instagram and FB exposure, but also used photo library budget to purchase additional rights to images they obtained during their 48 Hours in Billings in FY19. When working with influencers, Visit Billings staff try to stay away from itineraries. Instead, printed materials are offered including maps, Visitor Guidebooks, and other printed materials to inspire, orient, and facilitate the guests. Visit Billings staff take the guests to dinner, lunch, or breakfast - or a combination - and go through the peices talking about best places to explore. Instead of forcing story lines and agendas, the stories, blogs, and other social posts are then more organic and less formatted. The branded story 48 Hours in Billings along with the paid social was \$8,000 total. \$4,000 of this was for the images obtained for the Visit Billings photo library. The other \$4,000 was for the contract to host Ms. Fischer and Ms. Sierra. This Method was successful. The objectives were met and such projects will continue. RoadRUNNER Magazine Videographers Again, as noted in the Method , Visit Billings works to partners with entities, publications, and individuals that who can elevate Billings as a tourism destination with a proven track record. Recruiting writers to visit, learn, and write about the destination and the surrounding region is important to the mission. RoadRUNNER Motorcycle Tourism and Travel Channel falls well within this statement. The two-wheel, motorcycle market continues to be very successful to Billings' tourism marketing efforts and strategies. Visit Billings contracted with RoadRUNNER magazine videographers who visited Billings and the region and edited an incredible video that has boasted nearly 8,000 views to date on the RoadRUNNER Motorcycle Touring and Travel YouTube Channel. When working with influencers, Visit Billings staff try to stay away from itineraries. Instead, printed materials are offered including maps, Visitor Guidebooks, and other printed materials to inspire, orient, and facilitate the guests. Visit Billings staff take the guests to dinner, lunch, or breakfast - or a combination - and go through the peices talking about best places to explore. Instead of forcing story lines and agendas, the stories, blogs, and other social posts are then more organic and less formatted. In the case of the RoadRUNNER guests, Visit Billings staff met with the gentlemen in downtown Billings and looked through materials and maps including the Billings Loop Tour Map. This map offered the influencers insight on where to explore organically while still elevating the destination. Billings CVB funds paid for the two guests' stay at Montana's Trailhead. The RoadRUNNER reps were in Billings August 13-19, 2018. Visit Billings hosted Cameron Mullenburg and his co-worker John Flores for the RoadRUNNER project in Billings. The two stayed in Billings in August of 2018 and visited the city and the region including the Little Bighorn Battlefield and the Beartooth Scenic Byway. The total Publicity/Press Trip budget for Visit Billings in FY19 was \$5,000. Visit Billings spent 99.99% of this budget with \$0.30 remaining in the line item between the Billings CVB's commitment in this category for the Visit USA Parks and RoadRUNNER contracts. Visit USA Parks was \$4,000 under this line item with the RoadRUNNER lodging costing \$999.70. All assets were made available to Visit Billings, local and regional tourism partners, MOTBD, and all were posted and shared on social channels for the destination marketing organization and area. The video is available on the RoadRUNNER YouTube Channel here: https://youtu.be/HmUOVztcgwg In FY19, Visit Billings was successful in executing this Method and meeting the objective of contracting with media and/or influencers who impact the brand of the destination.	Billings - October 2019 - Final Report Visit USA - pdf
						\$351,184.00		

Marketing Method Evaluation Attachments

- Attachment 1** FY19/isiBillingsBudgettoActualComparisonpiecharts.pdf
- Attachment 2** FY19 Visit Billings Partnership spend of total marketing budget.xlsx
- Attachment 3** BillingsTripAdvisor.xlsx
- Attachment 4** Sojern - JV - FY19 Report.pdf
- Attachment 5** Horizon - Proof of performance.m4v

Attachment 6	BillingsAdvertorial_RMI2018_ITA_adproof-1024.pdf
Attachment 7	Billings Media Report 7.8 (1).xlsx
Attachment 8	2019 Lewis and Clark Marketing Program Report for VB.pdf
Attachment 9	Planner FAM 19.pdf
Attachment 10	Horizon Buy - Times Square POP.jpg

Marketing Method Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Bed tax funded budget	Non bed tax funded budget (optional)
Consumer	Joint Ventures	\$30,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Multi-Media Marketing	\$46,398.00	\$570,000.00
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	\$30,000.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Ad Agency Services	\$30,000.00	\$25,000.00
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	\$6,500.00	\$5,000.00
Consumer	Webpage Marketing/SEO/SEM	\$8,500.00	\$20,500.00
Consumer	Billboards/Out-of-Home	\$0.00	\$15,000.00
		\$151,398.00	\$635,500.00
Film	Opportunity Marketing	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
		\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Group Marketing	Multi-Media Marketing	\$60,000.00	\$80,000.00
Group Marketing	Fam Trips	\$13,500.00	\$9,750.00
Group Marketing	Travel/Trade Shows	\$10,750.00	\$57,000.00
Group Marketing		\$0.00	\$214,500.00
		\$84,250.00	\$361,250.00
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	\$3,500.00	\$135,000.00
Marketing Support	Fulfillment/Telemarketing/Call Center	\$24,500.00	\$9,000.00
Marketing Support	Printed Material	\$6,350.00	\$94,500.00
Marketing Support	Research	\$11,000.00	\$6,500.00
Marketing Support	Administration	\$70,236.00	\$277,401.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$1,350.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	DMO Program Participation	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Marketing/Publicity Personnel	\$0.00	\$139,000.00
Marketing Support	Website/Internet Development/Updates	\$0.00	\$21,000.00
Marketing Support	Partner Support	\$0.00	\$23,500.00
Marketing Support	Professional Development	\$0.00	\$12,400.00
Marketing Support	VIC Staff/Customer Service Training	\$0.00	\$13,750.00
Marketing Support	VIC Funding/Staffing/Signage	\$1,100.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Equipment	\$0.00	\$26,040.00
Marketing Support	Crisis Management	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Marketing Support	Outreach	\$0.00	\$3,700.00
		\$119,536.00	\$764,291.00
Publicity	Press Promotions/Media Outreach	\$5,000.00	\$7,000.00
Publicity	Press Promotions/Media Outreach	\$0.00	\$5,250.00
		\$5,000.00	\$12,250.00
		\$361,184.00	\$1,774,291.00

Miscellaneous Attachments

Description	File Name	File Size
Sunset Magazine Creative	40145 - CVB Sunset Magazine June 2017.pdf	152 KB
Meeting and Convention Recruitment	40536_CVB_cVent_360x300_Static.jpg	172 KB
Sturgis Creative - Visit Billings Two-Wheel Market	40663_CVB_SturgisMapAd.pdf	119 KB
Regional Private Funds Promotion of Local Music Scene Campaign	40692_CVB_GarthBrooksInsert.pdf	4.7 MB
MHSA Tournament Program promoting Billings hosted MHSA sports events - Private Funds	41125 - CVB MHSA Tournament Program Ad.pdf	1.9 MB
Example of regional partnership	Billings CVB - Destination Red Lodge Partnership.pdf	236 KB
National Gateway Creative Example Yellowstone Journal	Billings CVB Yellowstone Journal 2018.pdf	3.9 MB
Visit Billings Sports Promotion	Billings CVB-NASC-Sports-Web-Banner-728x90.gif	34 KB
Billings CVB Sojern Match	Billings CVB-Sojern-JV-Match-2017-2018-300x600.jpg	86 KB
ORD promotion (Chicago Seasonal)	Billings CVB_Chicago-Billings_300x250.gif	37 KB
Rocky Mountain International	BillingsAdvertorial_RMI2018_FR_adproof-1024.pdf	361 KB
Rocky Mountain International - Germany	BillingsAdvertorial_RMI2018_GER_adproof-1024.pdf	363 KB
Rocky Mountain International - Italy	BillingsAdvertorial_RMI2018_ITA_adproof-1024.pdf	362 KB

ORD Promotion (Seasonal Chicago)	CVB_Billings-Chicago_300x250.gif	34 KB
Pandora Example	CVB_Summer_Banner_300x250_Pandora.jpg	43 KB
Fall Distinctly Montana Posts - Private Funds	Fall_DMTPosts (002) Distinctly Montana Facebook Posts .pdf	3.1 MB
FY19 Visit Billings Marketing Plan & Budget	FY19 Visit Billings Marketing Plan.pdf	8.8 MB
Facilitation Billboard - Garry Owen area near LBHBNM	Hardin Billboard 10 Garryowen .png	865 KB
Research	Randall 2016.pdf	621 KB
Visit Billings - Lumen	VB_SummerFB_LUMEN.docx	867 KB
Meetings and Conventions Recruitment	Visit Billings - CVB Meeting News Northwest Feb 2018.pdf	3.2 MB
Sports Events Reader's Choice Award	Visit Billings - CVB Sports Events Readers Choice January 2018.pdf	229 KB
Full Sunset Spread for Visit Billings	VisitBillings_TC[1].pdf	2.3 MB

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
Application for Lodging Tax	FY19 Application for Funds - Billings CVB.pdf	243 KB
Visit Billings FY19 Full Marketing Plan and Budget	FY19 Visit Billings Marketing Plan.pdf	8.8 MB
FY19 Required documents	Required Documents - Billings CVB FY19.pdf	532 KB

